

TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF MISSION

ECUMENISM AND MISSION

A Missionary Challenge

BY

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CHAPTER THREE.

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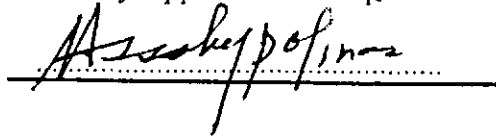
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for academic credit to any other institution!

All sources have been cited in full.

Signed: Msaky Appolinaris, CSSp.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Msaky Appolinaris", is written over a solid horizontal line. A dotted horizontal line is visible just below the solid line.

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This essay shows that there has been a tremendous contribution and advice of many scholars. For this reason, I am grateful to my moderator Dr. Mary Getui who read the whole essay, for her directions, suggestions and corrections.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

A R C I C: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.

S P C K: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

I M C: International Missionary Council

S C M: Student Christian Movement.

W C C: World Council of Churches.

A P U C: Association for the Promotion of unity among Christians

A A C C: All African Conference of Churches.

C A: Church Aid

R C C: Roman Catholic Church

F & D: Faith and Order

M I T: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

A C : Anglican Church.

J P I C: Justice, Peace , and Integrity of Creation

J W G: Joint Working Group.

1: INTRODUCTION:

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them so that they may be one, in them and you in me, that they may become completely one” (Jn 17:20-23)

Jesus Christ at the hour of his passion directed this prayer to the father that his disciples may all be one. It is a prayer for unity, a unity that the Lord has bestowed on his Church in which he wishes to embrace all people. This unity stands at the very heart of Christ’s mission since the church is an instrument of the mission of Christ and since it was God’s intention that his people be one. “Ecumenism” which strives for unity belongs to the very essence of the mission of the church.

God wills the church because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of his love. The catholic church therefore, embraces with hope the commitment to ecumenism as a mission of the Christian action enlightened by faith and guided by love. Here too we can apply the words of Saint Paul to the Romans “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, thus our hope does not disappoint us (Rom 5:5) This is the hope of Christian Ecumenism as we see its origin in the unity of the Trinity: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

I am challenged by this idea of unity because it is a central focus assigned to the Gospel proclamation worldwide. As a believer in Christ, living with non-Catholics but who believe in Christ’s Gospel message, and above all a missionary, I have to abide with the stated purpose of Jesus Christ’s mission, to build his one Church, and together with all Christ’s disciples to get

involved in ecumenical commitment to gather Christians into unity. The church is permanently open to missionary and ecumenical endeavour, for the church is sent to the world to announce and witness, to make present and spread the mystery of communion which is essential to her, and to gather all people and all things into Christ, so as to be for all an "inseparable sacrament of unity"

This quotation reminds me of the fact that the struggle for the unity of all divided humanity is the will of God. For this reason, as an agent of God's mission to humanity, I therefore felt obliged to work for the unity among all Christians. Taking part in this movement which is called *Ecumenism* I have decided to write this long essay on "*Ecumenism and Mission: A Missionary Challenge*." Specifically I am concerned with four things:

- 1: The new vision of the church created by Vatican II Council; that the mission of Christ is one and therefore the church which comes as the result of Christ's mission should also be one. For this reason then, I see that to have meaningful Ecumenism, there should be a mission of integration between various churches for the sake of building the Kingdom of God within the human community.
- 2: The present situation among the churches manifests distrust, prejudices and misunderstandings, and therefore lack of unity among Christians. The official documents issued hitherto by John Paul II, for example, encyclical letter "*Ut Unum Sint*" on **Commitment to Ecumenism**, show a concern about this situation of division between the Catholic Church and other Churches. So to work for the inter communion of churches, I think should be the ministry of the church today and the meaningful answer to a question about the ministry of the Church is an Ecumenical one.

1. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*" No. 14

3: Ecumenism is a commitment, a call for Christian unity, aims at bringing Christians together just as Christ intended that we all be one: "I have given them the glory you gave me that they may be one, I living in them, and you living in me, that their unity may be complete". (John 17:22-23) This means that Christ's presence in us, creates a bond of fellowship that is open to ecumenical endeavour. This gives me a conviction that a missionary is called to announce and witness, to make present and spread the mystery of communion which is essential to the church and to gather all people into Christ.

4: I wish that this paper acts as an instrument of conscientising christian churches in promoting christian unity that is to come through prayers, sacrifice and sufferings from both the catholic Church and other churches.

This paper has three chapters. The first chapter deals with brief history of the Ecumenical Movement. In this chapter I have dealt with the definition of Ecumenism and Mission, Relationship between Ecumenism and Mission and Development of Catholic Stance towards Ecumenical Movement and Mission.

Chapter Two is devoted to a research exercise on Ecumenical Relationship between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in Nairobi, the Nature of Separation between the Two communions and if there are any efforts to come together. Methods employed in this research exercise are surveys, interviews and conversation with the informants; Fr Christopher Burke of Karen Catholic Church and Christians of Karen Anglican Church in Nairobi. There was a need of interpreting the questionnaires and match them with references from official published documents of the Catholic church and see how these documents might have influenced the present situation of separation between Catholics and Anglicans.

Chapter three focuses on the missionary challenges in the field of Ecumenism and mission.

Finally, are given recommendation and a conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE:

1:1. DEFINITION: ECUMENISM AND MISSION:

1:2. ECUMENISM:

The word 'ecumenism' or 'ecumenical' is derived from a Greek word '*oikoumene*' which means the space in which people live. It refers first of all to the inhabited and cultivated world. The word acquired new meaning in the 19th century when the various Christian churches that had been formed in the course of history began to seek unity among themselves, especially for the sake of co-operating in the missions. Today, the term 'ecumenism' has been appropriated to relation between Christian denominations and seeking ways of drawing them into discussion and partnership without loss of identity.² It is a process of bringing together all Christian churches, and goes beyond to reach out to those of other faiths. So the term ecumenism in this context means "a movement fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit for the restoration of unity among all Christians that there may be one church of God, a church that is truly universal and sent to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God"³

This quotation of the Decree "Unitatis Redintegratio" is affirming that taking part in this movement which is called ecumenism, are those who believe in the Good News of the Gospel of Christ, those who invoke the Triune God, that Christ founded only one church, and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In this sense then, ecumenism is a movement that refers to relations between Christians. Once this relationship is extended to non Christian religions like Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, then it is called 'inter-religious dialogue' which is part of ecumenism. Inter-religious dialogue is also applied to the relations between Christianity and

² Kemdirim, Protus, "Ecumenical Fellowship," *AfR*, 40 (2) April 1998 P.101.

³. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism, "Unitatis Redintegratio, No.1

world views which are not religious especially Marxism. Inter-religious dialogue is sometimes called “*inter-faith dialogue*” as it summons the church to seek a new self understanding in its relation to other religions. It therefore requires the Church to look for deeper resources like workshops, seminars, consultations and meetings to deal with the reality of plurality, and it calls the church to new approaches to mission and witness, plus holding discussions on the priorities of the other churches and such gatherings (discussions) can be the occasions for the participants to refresh and enrich their theological insights through fellowship, study and sharing of experiences.

1:3. MISSION:

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few, therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest (Mt 9:36-38). In relation to this quotation above, Tallman Raymond’s book titled “*An Introduction to World Missions*” has the following questions to ask. What is Mission? Where does one start a text on mission?”⁴ He says that some would say, start with the issues. of course the biblical issues like, forgiveness, love, justice and peace are the central focus of today’s Christian missions. These issues are relevant matters that must be addressed. But issues divide. There are many different opinions about what these issues are, which are most significant, how they should be addressed, and subsequently they determine the way we understand and define mission.

