

TANGAZA COLLEGE

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

**MISSION IN THE SLUMS OF  
NAIROBI**

An Essay submitted to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa,  
Faculty of Theology, in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts BA (Religious Studies)

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**I declare that this is my own original work and it has never been presented in any other institutes.**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Simon", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with a prominent loop at the end.

Thomas T SIMON, SMA.

## PREFACE

A beautiful statue is perceived by a sculptor in an ordinary stone; and his vision of that statue is actualized by his art of carving. This paper, "Mission in the Slums of Nairobi", is my vision of mission and ministry among the slum communities. In my research for this project I have been helped by many people and they all deserve my sincere thanks.

First of all I extend my hearty thanks to Fr Charles Odeny, CSSp, who undertook the task of being my personal tutor for this research work. He has enlightened me with his valuable contributions.

Secondly, I thank my superiors and students in SMA Community for giving me all the opportunities for the success of this project.

My special thanks to Sr Susan Kanuu (Good Shepherd Sisters), who has enriched me with her wider experience among the people of Korogocho.

Also I wish to thank all the missionaries in various slums of Nairobi who have helped me reshape my own perception of mission, church, ministry and mission spirituality.

Above all, I extend my sincere thanks to all my friends in different slums of Nairobi. I acknowledge that it is because of their open sharing and open dialogue I have gained hope that my vision of mission will be actualized one day.

Thomas T. SIMON, sma.

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# MISSION IN THE SLUMS OF NAIROBI

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*'A slum is an industry that produces all sorts of criminals'* - this is the image of a slum that I get from daily newspapers and magazines. Robbers, murderers, thugs, drunkards, thieves, adulterers these are just other names given to a slum dweller. Since it concerns with a good number of people of Nairobi, I made up my mind to go for a thorough research regarding the slums of Nairobi. Being a member of the Society of African Missions, I will be sent to any place in Africa for my priestly ministry. Since I am well acquainted with Nairobi I believe that a detailed study of the Nairobi situation will help me as a microcosm from which I will be able to proceed my missionary tasks to the place that I am going to be sent. Secondly our Superior General Rev. Fr. Daniel Cardot after having visited all the SMA priests in their mission fields came up with a remark that a feeling of an "unfulfilled mission" is found among most of the SMA's, and that some of them are even frustrated. So that he urged us to concentrate on different kinds of mission. As I am very much interested in the slum mission, I am sure that observing analysing and studying the situation of different slums in Nairobi will help me to find a fulfilled mission in my mission area.

#### 1.1 The Purpose

I believe that the slums are not created by God; rather they are made by certain group of human beings. While there was a way to find a slum, there should be another way to come out of it. What is lost among the slum people is not only money and property, also their dignity as *'image of God'*. The street children are even sometimes called *'taka taka'*, a Kiswahili word,

meaning, 'rubbish' or 'useless thing'. It shows that there is basically something wrong. These people who have lost their dignity are certainly entitled to get it back. The World Conference on Human Right, Vienna, June 1993 declares that **“the current position in international law, whereby all people are entitled both to civil and political rights and to economic, social and cultural rights, is normally encapsulated by describing the two sets of rights as “indivisihle” and “interrelated”<sup>1</sup>**. These kinds of declarations on human rights have to be carried out by some agents. Being a missionary I feel that I too have certain obligations towards justice and peace. Bearing this in my mind I proceed with my journey to the slums.

## **L2 My First Attempt**

My first attempt was to go to a slum called Korogocho. I was accompanied by Sr. Susan one of the Good Shepherd Sisters who have established their mission in that slum since long back. The bus that we were travelling was about to reach Korogocho. She asked me to remove the watch from my wrist and to put it in my pocket. I understood that it was a polite warning. I removed my watch and put it into my right side pocket. When we reached the destination I found the watch was perfectly safe in my right side pocket, but my left side pocket was empty. My wallet with some money and my Tangaza student's ID card were stolen. Luckily she had enough bus fare for both of us to come back home. Then I had to re-apply for my ID. card in Tangaza. Though this incident was very unpleasant, it made me to think in different angles. First of all what makes these people to go for stealing? What would have happened if Sr. Susan was not there with some money for my bus fare? Why can't they go for a job and earn money for their survival? Is it because of their laziness they depend on others' pockets? I became more curious to know more about slums. **A “Slum” - What is that?**

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<sup>1</sup>**Richard Reoch, Rights Or Privileges ?, An independent guide to the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993. An Inter press Service Publications ., p.15**

### 1.3 'SLUM' - A Definition

The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedia Dictionary defines a slum as "A squalid, dirty, overcrowded street or section of a city, marked by poverty and poor living conditions". According to the same dictionary 'Slummed' or 'slumming' means "to visit slums or other places, considered inferior to ones usual haunts, for amusements or curiosity"<sup>2</sup>. Concise Oxford Dictionary gives another explanation for a slum as, "a house or building unfit for human habitation".

Though the definition varies from one dictionary to another, basically they are saying the same thing. By its very definition we come to know that a slum is not a place that a human person wishes to choose, if there are other options. In spite of that, all the slums of Nairobi are packed with plenty of people. Kibera, Korgocho, Mathare Valley and even the small slums like Kuwinda all these slums are constantly increasing their population. The situation of a slum as far as I have observed is exactly the same as it is defined in the dictionaries; that is a dirty and squalid place where the people live in very poor conditions. Though it is not a preferable place for any human being, what makes people flow into the slums? How did the slums of Nairobi originate? I think, some brief historical facts will help us to understand it better.

### 1.4. Origin of Nairobi Slums

#### 1.4.i) Colonialism

The origination of Nairobi slums goes back to the period of Colonization. According to Hans Haselbarth's observation, "Africa was regarded as a reserve of raw-materials and manpower which was exploited to the benefit of the foreign powers; hence the unbalanced and vulnerable economies. Colonialism introduced racial segregation, the striving for profit on a large

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<sup>2</sup>Albert H. Mark Wardt (Chairperson) The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedia Dictionary, Standard College Dictionary, USA, 1967. P.1265.

scale, the pursuit of individual happiness, thereby endangering the older values of African humanism based on the community-spirit of a people who to a large extent owned things corporately. The outcome was the "*Marginal Man*" who lives on the edge of two worlds, who has lost identity and self respect, whose cultural and religious background was dismissed as primitive."<sup>3</sup> The colonials had the power and money to grab the fertile lands of Kenya. They exploited the raw-materials and squeezed the manpower. The more foreign powers strived for their own profit in a large scale, the more sons and daughters of this soil were pushed down. Even then this colonialism was not a direct cause for the origination of Nairobi slums; because Kenya had enough and more good cultivable lands. In my view the main damage that the colonialists brought to this nation was a kind of change in the 'psyche' of the people. The community spirit was one of the greatest values found among African people. A kind of shared agony, a shared responsibility was prevailing all over Africa. Colonialism brought a kind of individualism. Personal property, desire to grab as much land and property as possible, this kind of mentality has entered into the mind of some of the indigenous people. For example, "there were certain colonies in Africa, it appeared, which could well support far more than two hundred healthy British families, and really ought to do so. Kenya was one of them."<sup>4</sup> These healthy families not only grabbed all the resources in Kenya, but also, with their own life-style have influenced some of the local people to imitate their life-style and this made them forget about their African traditional values of sharing and caring in the communities. So colonialism gave raise to segregation in the Kenyan society. But it was not the direct cause for the origination of the slums in Nairobi. It only paved the way. The direct cause would be **urbanization**, that I would

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<sup>3</sup>Hans Haselbarth, Christian Ethics In African Context, Uxima, Nairobi, 1976. P.223

<sup>4</sup>Basil Davidson, The Search For Africa: A history in the making, James Currey, London, 1994, p.163.

like to explain.

#### 1.4.ii) Urbanization

Some statistics of urban growth and urbanization process in Kenya gives us a general idea that people are attracted towards the city of Nairobi in a large scale. The rate of population explosion is very high. "People are moving currently into and being born into the city at the rate of more than 500 per day or around 200,000 per year. At this current growth rate (7%) the city doubles in size every ten years. Allowing for half of that growth to be by birth, around 250 new immigrants per day move to Nairobi from other places. Two out of three of the immigrants to the city are men, and 90% are under 30 years of age."<sup>5</sup> The main cause of the rapid population growth in Nairobi city today is the employment situation. It seems that people have a false hope on the city life. We will discover in later chapters, many people come to Nairobi city to look for a white-collar job, to have a good house and a car, and to live a jolly-good life. Many of them sell their "shamba" and cattle in order to be settled in the city of Nairobi. Only when they come to the city, they are forced to face a different world, that is totally different from their dreams and imaginations. They find the cost of living in the city is far above from their reach. After spending their little money they look for a place to survive; and the only place they can find is the slums. Consequently each sium in Nairobi is growing larger and larger.

For the last fifty years the number of urban centres in Kenya has increased on a large scale. "In 1948 the number of urban centres was only 17, and the total population of such settlements was 276,240, representing about 5% of the total population of Kenya. The second national population census of Kenya was held in 1962. This census showed that the number of such settlements had doubled from 17 to 34. The third Kenya population census in 1969 showed an

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<sup>5</sup>Larry Niemeyer (Survey Coordinator), Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey, Daystar University College, 1989, Nairobi., p. 13.

increase in urban centres with 2,000 or more inhabitants from 34 in 1962 to 47 with a total population of 1,079,908 or 9.87% of the total population, growing at the rate of 7.1% per annum. Of the towns that increased their population Nairobi increased by over 50%.<sup>6</sup> The city with its size and landscape remains the same for ever; it cannot grow, but the population is growing so fast that the people are forced to find some place to survive, and the only survival place here in Nairobi for them seems to be the slums. In short, I would like to say that the colonialists paved the way for urbanization and urbanization remains the direct cause for the origin of the slums.

