

TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

INCULTURATION IN THE MISSIONARY
ACTIVITY OF SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR
EVANGELIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY
AFRICA

An Academic Study in Mission Theology
for the Degree Bachelor of Theology Presented
to Tutor Fr. Francesco Pierli (M.C.C.J.) by the Student
Wieslaw Wroblewski (O.F.M. Conv.)

NAIROBI, 17th FEBRUARY 1997

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution: All sources have been cited in full.

Wiesław Wroblewski

Signed: Wieslaw Wroblewski

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
<u>CHAPTER I:</u> Biographies of Saint Cyril and Methodius.....	3
<u>CHAPTER II:</u> Inculturation in the Missionary Work of the Brothers from Thessalonica.....	10
<u>CHAPTER III:</u> Significance of the Missionary Work of Ss. Cyril and Methodius for the Evangelization in Contemporary Africa.....	24
Conclusion.....	40
Bibliography.....	44

INTRODUCTION

Give us this day our daily fish, Lord... - in these words Eskimo Christians begin *The Lord's Prayer*. The first reaction of a reader on such a well-known invocation may be an astonishment. Then is coming reflection: yet on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit talked through the Apostles in foreign languages to the peoples who originated from different countries. We can see that from the beginning the Church was entrusted with the Word to be passed on to people of different nations, languages and cultures. In essence this is, what we are today calling *inculturation*, it is nothing new, rather this is another form of the eternal process, the renewed answer of the Church to a multi-cultural world.

We have many definitions of *inculturation*: one of them contained in the Encyclical Epistle *Slavorum Apostoli* (No 21) says that *inculturation* is an "incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the Church", another definition is contained in the *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* (No 96) - The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith says that *Inculturation* "is an intimate transformation of authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the planting of Christianity in the different human cultures." We have various terms that are similar in meaning to *inculturation*, these include: *adaptation, incarnation, accommodation and contextualization*. Another term which is related - *indigenization* - is often rejected because it is clumsy grammatically and has a restrictive connotation. The term *enculturation* is mostly used by anthropologists to describe the process by which a person becomes part of a given

culture by being immersed in it. The term which is used for the description of *culture-contact* is *acculturation*.

In this paper I will not try to answer to all the problems of the evangelising work in Africa, rather on the example of Ss. Cyril and Methodius - so called Apostles of Slavs, - I would like to present what we can learn from those two Saints in order to make our evangelising work more effective. Their experience can help the Church incarnate the Gospel, so that those who accept Christianity may remain be rooted out in their own cultures. Cyril and Methodius could help us to understand that all cultures have many positive values which can enrich the Universal Church making her truly Catholic.

First of all I would like to present the figures of both Saints and the value of their missionary work among the Slavs who had totally different cultural roots from the Greek culture from which Cyril and Methodius had come. I would like to further reflect on what could be meaningful for those who work in the vineyard of Lord in the African context today.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHIES OF SAINT CYRIL AND METHODIUS

Saints Cyril and Methodius so called *Apostles to the Slavs* were brothers. They were born in Thessalonica (modern Salonica) to a noble family.

In the ninth century Thessalonica was an important centre of commercial and political life in the Byzantine Empire. This town situated on the frontier of the Slavonic territories, was rich in Slav citizens and had a Slavonic name - Solun.

Methodius (his baptismal name Michael) was the elder brother. He was borne between 815 and 820. In his youth full days he studied law. His political career started at the moment when he received the title of the Archon in other words the "Prefect" of the one frontier province where many Slavs lived.

At the close of the year 840, he abandoned his official and political career (some sources say he abandoned even his wife and children) entered a monastery at the foot of Mount Olympus.

Cyril (his baptismal name Constantine) was the youngest of seven children. He was borne between 826 and 828. When he was 14 years, his father died, and soon after he travelled to Constantinople. There under the protection of Logothete Theoctistos, chief minister of Theodore, the widow of Emperor Theophilus I, Cyril started to study at the imperial university. He had many excellent teachers like Leo the Mathematician

and Photius (future patriarch of Constantinople). At the end his of studies, Cyril refused the title of being a Prefect of one of the Provinces.

He received priestly ordination and became a patriarchal librarian of the Archive attached to the church of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Constantinople, he also had a function of a secretary to the Patriarch of that city. However, he soon retired secretly to a monastery on the Black Sea coast. After six months he was discovered and given the task of teaching philosophy in the School of Higher Learning in Constantinople. Cyril's talent for philosophy gained him the name, "the *Philosopher*." He was sent by the Patriarch and the Emperor to the Arabs as a member of a delegation. During this mission in Samarra on the Tigris at the caliph's court he had famous discussion on the Trinity. When the mission was completed, Cyril withdrew from public life and decided to join his brother in monastic life in the same monastery. Towards the year 860 both Brothers were members of a delegation which was sent to Khazars, a Turkic people who created a political and commercial empire in the Southern parts of Russia. In the 8th century the Khazar aristocracy and the king were converted to Judaism.

During the journey, at Crimea in Cheson, they discovered the church which held the relics of Pope St. Clement I. The Brothers brought the recovered relics to Rome and presented them to Pope Hadrian II.

Cyril and Methodius had discussions on soteriological topics with the Khazars, particularly on relationship between God and Abraham, God and chosen People of God.

When he returned, Cyril became a professor at the patriarchal academy in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. In the same time Methodius was

appointed abbot of the monastery of Polychronion on the Hellespon (Dardanelles) in Asia Minor.

In 863 a delegation of Ratislav - the ruler of Greater Moravia, arrived at Byzantium with request to Emperor Michael III to send to his people (the Slavs) *a Bishop and teacher...able to explain to them the true Christian faith in their own language.*¹ The Emperor chose both of the Brothers and sent them to Moravia, a state which at the present time includes various Slavonic peoples of Central Europe.