A better place to begin in the efforts to understand and define Christian mission is with the images as presented in Mt 9:36-38. Jesus called the disciples and asked them to look at the world as a harvest field and to look at the people as sheep. These images “harvest field and

⁴. Raymond Tallman, *An Introduction to World Missions*, Moody Press, 1989, p. 15

sheep” are related, united rather than divided. They evoke emotion because they are the profound values of human rights which leads to creation, that as one receives Christian faith, he/she is being re-created a new. This means, to be a good Christian, you have first of all to be a good human being. It is even true to say that if you are a good human being, you are ‘ipso facto’ a good Christian (even if as some would put it, anonymous).

This means that mission in the Christian context is the proclamation of the Good News through which Jesus Christ enters onto our human history. It means that this Good News is Jesus Christ himself. Saint Mark’s Gospel confirms this when it says, “The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mk1:1). Mission therefore, finds its starting point in Jesus Christ. And the same message of the Good News which is Jesus Christ himself is what Jesus brought into the world: “*Salvation*” of all people who believe him to be the saviour and the Lord. In this sense, Mission is the proclamation of the Gospel through which Jesus Christ enters into human history, frees humankind not only from sin but also from the consequences of sin, namely ignorance, poverty, diseases and all forms of injustices and oppressions. This mission is carried out by the church and becomes the church’s universal mission. It is born from the command of Jesus Christ to his disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:19-20) and is fulfilled in the course of the centuries. These efforts to make Christ’s mission more incarnate to respond to the needs of human cultures, increases the diversities in the world-wide body of Christ. In this case it raises the question of unity in the one faith. Mission therefore meets or encounters challenge, and ecumenism in this sense is the response to Christian mission.

⁵ Ibid

1:4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MISSION AND ECUMENISM:

A Missionary Challenge?

Scholars such as Konrad Raiser point to the fact that “ the missionary vocation is indeed the necessary horizon for ecumenism and he continues, “the relationship of ecumenism and mission is still an area of struggle and controversy”⁶ This means that there exist a struggle between the two fields ecumenism and mission. it is a struggle for unity of the churches to come together so as to profess one faith, one mission and hence, one church and one people as intended by Jesus Christ. However such struggle helps us to observe three things:

1:4:1 Commitment to Ecumenism:

That ecumenism aims first and foremost at establishing the unity of the churches in response to the prayer of Jesus Christ. “ And now I am no longer in the world. but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one” (John 17:11) This becomes a challenge when one fails to see the integral part of the whole ecumenical enterprise in the Catholic Church that it also involves other Christian communions like Orthodox and Protestant churches. Ecumenical movement then is a call to respond to the church’s universal mission as it is born from the command of Jesus Christ and is fulfilled in the course of history in the proclamation of the mystery of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the mystery of the incarnation of the Son as saving event for all humanity.

1:4:2. Ecumenism as the Praxis of Dialogue.

Ecumenism is a dialogue. It is a dialogue between members of Christian Churches and ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church. This dialogue is done

⁶ . Raiser-Konrad, “That the world May Believe.” *SFDQS* 19 May (1999): 99/165

through renewal, conversion and reconciliation. To say that Ecumenism is a dialogue it means it is "an indispensable step along the path towards human self-realisation, the self-realisation both of each individual and of every human community" Ecumenical dialogue therefore, implies a global existential dimension for it involves the human subject in his/her entire life. For this reason, the Vatican Two Council's Decree on Ecumenism insisted on the importance of "every effort to eliminate words, judgements and actions which do not respond to the condition of separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations between them more difficult."⁷

This is to say that when undertaking dialogue, each side must presuppose in the other a desire for reconciliation, for mutual opening of members to each other, for unity in truth, arising from the longing to learn from another communion and to be enriched by it. This is the whole mission of Christ and so a missionary concern in the world which is to announce the Good News of the Gospel and take Christ to be at the centre of this mission. "That the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21)

When observing the local structures of dialogue, the Vatican Two Council noted the following points: Ecumenical dialogue is of essential importance. "Through such dialogue everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both communions. In addition, these communions co-operate more closely in whatever projects a Christian conscience demands for the common good. They also come together for common prayer, where that is permitted. Finally, all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and, wherever necessary, undertake with vigour the tasks of renewal and

⁷. Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council "Decree on Ecumenism," *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No. 15

⁸. Ibid

reform” So there cannot be genuine Ecumenical Movement that will not involve a genuine dialogue.

1:4:3. Mission and Ecumenism Share in an uneasy Relationship:

Mission and Ecumenism though cannot be separated, they share in an uneasy relationship. Efforts to unite them often create tension. The Encyclical ‘Ut Unum Sint’ by John Paul II, affirms that “lack of unity among Christians weakens and discredits their missionary witness and thus underlines the close relationship between full unity and evangelisation”¹⁰ But the Pope also gives evidence of the situation of the two when he writes, “the ecumenical movement in our century, ... has been characterised by a missionary outlook”¹¹ Following the verses of John’s Gospel which is ecumenism’s inspiration and guiding motif, “that they may all be one, ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me”, the Pope meant that in the mind of the evangelist, unity is above all for the glory of the Father. It was in this perspective that the encyclical “Ut Unum Sint” establishes the primacy for the search for full unity as the mission that a missionary is called to witness.

1:5. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE IMAGE OF ECUMENISM:

1:5:1. Ecclesial Fractures.

a) Division in the early Corinthian church (1 Cor. 1: 10-13 and 1 Cor. 3:4-7.)

From the very beginning of the history of the church, the attainment and preservation of unity involves struggle. In this regard Saint Paul says, “Now I appeal to you brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and

⁹ . Ibid

¹⁰ . Cf. The Encyclical “Ut Unum Sint”, on Commitment to Ecumenism, 1995.

sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, I belong to Paul, or I belong to Cephas, or I belong to Christ. Has Christ being divided?' (1 Cor. 1:10-13) Paul continues, wherever someone says, I belong to Paul, and another, I belong to Apollos, are you not merely human? What is Apollos, after all, and what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers, just as the Lord assigned each one, I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. Therefore, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth. One might say that the Church was conceived in crisis from the very beginning.

b: The Second Century Movements: Gnostics and Donatists.

There was the Gnosticism challenge of the 2nd century, gnosticism, "derived from the Greek word 'Gnosis' that means knowledge. It refers to religious movement which claimed that salvation was based on secret knowledge conveyed to the elect by heavenly revealer. This knowledge is the 'Gnostics' apart from others whose faith was placed in such 'public' scriptures as the Jewish law, the canonical Christian gospels or the well-known teachings of Greek Philosophers"¹² Gnosticism posed a strong challenge to the emerging orthodoxy in the Christian church since its teachers claimed that they, not the bishops, possessed the secret revelations which Jesus Christ has transmitted to individual disciples after his resurrection, and therefore only Gnostics would attain salvation by incorporation into heavenly church.

During the time of persecutions, there was "Donatism" especially in Africa. Donatism was "a movement started by Donatists, the followers of Bishop Donatus, a leader of a Christian sect which originated in North Africa in the beginning of the 4th century"¹³ Donatism posed a serious challenge when they started teaching that the validity of the Sacraments depends on the

¹¹ . Ibid

¹² . Perkins, Pherme, "Gnosticism" in The New Dictionary of Theology, 1987

¹³ . Runes, Dagobert, "Donates" in The Dictionary of Philosophy, 1981

moral and spiritual credibility of the minister, contrary to what the church teaches that the validity of the Sacraments is not determined by the moral character of the minister.