The slums are there; this is a reality. Now my question is, how do people in slums live? What is their economical status? What is their social status? What are their job opportunities? How do they go about health-care? What is their status of Marriage, children and of family life? Do they have any local law and court system? These are some of the questions that I would like to analyse in the next chapter. As there are very few written materials available in these areas, most of the information is given by the people of different slums. My several visits and interviews with different organizations and slum dwellers are going to provide answers for us for all these questions.

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<sup>6</sup>W. R. Ochieng (Editor), The Post Colonial Urbanization Process, East African Educational Publishers Ltd, Nairobi, 1992. pp.405-406.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A SLUM LIFE-STYLE

Each Ethnic group in Kenya has its own life style emerging basically from its own culture. It provides the diversity of different language, dress and food within Kenya. For an example the culture of Maasai is not the same as Luo and the Luo's are not the same as Kiisi. They all enjoy their own culture, and basically the cultural factors determine the life-style of each ethnic group. A slum is a mixture of so many ethnic groups. So that the interaction between one culture and the other has made the slum-dwellers develop their own culture that I would like to call a "slum-culture". It is because the situation of the slum is not the same as the situation in the villages. In a slum the question of the *survival of the fittest* takes the prime place. We can pinpoint certain reasons like unmet socio-economical needs in the families, uncontrolled population growth, poor education, unplanned parenthood, environmental handicaps, lack of hygienic water and food and so on. These are the factors in fact determine the life-style of the slum people much more than the particular culture where he or she comes from. In the cities people are graded in terms of one's pocket rather than one's heart. In this situation the slum dwellers are forced to face the challenges of their socio-economical needs. Each day of survival is a challenge for a slum dweller. I would like to start with the economical situation in the slums.

#### 2.1 ECONOMICAL SITUATION

Nairobi is the home of hundreds of foreign companies, houses diplomatic representatives from more than 80 countries, services over 30 foreign airlines, and provides offices to more than

30 international organizations (WHO, EEG, OAU, HABITAT, UNESCO, UNEP, etc).<sup>7</sup> In spite of that Nairobi city is filled with parking boys and girls, various street people and beggars, mentally and physically handicapped, prostitutes and so on are moving around the city. Most of these cases can be looked at in relation to the slums. A good number of people living in the slums do not have means to meet their basic and very essential needs of food, clothing and shelter. We see many street children inhaling the fumes of petrol or glue. In the beginning I could not understand them. I enquired of six street children in different places. Four of them said that it helps them to forget their hunger. Two of them said that they are inhaling it just because their street mates are doing it. The question here is not where does this kind of practice lead these children or where will these people go in future? I think the basic question to be asked here is where do they come from? Only by knowing their past, I believe, can we do something for their future.

### **2. 1.i) Kibera Slum - As an Example**

Kibera is the biggest slum in Nairobi. I have visited this place several times. Every Saturday around 100 to 150 street children come to "*New Life*", an organization run by the Missionaries of Charity Brothers. All these children are the sons and daughters of Kibera slum. Nine out of ten do not know who his or her father is. It is a sign that there are a significant number of single mothers in Kibera. I met some of them. The most pitiable thing that I have discovered from them is that they prefer to be single mothers. I interviewed eight of the single mothers. Only one of them said that it was by accident she conceived her child, and she was open enough to say that she does not know who is the cause of her child. Four of them complained that they were unable to bear the '*wife-beating*' of their husbands. They say that those husbands were

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<sup>7</sup>Larry Niemeyer (Editor), *Summary of the Nairobi Church Survey*, Daystar University College, Nairobi, 1989. P.64.

very cruel to them especially after consuming the local drinks. So they prefer to live far away from them. Three of them complained that their husbands are living with other women and they do not like it. These single mothers who have small jobs or a small-scale business try to feed their children. Otherwise these children have to fend for themselves. For this they search the garbage heaps.

Among the street children in Kibera there are different groups. Each group has its own garbage heap. Each group has a kind of leader whose main duty is to chase the children who come from other groups. In the garbage they collect paper, metal and plastic materials and so on. They sell it for a little price. When they have enough money they immediately buy a litre of petrol and share among themselves to inhale it. Here, I do not judge them or condemn them for doing this. In the beginning I used to ask them to buy some food instead of petrol. But later I discovered that these kind of suggestions just make them more vulnerable and feel bad. It is because to roam around the streets is not their innate desire. It is not their natural tendency to inhale petrol all the time. This is the kind of world in which they are being exposed; and they are in it now. In other words they did not choose to live in this extremely poor economical situation; rather they are made to live in it. We can pinpoint so many reasons for that. Even some of the cultural implications can cause the growth of the street children. For example I met a woman in Eastleigh, a small slum where she was selling some few vegetables and potatoes. She is called Thabita, and she said that she comes from Kiisi where they had plenty of tea plantations. After marriage she came to Nairobi with her husband, where that man left her with a child; and she does not know where he is residing now. She is struggling a lot to find her daily food. Her three years old child is just learning to beg from the by-passers. I asked her, "*Why don't you go back to Kiisi and do some work in your tea plantation.?*" She replied, "*in our culture only the boys have the right of inheritance, so that I do not have any share from the property of my father; if there is a share,*

*I would have gone back to Kiisi long ago... now to whom can I go...?"* While saying this I saw her eyes filled with tears. Thabita's son, a probable future street boy, seems to have been affected by the traditional system that does not allow the women to have the right of inheritance.

People like Thabita coming to Nairobi from a far off distance for various reasons are numerous. For some or other reason they are not able to go back to their own place. Most of them finally end up in the slums. That is one of the reasons that "in Nairobi it is nearly impossible to estimate how many people currently reside in the vast squatter slum settlements found all around the city's periphery. It is not too pessimistic however to assume that there are some one million slum dwellers: illegal and unplanned housing is common, as are unsanitary and unsafe conditions. These slums - Mathare Valley, Kitui-Pumwani, Korogocho, and others are the spawning ground for street children and many of society's other deviant subculture groups".<sup>2</sup>

It is quite obvious that when the slum dwellers are increasing constantly in number, their economical situation becomes worse and worse. The job opportunities become less. To find a job for most of these people is a day dream, and that leads to the crisis of unemployment problem.

## 2.2 JOB OPPORTUNITIES

When I enter into any slum, it gives me an impression that half of the slum dwellers are selling something and half of them are buying. The majority of these people invest a little amount of money to trade with vegetables or second-hand goods like clothes, shoes and so on. Some of the skilled labourers are busy with their "*jua kali*" works (*in Kiswahili that means some one who works in the hot sun*). Most of these people are not restricted to only one work. For example a "*jua kali* plumber can also be a carpenter according to the demand and need. Apart from these

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<sup>2</sup>Fr Arnold Grol (Chair person) SURVIVAL, Undugu Society, Nairobi, 1993. p.55

little job opportunities there is no slum which can offer a decent and a good job. As these opportunities are very much limited there are also a good number of young people striving to find a job but in vain. It is because the unemployment problem is one of the major crises not only in the slums but also throughout Kenya. According to the prevailing situation in 1993, "the economy would need to create 1,000 new jobs daily, in order to stabilize the jobless scenario. An estimated seven million Kenyans will be unemployed by the year 2000. Only 10% of the more than 600,000 Kenyans who enter the job market each year would find employment in the former sector... Two years later, the effects of a global recession, and the continuing trend of rural urban migration, have eclipsed any gains made against these seemingly overwhelming obstacles. Now more than ever there is a crying need for creative, practical efforts toward employment creation."<sup>3</sup> Since the job opportunities are very low throughout the country it is very hard to find a slum dweller being engaged in a white collar job. They are struck in between the aristocrats of Nairobi city and corruption. The people with plenty of money bribe the officials to get a job. For a slum dweller it is impossible to bribe with the big amount of money required. He or she does not have it. So most of the slum people are engaged either in small-scale business or in illegal activities. This situation sometimes causes the problem of street children and child abuse. As Philistia O, points out "child abuse has also been associated with conditions of unemployment. The majority of mothers who abuse their children are found to be in impoverished conditions. Situations of unemployment make a large number of mothers in the country indulge in illegal activities and petty thefts, brewing beer, prostitution, trading without licenses. The majority of the women who commit these crimes do so because they are unemployed. When these mothers serve prison

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<sup>3</sup>*SURVIVAL, Undugu. Nairobi , P.38*

sentences, their children become abandoned and suffer from neglect."<sup>4</sup> The same view is emphasised by many authors. K. J. Umbima, for example in her article, "**Child Abandonment**", shares the similar kind of view to emphasise the unemployment problem. According to Umbima, "the abandoned child usually comes from a family where the parents are unable to adequately provide food, shelter, clothing, medical attention and education for its members. The parent(s) of most abandoned children are, to a large extent, under employed or unemployed. A survey carried out in six children's homes revealed that the parents (mothers) of abandoned children did not have reliable jobs. Most of them were engaged in illegal trade which resulted in problems with law enforcement unit. A good number of mothers were unemployed and earned their living through prostitution or brewing and selling illegal liquor. General observations revealed that most abandoned children seem to suffer from some form of malnutrition and physical or emotional neglect. Those in urban centres come from slum areas with inadequate sanitation and housing."<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2.i) A role-model for the slum dwellers

As the number of unemployed increases day by day, the number of petty crimes and the number of street children are also increasing rapidly. Those who work hard and earn a substantial amount of money generally do not think of the future. A kind of Epicurean mentality is found among most of the slum dwellers; that is they drink and make merry until the pocket is empty. Almost in all the slums there are so many organizations trying to help the people to save some money for their future. In spite of that, as far as I have noticed, there is only one man in the slum of Kuwinda called Simon Njero, who owns an old car. He is a shoe-maker; and I am one of his

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<sup>4</sup>**CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, (Kenya Medical Women's Association), "Keynote address Child Abuse and Neglect"** by Philistia.O, Initiative Publications, Nairobi 1990. p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>**UNICEF, Child Abuse And Neglect, "Child abandonment"** by K. J. Umbima, English Press Ltd, Nairobi, 1990., p. 73.

regular customers when I need to repair my shoes. He is a hard working man. He is keen on his duty. I was really surprised to see him owning his own car. I asked him how is it possible to buy a car being a shoe maker in a small slum. He says that everyday he saves a little money, to fulfill his ambitions. His first ambition was to buy a T.V. for his family. After succeeding with that, he strived for a car. With his hard work and saving mentality, he was able to fulfil his goal of owning his own car. The most interesting thing is that there is a slum-bar just close to his shop. I asked him whether he spends some money in that bar. Surprisingly he said that he will never go to that bar, until he fulfills his next ambition, which is to build a good house for his family. I am so impressed by his attitude. Such kind of persons can be a good role-models for the slum dwellers. It gives me an impression that even in the slums with a little job opportunities or with a small-scale business, there is a possibility to come up in life. The job opportunities have to be seen in connection with education. I think that an analysis of the educational status of different slums will help us to understand the slum life-style better.