From the historical sources we deduce, that Mary, the mother of Cyril and Methodius, had a Slavic origin. Some sources say that for the holy Brothers Slavonic language was not strange, probably this language was in general used in their family home.

The mission in Moravia changed the life of both Brothers. Since this time they spent much time amidst journeys, sufferings, privations, persecution - Methodius even was imprisoned in hard prison. These experiences demonstrated strong faith and hope in God.

The people in Moravia were already partly converted by Iro-Scottish monks and Bavarian missionaries. However this conversion was very superficial, because these missionaries from foreign countries tried to convert the people without using their language.

Before their journey to Moravia, Cyril and Methodius created the Slavonic alphabet. With the help of this alphabet, they translated the Gospel into Slavonic language. When the Slavonic alphabet was approved by Moravian court, they

¹ John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, Encyclical Letter, (Catholic Desktop Library, Pauline Books and Media, 1994), No.5.

translated some of the liturgical books. During this time they tried to introduce Slavonic liturgy, nevertheless this attempt of inculturation of the Gospel met strongest resistance from Bavarian priests. They were called *trilinguists* or *pilatians* by both of the Saints, because they used only three languages like Pilate: Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

After three years of evangelical work, they had some religious vocations, and people who expressed the desire of becoming priests. In this situation, Cyril and Methodius organised a journey to Rome. On their way they stopped in Pannonia, where the Slav Prince Kocel gave them a hospitable reception, and entrusted them with fifty young men to be trained in the Slavonic tongue.

The road to Rome led them through Venice. There they had hard discussion with bishops and priests of this town, who were against the use of Slavonic language in the liturgy.

When they arrived at Rome, the new Pope Hadrian II received them cordially and solemnly approved the liturgy celebrated in Slavonic language and all the Slavonic liturgical books. The Pope ordered that these books be placed on the altar in the Church of Saint Mary Major.

The disciples of the Saints also received priestly ordination.

Unfortunately Cyril became seriously ill and after taking religious vows and the monastic habit died at Rome, on 14th February 869. On his deathbed, Cyril directed his brother with the following words: *Behold, my brother, we have shared the same destiny, ploughing the same furrow. I now fall in the field at the end of my day. I know*

*that you greatly love your Mountain (Olymp); but do not for the sake of the Mountain give up your work of teaching.*² Cyril was buried at San Clement in Rome.

After the death of his brother, Methodius returned to Pannonia as papal legate for all the Slavic peoples. At the same time Pope Hadrian II addressed the important bull *Gloria in excelsis* to Kocel, the Prince of Pannonia, to Ratislav and to Svatopluk. This bull says that the Slavonic liturgy is accepted on the following conditions: that during the Mass, the Epistle and the Gospel would be read first in Latin and then in Slavonic tongue.

In 869 Methodius was sent back to Rome by Kocel and there he was consecrated an archbishop of the ancient Diocese of Pannonia with the re-established Episcopal See of Sirmium.

The Pope wrote another document in which Pannonia and Greater Moravia were excluded from the jurisdiction of the Bavarian bishops. This evoked many accusations against Methodius and his new evangelical methods. Intrigues of the German opponents stopped his missionary activity. Towards the year 870, he was accused of having invaded the episcopal jurisdiction of another bishop. As a result, Methodius was imprisoned in South Germany. After two years he was released through the personal intervention of Pope John VIII; later, he was installed to the See of Greater Moravia.

The missionary work of Bishop Methodius and his disciples met greater difficulties when the Prince Svatopluk, the new sovereign of Greater Moravia, (870) and the Frankish clergy started to organise an opposition front against the Slavonic

² *Ibid.*, No. 6.

liturgy. As a result of spreading doubts in Rome about the orthodoxy of the new Archbishop, in 879 Methodius was ordered to appear in Rome. There he defended himself and with the help of the bull *Industriae tuae* (880) received the privilege of juridical independence except the Holy See itself. This document like the bull *Gloria in excelsis* authorised the celebration of the mass in Slavonic tongue. In the meantime one of Methodius' opponents - Wiching, was consecrated as his suffragan to the seat in Nitra. Wiching addressed a letter to Pope John VIII accusing Archbishop Methodius of being out of orthodoxy in his pastoral work. The reply of the Pope contained in *Pastoralis sollicitudinis* of March 881, guaranteed the orthodoxy of Methodius. However his opponents did not take care of it for them it was matter of political influence, this was what they were after.

Between 881 and 882 Methodius arrived at Constantinople, where he was warmly welcomed by Byzantine Emperor Basil I and the Patriarch Photus who at this time was still in communion with Rome.

All of these years were bitter for Methodius: He was forced to excommunicate bishop Wiching.

The last years of Methodius were spent on translation of parts of the Bible. Earlier together with his brother Cyril, they had translated the Psalms, the Gospels and Letters of St. Paul. In summary, they translated the whole Bible except Machabees, some liturgical books and works of the Fathers of the Church.

Together with his disciple Gorazd, he composed the collection of ecclesiastical and Byzantine civil laws called *Nomocanon*.

Methodius died on 6th April 885 in his cathedral church surrounded by his disciples. Gorazd who was the successor chosen by Methodius, never took the position of his master because of the intrigues of Witting.

At the end, the hostility of prince Svatopluk brought to a halt the work started by Saints Cyril and Methodius. Their disciples in 886 were sentenced to exile (included Gorazd) and they came to neighbouring countries to successfully spread the work of their teachers.