Still during the period of persecutions, the unity of the church was challenged by the "Manichean Movement", started by a man called 'Mani', a native of Persian (c. 2216-c. 276), who taught a religion whose core was an absolute dualism, a conflict between good and evil, light and darkness"⁴ His views were related to various aspects of Judaism, Gnosticism and Christianity. Once the convert has come to accept the basic view of the Cosmos in which particles of light were imprisoned in matters, the life task was to liberate the light. This caused controversies as the church tries to restore unity in the form of Christological and Trinitarian mysteries.

c) Schism Between Rome and Byzantium: Ecclesial Communion.

At the end these controversies gave way to two ruptures: Schism between Rome and Byzantium that was concerned with the question of order. This Schism started in 330 as emperor Constantine inaugurated Constantinople as his capital-on the site of the Greek city of Byzantium. In 381 its Bishop was given honorary pre-eminence after the Bishop of Rome. By the 16th c, the Patriarch of Constantinople was recognised as the Ecumenical Patriarch in the East. Gradual estrangement from Rome developed, leading to the final breach between the Catholic West (Rome) and Orthodox East (Byzantium) in the year 1054. (source: Living Stone E.A. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977)

There were also the Protestant reformation and Counter-Reformation that began in Western Europe and spread to America and Africa. It was concerned with both the question of order and doctrine, that means ecclesial creed.

⁴. Emo, Robert, "Manichaeism" in The New Dictionary of Theology, 1987

d) Protestant Efforts to Unite in 16th Century.

Attempts were made to reconcile between Rome and Byzantium that go way back to the 16th century. Example, Protestant efforts to come together and heal their differences in matters of faith and doctrine.

1:5:2. Some Events in the 19th Century.

In the 19th century, Catholic theologians attempted to prepare the ground for a possible unity of the two churches; the Western church (Rome) and the Eastern Church, but they did not succeed because they were not supported by the Vatican. A good example is the resistance of Pius XI against the participation of the Catholic Church in the APUC in England in 1864.

- In 1832 J.A. Mohler (1796-1838) published an account of the doctrinal differences between Catholics and Protestants. He noted that many differences between the confessions were originally differences between Schools of thought. This means, different opinions in matters of faith.

- In 1855, the unification with the churches of the reformation calls for the search for new paths to resolve their differences of faith. Then it followed counter reformation period that made the church to turn to its own internal renewal- given itself over to a period of orthodox formulation and consolidation of its church life.

In addition, the churches of the reformation were from the outset divided among themselves by divergent faith. So because of this division, Ecumenism took a root towards mutual relations among churches which were already divided because of differences in faith. Examples of these efforts are K. Harms (1778-1855) a Lutheran Theologian who composed 95 theses against the enlightenment, and the Danis Theologian N. Grundtwing (1783-1872) who tried to understand the different Theologies as different Theological Schools in order to prepare the ground for brotherly communion among them.

The Anglican had put emphasise on two things: Tradition and Pictism and took on a special importance for the ecumenical movement in the churches of the reformation. Example, is the Oxford Movement founded by J. Keble (1792-'866), E. Pusey (1800-1882) and Henry Newman (1801-'890). J. Keble developed what is called the "Branch Theory". It is a theory that seeks a new triune unity of the church between the Orthodox Church and the Anglo-Catholicism, and so completely leaves out Protestantism.

In 1870, the new image of the Church was clearly seen. Example, Pope Leo XIII no longer referred to the other churches as schismatic and heretics, but started to use the names which they give themselves.

In 1895, Leo XIII dedicated the novena of Pentecost to prayer of the unity of Christians and in 1897, the Pope returned to this prayer in the encyclical letters called "*Divinum Illud*" and "*Satis Cognitum*" in both encyclicals he saw the realisation and guarantee of the churches' unity only in the hierarchical church founded by Christ with the Pope as the head.

1:6. FLASH POINT OF MODERN ECUMENISM:

Background:

The background for the modern ecumenism began with the 19th century Missionary expansion by Protestants and the contacts, after tension with Orthodoxy, produced by these missionary efforts. The scandal of a divided Protestant Christianity on the one hand and the dissension caused by 'evangelism' in orthodoxy territory on the other brought those confessing Jesus Christ to a new awareness of the need to reconcile the divisions among Christians.

At the same time, the Catholic church interest in ecclesiology stimulated by historical, liturgical and biblical studies in the late 19th century and early 20th century was another facet of this groundwork. The vision of the Catholic Church's relationship to the world began to evolve with the collapse of papal rule in Rome 1870. This change was taken up by the renewal of social

teachings in its new context by Leo XIII, and biblical researches already under way in the Protestant world created a theological basis for a renewed doctrine of the church.

All these changes paved a way for the following world missionary conferences aiming at bringing Christian churches together.

1:6:1. World Missionary Conference Edinburgh Scotland 1910.

The conference was inspired by the efforts of the "Students Volunteer Movement for Mission" ¹⁵ Its mission was to make a special appeal of unity against division that was contrary to evangelisation of peoples. This was the spark that created the movement especially with the creation of "continuation committee" that marked as an outstanding body of the origination of the ecumenical movement.

1:6:2. World Conference 1911.

A world conference was planned in 1911. The Catholic Church was invited, but Pope Benedict XV declined the invitation.

1:6:3. First World Conference of Faith and Order, Lousanne 1927

This conference brought together 108 churches. The objective mission of the Lousanne Conference was ' a call to unity' and the relation thereto of existing churches. The conference tried to bring together some churches already divided on matters of faith.

Lutheran concern for grace, that salvation comes by grace alone. Calvinist concern for the word of God, that salvation comes through the word alone. Anglican concern for sacramental worship, that salvation comes through the sacraments alone. Then a proposal to form the World Council of Churches.

1:6:4. A Second World Conference, Oxford 1937

The Catholic Church absent. No services of human communion included in the program. The Catholic Church Ecumenists emerged at this time. These were Bonhoeffer

Dietrich and Yves Congar. In 1937 Congar wrote a "*Theological Essay on Catholic Ecumenism*" on behalf of the Catholic Church to enter into the movement.

1:6:5. Formation of World Council of Churches 1948.

In 1948, headquarters of the World Council of Churches was established in Geneva. The aim of this body was to spearhead the union and communication among the Churches and care for the prisoners of war. Between the years 1945-1948 five major Protestant Churches were already full members: Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and Orthodox.

1:6:6. Subsequent World Council of Churches Assemblies:

Aiming at bringing the unity of the Churches.

1952: Willhagen German. This conference worked to create International Missionary Council so as to co-ordinate the missionary activities.

1954: Confessions came from Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific.

1958: Accra, Ghana. The International Missionary Council worked to define Christian Mission and the place and the function of the missionary.

1961: New Delhi. The conference theme was "*The nature of unity we seek*" It clarified further the aim of the ecumenical movement and expressed the conviction that the time had come to undertake a new study on the role of the councils in the first centuries and their method and influence.

1963: Montreal, Canada. This was a Conference on Faith and Order that discussed about Christ and the Church.

1966: Swanlike, England. This was the 1st large international ecumenical gathering which the Catholic Church participated, with 239 participants from 78 countries and its theme was "development and the projects"

⁵ Johnson, Uppsala to Nairobi, P. 125

1968: Uppsala: The Uppsala Assembly asked the churches to work for the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all christians.

1971: Lima, Peru: World Council of Christian Education. The Lima meeting faced the important issue that to educate is to liberate human kind from bonds that prevent the development of God's image, and to put humanity under God's power.

1973: Bangkok, Thailand. It had Theological theme for liberation, Social Justice and Salvation.

1974: Bucharest, Romania. The theme was Church and Society. The main objectives were science and Technology for human development.