### **2.3 EDUCATIONAL STATUS IN THE SLUMS**

There are less than half (42%) of Nairobi's residents who have had some secondary education. Furthermore 30% of Nairobi's population are not literate.<sup>6</sup> Some of the N.G.O.'s and Missionary societies are engaged fully in the educational programme in the slums.

#### **2.3.i) Schools for the Street Children**

The Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity Brothers (Mother Theresa Bothers), for example run two primary schools in the slum of Kibera. These schools are mainly meant for the street children. The regular attendees of these schools are taken to the other standard schools

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<sup>6</sup>AFER, Vol.1, *Christ's Mission: Hope to a Broken World*, by Sean P. Kealy, CSSp., Nairobi, p.124-125.

outside the slum. The students who attend these slum schools are not asked to wear uniforms. What is expected from their parents is very minimum; may be as little as to buy a slate for their children. Even though very few children are able to complete their primary education and come out of the slum.

### **2.3.ii) For Drop outs**

The UNDUGU Society has a basic education programme in different slums mainly for drop outs. "For many school-age children in the slums due to lack of fees, or money for uniforms, books and other materials, UNDUGU has since 1978 operated an informal, '*basic education programme*' (UBEP). Running parallel to the regular public education system in Kenya, Undugu offers basic literacy and numeracy skills to street children in four schools located in the slums."<sup>7</sup> Like Undugu there are also various organizations that have different programmes for the drop outs. Some of the Salesians and Comboni Missionaries make a great effort to train these people as skilled labourers. Carpentry, plumbing, tailoring, building works these are some of the efforts taken by the missionaries for the drop outs of the slums..

### **2.3.iii) Food Programme**

One of the main reasons why the neglected street children neglect the basic education offered by different organizations is hunger. Even those who attend the charitable schools find it very difficult to concentrate on studies with their hungry stomach. They do not have sufficient energy for their studies. The Kenya Medical Women's Association took this issue into serious consideration, and this matter has been analysed in one of the seminars presided over by the President of Kenya. One of the members of this association is Mrs. Eddah Gachukia, Ph.D, who is the Kenya National adviser to UNESCO. In her report, on '*The working Mother and her*

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<sup>7</sup>SURVIVAL. p. 44

*Child*' she says, "Among the disadvantages for children of working mothers are hunger and improper feeding. We acknowledge with joy that children in our primary school are able to get milk twice a week through the personal intervention of H.E. President Daniel arap Moi. As mothers we also appreciate the numerous official Government of Kenya and NGO school feeding programmes for children in deprived areas. Communities should introduce milk and lunches to all nursery schools and day care centres... As well as supporting the working mothers, school feeding programmes ensure that children from poor families have at least one square meal a day. Kenya can afford it."<sup>8</sup>

We are aware of the fact that for a hungry child who goes to school this 'twice a week milk' is insufficient and it is almost of no use. The New Life Centre of Kibera has a programme for the street children in which on every Saturday the street children go to this centre to have a bath and to have their lunch. I asked one of the boys, who looked terribly dirty, to have a shower before coming for the meal. At once he started shouting at me by saying, "give me 'ugali' first then I go for a shower". The Undugu society also has organized a food programme for their slum schools. "Through discussion and meetings it was agreed that most of the learners needed assistance, especially food. Towards the end of 1993 plans were made to introduce a lunch programme at the four UBEB (*Undugu Basic Education Programme*) schools. (This programme actually began in 1994, with around 3,179 meals served weekly). The introduction of hot meals in the schools has reduced the drop-out rate tremendously. It is also hoped that the progress of the learners, no longer affected by hunger, will improve."<sup>9</sup>

The children who come under this category are numerous. "Though accurate

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<sup>8</sup>CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, (K.M.W.A): "*The Working Mother and her Child*", by Eddah Gachukia, Initiative Ltd, Nairobi, 1990. P.94.

<sup>9</sup>SURVIVAL (UNDUGU) p.44

demographics are difficult to obtain, estimated Nairobi's street child population run as high as 130,000<sup>10</sup>. It is in fact very difficult to provide food and education for all these people. Only a few of these children are benefited by the NGO's and different missionary groups. It needs a radical transformation throughout the country. Some statistics on education in Kenya shows that the women are less advantageous regarding their education. It is even worse in the slum areas.

#### 2.3.iv) The Educational Status of Women

In general the female population of Kenya is disadvantaged in matters of education. Some of the statistics show us the vast gap between the boys and girls in their educational level:

\* In 1973, 15% of students at the university of Nairobi were women. The women were primarily enrolled in the faculty of Advanced Nursing, and the faculty of education (Arts), both female domain areas.

\*In 1980, in the faculty of Architecture there were 9 women as compared to 150 men. In the faculty of Engineering the average number of female students between 1970-1977 was less than one percent.

\*There was some increase of female students in Medicine. Between 1970/71 and 1979/80, the number of female students in this subject area rose from 40 to 250.

\* In 1979 there were one million more illiterate women than men in Kenya.<sup>11</sup>

These statistics prove that whether knowingly or unknowingly the women are discriminated against and deprived of their right to education. That is why the majority of the women in the slums are illiterate. Therefore in all these slums the day to day life of a woman becomes much

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<sup>10</sup>ibid. p.6

<sup>11</sup>WAJIBU, (*A Journal of Social & Religious Concern*), *Education Of Women In Kenya Before and After the Women's Decade*, By Ciriaka T. Kithinji, Vol.7, No.4. 1992. p.6-7.

harder and more difficult than a man. But as far as nature is concerned, a man and a woman have to join together to create a new family. In the villages the matrimonial ceremony goes along with the cultural practices of each ethnic group. All the slums of Nairobi are mixed, with so many cultures. In the slums like Korogocho there are many Somalis whose culture is totally different from that of Kenyans. When they come into contact with these different cultures how do they go about marriage and procreation, and what is the status of family life in the slums?

## **2. 4 MARRIAGE, PROCREATION AND FAMILY**

In the traditional marriages of Kenya, the time of marriage is a great occasion and a very important transition period of one's life. Certain cultural demands and social requirements, like paying bride price, have to be fulfilled for a valid marriage. A marriage is a community event much more than the affairs of two individuals. The traditional marriages are blessed by the elders, the local priests and the ancestors of each clan. All the family problems were discussed and solved by the elders of the community. So that there was an order, a harmony and also there was a sense of peace and joy in the families. When we analyse the marriages of Nairobi slums, we come to know that most of these traditional values are missing.

### **2.4.i) Marriage**

"Marriage" by definition is an instance of a legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. Almost in all the cultures this marriage bond is for life. Both the man and the woman are bound in marriage either by customary law or by civil law. Unfortunately what happens in the slums is that in most cases the marriage becomes the mutual understanding between a man and a woman. Out of five cases that I interviewed in Huruma, (one of the sub-divisions of Korogocho), four of them said that they are not yet married but live together. Only one of them who is of 48 years old said that their customary marriage was held in their homeland, Kiisi. She

was very glad to say that she can never forget that golden day of her marriage. Now she is worried that her daughters (two of them) have children and they are not yet married. In the slums the major problem regarding marriage that I would consider is that in most cases there is no legal bond between husband and wife. So that neither the civil law nor the traditional customs could interfere in the family matters. Thus the conjugal union between a man and a woman lasts as long as they love each other, and as long as they understand each other. Separation becomes so simple even for a slight misunderstanding. The pitiable thing is that when a wife leaves her husband she leaves only him; but when a husband leaves his wife almost in all the cases he leaves her with the children either in the womb or on the back. The whole responsibility over the child, therefore falls on the woman's shoulders. That is the reason that many of the slum children hate to talk about their fathers.

#### **2.4.ii) Procreation and Child care**

Though most of the marriages are broken, the rate of births in slum areas is much higher than in the cities. One of the reasons is that "a girl knows that after the first child and with the lover gone, there is no chance of getting married. Then they turn sex into a form of income. They have no time and no facilities for good family planning advices and treatment. The children add poverty to poverty unless they are girls, who can earn money even at the very early age of 11- 12 years<sup>12</sup>. It shows that some of the single mothers just leave their children in the streets to be taken care of by themselves. The unplanned and unwanted pregnancies cause more and more abandoned children. It happens either through prostitution or through the 'timely lover' who hides himself from the risk of taking care of his child. The Standard News paper of 27th February, 1989 reports the following tragedy:

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<sup>12</sup>UNDUGU SOCIETY OF KENYA, "Despair and Hope In the Slums Of Nairobi", Modern Lithographic (K)Ltd, Nairobi, p.4

“Two children have been found abandoned in a house at Grogan Slum village, Korogocho in Kariabangi North Nairobi. The mother of two children, a girl 2, and a boy 4, is allegedly from Alego in Siaya District. According to the local sub-chief Mwalimu Juma Ali Mbaya, the children’s mother abandoned them immediately she had been evicted from a house. Mrs. Coleta O. Otieno, a neighbour who went to the children's aid, said they were so weak that they could not walk when she found them.”<sup>13</sup> This sort of case is not something unusual in the slums. In all cases the children become neglected and suffer most.

In African tradition children have a very special place in society. They are considered as the treasures of the entire community. So the responsibility for the children was not only limited to their parents, but also to the whole society. The children of Nairobi slums are in a way forced to face a society that is totally different from the traditional one.