CHAPTER II

INCULTURATION IN THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE BROTHERS FROM THESSALONICA

In the call of Saint Cyril and Methodius we can see resemblance to the call of Abraham, St. Paul and many other missionaries. Both Saints were addressed by the Emperor of Byzantium and the Patriarch of the Church in Constantinople, in an exhortation which contained proposition for their work among the Slavic people. They willingly took this missionary mandate, although this was equal to abandon contemplative life, a position of honour, etc. Surely they had in mind that their apostolic work would be among the peoples of different cultures and various systems of civil societies which were not imbued with Christian principles, and were still far from the culture and state organisation of Byzantium.

From the Slavonic life of Methodius, we know about the request of Prince Ratislav addressed to the Emperor, Michael III, in the following words: *Many Christian teachers have reached us from Italy, from Greece and from Germany, who instruct us in different ways. But we Slavs... have no one to direct us towards the truth and instruct us in an understandable way.*³

Cyril expressed his readiness in the letter sent to the Emperor which contained the following words: *However tired and physically worn out I am, I will go with joy to that land; with joy, depart for the sake of the Christian faith.*⁴

³ John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, op. cit., No. 9.

⁴ Ibid.

Christ's resurrection and flowing hope for all the peoples pushed the holy Brothers to preach the Gospel to all the Slavic peoples according to the words of Jesus: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*⁵

The missionary model of St. Paul guided them, to become part of these Slavic peoples. In this way, the missionary activity of both Brothers characterised by respect for the people, promoted concern for their spiritual good and understanding of Slavonic cultural differences. This was a time of increasing cultural and doctrinal conflict between the East and the West. The complexity of the conflict required many good decisions. On this field Cyril and Methodius demonstrated good will and excellent knowledge. In difficult time for evangelization, they were able to built up a Church which was fully local and yet in communion with the universal Church. Hence those holy Brothers are protagonists and models of ecumenical movement, because until the end of their life they tried to preserve the unity of faith and love between the newly created Slavic churches and the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople.

The evangelical work of these Saints have both model of inculturation: the introduction of the cultures into the life of the Church and the incarnation of the Gospel in these cultures. As true missionaries, they always looked for new forms of evangelization to make the mission work more effective.

By trying to present the model of inculturation used by the Brothers, it is imperative to consider the main targets of their missionary work:

⁵ Matthew 28:19.

A: the invention of an alphabet for the Slavonic language;

B: the creation of the Slavonic liturgy;

C: unity and diversity in the Church of God.

A: The Invention of an Alphabet for the Slavonic Language

The erudite Bulgarian monk from 10th cent., known as monk Chrabra, who probably was one of the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, in this way expresses the process of formation of the Slavonic writing: *First Slavs, who were pagans, did not have letters, with the use of notches they counted and practiced fortune-telling. When they were baptised, they used Roman and Greek letters but without any order. It was like this for many years. After some time, God who loves people and who is the governor above all things, who did not want to leave mankind without wisdom and salvation, took pity on Slavic nations, He sent them the holy Constantine Philosopher, called Cyril, a righteous and honest man, who created for them thirty eight letters of Greek design and others according to Slavonic pronunciation.*⁶

Cyril created the Slavic alphabet long time before undertaking a mission to Moravia in year 863.

The first effort to use Greek alphabet in Slavonic language met serious limitations. Greek alphabet did not have signs for many Slavic sounds, such as: *b, cz, sz, c, e, y,* etc.

⁶ Jan Lesny, *Konstantyn i Metody Apostolowie Slowian - Dzieło i Jego Losy*, (Poznan: Księgarnia Sw. Wojciecha, 1987), 39.

Nevertheless the work of Cyril made things more simple. His work was first addressed to all the Slavs who lived in the border of the Empire, among whom Christian idea grew slowly amidst many problems.

Practical consideration to make it easy for the Byzantine Slavs to understand the mysteries of the faith, was the beginning of the creation of the Slavic alphabet and the beginning of writing in Slavonic language. They would have remained in ignorance ever, if the initiative of creating this alphabet had not come from Cyril instead of the Church's Byzantine officials or from the Emperor, who knew that the existence of pagans in the Empire's border would not bring him glory.

Cyril out of many efforts invented the alphabet known as the *Glagolitic*, which was later known as *Cyrillic*. The name *Glagolitic* originated from an Old-Slavonic term *glagol* (voice, word), *glagoliti* (to proclaim, to speak, to tell).

The creation of this alphabet came out from Cyril's principle that each nation should have its own alphabet which correspond to its own language. From the beginning Cyril had thought of an alphabet, which would be useful in the Thessalonica - Macedonian dialect of 9th cent. For particular letters of adaptation, the Saint borrowed from Eastern alphabets: Coptic, Samaritan and Hebrew. Cyril used special geometric figures that distinguish his final work from any other graphic system used for creation of the mentioned above alphabets.

This alphabet was used successfully in the Slavonic language system, but its writing had weak points. Originally it had as many as 38 basic signs - that is almost about 20 more than the Greek alphabet. Moreover, it had two separated signs for *o*, *z* and *i*. Nevertheless *Glagolitic* was the writing which was generally used by Cyril and Methodius as well as their disciples in Moravia in the 9th cent.

The apostolic work of the holy Brothers is in a certain way permanently present in the history and the life of Slavic nations. The alphabet they created made the Old Slavonic language to become like Latin in Western countries or even more, because it has been existing longer than Latin (in part until the 19th cent.) Hence it influenced local literary languages more effectively because of its close kinship with them.