1975: Nairobi: This was the WCC Assembly on "confession of faith and life of communion on the universal level."

1977: Chiang Mai, Thailand. The conference theme was "Dialogue in Community"

1993: Canberra: This was the 5th world conference on Faith and order. The conference focused on unresolved ecumenical issues concerning ministry especially the ordination of women and more attention to the gift of the Holy Spirit within the church.

1998: Harare: World Conference on Faith and order. The conference theme was mission in the church, and major study on ecumenical perspectives on ecclesiology, concentrating on basic perspectives of unity and diversity.

1:7. ECUMENISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:

1:7:1. Before Vatican II Council.

Throughout this entire first generation of the ecumenical movement, the Catholic Church drew attention to itself by her absence. In 1910 during the meeting of the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Pius X condemned modernism and showed an extreme position on relativism in religion.

1:7:2. After the Vatican II Council.

The Vatican II Council appreciated the worth of the ecumenical movement in its dimensions: Both Faith and Order, Life and Work. The Council issued "Decree on Ecumenism" that called for the membership of the Catholic Church to recognise the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism to provide Christian unity. In this regards the Decree teaches that we should remember our baptism and its promises which call of us to be one unity into which all of us are baptised. Hence it is not possible to remain divided because Jesus' death has broken all walls of division.

1:7:3. Of More Recent: The last 30 years:

The movement has witnessed full backing with the two recent writings of Pope John Paul II on ecumenism: His encyclical, "*Ut unum Sint*" on *Commitment to Ecumenism* issued on May 1995 and his apostolic letter on the Eastern Churches called "Oriental Lumen" issued in 1996. Both documents updated the orientations of the Vatican to ecumenical dialogue with other Christians. In 1993, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity published the "Revised Ecumenical Directory". This Directory among other things elaborated Principles of the Catholic Church on Ecumenism, Projects having to do with Social Transformation, Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation. Today, co-operation among the churches has brought the participants to a more sense of unity and Christ.

CONCLUSION:

For me these series of world ecumenical conferences was like a "process of learning". A process that constituted the dimension for the church as church and helped these conferences to be action oriented. These conferences did not achieve all their objectives, but they enabled Christians to act in order for them to learn, to be right with God and with one another in word and deed. Ecumenism means "learning in community". People are asked to establish relationships with one another, and also with those who are far away and with what is

unfamiliar. It means “learning together” whereby christians are invited to reflect the global in the local and what is not familiar in their own environment. In this way christians learn and promote the encounter of different ways of expressing christian faith, traditions and forms of life whereby social and religious learning are not separated but constitute a unity.

CHAPTER TWO:

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NAIROBI

2:1. INTRODUCTION:

The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II Ecumenical Council, "Unitatis Redintegratio" notes that among churches which were separated from the Holy See, "the Anglican Church occupies a special place"¹⁶ This is because, Anglicans like the Catholics invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour and since her members are justified by faith through baptism they are also incorporated into Christ. So this special place that the Anglican Church occupies, means that they are properly regarded as brothers and Sisters in the Lord by the Sons and daughters of the Catholic Church. However, this is shared by other denominations.

The recognition of this special place that the Anglican Church (AC) occupies, was further strengthened by the publication of two important documents.

1. "Malta Report 1968" and continued in the publication of "the final report 1982"¹⁷ that examined and reviewed the ecumenical relationship between the RCC and the AC.
- 2: Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). The ARCIC was founded in 1966 when the Archbishop Michael Ramsey of Canterbury visited Pope Paul VI in Rome, and together they set up this commission whose brief was a series of dialogue which founded on the Gospels and on the common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth for which Christ prayed, "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through

¹⁶ . Vatican II Ecumenical Council, *Unitatis Redintegratio* Ed. Walter Abbot, 13(1966)
¹⁷ . *The Malta Report*, 1982, ed., WCC Geneva

their word that they may be one" (John 17:20). Hence, the commission had its main objectives as: Eucharist, Ministry and the Authority of the Church.

These efforts show the commitment to achieve unity from both sides; Anglicans and Catholics. More than that "This unity has been confirmed by the continuation of appointments to the ARCIC, and by the joint renewed dedication to the goal of the pastoral visit of Pope John Paul II to the Archbishop of Canterbury in England 1982. Since that time, the mutual commitment to work for unity has been repeated and strengthened. For example, the pastoral visit to Rome by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1996. In this research exercise, I discovered that the Anglican Roman Catholic Relationship is facing Missionary challenges that are ranging from Ecclesiological differences to Doctrinal disputes in the areas of leadership to Theology of Mission.

2:3. REASONS FOR DIFFERENT EXPRESSION OF ONE FAITH:

2:3:1. Divisions that Developed within History.

From very early in her history, the church has suffered from tensions. The earliest community in Corinth experienced tensions and fractions. We read this from the letter of saint Paul to the Corinthians. "Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters." (1 Cor. 1:10-11). This shows that signs of division were already there even among the first Christians. So Paul had to address that using the name "brothers" and "Sisters" to teach them that all Christians are part of God's family. Anglicans and Catholics are to learn to agree with one another, and allow for no divisions. They might not completely agree on every issue, but they can work together harmoniously if they agree on what truly matters-Jesus Christ is Lord of all. In their Churches,

Catholics should speak and behave in a way that will reduce arguments and increase harmony.

And Anglicans do the same. Petty issues should not divide Christians.

In 431 there was a Council of Ephesus, and in 451 was the Council of Chalcedon. After these two Councils, part of the church in the East separated from the rest of the Church.

In 1054 there was the break between the Church of the East and the Church of the West.

Reformation: This came with Luther Martin and divided sharply the Western church creating the two churches; the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church to exist apart from each other. The Catholic Church sees itself as one, holy and apostolic, while the Anglican Church insists on faith, life and worship. Today, not only that we continue to have the persistence of these divisions, but also new ones.

2:3:1. Divisions Brought by Early Missionaries.

The old traditions of bitterness, mistrust and missionary attitudes of hostility being passed on to the new generations of Christians. For instance, the missionaries that came to Nairobi, each preached and formed a different group of Christianity: These groups are:

- * English Missionaries with the Anglican Church.
- * Scottish Missionaries with the Presbyterian Church.
- * Italians and French Missionaries with the RCC.

This means that from the very beginning of the proclamation of the word of God by the Missionaries in Nairobi and elsewhere in Kenya, divisions among Christians were perpetuated. Rise in the birth of the independent churches in Nairobi today came about because Kenyans (Some) could not associate themselves with Western Missionaries, and the Logic is obvious;

If the English have their Church, the Italians and French their church, Americans their Church, why can't we have our own church too?

2:3:2. Divisions that are Brought by Politics.

Politics mixed with religious issues has continued to divide people especially where people are from different political parties that associate themselves with various churches. This aspect along with socio-economic ones form an obstacle to any meaningful communion between Anglicans and Catholics in Nairobi. Alan Morehead expresses this same point when he says "There is another obstacle before the Christians in Africa and it is more fundamental ... they are divided among themselves because of politics." ¹⁸

2:3:3. Divisions Brought by Doctrines

Catholics and Anglicans are also set apart by Doctrinal implications that makes Anglican-Roman Catholic Relationship harder. In many ways these doctrines vary according to the conditions of each Church. Though these doctrines can truly "engender a life of grace, and can be rightly described as capable of providing access to the community salvation"¹⁹ they also have within themselves a tendency towards exclusiveness and having their strong unopposed belief invested in those doctrines that differ from church to church, they easily increase a sense of exclusions, of certain refusal to forgive, of a certain pride of un-evangelical insistence on condemning the 'other' as wrong.