#### **2.4.iii) Family**

Generally a family consists of a married couple and their children. In the context of the slums the basis for a family, that is the marriage itself, is lacking certain fundamental qualities. Most children, as I have mentioned in the beginning, do not know who their father is. Some of them even do not want to hear anything about their fathers. There are very few cases where mother and father commit themselves to each other, and where both show their love and affection towards their children. Generally these people are Christians. Apart from that there are numerous single mothers, some single fathers, and plenty of street children to be seen all over the slums of Nairobi.

Family is the fundamental source of knowledge and morality, and it is the place whereby a person learns the meaning of life. If the family itself is broken or scattered, it certainly affects

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<sup>13</sup>STANDARD (News Paper), 27th Feb, 1989.

the whole society, because basically everyone is supposed to have come from a family. In this case a radical transformation has to take place in the Kenyan society. But How...? For this question I would like to give some of my own suggestions in the next chapter. Now the question is how do the slum people go about the family planning programmes.

#### **2.4.iv) Family Planning Programmes**

As far as I have observed it seems that in the slums the whole question of family planning programme is reduced to the use of condoms or some other contraceptives. In this aspect generally people of Kenya show a lot of interest in the so called family planning programmes. "Statistics on the number of visits to family planning clinics demonstrate a growing interest. Since 1968, when the programme was launched in earnest, the number of first visits has increased from 11,700 to 41,100 in 1971. About 90% of first visitors are reported to accept contraceptive advice. The retention and continuation rate for the loop and the pill respectively are, however, believed to be very low. A recent pilot study supports this view, since it reveals that 80% of acceptors leave the programme with in 2 years. It is at any rate evident from available data that only a small fraction (less than 5%) of the more than 2.3 million women of child bearing age have any contact at all with the programme."<sup>14</sup>

These contraceptive methods for family planning are certainly irrelevant in the slum areas. The reason is that first of all often there is a failure in the use of contraceptives; and secondly their use promotes social immorality. So, in my opinion, a proper guideline has to be given for a real family planning, that is to plan out a family from the time of marriage until the end of their lives.

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<sup>14</sup>REPORT OF AN INTER-AGENCY TEAM, **Employment, Incomes and Equality**, I.L.O. Publications, Geneva, 1972. p.126

## 2.5. SICKNESS, HEALTH CARE AND ENVIRONMENT

Presently the six immunisable diseases in Kenya are: Tuberculosis; Poliomyelitis; Diphtheria; Whooping cough; Tetanus; Measles.<sup>15</sup> Most of the slum dwellers suffer from some or all of these diseases. This is undoubtedly due to lack of hygienic water and a polluted environment. The main street of Korogocho for example looks like a dust bin. We can see the rubbish all over the place and it looks filthy. Apart from that the constant smoke from Mukuru dumping site in Korogocho attacks the lungs of the people all the time. *The Eastern African Standard* of Monday October 6, 1997 describes the situation of the slums in detail. In which the Nairobi Mayor Dick Waweru admits that the dumping site at **Dandora** is a shame, a risk and a shocking scene. He says, "it is very dangerous..! I have seen children play with blood in bags marked HIV... seen them blow into used condoms like balloons." This Dandora dumping site is filled with blood with HIV, dead babies, aborted embryos, drugs and so on. The vast dumping site at Dandora phase 6 spews smoke (from spontaneous fire) all day and night, poisoning residents of Dandora, Huruma, Korogocho, and Kariabangi. The smoke blows directly into the schools which are constantly in a haze even as students go about their studies.

On the 5th October 1997 with the help of Mr. Raphael Oduor, one of the residents of Korogocho I climbed up the Mukuru dumping site. The smoke, the dust, and the dirty things all around the place made me think of giving up the project in the beginning. At the same time I saw hundreds of human beings roaming around this dumping site with a bag hanging on their shoulders. By seeing them I made up my mind to proceed. Mr. Raphael Oduor gave me a shocking news that 3 quarters of the people who live there survive only by the garbage. The left-overs from the Airport is dumped there. So they get some food from that. The most intolerable

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<sup>15</sup>(CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT) K.M.W.A., Nairobi, p.32.

thing is that the waste from Kenyatta National Hospital and other clinics is also being dumped there. The used scissors, needles, aborted embryos and all sorts of hospital things are dumped there in the same place. Hundreds of homeless people even sleep in the same place, using their garbage collection bags as their beds. Most people of the slums die in young age, or they contract various sicknesses and suffer all through their lives.

According to the Nairobi Mayor, "the problem is not wholly financial since many organizations were willing to fund the clean-up. The most unfortunate thing is that we have officers who are not committed to their work. I had even suggested that we use quarries for dumping but no one listens. The officers have developed a "don't care" attitude."<sup>16</sup>

#### **2.5.a) Medical Possibilities**

While these people suffer from various deceases, there are very few who receive proper medical treatment. There are some organizations running health care centres. Most of the slum dwellers suffer from diarrhoea and other endemic diseases. "There is a national programme aimed at the control of endemic diseases such as diarrhoea, sexually transmitted diseases, Aids, Malaria etc. Extensive government and foreign donor programmes are being implemented as regards practical control, treatment and health education. For example, there is a national programme for the *Control of Diarrhoeal Deceases* (CDD) which is committed to training health personnel and parents about the treatment of dehydration by Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS). At least 1,000 oral rehydration centres will be established in already existing health units. These will serve as model treatment centres, as referral centres and as centres for training peripheral staff. DANIDA and UNICEF have already donated seven million packets of ORS(*Oral Rehydration Salts*) for distribution throughout Kenya. Oral Rehydration Salts are also produced locally by some

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<sup>16</sup>STANDARD, 6th Oct., '97.

pharmaceutical companies."<sup>17</sup> Apart from these immutable deceases the people also suffer from various kinds of injuries on their bodies. It happens either by accident or by the clash between different ethnic groups. In the month of August '97, there was a lot of fighting between the Luo and Agikyu of Korogocho. Many of them are still in the hospitals. Mr. David Mwangi of Korogocho says that for all these ethnic clashes there is a political background; but the sufferers are always the poor people. While looking at this pitiable life situations of the slum dwellers, there are number of organizations, NGO's and different missionary groups who have dedicated themselves to the service of these poor people. In my next chapter I would like to analyse some of these organizations and their activities for the welfare of the poor people of Nairobi slums.

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<sup>17</sup>CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (K.M.W.A ), Nairobi. p.31.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MISSION ATTEMPTS

In the previous chapter we have seen the miserable situation in the slums of Nairobi. Nevertheless the involvement of various missionary groups, People's Organization(PO's), and Non Governmental Organization(NGO's) show us that human beings are made for each other. They all struggle and strive for the betterment of the slum-dwellers. In this chapter I would like to present a brief outline of Non Governmental Organizations, Christian Missionary activities and People's Organizations in various slums. Towards the end of the chapter I would like to give my own constructive criticism of these mission attempts.

#### 3.1 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO'S)

“To understand African NGOs requires a number of steps. First, there is a need to desegregate NGOs as an organizational category within the voluntary sector. Second, this is followed by an appraisal of the origins of African NGOs, which suggests that they cannot simply be compared with their Northern counterparts. Third, an analysis of the NGO role in Kenya's development that they may not possess much in the way of a comparative advantage over the state in the delivery of social welfare services”.<sup>1</sup>

In Kenya it is almost hard to talk of an NGO community or of the general principles of NGOs. Secondly all the NGOs do not give priority to the slums, and those involved in slum missions, their activities and success are limited for various reasons. “There are also initiatives by legal NGOs but their successes are limited by urban and elite bias, and further constrained by the

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Semhoja & Ole Therkildsen (editors), Service Provision Under Stress in East Africa, “NGOs and Globalization of Social Welfare” By, Alan Fowler, Villiers Publications Ltd, London 1995., p.55

agents of foreign funders”<sup>2</sup>. A significant number of NGOs exist and function in Kenya. “As its inauguration in 1993, the Kenyan Non Governmental Organizations Board registered about 400 national and international NGOs. By June 1996, 560 NGOs were registered, of which about 200 are international. The explosion of NGOs and the diversity in their aims, activities, methods of work and political outlook makes it impossible to talk of an ‘NGO community’. There are presently 13 main legal and human rights oriented NGOs in Kenya”.<sup>3</sup> Though there are considerable number of NGOs functioning in Kenya, only a few of them show a special interest in the problem of slum dwellers. I would like to mention some of the NGOs, and their efforts in the slums of Nairobi.

### 3.1.a) UNDUGU

The Undugu Society is one of the foremost organizations in Nairobi to show a special concern for the slums. ‘*Undugu*’ is a Ki-Swahili word for ‘*brotherhood*’ or ‘*solidarity*’, in the sense of basic Christianity. It is a well-structured organization and it has a programme for the parking boys, basic education, youth centres, vocational training centres, agricultural projects, small scale business schemes, sponsorship programme, women groups and a community health programme: “The Undugu philosophy is based on three principles: *Respect, Concern* and *Service*. The aim of Undugu is to establish a human, brotherly relationship amongst the people living in the slums of Nairobi”<sup>4</sup> Through an active involvement Undugu has contributed a lot to the welfare and lives of slum dwellers. One of the important aspects that I like of Undugu is that their missionary activities help the people to stand on their own, to be independent. This society brings

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<sup>2</sup>Rakiya Omaar (Co-ordinator), African Rights-Kenya Shadow Justice, African Rights Publications, Nairobi., 1996. (back cover)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p.202

<sup>4</sup>(Undugu Society of Kenya) Despair and Hope in the Slums of Nairobi, Nairobi., p.3

hope and self confidence among the slum dwellers.

### **3.1.b) ANPCAN**

This is an NGO, presently functioning in the slums of Nairobi. Its main concern is for children. In Korogocho there is a centre for this organization. Its service is aimed at the rights of children. ANPCAN raises its voice against child-labour and it emphasises the right to education of the children. Many of the slum children benefit from the activities of ANPCAN.