B: The Creation of the Slavonic Liturgy

The missionary journeys to the Khazars, Bulgarians and the Arabs prepared the holy Brothers for the apostolic work among the Slavic nations. Cyril knew very well the traditions of national Churches in the East - Georgian and Syrian, which freely used national languages in the liturgy. Probably in this time he started thinking of using Slavonic language in the Christian liturgy. The occasion came soon. In the year 862, the Emperor Michael III sent them to Moravia at the invitation of Prince Ratislav. The invitation of the missionaries who knew Slavonic language by the Byzantine Empire in a situation where already existed a kind of Latin Christianity, bears witness that Ratislav was willing to free the country from German influence.

Cyril and Methodius obeyed to the decision of the Emperor; they undertook preparation for the journey which had an epoch-making significance for the future of culture and liturgy of the Slavs. There was no Slavonic alphabet at that time. Cyril first of all invented the alphabet and began with the help of his brother a translation from the Greek lectionary (the so called *aparakos*) to Slavonic language biblical texts important for liturgical celebration. They translated also the Psalter and some chosen

liturgical prayers. Many slavists and philologists express their own appreciation for the translation of the Holy Scriptures performed by the Brothers. For example F. Grivec wrote: *The Old Slavonic alphabet properly express the purpose and sounds of the Old Slavonic language. The translation of the Gospel is masterly performed in itself, it expresses an extraordinary education and a great talent of its inventor, Saint Cyril. It is remarkable in the history of literature.*⁷

When they had translated the liturgical books in the Slavonic language, they proceeded to Moravia where they taught and celebrated the liturgy in the Slavonic vernacular. However, their uncommon missionary innovation met negative reaction from the German clergy, who had been working for long time in Moravia and who spread Christianity in the Latin-Roman rite. They openly started to combat the missionary activity of the Brothers such as celebrating liturgy in Slavonic language. Cyril and Methodius had no possibility of defending their undertaking because they were not sent to Moravia as bishops, so the possibilities of their mission were limited. After three years of work in Moravia they went to Rome. One of the purposes of this journey was priestly ordination of their disciples. During the journey they stopped in Pannonia (an ancient Roman province Southwest of the Danube River, encompassed parts of present-day Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia), where they had many mission successes. In Venice they had a dispute in which the Brothers defended Slavonic language in the liturgy. In Rome on the contrary, Pope Hadrian II gave them a good reception and approved the Slavonic language in liturgy, and the liturgical books written in Slavonic language brought by Cyril and Methodius. Hadrian II

⁷ Jan Sergiusz Gajek, Leonard Gorka, *Cyryl i Metody Apostolowie i Nauczyciele Słowian: Studia i Dokumenty, Część I: Studia*, (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1991), 76.

ordered also to consecrate as priests their disciples. Following the description of *The biography of Constantine* written between 9th and 10th cent. by one of their disciple - Cyril and Methodius together with neopresbiters celebrated liturgy in Slavonic language in the St. Peter Basilica, in St. Paul Basilica and in several churches of Rome.

After the death of Saint Cyril, Methodius returned to Pannonia as archbishop of the new diocese and settled in Sirmium, and preached there Gospel in Slavonic language. It seemed that at this moment the Slavonic liturgy was fully accepted by everybody, but this was only an appearance. Methodius was imprisoned and was accused of having invaded the episcopal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Salzburg. He was imprisoned for two and half years in a place near what today is Stuttgart. He was released after personal intervention of Pope John VIII, who at the same time forbade the use of Slavonic language in the liturgy.

After he was released, Methodius proceeded to Moravia. Here he did not get a support from the new governor - Svatopluk. He was accused of spreading heresy and was called to Rome. There the archbishop Methodius cleared himself from blames and was able to convince the Pope to use Slavonic language in Slavonic liturgy. He returned to Moravia with the papal bull *Industriae tuae* addressed to Prince Svatopluk in which the Pope wrote that he testified to the orthodoxy of bishop Methodius, he gave him all the rights of an archbishop and permitted the use of Slavonic language in the liturgy with the reservation, that the Gospel should be read first of all in Latin and afterwards in Slavonic translation. Further divine services should be celebrated in Latin for Prince Svatopluk and for his court according to his wish.

The victory of Methodius and his Slavonic liturgy was partial, because the Pope appointed as his suffragan a German by the name of Wiching, an adversary of

the Slavonic liturgy. Nevertheless Methodius evangelised in Slavonic language, as it is reported in *The biography of Methodius*, he also baptised Prince Bozyvoj and the mission in the country of Vistlans.

One of Methodius' last journeys, was to Constantinople. Historians do not know what was the purpose of this journey. There he retired to a monastery, most likely in Macedonia and committed himself to literary work. He translated the rest of the Old Testament's books not yet translated by Cyril - except the Books of Maccabees.

One question arises: Which liturgy was celebrated by the Brothers? They originated from Greek background and it was there they received education. Methodius was ordained as priest in Constantinople according to the Byzantine rite. Did they celebrate the Roman-Latin liturgy or the liturgy according to the Byzantine rite? *The biography of Constantine* uses the word *secret service* which is equal to Greek *mystike leitourgia*, which signifies the celebration of the liturgy of Eucharist in Eastern Rite. It says that the Brothers transferred to Moravia, Pannonia and to other Slavonic countries the Byzantine liturgy. For long time historians have been reflecting on this problem. In the year 1872 the principal of the Russian mission in Jerusalem, bought a manuscript and sent it to the Theological Academy in Kiev, hence its name *Kiev Missal*. In the manuscript were discovered liturgical texts written in Slavonic language with *Glagolitic* alphabet in 10th cent. These are changeable parts of the Eucharist in Roman rite (which contain 38 liturgical prayers). These mentioned texts are irrefutable evidence that at least in 10th cent., Roman-Slavonic liturgy was in use. Because this *Kiev Missal* contains texts from ancient *Gregorian Sacramentary* from

7th cent., supposedly Cyril and Methodius translated Latin-missal text during their sojourn in Rome. Today we are sure, that the Roman-Slavonic liturgy was inaugurated together with Byzantine-Slavonic liturgy and that Cyril and Methodius were their authors.