This research shows me that among the Christians of the two churches, the AC and the RCC, in Nairobi, there exist a presence of defensiveness based on the self-righteousness and fear of spiritual pollution and of losing one's religious identity if they are to re-formulate their doctrines so as to make them flexible to accept the beliefs of other faiths. On the side of the Catholic Church, this fear is even expressed in her official documents on ecumenism:

¹⁸ . Alan, Moorehead, The White Nile (Harmonds Penguin Books, 1963) 295.

¹⁹ . Raymond, An Introduction to World Missions, Moody Press, 1989, 101.

Here it is not a question of altering the deposit of faith, changing the meaning of dogmas, eliminating essential words from them accommodating truth to the preferences of particular age, or suppressing certain articles of the creed under the false pretext that they are no longer understood today. ... in matters of faith compromise is in contradiction with God who is truth²⁰

This is strong position of the Catholic Church on Ecumenical Dialogue. That in this way of ecumenism, though aiming at the restoration of unity among all Christians, taking part in this movement, does not mean changing or altering or compromising her doctrines for the sake of ecumenism.

Against this stand of the Catholic Church, the question that one can ask is obvious: If the Catholic Church is not ready for the reform in her doctrines, who then would accept and consider legitimate a unity that is brought about at the expense of surrendering one's position? The result of this stand is the development of more attitudes of hostility and bitterness that lead to strained ecumenical relationship between the Catholic Church and the Anglicans.

2:3:4. Social Economic Reasons:

The Social economic reason run very deep into the relationship between the two churches. These factors include alcohol, cigarettes, to political party affiliation. One observer point out that drinking and smoking are more pressing problems than any doctrines of faith. More than beer and cigarettes, there is a burden of long-standing misgivings inherited from the past, and of misunderstandings and prejudices, complacency indifference and insufficient knowledge of one another often complicates this relationship.

To hold a fund raising meeting for one particular church automatically means strengthening the membership of that Church. But all these non theological factors for division

²⁰ Vatican II Ecumenical Council, *Humanag*, Ed. Walter Abbot I (1966).

could be traced to basically one reason, that is 'prejudice'. Prejudice is built on very deep-seated psychological attitudes toward the other, which lead us to excessive exaggerations. Raphael Ndingi Mwana Nzeki, the archbishop of Nairobi made his observation from the experience that "Africans are co-operative before conversion, but once they become Christians they begin to oppose each other"²¹

2:3:5. Concrete Example that Reflect Anglican-Roman Catholic Relationship in Nairobi.

The few Christians that I interviewed at Karen Nairobi, both Catholics and Anglicans do not see the need of ecumenical relationship since Kenya has a freedom of worship and so why bother?

Another reason is the lack of awareness and knowledge on the area of ecumenical dialogue, leave alone the fact that some are not conscious of their differences that are incompatible with the will of Christ that we all be one just as Himself is one with the Father. Hence the need of ecumenical formation as a part of the struggle to overcome this divisions, first by raising people's awareness, instructing them on the ways to achieve their unity.

Examples that illustrate Anglican Roman Catholic Relationship in Nairobi are:

2:4. COMMON IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE INTO PRACTICE:

Anglicans and Catholics have been co-operating in the areas of social justice and peace. This is done by writing briefs or statements to government policies like open letters, challenges to legislation as it has proved to be unjust in the country. For example, the two communions participated fully in the formation of "*Ufungamano Commission for constitutional Reform*".

²¹ Ndingi Mwana Nzeki, Nakuru, 1993.

Also open letters to address domestic poverty and child abuse and decline of Social infrastructure.

2:4:1. Joint Services for the Poor and the Hungry.

The recent hunger epidemic in the Northern part of Kenya has received a lot of attention from the leaders and the faithful of both churches. Catholic and Anglican.

2:4:2. Relief Services for Refugees and the Displaced.

Together with the assistance from other Christians, the country has witnessed the love, and mercy that Catholics and Anglicans have shown to the victims of tribal clashes in Molo, Mombassa and in Masai land.

2:4:3. Common Prayers and Liturgical Services:

When it Comes to National Issues, asking for peace and security in the country, reconciliation among people, drought situation in the country has brought these two groups together several times for common prayers asking for rains.

2:4:4. Ways of Spearheading Roman Catholic Anglican Relationship in Nairobi.

1) Ecumenical Formation:

ARCR in Nairobi requires nurturing, to make it a process of learning in their respective churches. This will inform and guide the faithful who are inspired by the Holy Spirit to seek the unity of Christians. This process is a way of exploration into the rootedness in Christ in relation to church's tradition, and then with humility and patience we resolve together our divisions.

Taking the example of our already existing unity in the Triune God, we formulate the nature of the communion we hope to achieve. Thus, by ecumenical formation it means, " a process of education by which we seek to orient ourselves towards God, all Christians and indeed all human beings in a spirit of renewed faithfulness to our common Christian

mission”²² This means that when we talk of ecumenical formation, it is on-going formation, a process of continuing the shift from church-centred to theo centric mission. Jurgen Moltmann of Germany focused on Christ’s messianic mission and the creative mission of the Spirit, in which all believers participate. Participation is Moltmann’s key word (rather than human initiation)- participation in creation’s liberation, in uniting women and men, in the history of God’s suffering, and in God’s dealing with the world.

II) Three interrelated elements for the promotion of ARCR in Nairobi.

a) Spiritual Means:

One of the main spiritual means is the aspect of prayer. Prayer will help Anglicans and Catholic to the change of heart and strife for the unity of the faithful. The Vatican II Ecumenical Council calls this “Spiritual Ecumenism”²³ that prayer becomes a basis of ecumenical renewal and unity, a basis and support for Theological Dialogue. This can be done both in private and common public prayer for unity of christians. Apart from this, there are other ways like organising prayer meetings, seminars and workshops. Before ecumenical meetings it is always good to start and culminate with prayer. For example, the “week of prayer for christian unity” celebrated in January (for instance in Tanzania) or in some countries around Pentecost has become a good tradition among the Anglicans and Catholics.

So prayer will help Christians to proceed along the road leading to the conversion of hearts guided by love which is directed to God, and at the same time, towards people of other Christian denominations, including those not in full communion with Anglicans and Catholics. For achieving any meaningful unity, there should be a genuine love between the two sides that are struggling for that unity. Love gives rise to the desire for unity... builds communion

²² . Vatican II Ecumenical Council, Unitatis Redintegratio, ed. Austin Flannery, 6 (1992).

²³ . Encyclical Letter, “UT UNUM SINT,” Commitment to Ecumenism, 57 (1995)

between individuals and between communities”²⁴ This is to say that for the Catholics and Anglicans to achieve their unity then they must love one another, and if they love one another, they will strive to deepen their communion and make it perfect.

b)Theological Dialogue.

If prayer is the soul of ecumenical renewal and of the yearning for unity, it is therefore the basis and support of everything that the Vatican II Ecumenical Council defines as Dialogue. The capacity for dialogue is rooted in the nature of the person and his dignity. As seen by Philosophy, this dialogue is linked to the Christian truth concerning a human person as expressed by the council: Man and woman are in fact the only creatures on earth which God willed for themselves, thus they cannot fully find themselves except through a sincere gift of themselves. So if every person is to take herself or himself as created by God, and therefore a gift from God, then there should be some form of togetherness, and commonness among all people. In this juncture if we take dialogue as an instrument and a means through which people can sit down, discuss, evaluate and weigh matters and finally reach agreement, then dialogue is by itself a prayer, and above all it is an “exchange of ideas and gifts that takes place in a variety of formal and informal settings, example, conversations, sessions and study on specific subjects about ecumenism”²⁵ This means that if we take “*agreement*” and “*mutual understanding*” as two main objectives of dialogue, then dialogue will enable the two churches to learn from each other and to be enriched by each other with a phase of respectful listening, and in this way it is possible to bring together the entire history of reciprocal relationship between the Catholics and Anglicans.