### **3.1.c) ACRIF**

This is an Italian organization. It is based in Korogocho but also renders service to other slums of Nairobi. The members of ACRIF are Catholic lay missionaries. They co-operate with the parish priests and are involved in parish activities of Nairobi slums.

### **3.1.d) PROVIDE-INTERNATIONAL**

Raphael Oduor, one of the residents of Korogocho says that when this organization was launched in that slum its initial aim was to help the poor children; but now they have established a clinic and they expect the people to pay for medicine. Since there is no more free service Oduor complains that this organization has become like a business centre, where the patients are expected to pay more than they can really afford. So that according to him this organization is only for the few well off people who live in Korogocho. Since I did not meet any of the members of this NGO I would not like to give any comment on it.

### **3.1.e) ACTION-AID**

Action-Aid renders its service to the slums and remote areas of Nairobi. Their main charism is to establish schools and educational centres, and to build toilets in the slums. They try to promote hygienic conditions of life in the slums.

### **3.1.f) Africa Ministry Resources (AMR)**

AMR is concerned with evangelism and it promotes the fellowship of different churches.

It is a non-denominational mission organization devoted to promoting balanced church growth among the churches of Kenya. "In the slums and in urban areas AFR can provide training and consultations on this research project, on church growth and on planting"<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.2 PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS

These and many more NGOs are involved in various activities in the slums of Nairobi. These organizations, however, come from outside with various developmental projects. Apart from these there are also some more organizations emerging from the local people, and these are known as "*People's Organizations*". To give an example, the organization known as "4C's", is an active people's organization. Most of the members of this group are from different slums of Nairobi. The 4C's stand for, "*Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change*". They go to different schools and colleges to give their message in the forms of drama, comedy, songs, speech, dances and so on. This organization is devoted to strive for peace and justice in Kenya, and in particular in the slum areas.

"**YOUTH FOR YOUTH**", is another people's organization that is very much concerned with the young generations of the slums. In the slum of Korogocho, a Comboni missionary Fr Antonio is the co-ordinator of this group. This organization helps the young people to get rid of the barriers that cause ethnic conflict. The majority of the people in Korogocho are Agikuyu and Luo. Many lost their lives and homes in the tribal clash of June 1997. The "Youth for Youth" group helps the young people of the whole slum to come together and to stand for their rights.

In my view, the People's Organizations seem to be more effective than NGOs, because

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<sup>5</sup>Daystar University College, P.98

they do not come from outside rather they originate from the people. They give them hope and perseverance because they know exactly what they stand for. Moreover they help the slum people realize that in no way are they lesser than the people who have high standard of life in the cities. Through these People's Organizations they come to an awareness that they are deprived of so many things. This awareness is the stepping stone to thinking of the possibilities of a better way of life. Therefore I think these POs with a proper guidance and appropriate motives can bring forth a radical transformation in the slums.

### **3.3 CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES**

According to the survey taken by the Daystar University College, "Nairobi today needs 10,000 congregations (20,000 by the year 2,000) each with 200 attendees to cater for the needs of the current population."<sup>6</sup> This shows that there is an enormous need for missionary activities in and around Nairobi. Among them the most abandoned and neglected people are in the slums. In these areas the primary missionary activity of evangelization has to go in line with the critical issues that affect ordinary people's lives: issues like, marriage, divorce, single mothers, polygamy, poverty, education, street children, female-circumcision and so on. There are many missionaries from various congregations who dedicate themselves to the service of the people in the slum areas. I would like to mention a few of them.

#### **3.3.a) SERVANTS OF CHARITY (Brothers)**

This congregation, founded by Mother Theresa is the fastest growing congregation in the world. The service of the Brothers is highly appreciated by the people. In the slum of Kibera, for example the Charity Brothers have their mission called, "NEW LIFE". At present 36 mentally

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<sup>6</sup>Daystar University. P.76

and physically handicapped people are taken care in this centre. Apart from that everyday many patients come for medicines. At least once a week (on Saturdays) the street children are given the opportunity to wash their clothes and to wash themselves. Hundreds of children come there every Saturday. The Brothers also go to other smaller slums to provide medicines for the sick. They also have two primary schools within Kibera. There are some volunteers who come forward to teach in these schools. They try to help the brighter and regular students to go on for further studies. The presence of the Charity Brothers in Kibera and in other slums is a great blessing for the people of the slums.

### **3.3.b) MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY (Sisters)**

The Mother Theresa Sisters, with their simple way of life and with total dedication to their service bear also witness to the Gospel in the slums. They have their mission centres in Otiende, Huruma and in other slums. In Otiende more than one hundred orphaned children are taken care of day and night. They call it, "Sishu Bahvan", a Sanskrit word, meaning "the home of the innocent". During my last visit I saw a child just three days old, and these nuns being mother of that tiny child. They also go to various smaller slums to teach catechism and to help the poor people with clothes, medicines and food. Though they all come from various part of the world they all have the same simple way of life and that makes it easy for the slum dwellers to feel at one with them.

### **3.3.c) COMBONI MISSIONARIES**

The Comboni Fathers, Brothers and Sisters have a special interest in the slum mission. Their mission activities are focused towards the self-support and the self-reliance of the slum dwellers. The parish church in Korogocho is run by the Comboni Fathers. They have different projects for single mothers, street children and for the people involved in illegal activities like brewing local drinks, petty thefts and prostitution. They train the people to make batiks, wooden

carvings, African ornaments and various religious articles. They also help the people to involve in small scale industry and business. As the unemployment problem reaches its peak in Nairobi this kind of small scale project helps the people first of all to recognize their talents and make it useful for the upliftment of their lives.

### **3.3.d) THE GOOD SHEPHERD SISTERS**

The Good Shepherd Sisters are concerned with the people in crisis. Especially they take care of the women who face problems like unwanted pregnancy, women who are neglected by their husbands, widows and so on. They have their mission centres in South-B, in Korogocho and in some other slums. Their simple life-style and their presence among the slum dwellers give hope and encouragement to those who are neglected. They help the people in their social, spiritual and economical crises. They also provide opportunities for the single mothers to make their livelihood happier by involving them in small-scale industries like producing greeting cards, tailoring and so on. Though there are many other missionary congregations actively participating in the slum mission I have mentioned only a few of them. My radical question here is that in spite of having such a good number of people who render their service through NGO's, PO's and through Christian Missions still we find that poverty in the slums is constantly increasing. A general reason for this would be that, as I have mentioned in the first chapter, people from various places come to Nairobi looking for a job and finally they end up in slums. So the population is constantly increasing in the slums, consequently the need for missionary activities also increases. I have visited many slums in Nairobi like, Kibera, Korogocho, Pumweni, East Leigh, Huruma, Kuwinda, and Mathare Valley. I wanted to know the feelings of the people about these mission organizations. Their response was sometimes very interesting.

### 3.4 RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

I was surprised to know that many people do not have any idea about the NGOs that are functioning in their own areas. Some of them do know about them, but they complain that the projects of NGOs do not fulfil their radical need. Very few of the slum dwellers really appreciate the work and the task of NGOs.

The radical need of a particular slum is conceived and defined by various NGOs in various ways. For an example the UNDUGU society defines the radical needs of the slum people as follows: "The existing law among them is: do what you can if you want to survive, nothing is illegal provided it gives you your daily bread, your daily glass of changaa (a kind of local drink), your daily stick of bhangi".<sup>7</sup> In my view bread, changaa and bhangi are not the basic need of the people though they give such impression. Once I had an open dialogue with some young guys in Mathare Valley. Mr. Joseph Mwangi who is a member of one of the PO's in that slum said to me, "In so far we are considered out-cast, as far as we are denied of our dignity, and deprived of our rights we will be depending on these kind of NGOs". While listening to this another man contributed his view by saying, "If these NGOs are not there many would die of hunger and sickness because they supply medicine and food where it is deadly needed".

Some people also shared some negative opinions on these organizations. For example, Steven Mugetha in Korogocho complains that these people take pictures of filthy places and naked children and they send them to abroad to get money. This man does not have any positive opinion on the NGOs.

In my observation people generally have good opinions for PO's and Christian missionary activities. The main reason they give is that the Christian missionaries are not profit oriented. A local nurse in the slum of Huruma says, "They dedicate their whole lives for the poor people; they

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<sup>7</sup>UNDUGU, P.3

leave their family and friends and they come to live in the slums as one among them; and that itself is a great thing.” I was so glad to hear that because she had a high opinion of missionaries.

When I try to analyse the activities of NGOs, PO's and Christian missionaries I feel that there is a need of a meeting place whereby the missionary projects and the feelings of the people may go together. In this perspective I would like to give some constructive criticism of my own.

### **3.5 A CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM**

In my view any mission attempt in the slum has to be an attempt for a radical and ultimate transformation. Some of the NGOs come up with some projects that may work like a “Panadol” that gives a temporary relief from head-ache. Only when we go deep in search of the cause of the head-ache, the patient can be treated properly and can find the way to a permanent relief. As far as I am concerned what is lacking in the mission attempts in the slums is first of all a proper methodology, and secondly collaborative ministry.

#### **3.5.a) Methodology**

A good number of people come forward to dedicate their lives for the poor and needy. And those who cannot participate directly in the missionary activities contribute generously to the welfare of the poor in terms of money, clothes, medicine and other things. But in order to make all these things worthwhile their missionary activity needs a method that is proper to a particular slum or a particular area of concern. The problem with the NGOs is that each NGO has its own well established plans and aims for a particular developmental project. With this strict agenda they come to a particular slum for a particular purpose. For example, there are some organizations that help the people whose survival totally depends on the garbage from the dumping-site in Korogocho. This place ‘Korogocho’ began to be a slum in 1984. Since then no serious effort has been made to clear that dumping-site, and to find a quarry system for dumping rubbish. The more

rubbish is dumped there the more people go there to survive without thinking of other possibilities of a better way of life. That is why I feel that a proper methodology is needed in any mission attempt so that a radical transformation can be possible from the existing situation. Next to a proper methodology more importance has to be given for the collaborative ministry.