According to historians the Brothers celebrated the most simple liturgy during their evangelical work. They had a standpoint that the incarnation of the Gospel should be done step by step, not everything at once. For this reason, they did not translate the so called Liturgy of St. Peter which is a kind of *liturgical luxury* for more advanced persons in the Christian faith.

The Saint Brothers from Thessalonica, through the introduction of the Slavonic language in liturgy demonstrated what mission means in their apostolic work. Celebrating at the same time Roman and Byzantine liturgy, they gave their descendants a clever example in liturgical inculturation through which they were deeply rooted in the Western and Eastern Churches.

The conviction that each local church has a call to enrich the entire Church with its own endowments, encouraged the holy Brothers to introduce the Slavonic language in the liturgy as an effective instrument of evangelization. Characteristic is the fact, that during their apostolic work they never tried to impose on the Slavonic people any superiority of the Byzantine culture and the Greek language.

After the death of Methodius, his disciples were forced to leave Moravia. It seemed the end of the liturgy in Slavonic language. Meanwhile the disciples of the Brothers started to spread the Gospel in the Slavonic language among the Bulgars and in the territories of present Yugoslavia. Constantine, one of the disciple of St.

Methodius, created a new Slavonic alphabet called *Cyrillic*, in this way he improved, after some years of experiences, the work of the Apostles of the Slavs. Most probably it happened between the year 893-984 in Bulgaria and since this time *Cyrillic* alphabet began to push out *Glagolitic* alphabet in the liturgy. One of the disciples of Methodius - Saint Clement of Okhrid, established in Bulgaria centres of monastic life where *Glagolitic* alphabet was still in use. At the same time in other territories Cyril's and Methodiu's disciples spread liturgy written in *Cyrillic* alphabet.

When Pope Innocent IV in 1248 approved the *Glagolitic* liturgy, a bit of the Slavonic liturgy enjoyed peaceful time.

However at the time of Cyril and Methodius the German clergy fought against the use of this language in the liturgy. But in the 12th cent. we could find also few German bishops who used Slavonic language to teach Slavs principles of Christian faith. For example bishop Otto of Bamberg (1102-1139) preached sermons in this language, bishop Benno (+1106) taught his priests to prepare themselves on mission among the Slavs, to speak and write in Slavonic language.

After many years, Old Slavonic liturgical language became not only ecclesiastical but was also used as the official, the literary and even as common language of the more educated part of the Slav nations, especially Slavs of the Eastern Rite. Even today this language is in use in the Byzantine liturgy of the Slavonic Eastern Churches of the Rite of Constantinople, both Catholic and Orthodox in East and Southeast European countries, in the catholic liturgy in Croatia and in many countries of Western Europe.

C: Unity and Diversity in the Church of God

The mission undertaken among the Slavs by Ss. Cyril and Methodius was rich and concerned many spheres of the life of the Church. The novelty and originality of the work of the Brothers preceded the orientations of the Second Vatican Council for about a millennium. We should see that their whole apostolic effort in the sphere of evangelization, catechism, liturgy, inculturation and even ecumenism, had one fundamental conviction and purpose from which the Apostles of the Slavs never held back to establish mature ecclesial communities among the Slavs.

We have no doubt that Cyril and Methodius many time met with the immaturity of the Slavic nations in cultural, religious, and political life. This immaturity however did not discourage the Brothers but just the opposite was their reaction: with bigger zeal, ignoring the difficulties, misunderstandings, persecutions, they propagated the Christian faith among the Slavs.

Their plan of building a mature and self-sufficient local church, required some concrete means which were intended to make a firm foundation in which evangelising work would be effective and bring future fruits. The creation of the Slavonic alphabet, the translations of biblical and liturgical texts, the education of the disciples for the purpose of making them masters in Slavonic writing and after that receiving them in the company of clergy on different levels: lectors, deacons, presbyters and bishops. In other words we can say that they had a purpose to establish adequate structures in which suitable and autonomous ecclesial unit would exist in the universal communion of the Church.

During the time of Cyril and Methodius the situation in the Church was similar to an impoverished family whose two sisters, Rome and Constantinople were always

in tension. The great Christological controversies and iconoclasm brought about the call of the great councils through which orthodox doctrine was formulated. After that time the position of the growing local churches was weakened. Practically other local churches could only have lower ecclesial levels (suffragan churches). These churches were seen as newly converted, such atmosphere was not favourable for their growth.

This time is referred to as phenomenon of disappearance of ecclesial difference between particular churches. In the East the patriarchal capitals were losing their old importance. All of them gravitate towards Constantinople. New local churches could only receive religious goods from the Church of Constantinople, but they could not give anything in return. This is practically the same picture we had in the Western Church.

Summarising, the Apostles of the Slavs for ever remain as the experts of ecumenism, who took Jesus' priestly prayer *that they may all be one*⁸ as their missionary motto. During the time of the Saints, the unity of the Church was greatly damaged. The work of Cyril and Methodius assure us that different cultures and conditions of life of the local Christian Churches, cannot justify disagreements and divisions at the level of faith and love. As a fundamental means they used dialogue with opponents, carried on in perfect way, successfully defended liturgy in the Old Slavonic language and fundamental ecclesiastical rights proper to the local Churches. Through the missionary work of the holy Brothers, the Slavic nations were able to understand that even they are called to participate in the universal plan for the salvation of the

⁸ John 17:21.

world. This way of evangelization approved by the Holy See and the Patriarchs of Constantinople, guaranteed that Slavic nations in future would feel that they are descendants and heirs of the same promises which God made to Abraham.