There are many benefits that dialogue will offer to the two churches: First, dialogue will help to dissolve their misunderstandings and polemic cliches. Secondly, dialogue will serve to

²⁴ . Vatican II Ecumenical Council, Gaudium et Spes, ed. Austin Flannery, 24 (1992)

improve their relationship, free them from fear of one another, contribute to the deepening of one's own faith, bring believers nearer to each other and therefore making them authors of unity."²⁶

If the two communions reach this phase then they will be able to give thanks to the Spirit of Truth promised by Christ the Lord to the apostles and the church:

“But the counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26).

This is to say that just as Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them, the same promise is being given to us today that the Holy Spirit will help us to remember our promises and our call to Christian unity without taking away our individual perspectives and where we stray from the Gospel message the Holy Spirit will remind us and lead us to unity.

c) Common Witness/Co-operation.

According to the Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism, practical co-operation is “a clear expression of the bond that unites all the baptised”²⁷ and the encyclical letter *UT UNUM SINT* of Pope John II on “*Commitment to Ecumenism*”, the Pope sees practical co-operation as a “true school of ecumenism and a dynamic road to Christian unity”²⁸ So relations between Catholics and Anglicans have to give rise to some form of practical co-operation in all aspects of Christian mission.

Co-operation among Catholics and Anglican vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the servant. This co-operation

²⁵ . Schoen, Ulrich, “Dialogue”, *Dictionary of Mission*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1997) 76.

²⁶ . Ibid.

²⁷ . Vatican II Ecumenical Council, *Unitatis Reregratio*, ed. A. Flannery, 15 (1992).

²⁸ . Ibid.

becomes a manifestation of our common faith in Jesus Christ, filled with fraternal communion and learn easily how to understand each other between and esteem each other more, and how the road to the unity of Christians may be made smooth. In the eyes of the world, co operation between Christians becomes a form of common Christian witness and a means of evangelisation which benefits all involved.

2:5. CONCLUSION:

Ecumenism is not an option for the Christians. In obedience to Christ and for the sake of the world the Anglicans and the Catholics are called to be an effective sign of God's presence and compassion before all the nations. For the Anglicans and the Catholics to come divided to a broken world is to undermine their credibility when they claim to have a ministry of universal love, unity and reconciliation. The ecumenical efforts between the two churches therefore, must be heard and responded by all the faithful of both sides. It is a response that requires ecumenical formation which will help the people of God to render a common witness to all humankind by pointing to a new earth, as we read from the book of Revelation: "Then I saw a new heaven and new earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea" (Rev 21:1).

And in the second letter of St. Peter it is written " But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Pt. 3:13). From these two quotations, we admit that we do not know how the new earth will look like or where it will be. But God's purpose for his people is re-creation, that is God and his people will be united in love to live there forever.

Using the Instruments of Communication: In today's struggle for unity among Catholics and Anglicans, there is a relatively new factor that has to be considered seriously: the scientific technological advances, particularly the communications revolution. The world has now

become a global village in which religions, cultures, and Christian denominations are now brought closer. Hence, modern instruments of communications as, televisions, tele-video, internet, email, radio, can be used to relate to one another for mutual survival and peace. In this way the possibilities of mass communication to be an asset for communicating the ecumenical spirit is high.

The media also can be an important instrument for ecumenical formation, and we only need to be ready to accept the many possibilities which it offers. But the world of the media has its own logic and value for it is not an un-ambivalent resource. Critical analysis should, therefore, be done in preparing people of the instruments of communication for the ecumenical task.

CHAPTER THREE:

CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIAN MISSION:

3:1. INTRODUCTION:

Having examined the actual relationship between Anglicans and Catholics, it now remains to direct our focus to the object of the “Challenges to Christian Mission” and her Missionary Calling. The Lord Jesus, before ascending into heaven, commanded his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world to baptise all nations.

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world.” (Mt 28:18-20, Lk 24:46-48, Jn 17:18,20, Acts 1:8).

Jesus left the disciples with these last words of instruction: They were under his authority; they were to make more disciples; they were to baptise and teach these new disciples to obey Christ; Christ would be with them always. Whereas in previous mission from now on would be world-wide. Jesus is the Lord of the Earth and he died for the sins of people from all nations. That the mission of Christ entrusted into the apostles was to be one with the Trinity and it remains to be the great missionary commission concerns the present. This “*missionary commission*” contains a general command to go forth and make disciples and it is to be done to “*all nations*”, a universal call that applies to all peoples including their cultures. And so to say, Christian mission is one in praying, preaching, baptising and teaching up to the coming of the Kingdom of God in its fullness- as John puts it, “*I am with you to the close of the age*”

Defining “*all nations*”: To define the words of Jesus, “*all nations*” one can refer to Revelation 5:9-10 where it is said that they sang a new song:

“You are worth to take the scroll and to open its seal, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a Kingdom and priests to serve out God, and they will reign on the earth”

The emphasis in this quotation is on the gathering of disciples out of every tribe and tongue and people and nations. It is the idea of nations as referring to the whole world. Thus, the command is to reach all of the “*person by person*”. This is desirable goal, but one for which every one of us is called to pursue.

So, whatever the meaning is given to this quotation, the indisputable fact is that every Christian is called to be “*world Christian*”, that is to say that as believers we have to be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord, His Lordship will determine our perspective of the world. We are therefore called to be “*world Christians*”²⁹ This means that God’s message of salvation and eternal life is not limited to a specific culture, race or country. Anyone who comes to God in repentance and faith is accepted by him and will be included in his kingdom.

3:2. RELIGIOUS CHALLENGES FOR MISSIONS

Brian Hearne, noted that, “the pre-ecumenical mentality is perhaps most clearly evident in the defensiveness many Catholics show when they are confronted with “*evangelicals*” and “*Born again Christians*” who have of ten indoctrinated into an anti-main line churches (Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches) mentality, as well as into an impoverished and narrow minded version of Christianity.”³⁰

²⁹ . Tallman, Raymond, An Introduction to World Missions, p. 173

³⁰ . Hearne, Brian, “Mission, Ecumenism and Fundamentalism”, AFET, 37 (1995): 112

So Christians from these main line Churches are called upon to ask themselves the reason as to why fundamentalism is ever succeeding. Success of fundamentalism should lead us to think more positively- and learn the ways and strategies that are adopted by these groups, (like Ever Green International Church, Neo Apostolic, Jehovah's Witnesses) that make them to be so attractive.

3:2:1. Challenge from Independent Churches.

One of the notable religious trends affecting the missionary enterprise is the emergence of independent church movements. Some refer to these as "*indigenous church movements*". This term carries with it the idea of 'springing from the soul'. Webster defines it as "having originated in and being produced, growing or living naturally in a particular region or environment"³¹ These groups are many, deeply rooted in people's culture, they often mix Christianity and traditional religious aspects. This is not bad so far as we speak of Inculturation and adaptation of the Gospel message to cope with people's culture and to satisfy the needs of the people, but it becomes difficult to have ecumenical dialogue with them because they are too many and are highly divided among themselves that it becomes hard to bring them together for dialogue. Some oppose openly ecumenism for themselves broke away from the main Christian churches as a reaction to certain issues of which they now claim to revive. The confusion of cultural tradition with biblical doctrine is one of the difficulty areas to deal with as a missionary in the mission. The founders of these independent churches are not to be blamed for they emerge, as Raymond Tallman says, due to "lack of a culturally sensitive presentation of the true gospel" and ... the imposition of cultural fragments from the expatriate missionary's own culture upon his receptor audience"³²

³¹ . Babcock Philip, Ed., "Webster's 3rd New International Dictionary." Massachusetts, G & C Merrian Co., 1971, P. 2319.