### **3.5.b) Collaborative Ministry**

The collaborative ministry in my view is a two way process. First of all collaboration between different organizations and missionary societies, and, secondly, collaboration between an organization and the local people. Often the local resources are either neglected or not taken into consideration. The local resources can be of various things like great ideas of intelligent people of the slums, human labour, and to making use of the available material things. Only when the local resources are recognized and accepted, I think, the people can recognize their own worthfulness and they can develop a sense of belonging to any developmental project in the slums.

I would also like to emphasise the importance of collaborative ministry between the different organizations and Christian missionary societies; because if each organization comes up with its own isolated projects we cannot view the situation in a wholistic way. To look at the problems of a slum wholistically is very important because all the problems and issues are interconnected. For example, the problem of a particular prostitute in a slum has to be seen in connection with her family background, socio-economical and marital situation, her spiritual status, her education and her intellectual capacity and so on. All these matters have to be taken into consideration while dealing with a problem of prostitution. That is the reason that a wholistic outlook is very essential for any effort and for that collaborative ministry becomes very important. It can help organizations in their planning process and in setting goals. As Norman P. Hooper says, "Individual members are respected and have a sense of responsibility in planning and in setting goals. When the team gathers to build a consensus around its goals, it makes collaborative

decisions.”<sup>8</sup> This collaborative decision may not bring success in the goal of each organization as it was intended, but certainly it will bring success in the lives of people to bring forth a radical transformation and a permanent relief from the sufferings of the slum dwellers.

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<sup>8</sup>Norman P. HOOPER, Collaborative Ministry, Pauline Press, New York., 1995. p.55

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

Christianity presents God, as a God of love, justice and peace; and a God who is ever ready to hear the cry of the poor. Peace, joy and hope are the qualities of the Kingdom of God. All missionary activities are the efforts to strive for this Kingdom of God made present in this world. We have the Scriptures and the Church documents on which to base our missionary tasks. In the scriptures right from the time of the Old Testament, God is portrayed as a great liberator and Saviour who takes part in the history of humanity. He liberates His people from slavery and brings them to the promised land. This saving act of God had been carried out by the prophets, kings and priests. God makes use of them to lead His people towards liberation. In the New Testament Jesus the Son of God Himself becomes the liberator of the oppressed and marginalised.

Today in the slums of Nairobi the missionaries are given the same task by God. The people are to be liberated from the slavery of poverty, ignorance and injustice. In this chapter I would like to analyse this liberative aspect of God in the Scriptures and the task given to us through the Church in some of her documents. Also I would like to analyse who God is for a person living in a slum and what are the tasks and functions of a priest in a slum.

#### **4.1 A BIBLICAL APPROACH**

The word of God is central to any missionary task, because basically it is the work of God that the Christian missionaries undertake. "The tradition that comes from the Apostles makes progress in the church with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on by means of the same tradition ... the holy scriptures themselves are more thoroughly understood and actualised in the church." (Dei Verbum.8).

The word of God, that is actualized in the church, has to be transformed to make it present and meaningful to various people in their own situations; for example the situation of the slums in Nairobi. "The word of God is not a static reality in the life of the Church, but dynamic. Its full meaning is better understood through the events of history, through the experience of people"<sup>1</sup>. The word of God is not something abstract, but it is rooted in words and actions related to the events of human history. There is certainly a history behind all the existing slums of Nairobi. And certainly there are reasons behind for the poverty and suffering of slum people. Since the word of God has to be rooted in the events and actions of human history, it becomes a powerful weapon to fight against the evil forces of the slums. These evil forces may be self-centred politicians, money minded authorities or the higher officials with the mind of a kind of 'don't care' attitude. Sometimes even the ignorance of the people who can't think of a better way of life becomes an evil force. In this situation the Word of God becomes the voice of the voiceless; and the power of the powerless. There are many scriptural passages in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament that present us a God who is always on the side with the poor and the oppressed.

#### **4.1.a) Aspect of Liberation in the Old Testament**

When we think of Egyptian slavery, the Babylonian exile, the persecution of the Maccabean times and so on, we feel that the whole Bible tells us the story of the small people suffering at the hands of bigger nations that attacked them, plundered them, subjected them and even persecuted them. The cry of the oppressed groups becomes their cry for justice and that becomes their prayer. In the Books of Wisdom and the Psalms and also in the books of the Prophets and Proverbs we see that God always hears the cry of the poor and He has concern for

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony Bellagamba, **Mission and Ministry in the Global Church**, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York., 1994. P.20

the oppressed. Yahweh Himself acts in the history of the people and liberates them. It is the same God who was in favour of the outcast, downtrodden, neglected and the oppressed in the OT, who now hears the cry of His people in Kibera, Korogocho, Mathare Valley, Pumwani, Kuwinda and so on. Though the whole of OT portrays God as a God of justice I would like to restrict myself to Prophets, Psalms and the Book of Proverbs to extract some liberation themes and to apply it to the present condition of Nairobi slums.

i. **Prophetic Concern**

The prophets were the spokesmen of God, and sometimes they are termed as '*the mouth of God*'. Their purpose therefore is to tell the people what God wants of them. The prophet Baruch says, "Jerusalem take off your dress of sorrow and distress, put on the beauty of God's glory for evermore, wrap the cloak of God's saving justice around you.... Peace through justice, and glory through devotion" (Baruch 5: 1-4). By saying this the prophet tells the people that God is a lover of justice and His people will be wrapped by that saving justice of God that can bring peace and joy to the Israelite community. This prophetic concern is not only meant for Jerusalem; I believe that it is for all the people who are in sorrow and distress. If we replace 'Jerusalem' with Kibera or Korogocho... take of your distress and sorrow... I think the word of God becomes more meaningful and active for the people who are living in these slums. It gives them hope of being wrapped by the justice, peace and love of God.

The prophet Amos asks the people to "hate evil, love good; let justice reign at the city gate" (Amos 5: 15). I feel that if justice reigns at the city gate of Nairobi, the city would not be contaminated by corruption and injustice. Consequently, there would not be such a wide gap between the aristocrats and the poor people of Nairobi. In chapter 8 of Amos we see that the prophet is very angry with the swindlers and exploiters. He says, "listen to this, you who crush the needy and reduce the oppressed to nothing.... Yahweh has sworn by the pride of Jacob, never

will I forget anything they have done”(Amos 8:4-8). If Amos appeared today in Nairobi, I think the people of Nairobi slums would gain hope and confidence; and, at the same time, the exploiters would be put to shame and fear because being a prophet he warns the swindlers and exploiters about their final destination.

The prophet Micah speaks against the people who misuse their power and authority. He says, “disaster for these who plot evil, who lie in bed planning mischief ! No sooner is it dawn then they do it, since they have the power to do so” (Micah. 2:1). When the people in authority misuse their power for their own selfish motive the other group of people who are subjected to the authority become the sufferers, and those sufferers are pushed down to the slums and squalid areas of society. Micah prophesies disaster to these selfish and mischievous people, because our God Yahweh is always in favour of the poor and oppressed. This theme is flowing all through the Prophetic literature. The prophets were bold enough to raise their voice against the money-minded authorities, against the swindlers and exploiters of their society, and they stood for justice at all costs. It is because what they spoke was the word of God; and what they stood for is a just society that is desired by God. I believe that today God desires that all the people of Nairobi slums are to be liberated from their poverty, ignorance and injustice; and He gives the same prophetic role to all the Christians to take part in the saving act God.

ii. **God of Justice in the Book of Psalms**

**“He judges the world with justice; He governs the people with equity.**

**The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed;**

**a stronghold in times of distress”. ( Psalm 9:9-10)**

**“He will make justice dawn for you like the light; bright as the noon day**

**shall be your vindication” (Psalm 37:6).**

**“He shall defend the afflicted among the people,**

**save the children of the poor, and crush the oppressor.” (Psalm 72:4).**

**“Defend the lowly and the fatherless;**

**render justice to the afflicted and the destitute.” (Psalm 82:3).**

These are some of the examples that show us that the Psalmist presents us a God who is always in favour of the poor and needy. It is not the will of God that some people have to be born only to suffer just like the people of the slums. But it is because a certain group of people who have power and money to grab as much land as possible, who can manipulate the natural resources at the maximum level, that some other people are deprived of owning even a small house and a piece of land. Such kind of selfish people never think of the suffering of the poor in the slums. Rather they get their servants from these slums for an unjust wage and most of the time the children of the slums are abused. The psalmist gives courage to fight against this kind of unjust society, and gives hope and confidence for a better future. The promise of the psalmist is that God will never abandon the poor and afflicted.

### **iii. Poor and the Rich in the Book of Proverbs**

**“He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor**

**will himself also call and not be heard” (Proverbs 21:13)**

**“Injure not the poor because they are poor,**

**nor crush the needy at the gate; for the**

**Lord will defend their cause and will**

**plunder the lives of those who plunder them” (Proverbs 22:22-23).**

**“A rich man who oppresses the poor**

**is like a devastating rain that leaves no food.” (Proverbs 28:3).**

In general the Wisdom literature, and in particular the Book of Proverb gives a lot of instructions on a just society. This Wisdom literature tries to strike a balance between the two extreme worlds

of rich and poor. The huge buildings, glittering glass-houses, the luxurious cars and all sorts of upper-class items are one face of Nairobi; on the other side, people who have lost their identity just try to survive in the squalid, filthy and dirty slums. During the time of natural or man-made calamities their lives become more and more miserable. So that certainly there should be a balance between these two worlds. In the New Testament Jesus Himself tries to strike a balance between the rich and the poor; and He openly talks against the exploiters and swindlers.

#### **4.1.b) Liberation in the New Testament**

In all the gospel accounts we see Jesus has a special concern for the poor and the afflicted and He was so compassionate towards them. He shows His compassion by feeding the crowds, curing the sick and so on. Above all He stood against the people who were cheating the poor with their authority and power. For an example in Lk. 16: 14-15, Jesus openly talks against the Pharisees and their love of money. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31), Jesus emphasises the importance of sharing one's extra goods with the poor and the needy. In this aspect even the communists claim that Jesus was the first communist, because he asked the rich to share their material things with the poor and that to form an equal and just society.