The author of *The biography of Methodius* expresses gratitude for his apostolic work in the following words: *After all of these, the merciful God, in our own time, raised up for the good work, for the sake of our own people, for whom nobody had ever cared, our Teacher, the holy Methodius, whose virtues and struggles we unblushingly compared, one by one, to those of these men pleasing to God.*⁹ Certainly, this quotation is very much reflected in the works of Cyril and his way of life.

The apostolic work of the Brothers *their love for the communion of the Universal Church both in the East and in the West, and, within the Universal Church, love for the particular Church that was coming into being in the Slav nations.*¹⁰ If today we would like to reconstruct the unity of the Christian Church, we cannot omit to draw inspiration from the efforts of both Saints on this field. Their heritage has deeper meaning than any division. Different cultures and religious traditions can only enrich the Universal Church.

We as Christians should see these great Saints as platforms that links both traditions: the East and the West, into one tradition of a Universal Church. For us they should be models and patrons of all ecumenical efforts, which through dialogue and prayer consolidate the Christian Church. Directed by Jesus' will and under the

⁹ John Paul II, *op.cit.*, No. 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 26.

patronage of Saints Cyril and Methodius, we should build Christian unity, with peaceful co-operation among the faithful, mutual respect and true liberty.

To be Christians today means to create unity within the Church and within humanity following the footsteps of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MISSIONARY WORK OF SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS FOR EVANGELIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

It is a fully justified statement, that today the Church has entered a new phase of history. After the short Judeo-Christian period, which gave foundations of her historical and theological identity, after a period of nearly two thousand years which was subjected to influence of one cultural area of Western Europe, the Catholic Church is now experiencing deep changes that is the Church is becoming more and more universal after centuries of European and North American strong cultural influence. In this situation the Church faces a new dramatic problem: *unity in plurality*. What position should be taken by the Church in this new situation? The answer to this difficult question depends on the position which the Church will take in the next few years.

Many theologians declare that each continent, each nation or ethnic group should have its own form of inculturation. Considering that, we may ask: what kind of inculturation should Africa have, the continent where in the last 50 years the number of Catholics has risen from 20 to 90 million? This growth brings a number of problems, many of which, could be solved by a reasonable inculturation. In this field Ss. Cyril and Methodius as cross-cultural missionaries can help us very much. As pioneers of inculturation of the gospel, these Saints preserved the Church from subordinating one culture to another, so they are parents for those who spare no pains to introduce the gospel in the most suitable way for the people.

Cyril and Methodius as foreign missionaries for the Slav peoples, tried to show that the Church which they planted truly was communion in love, and the each culture and the dignity of each person was highly respected.

The missionaries and local clergy seeing the problems on African continent could ask themselves: How do we make evangelization more effective; how do we make the gospel penetrate more deeply into human hearts? We can find kind of solution if we compare the circumstances of the missionary work of the Saints and those under which missionaries in contemporary Africa work today.

A: An Evangelization Less Westernised

There is no doubt the missionary impulse is always necessary. Pope Paul VI said in Uganda in 1969 that missionaries should be recognised as those who bring the Gospel message to the Africans, as those who sacrificed themselves for the good of the people in this continent because they left their family and homeland. Very often missionaries were pioneers who brought friendly contact with the rest of humanity together with health assistance and school education, modern technology, world-wide culture etc.

The people of Africa cannot forget that foreign missionaries are coming with many limitations which influence their pastoral work: they have the mentality of their own native culture, they cannot often deeply understand the customs and history of the people they are evangelising but they have the good will to do pastoral work in the most effective way. What they need is a recognition of their own limitations while facing new peoples, cultures and languages, a bit of faith that any success of human abilities is based on the power of the Lord. This will help missionaries to recognise the

local language, customs and the history of the local people. Thus their pastoral work would not be destructive of culture of local people but would help it bear many fruits.

Ss. Cyril and Methodius give us a model of evangelising work which with some adaptations missionaries can use in the African context. In the Biographies of the Saints we read that their mission to the Slavs took a long time of preparation, mainly on cultural and language study. For sure they discovered that the Christianity implanted by the German clergy could not permeate the people because their evangelising work was done without any respect for the individuals and their cultures. They also found that the Slavs still worshipping many gods and goddesses in the shape of sacred stones, trees, mountains; that polygamy and bloody customs were still prevailing among the people.

The circumstances in which the saint Brothers worked were similar to the circumstances in which many missionaries are working in today's Africa. The deed of inculturation undertaken by them touched areas which assured success to pastoral work like: knowledge of the local language, creation of the local liturgy, translation of the Bible and liturgical texts with terminologies easy to be understood by the people. They proclaimed the gospel in a peaceful way and in this way respected the spiritual and cultural riches of each nation; they were rightly convinced, that the grace of Christ does not destroy, but rather builds and transforms.