³² . Ibid.

This situation of expatriate missionaries imposing their culture upon the life of those they are evangelising has caused reactions in some areas and the clear example of this reaction is the forming of new Christian Churches that embrace people's traditional cultures. So to avoid repeating past mistakes, missionaries should be trained in the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and in the doctrinal truths of the Scriptures. Missionaries also can direct some of their pastoral activities within the context of these marginal Christian groups. For example, starting common apostolate in the areas of justice and peace and raising people's awareness of the need and advantages of working together for the harmonisation of Christian mission. This will help to bring them closer to the main line churches.

3:2:2. Challenge from Cultic Expansion.

A Cult would be similar to a sect, but larger and more firmly established. Examples are as follows:

- 1: Pseudo-Christian Cults: These include marginal Protestant group like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians and Christian Scientists. These four pseudo-christian groups is a challenge to the world wide spread of Christian's missions. Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are particularly aggressive to mainline churches and they should receive special attention. Their fast growing number is also a threat. According to Tall man Raymond, " the year 2000 it was estimated that there were 11 million Mormons in the world, and in the year 1975 Jehovah's Witnesses number over 2 million." ³³
2. "*Eastern Cults*". Eastern religious movements especially those from India like "*Hare Krishna*" have found their root in Nairobi. Having their roots in ancient Hinduism, they claim converts from Christianity especially the youths by promising them security and certainty of their life in our world of insecurity and uncertainty. This can be achieved by a complete transcendental meditation whereby one is moved from this earth and unites with God in heaven. A missionary

finding himself at the centre of these systems into his ministry is challenged both in his mission and in his identity.

3:2:3. Challenge from Islam:

Islam has spread through the conflict such as Jihad that is Holy war fought by Muslims against those who reject Islam and physical confrontation with Christians. In the process, both Christians and their ministers have lost their life. The pattern of Islamic influence has always been a holistic world view with religion as dominant factor: political structures, social structures and environmental adaptation in Muslim lands. Because of this view, Muslims see Christians as their enemies. Some Muslims intentionally create obstacles to the spread of the Good News as they regard missionaries with suspicion especially by those who have never come into personal contact with them. It is also interesting to note that Christian missions, personnel and properties have been the target of many of Islamic fundamentalists. This is also related to the fact that Christianity is still seen as Western, having links with the agents of economic colonisation and imperialism. Example, the “increasing suspicion by Muslims towards the work of evangelisation in the post Gulf War era is not something that can be taken lightly if we are to look for smooth and peaceful running of our Christian missions in the Muslim dominated areas. Very serious thought has to be given to this by all the churches, if long term solutions for these challenges are to be sought”³⁴ More than this according to Zeppo Ira in his book, A Muslim Primer, today, Muslims have a world plan for the spread of their faith and an increasing importance in the world affairs. The positive aspect of this trend is the fact today there is much more intense desire on the part of the missionaries to evangelise the Muslim World. This helps to promote ecumenism for it strengthens Christian Islam relation in prayer, mutual, knowledge, dialogue and practical co-operation in social development. For instance, Missionary

³³ . Ibid. p. 193

³⁴ . Clark, Alan, “Ecumenical Formation”, SEDOS, 26 (1994) 58

Congregations like Spiritans and Missionaries of Africa have taken up “dialogue with Islam” as their special missions in the Muslim world. It is a task that is receiving new strategic consideration to find ways to break through with the Gospel.

3:2:4. Challenge from Charismatic Movements:

This is a significant movement (that is Charismatic) within Christianity that has both denominational and non denominational groups. These groups include Charismatic in non-Pentecostal Protestant denominations, Roman Catholic charismatic, Anglican Charismatic, and Orthodox Pentecostals³⁵

Problems from these groups arise from the fact that they refuse to have dialogue with other christians. Among them, Assemblies of God (classical Pentecostal denominations) and Neo-Pentecostals are notorious in this position. They emphasise on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, faith healing, exercise of the same charismatic gifts referred to in scripture in the apostolic church. Mission Societies working where these groups are found, find it hard to allow charismatic to serve with them for the fear that doctrinal implications are too great to allow for the necessary harmony for their mission purpose. Such stand is not in line with promoting the spirit of ecumenism. Other charismatic groups have maintained a separate position in ministry from the mainline churches and refusing to recognise them as authentic believers in Christ. Hence there is no harmonious context for ecumenical dialogue, and there is a growing pre-occupation of who is a true Christian. Such move destroys if not kills the good conscience in people’s hearts.

³⁵ . Tallman, Raymond, An Introduction to World Missions, p 199.

3:3. THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGE FOR MISSIONS:

The following Theological trends will challenge the future missionary in mission and consequently determine the direction and notion of his discipleship. They relate to both Theology of Mission and the missionary's personal career.

3:3:1. Challenge from Ecumenism:

The modern Ecumenical Movement is an "effort to present to the world a visible oneness or unity of the church. ... it tries to see that the struggle is directed more towards a conceptual unity where different approaches to truth are acceptable"³⁶ So the goal of all sorts of Ecumenical movements is to bring Christians together. And the strive of this "oneness" finds its origin from the goal of Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of Saint John.

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (Jn 17:20-21)

From this prayer of Jesus we see that Jesus prayed for all who would follow him. He prayed for unity (17:11) protection from the evil one (17:15), and sanctity, that is holiness (17:17) Knowing that Jesus prayed for us it should give us confidence as we work for the same unity among ourselves for the sake of the kingdom of God. In verse 20:21, Jesus' desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. This means that all ecumenical efforts should be for helping to unify the body of Christ, the church, praying for one another, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, exalt Jesus and see ourselves as one body of Christ.

³⁶ . Ibid., P 202

Mission and Evangelisation therefore, become crucial in bringing about this desired unity: that mission and evangelisation have to be one project that relates to unity in search for Christ. There are interacting factors within the ecumenical area that have continuously hindered meaningful development in the ecumenical dialogue among the Christian churches:

- 1) The Anti-ecumenical Missionary Tradition: The bitterness both in actions and words, and suspicion that generally flourished among Catholic and Anglican Churches from colonial era to independence time, like in Nairobi left people with a lasting trace on our contemporary thinking about Christian mission. Catholics and Anglicans still find themselves today experiencing hostility towards each other to the extent that it minimises their commitment to get involved fully in ecumenism.
- 2) Introversion: That is the attitude of being interested in one's own thoughts and feelings than in things outside himself/herself. Applying this meaning to the churches, it means that tendency of each church to be concerned exclusively with its own affairs, especially at the expense of their common task for mission. The research exercise that I carried in Nairobi on the : "*Ecumenical relationship between Catholics and Anglicans*" revealed that Catholic priests and Anglican Pastors do not visit each other at least to discuss pastoral problems that concern all. The reason for this is that "*there is no time*".
- 3) Ecumenical Reluctance: In urban areas there is a growing tendency of ecumenical reluctance that comes as the result of the urban privatisation of religion, (that is taking religion as one's own property - using and manipulating religion for self gain) What is challenging here is that such attitude contributes widely to growth of secular elements with conviction that religion is irrelevant to the urban's problems, while at the same time problems like '*changes of affiliation,*' and playing the religion '*supermarket*' are common problems in ecumenism especially in urban areas. Worse enough, some preachers instead of taking time to learn from

one another, sharing in worship and having common witness is carrying out Christ's mission, they spend a lot of time 'rubbing' other churches during their sermons.