This idea of striving for a just society was very much emphasised in the early church. During the Apostolic period, when the church was still very young, the believers gathered together to pray in the name of Jesus. According to the Acts of the Apostles, "and all who shared the faith owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and distributed the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed" (Acts. 2:44).

We have the evidence that the faith life and the social life of early Christian communities were going hand in hand. For example, Paul insists on equality of all the people in the liturgical celebration:

"It is no bad thing, either, that there should be differing groups among you so that those

who are to be trusted among you can be clearly recognized. So when you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat; for when the eating begins, each one of you has his own supper first, and there is one going hungry while another is getting drunk. Surely you have homes for doing your eating and drinking in? Or have you such disregard for God's assembly that you can put to shame those who have nothing?"

- (1Cor.11:19-22).

It shows that right from the beginning of the church there was a great effort to bring equality among the followers of Christ and eventually in the world society. The early church gives more and more importance to love, respect and promotion of the dignity of the poor and oppressed.

Today if the distinguished rich ones of Nairobi come forward to share their extra resources with the disadvantaged people, for sure all the slum people will have a happy and decent life. As it becomes impossible in a practical sense our Mother Church gives us some important guidelines and methodologies to promote justice and peace wherever it is required, especially in the areas like slums where people are subjected to oppression on a grand scale.

#### 4.2 JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE CHURCH DOCUMENTS

At the recent Synod on the Church in Africa, Nigerian Bishop Adalaku said, "Christ the liberator came to free mankind not only from sin but also from the consequences of sin, namely ignorance, poverty, disease and all forms of injustice and oppressions."<sup>2</sup> The church of pre-Vatican Council showed much interest in liberating people from their personal sin; but gave little importance to thinking of the communal consequences of sin. Whereas today, through the

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<sup>2</sup>AFER (*African Ecclesial Review*), Vol.37, NO.1. "Christ's Mission: Hope to a Broken World" by Sean P. KEALY, C.S.SP., Nairobi, p.123.

powerful thoughts of some of the solid liberation theologians, the church urges her faithful to think more and more of the consequences of sin. In this respect one cannot stop with liberating a person with his or her personal sins; but it becomes a challenge to fight against the collective and social sins. The consequence of social sins are ignorance, poverty, disease and all forms of injustice and oppression; and, as Bishop Adedokun says, Christ the liberator came to free mankind from all these consequences of sin. The people who are subjected to this in a large level are the people of the slums; and therefore they deserve the first attention in the liberation efforts.

“The joy and the hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo on their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men, who united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the Kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.” (*Gaudium et Spes* No. 1).

*Gaudium et Spes*, first of all urges all the faithful to feel a deep solidarity with the poor and afflicted. That is the reason I think this document is very important for those who are called for a special slum-mission, to stay with the people and to participate in their daily life experience of joy and hope, grief and anguish and with that to bear witness to the Gospel of Christ.

Also this document emphasises the importance of promoting the dignity of all human beings, especially of those who have lost their identity and dignity, because it says, “....However, there is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of the human person, who stands above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable. He ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life; for example, food, clothing, housing, the right freely to choose his state of life and set up a family, the right to education,

work, to his good name, to respect, to proper knowledge, the right to act according to the dictates of conscience and to safeguard his privacy, and rightful freedom even in matters of religion” (*Gaudium et Spes* No.26). It is in fact a long list of one’s duties and rights that the church wishes, not only of her members but for all human beings. If we just look at the situation in the slum of Nairobi, hardly we can find someone living with all these rights and responsibilities of life. It shows that still a lot remains to be done to bring forth the Kingdom of God in the slum areas. It is a constant struggle and effort to strive for the fulness.

The Church also promises hope for the afflicted. “...As Christ went about all the towns and villages healing every sickness and infirmity, as a sign that the Kingdom of God had come (Mt.9:35ff, Acts.10:38), so that the church through its children, joins itself with men of every condition, but especially with the poor and afflicted, and willingly spends herself for them (2.Cor.12:15). It shares their joys and sorrows, it is familiar with the hopes and problems of life, it suffers with them in the anguish of death. It wishes to enter into fraternal dialogue with those who are working for peace; and to bring them the peace and light of the Gospel” (*Ad Gentes Divinitus* No.12).

The light of the Gospel and the values of the Kingdom of God that are promised in the Gospels are the hope for attaining justice and peace in the slums. In this way the Messianic activities of Christ still continue in the present world; and the presence of Christ Himself is realized by the poor and afflicted. In order to do that there is need for an orientation to pastoral planning and action. “The evolving methodology of the Church’s social teaching is also praxis oriented. Praxis, the action that comes out of reflection, and leads back to reflection, can be viewed as the end result of an option which one makes in the struggle for justice. The corollary

is that correct action (*orthopraxis*), completes correct doctrine (*orthodoxy*)<sup>3</sup>. Realizing the importance of praxis oriented evangelization the bishops conference of the different parts of the world have come up with many synods and documents; for example:

- 1 *The challenge of peace: God's promise and our response* (US Bishops, 1983)
- 2 *Economic justice for all: Catholic social teaching and US economy* (US Bishops, 1986)
- 3 *The Medelline Conference Documents* (Latin American Bishops, 1968)
- 4 *The Puebla Conference Document* (Latin American Bishops, 1979)
- 5 *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia* (Asian Bishops, 1974)
- 6 *Justice and evangelization in Africa* (African Bishops, 1981).

In all these conferences the Catholic Bishops view the gospel values in the light of justice and peace. I would like to take the example of the synod of African Bishops in 1981, in which Christ and His Kingdom values are viewed as follows:

1. *Jesus came to establish a kingdom of life, truth, love and justice* (No. 3)
2. *A church is not fully rooted among its people if it does not try to establish justice* (No. 3)
3. *Old Testament* (No. 4)
  - a) *God's saving justice;*
  - b) *Challenge of the prophets to the entire society to be just.*
4. *New Testament* (No. 5)
  - a) *Christians should find in the Gospels support for justice activities;*
  - b) *Jesus made Himself the champion of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised;*
  - c) *Call for justice is directed to Jesus.*
5. *Tradition: Justice is an essential basis for Christian life* (Nos. 5 and 6)

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<sup>3</sup>Peter J. Herriot, Edward P. de Berri, Michael J. Schultheis, Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret, Orbis Books, New York., 1990. P.19.

6 *Dedication to the interior virtues of justice and kindness and to the common good is needed to establish a political, social, and economical life that is truly human* (No. 8).<sup>4</sup>

All these efforts are not focussed on for a mere material progress or for the prosperity of the people. It is to create a just society in which each human person finds the value, meaning and dignity of life. As I have mentioned in the first chapter the slum dwellers are stamped as thieves, murderers, drunkards, and in an absolutely insulting manner the street children are some times called "*taka taka*", a Kiswahili word, meaning "*rubbish*" or "*useless*". What they have lost is not only their material possessions but also their dignity as human beings. That is why *Ad Gentes Divinitus* of Vatican II, clearly points it out by saying, "...they are not working for merely material progress or prosperity of men; but in teaching the religious and moral truths which Christ illumined with His light, they seek to enhance the dignity of men and promote fraternal unity, and in this way, are gradually opening a wider approach to God" (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*. No. 12).

Looking at the social teachings of the Church in the modern world a priest who is assigned in a slum has a very special function. A priest or any person who opts for justice and peace in the slum areas, has to be a person who knows the way, who leads the way and who goes the way.

#### **4.3 THE ROLE AND THE FUNCTIONS OF A PRIEST IN THE SLUMS**

A priest in a slum is not merely a preacher or just an administrator of the sacraments. His priestly function extents to the realm of striving for justice and peace in a particular slum where he is assigned. It is in fact a hard task. That is why the Church urges the formators of all the seminaries to prepare the student in such a way that he will be ever ready to undertake any mission, and he will be mindful of the pastoral needs of the people; and will be able to dedicate

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. P. 115.

his life for the kingdom values of God. "...Priestly formation must take account of the pastoral needs of the region; the student must learn the history, goal and method of missionary activity, as well as the peculiar social, economic and cultural conditions of their own people" (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*. No.16). It shows that first of all a priest in a slum needs to be aware of the social situations and the areas in which injustice is done to his people. Secondly a priest has to find himself one with the poor and oppressed; only then will his involvement towards justice and peace find its fulness. As Aylward Shorter says, "proclamation is secondary to the loving involvement of God with the world, which is at the origin of the Kingdom. This loving dialogue is revealed through praxis and prayer, as well as through proclamation. Praxis is focussed on community building and on the preferential option for the poor, who are the special object of God's attention"<sup>5</sup>.

All through the tradition of the Church, the priest is considered to be the representative of Christ; and Christ is portrayed by Vatican II, as the great liberator. "...Now Christ took a complete human nature just as it is found in us poor unfortunates, but one that was without sin. Christ whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world said of Himself: **'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me; to bring good news to the poor He sent me; to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim the captives release, and sight to blind'** (Lk.4:8)." (*Ad Gentes Divinitus* No.3). As an anointed priest, Jesus' first concern was to bring good news to the poor. The priests, as representatives of Christ are called for the same purpose. The good news to the poor includes liberation from all sorts of bondages; that may be from spiritual and material poverty, from oppression and discrimination and so on. Therefore a priest is demanded of a great involvement in a slum: his proclamation of the gospel and administration of the sacrament, have

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<sup>5</sup>Aylward Shorter, M. Afr., *Evangelization and Culture*, AFER (African Ecclesial Review), Vol.37, No.1., Nairobi., p.94.

to touch the daily lives of people in all respects. So the role of a priest in a slum is that first of all he is a man of God, who helps people to come more and more close to God; secondly he is a healer, who can heal the people from their wounds of social and structural sins; thirdly, he is a good teacher who can teach the people the values of moral life; and above all he is a leader in his community who can even lay down his life for his people.