The range of their influence was not limited to religious activity, they taught individuals, families and whole society Christian principles of life and hence they laid down among Slavics the foundations of new society, new justice, social love. Religion is fundamental for each culture and its morality. A missionary convinced of this

principle is able to transform people to whom he has been sent in a manner of Cyril and Methodius. To get ready for their missionary work, the holy Brothers saw the importance of knowing the Slavonic language. Even today many missionaries still do not see the necessity of learning local languages, in effect they perform liturgical celebration in languages which are not understood by local children and old people. Such missionaries remain guests. The best thing missionaries can do is to recognise this fact of being strangers and accept it, not as a weakness or a sort of failure but a starting point for an integral missionary work.. Missionaries would become one with the people if they know the local language and local people even if this is done at the price of many years of study. For this purpose he who comes to serve, must allow to be served by others, by accepting the beauty of the language, the riches of the culture and the friendship of the people. He should be convinced that every day he needs conversion. Pope Paul VI wrote in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* the following words which refers in a special way to missionaries: *Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.*¹¹ The missionary should be able to consider that his witnessing is a central point of his pastoral work, in other words, he should be generous and open to this cultural goods which can enrich the Church and make process of evangelization successful, but at the same time avoiding any danger of syncretism. Mission is not transplantation of the Church from one culture to another, but this is a searching for the seeds which are already hidden by God in another culture's soil. The Church is a communion of local churches with their own languages

¹¹ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (Catholic Desktop Library, Pauline Books and Media, 1994), No. 41.

and cultures. The missionary, special messenger of this Church, should rather assist people in discovering the new values of the Gospel and the values which are hidden in the local culture. Through such work he will be truly an European or an American by birth, but in heart an African, Methodius' hagiography says about him that he was all for everybody, for the purpose to possess everybody (for Christ).

The Saint Brothers from Thessalonica give us another important lesson: they claimed for a right to own an autonomous cultures for Slavonic nations and rejection of all kinds of discrimination among nations. This statement agrees with the preaching of St. Paul, according to whom in the world there is no better or worse nation: *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith* (Gal 3:26). The consequent and heroic struggle for preserving Slavonic liturgy was something more than the actions in defence of what is now forms of liturgical rite. As a matter of fact through it they emphasised the right of all nations to free choice of their own way of developing a civilisation. Their evangelising work was characterised by apostolic universalism, owing to their charismatic nature, they favoured the compenetration of different traditions, culture and united people into brotherhood. The Slavic theologian and slavivist F. Grivec (1878 - 1963) rightly noticed, that Cyril and Methodius through the introduction of Slavonic liturgy in the life of the Church, they gave simultaneous answer to basic question regarding possible ways to unite the Universal Church and different cultures with their different characters. They also gave answer to the question of how to become a Christian and being at the same time a Slav or - how to remain a Slav while becoming a Christian? Contrary to the missionaries from Germany, they avoided an evangelization which was destroying national identity. They struggled and suffered for these principles.

The idea of harmony, religious pluralism, autonomy and dignity for man is becoming a big task for the modern Church. Thus the work of Ss. Cyril and Methodius has today tremendous significance, especially for the missionaries who work in different cultures, for those who want to be agents of inculturation and who are still seeking for good method of inculturation.

B: The Situation of the Church in Africa

The Church in Africa is calling for many changes. African Christians live in an era of many conflicts. In the pre-colonial times African societies were regulated by traditional customs, modern Africa no longer lives the same. The modern state system destroys the traditional values and doesn't teach to the modern African a sense of direction in matters of morality. An African Christian finds himself in a position where what is condemned by the Christian is praised by his non-Christian kinsmen and vice versa, for example:

1. Where Christianity says that polygamy is contrary to conjugal love, tradition praises the custom of polygamy;
2. Where Christianity teaches about departed brothers and sisters who are waiting to rise at the Last Judgement, tradition says about the living dead who are more powerful, more beneficial in death than in life;
3. Where Christianity talks about the leading role of the Holy Spirit in religious life of the believer, tradition emphasises the role of the spirits of the dead and of gods who often haunt the living, who are often dissatisfied from the behaviour of the people.

We should notice that the African Christians have been told that their traditional religion, its beliefs, practices, rituals and symbols have no value to him. As a

result African Christians have many misunderstandings with their kinsmen, because they still are considered as members of local worship ceremonies and rituals. In other words, we have Christians in Africa and who are no longer Africans.

Many Christians find other way of life: they separate local traditions, customs, proverbs and stories from Christian faith and Christian teaching. The daily life of such people, his or her culture and the Christian faith are separated, they don't become one. Bolaji Idowu, a mission historian in a report at on *International African Seminar* described the situation of an African in Nigeria and Ghana, where Christianity has been longest in Africa: *An African could sing in Church "other refuge have I none" while in the same time he is still carrying an amulet or is able to go out of Church straight to his diviners and he does not feel that he is braking some Christian principles.*

C: The Churches which Grows Within African Cultures

How to integrate culture, daily life and Christian faith of an African Christian, is the task of inculturation and contextualization. Inculturation does not mean external adaptation of the Christian faith to a culture. The Gospel itself should enrich culture and culture should enrich the Gospel's message by the example of new forms of proclamation.

Pope Paul VI in the *Message of the Church to the Peoples of Africa*, on August 1, 1969 urges Africans to discover the contributions of the Church to the cultures of Africa in the following words: *Don't be afraid of the Church. It honours you. It educates upright, loyal citizens for you. It does not foment rivalries or divisions. It seeks to promote healthy liberty, social justice, and peace. If it has any*

*preference, it is for the education of children and the common people, for the needs of those who are suffering or abandoned.*¹²

The Church in Africa should be seen as one who is preserving Africa's traditional religious values by saving, purifying, developing and fulfilling their authentic values, by retaining and allowing the Africa societies to express their own culture through the manifestation of certain beliefs, practices, rites, attitudes, prohibitions, laws, and ethical regulations of these cults.

In traditional African societies we can find positive values like:

- family solidarity;
- hospitality and welcome;
- respect for life;
- belief in life after death;
- great respect for the elders as people of wisdom endowed with specific powers, that they can bless and curse effectively;
- respect for nature.