3:3:2 Challenge from Fear of Syncretism:

According to the Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, "*syncretism*" in its negative meaning came into common parlance in the modern ecumenism at the '*international Missionary Council*' (IMC) at Tambaram, India in 1938. The IMC defines syncretism as an "illegitimate mingling of different religious elements"³⁷ And David Barrett, sees syncretism as "religious movements that incorporate conflicting or divergent beliefs, principles or practices drawn from two or more religious systems"³⁸ In Pannenberg's view, the growth in understanding of the biblical figure of God has "*actually the form of a syncretic process*" and in his estimation, "Christianity affords the greatest example of syncretic assimilative power because it is linked to Greek Philosophy and inherited the religious tradition of the Mediterranean world"³⁹

From these three views we can say that whenever one's religion or one's faith comes into contact with another faith or religion, there is a possibility of each side to borrow some elements from the other. So whenever Christianity contacts other religious values, the objective approach has to be to express these facts by wrestling with them concretely and so to present the Christian truth and reveal the inadequacy of man's religious and moral problems"⁴⁰

But how does syncretism become a challenge to Christian Mission?

Syncretism has become a subject of controversy in the field of ecumenism primarily on the question of whether the fear of syncretism has not stopped the Christian churches from entering into relationships with non Western or modern religions and cultures which alone can

³⁷ . Lossky, Nicholas, ed. "Syncretism", Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, Geneva P.964

³⁸ . Barrett, David, ed. World Christian Encyclopaedia, New York, P. 845

³⁹ . Pannenberg W. Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie, p. 201.

⁴⁰ . Thomas, M. "Syncretism", Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, Geneva, p. 964

lead to new, legitimate incarnations of Christianity. Some church leaders see as syncretic any attempt at dialogue between Christianity and other religions.

Example: The “*Faith and Order Conference*” in Hong Kong 1966 on “*Confessing Faith in Asia*” saw the Christian churches in Asia as being too much inhibited by idolatrous elements from Asian traditional religions and the fear here that-Christianity was being contaminated by idolatrous elements. This creates the numerous obstacles and constraints within the field of ecumenism. For example such attitude of seeing a mixing of Christianity and values from traditional religions as syncretism is already an obstacle to recognise the varying perspectives from other religions and having little to do with the social and communitarian aspects of the Gospel.

It is the lack of this basic openness to benefit the positive values of other religions that has also retarded the process of greater involvement in the areas of charity, development, justice and peace. Due to fear of syncretism then the conference put a “*No*” to venture into confessing Christ in relation to religious renaissance and social revolution in Asia. In the year 1975, the “*WCC Nairobi Assembly*” expressed a fear of syncretism when a section of the WCC reacted angrily to the list report from a group dealing with “*seeking community: the common search of people of various faiths, cultures and ideologies*” that there were many values that are being incorporated into Christianity without a thorough analysis on the implications in the Christian faith.

In this context an effort has to be done in the area of ecumenism to see that the term “*syncretism*” is approached in a neutral way: That there is a possibility of true and false forms of syncretism. And even to recognise that there is also a possibility of “*creative syncretism*” whereby the relationship of Christianity to other religions and quasi-religious ideologies are two possibilities within the same process: Hence, each side benefits from the other.

One of the many things that Christian mission is facing in this area of trying to see what Christianity can benefit from other faiths in ecumenical relationship, is the difficulty of the missionary's task of identifying and, as much as possible, correcting deviant expressions of the Christian faith. For instance, distinguishing biblical and cultural aspects of various Christian faiths at the same time incorporating them in the ecumenical process provides a major challenge to missionaries.

4: GENERAL RECOMMENDATION:

Let me propose that Christian communions must learn to do their Theology together such that they increase their commitment to a common discernment of Christ mission in the universal church. The conviction that such discernment is possible in common is the most significant contribution of our time to true mission of evangelisation. It is useful to have groups of Catholics and Protestants that commit themselves to form a community of prayer and reflection. This will make a significant contribution to the advance of ecumenism and to the promotion of common mission between the various Christian denominations-for the urgency of working for useful understanding, respect and acceptance between the churches. The question confronting the churches today is to see that all Christians are called to embrace the oneness of the Christian message. Ecumenical co-operation then, becomes a weapon that defends the integrity of the Christian mission and above all it helps to avoid a situation whereby competitive missionary initiatives discredit the whole missionary enterprise. Ecumenism is facing its challenge too. It is still on the level of discussion, meetings and conferences. My research with the two churches (Anglican and Catholic) in Nairobi confirms that much has not been put into practice because of negative feelings about the ecumenical movement that continues to be stronger and sharper and more general than ^h ever. I felt that ecumenism has lost its momentum as

an American commentator says, "There is a serious concern whether ecumenism can recover its momentum"⁴¹ This indicates that the pace at which ecumenism has started has reduced and maintained a rather slower pace today. And in December 1996, a French Theological Periodical, carried an article titled "*L' impossible Oecumenisme*" (that is the impossible ecumenism) carried this provocative statement, "Dans le domaine religieux, un fait semble aujourd'hui acquis: l'oecumenisme aura ete la grande illusion de siecle"⁴² Literally this French statement means that "*Today in the religious domain it seems as if ecumenism will become a great illusion of the century*" What then shall we do? There cannot be a short clear answer.

Ecumenism is even made much harder by the strong stand of the Catholic Church on her principles to ecumenism. The principles of the Vatican II ecumenical council on Catholic Ecumenism insists on the ecumenical dimension of the **TRINITY, INCARNATION, HOLY SCRIPTURES AND THE SACRAMENTS**. This has put aside some Christian churches in getting involved in ecumenism with the Catholic Church as the position of the Church is clear. "We Catholics can have ecumenical dialogue only with those churches that agree with us on the following principles.

1. **TRINITY:** Our thoughts are concerned with those Christians who openly confess Christ as Lord and as the sole mediator between God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. **INCARNATION:** They must confess that the Son of God, Jesus assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. Belief in the true incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. (Nicene Creed)

⁴¹ . John, Murray, "Ecumenism: The Next Steps" *One in Christ*, 25 (1989) p. 54.

⁴² . Bruno, Delorme, *Lumiere et Vie*, 45 (1996) 75

3. **BIBLE:** The sacred Word is a precious instrument in the might hand of God for attaining to that unity which the saviour holds to all. Ecumenism is possible with those brothers and sisters who promote love and veneration for sacred scriptures.
4. **BASIC SACRAMENTAL STRUCTURE:** The Catholic Church demands that "there should be some minimum sacramental structure from other churches especially baptism and Eucharist."⁴³ Those who do not fall under this order, the Catholic Church insists that they lack the fullness of unity with the Catholics which flows from baptism. The Vatican II Ecumenical Council insists more on this position saying that "it is thus those churches which have the sacraments of baptism, Eucharist and a bit of ministry that we can enter into ecumenical dialogue"⁴⁴

However the Catholic Church is correct to have issued her principles for ecumenism because in any dialogue, each party declares its position and then enters together into dialogue and see how each side can accommodate the other and finally work out a common ground. At the same time while this stand would remain a positive influence or a positive foundation for the ecumenical process on the side of the Catholic Church, it does not take ecumenism any great distance until the other churches which do not fall under the category outlined by the Catholic Church accepts the demands of the Catholic position. But will they accept ? And if they are to accept, when will this acceptance come?

⁴³ . Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, "Unitatis Redintegratio" ed. Austin Flannery 4(1992)

⁴⁴ . Ibid.

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