This priestly function is also extended to all the baptized Christians, in terms of *common priesthood*. In other words, in striving for the Kingdom of God lay ministers have an inevitable role. As far as I have observed in the slums of Nairobi, the lay ministers generously come forward to involve in the various liturgical celebrations and other social ministries. For example, in Korogocho a group of lay ministers regularly visit the sick and pray for them. In Kibera, the lay ministers spend their extra time in teaching the children. This is to be highly appreciated; because it shows that the people are ever willing to share their common priesthood with the less advantaged. It is a sign of the growth of the Church, and also it is the sign that the Spirit of the Lord is present among the slum dwellers.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A METHOD OF MISSION IN THE SLUMS

For a successful mission, a proper methodology is highly desired. The missionaries, as people of good will, come forward to serve the people in the slums. Even after spending some years in the slum mission some missionaries feel that they did nothing for the people, because the situation still continues to be the same. Therefore, "missionaries themselves have become more reflective about their mission, and have expressed their views in many articles, essays and books. As a result of all these reflections, experiences and documents, the Church at present possesses a great wealth of literature which deals with mission, not only in the abstract but also in the concrete situations in which mission is carried out, and by people who are the agents of this mission, be they bishops, religious, or laity, whether full-time, part-time, or even short-term agents of mission"<sup>1</sup>. What was lacking before is a proper methodology in carrying out the mission; and what the missionaries have written down is their own experience in their mission field. By studying their experiences and by analysing them some of the great liberation theologians have formed various methodologies that has become a kind of guideline for the present missionaries. Hereby I would like to take only one methodology, that I feel would help a lot in the slum mission. This methodology is of five steps:

1 Observation; 2 Analysis; 3 Affirmation; 4 Transformation; 5 Fulfilment. Let us look at them one by one.

#### 1 Observation

When someone becomes involved in a slum mission, the first thing to do is just to observe

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony Bellagamba, Mission & Ministry in the Global Church, Orbis Books, New York., 1994. P.48.

the situation. This takes time, and it needs patience. When a missionary goes to a slum he goes with his knowledge, his education, his spirit and enthusiasm of doing something for the people. Sometimes it is hard to take away the prejudice of his own imagination of slums. With all the missionary spirit he is tempted to do something in the hand-level; that is to give himself for an immediate action; and expecting an immediate result. When there is no positive result, the missionary finds himself depressed and he can feel all his efforts have become useless. He experiences a kind of failure in his mission attempt. That is why I think it is better to spend some time in just observing what is going on in a slum. It may be helpful if he writes down all his observations; it will be of a great help when he goes towards the second step, namely *Analysis*.

## 2 Analysis

After spending a considerable amount of time in just observing the situation in the slum, the next step he has to take is to analyse the whole situation. Hereby the function of a missionary is in mind-level. In his analysis he deals with the questions, *what* and *why*. While finding answers to these questions he will be able to identify the inter-connection of all the happenings of the slum. If we take an example of prostitution, the missionary has to analyse the general psyche about sex in that slum, the socio-economical, educational, religious and spiritual background of the prostitutes and so on. In this way a missionary can go deep into a particular matter in order to find out the basic and fundamental cause of the problem. Analysis in itself is not the end; but it paves the way to attain the end. Through his analysis he will be able to find out the areas in which he needs to give priority. The analysis of the observations will help the priest to set goals for the future. Planning for the future is extremely important in any mission; and some times it becomes a long process. As Norman P. Cooper says, "one of the greatest challenges facing the local church is to engage in a process of strategic planning. Strategic planning is a process by which the parish leadership envisions the future of the parish and develops the necessary procedures and operations

to achieve that future. This vision of the future state of the parish provides both the direction in which the parish should proceed and the energy to begin the move. The strategic planning process helps the parish to do more than *plan* for the future; it can help the parish to *create* its future<sup>2</sup>. Therefore analysing the observed situations is of a great help to set strategic goals for the future. That naturally leads to the third step of *Affirmation*.

### **3 Affirmation**

Once the goals are set, the normal temptation would be to think of the implementation of the goals. But I think before implementation a bit of reflection is necessary on the existing situation of a slum and the goals. This reflection will help a missionary to find out the good things that are already existing in a slum. For example, the cultural values, community experience of various ethnic groups in the slum, their God experience, language, their intellectual capacity - in all these things there is something good already existing. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to affirm their good qualities. All the more, by affirming these values a missionary has to try to make use of them in attaining the goals. In this way all the talents and capabilities of the slum people are not buried in the name of developmental projects; rather they are given a new life. Affirmation of these values leads the missionary and his people as a whole community to the next step, namely, *Transformation*.

### **4 Transformation**

Now it is neither the priest as a single person, nor some group of people who strive for the betterment of a slum, but it is a whole community that strives for a radical transformation; the whole community is involved in the liberation activities; liberation from poverty, oppression, ignorance, discrimination and so on. So basically, building up of a community is the greatest task

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<sup>2</sup>Norman P. Cooper, Collaborative Ministry, Paulist Press., New York., 1993. P.96.

missionary. This task may be much more easier in the traditional villages, or in a parish where people of the same clan or ethnic group live together. Whereas in the slums of Nairobi, people are made up of various cultures, and of different ethnic groups. So that it becomes harder to build up a single community. It becomes possible, only when Christ becomes the centre of the community and the Kingdom values become the goal of missionary effort. In this way each one identifies himself or herself as a Christian, rather than of a particular tribe or a clan; and that makes the whole community be involved in the redemptive act of Christ. Now the hope is hope of the community, and that hope leads the community to the final stage of *Fulfilment*.

## 5 Fulfilment

The whole effort of mission and ministry is to attain a fulfilment, that is of two categories: i) Temporal fulfilment and ii) Eschatological fulfilment. When Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father...give us today our daily bread", He prayed for the temporal fulfilment of this life, whereby no one goes hungry and everyone's basic temporal needs of food, clothing, shelter, education and all the necessary needs are fulfilled. Jesus also continues praying, "...lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil". I think by praying like this Jesus focuses our attention towards the eschatological fulfilment; that is to say, let us not follow the evil means to fulfill our temporal needs of food, clothing and so on. Most of the criminal acts in Nairobi slums are done, in a way to fulfill their temporal needs in a short-cut way, or in a sinful way. The missionary effort is to train the people and to lead them to an eschatological fulfilment, where by everyone has his or her temporal needs fulfilled in an appropriate way; namely by creating a just society. As Mahatma Ghandi once said, "the world has enough and more for people's need; but the world does not have enough for people's greed". This is very true, because the greed of some people makes many people to suffer. So it is the time to find a way, in which equality, justice and peace may prevail in the slums of Nairobi; and that is the way everyone will find the temporal as well as eschatological fulfilment in life.

## CONCLUSION

According to the statistics, in 1994 the world population was 5.7 billion people, of whom 780 million were slum-dwellers; among them female slum-dwellers were 320 million. And the statistics predict that by the year 2200, there will be 2,250 million slum-dwellers in the world.<sup>3</sup> It shows that in future a larger number of people will be packed in the slums of Kibera, Mathare Valley, Korogocho, Pumwani and so on. Perhaps more and more slums will be created. Already the people of Nairobi slums carry a heavy burden on their shoulders, in terms of sickness, hunger, poverty, discrimination and so on. Suffering, of course is part of humanity, and it cannot be taken away completely. As Rerum Novarum says, "to suffer and to endure is the lot of humanity, let them strive as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which beset it. If any there are who pretend differently, who hold out in a hard-pressed people the boon of freedom from pain and trouble an undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment - they delude the people and lead them into illusions, and their false promises will only bring forth one day evils worse than at present. Nothing is more useful than to look upon the world as it really is - and at the same time to seek elsewhere, as we have said, for the solace to its troubles" (RN., No.14). I think what Rerum Novarum insists is that not to give a false hope to the broken-hearted people; rather to find a proper way to attain solace and comfort from the sufferings of the people.

Through this research of the Mission in the Slums of Nairobi, I feel that the people of the slums are in greater need of solace and comfort. In order to do that we have a strong support and guidelines from the scriptures and also from the teachings of the church. Before it becomes too

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<sup>3</sup>AFER, Vol.1, *Christ's Mission: Hope to a Broken World*, by Sean P. Kealy, CSSp., Nairobi., p.124-125.

late, as *Populorum Progressio* says, "...Now the time has come to put a halt, a moment to recollect, nay to pray: to think again of our common origin, our history, our common destiny... the deific of modern civilization must be built on *spiritual principles*, the only ones that are capable not only to sustain it, but also to enlighten and enliven it" (*Populorum Progressio*). This Encyclical letter of Paul VI (1967), deals with all the possible areas of human development. As far as I am concerned, this is one of the most relevant documents for those involved in the slum mission, because it invites all the responsible persons of the society to think of the poor and afflicted: "...Educators, it is your task to awaken in persons, from their earliest years, a love for the peoples who live in misery. Gentlemen of the press, it is up to you to place before our eyes the story of the efforts exerted to promote mutual assistance among peoples, as well as the spectacle of the miseries which men tend to forget in order to quiet their consciences. Thus at least the wealthy will know that the poor stand outside their doors waiting to receive some left overs from their banquets" (*Populorum Progressio*, No.83). This is a kind of official invitation from the church to the wealthy people and people of great power and authority, the tricksters, the swindlers, the exploiters of Nairobi to think of our brothers and sisters in the slums of Nairobi.

After analysing and reflecting over the situations and possible missionary effort in the slums of Nairobi, I would like to say that may the Spirit of the Lord guide all the missionaries; and may the love of the Lord strengthen them in their mission and ministry; may Christ be present in the lives of all the poor and afflicted; and with a great hope, may the missionaries and the people of good will, continuously strive for the Kingdom values of justice, peace, harmony, joy and equality in the slums of Nairobi. To conclude I would like to say that, I have full hope and confidence that one day or another the values of the Kingdom of God will prevail in all the slums of Nairobi.

**THE END**

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