These and other traditional religious values are strongly linked with African culture, they still exist in the hearts of many Africans and could still help to find an identity for the African Church, as we enter into the age of the second phase of evangelization, - that of deeping faith. Many from these traditional religious values could find their own expression in the Catholic liturgy. One question remains: How do the missionaries make our catholic liturgy more suitable for the people, that it would be fully accepted by them?

¹² Herve' Carrier, *Evangelizing the culture of modernity*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 85.

Missionaries can find some practical inspirations if they look at the effort of inculturation of Cyril and Methodius. They created a model of inculturation which touched areas such as:

- 1. Language in liturgy;**
- 2. Translation of the Bible and liturgical texts;**
- 3. Style of liturgical celebration;**
- 4. Formation of the local church.**

1. Language in liturgy

The Church has a long missionary tradition in which she has always sought to evangelise people in their own language. There is no doubt that the Christian missionaries in Africa, like Cyril and Methodius in Eastern Europe, wrote down languages which had been only oral. There is no doubt that only with the help of the native language of the people to whom the Gospel is proclaimed is effective possible evangelization. To know the language of the people is to reach their hearts, it is to easily mould them in the Christian spirit. Language allows us to pray together with people, to learn about their mentality and culture.

Language, which is the principal means of communication among people, in liturgical celebrations, is used to announce to believers the good news of salvation and to express prayer of the faithful to the Lord. In the language we have many elements which after careful consideration can properly be introduced into liturgical celebrations.

Talking about inculturation through language, we understand that this is an expression of the appreciation in the language of a particular culture, although the translation of

the Christian message meets many limits. First of all, the majority of terms used by Christianity may not exist in the language of that particular culture. Many terminologies have to be created. The effect could be similarly to the experiences of the missionaries in Zaire, who in the situation of lack of terms to describe sacraments, decided to use original terms. Unfortunately the term *uka-risa-tija* (Eucharist) in the Lele language means *to put woman to fire*. In many cultures the term *father* means not only biological father, but also his brothers and sisters, even their children.

The selection of the Christian terms should be done carefully in collaboration with the local people, especially in case where the missionaries do not know the local language very well. This will help to avoid many funny situations during the liturgy.

Today many missionaries are no longer interested in learning the languages spoken by the local people. If the matter of evangelization is very important for them, the matter of language should take the first place in their life.

2. Translation of the Bible and liturgical texts

The Bible and liturgical texts are important steps in the process of the inculturation of the liturgy. Wise translation allows the reception of the Sacred Scripture into a culture. The difficulties of translation of the biblical texts were not strange for Cyril and Methodius. They knew very well the Slavonic language, but they also asked their disciples to help them to translate many liturgical texts. The experience of the missionaries who tried to translate the following biblical text into the Papuan language *Selepet* underscores the difficulty of translation: *I will perform for you white magic, and your descendants become rich and your name will be great through all the ages. You become the leader of those who collaborate with white*

*magic. I will perform white magic for those who performs her for you. For those who perform black magic for you I will perform black magic.*¹³ (Gen 12:2-3) Sometimes the basic differences in comprehension of the reality makes difficult or even makes impossible intercultural communication. Performing *white magic* means in this text *blessing*, performing *black magic* means *cursing*.

The passage from one language to another in biblical or liturgical texts necessarily involves a change of cultural context. The biblical and liturgical symbols could be against other tradition of thought and other ways of life. In this situation the translation has to be followed by interpretation, which should set the biblical and liturgical message in a more explicit relationship to the local culture after the stage of interpretation. The next stage which leads to the formation of a local Christian culture which has all aspects of life: prayer, work, social life, customs, philosophical and theological reflection, legislation, arts and sciences. One thing is true: that missionaries should bring the Word of God in the form in which it has been inculturated in their own country. Established new local Church with the help of missionaries should make every effort to convert this foreign liturgical texts into another form which more closely corresponds to the culture of their own land.

3. Style of liturgical celebration

If we are thinking about the discovery of an identity of the Catholic Church in Africa, we should think first of all about the liturgy of this Church. Liturgy is specially privileged for inculturation. In order to develop Africa's own liturgy, Cannon Law

¹³ Andrzej Szyjewski, *Inkulturacja - w napięciu między synkretyzmem a ortodoksja*, Znak 472 (September 1994): 47.

should be a framework within which local Churches could develop their own rites of worship. We have many examples of liturgical inculturation like: ancient rites of the Church - in Egypt, Ethiopia and Zaire, where the mystery of the faith is expressed by signs marked by local customs. In these rites music and singing accompanied by hand-clapping, rhythmic swaying dance-movements, express the soul of the people. The presence of local art in the place where the liturgy is celebrated enrich liturgical experience. The liturgical vessels, vestments and colours should be meaningful for the people and have connection with their culture.

The *Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium* allows for admission of rites and gestures according to local customs into the rituals of Christian marriage and funerals, provided that the danger is avoided for these Christian rites to lose the expression of the Christian faith. It is also possible christianise pagan festivals or holy places, and veneration of ancestors. The Christian liturgy should not accept magical rites, spiritism, superstition, vengeance or rites with sexual connotation. Generally in the efforts of inculturation prudence is very needed. The Episcopal Conferences should examine each case particularly, so that the faithful would be able to distinguish true inculturation and inadmissible syncretism.

Missionaries should be convinced that the indigenous ministers could do a better job of inculturation than expatriates. Usually to know the language of local people takes a short time, but to think like they think takes many years, sometimes it is almost impossible. For reasons that the home clergy is closely connected with the local people, through its origins, its feelings, aspirations and outlook, they are able to open the hearts of the people to the faith and their work on the field of inculturation which is better acceptable to their countrymen and women. In this situation the role of the

missionaries is to encourage converts and local clergy to develop their own living expression of the Gospel. Local Churches could learn from one another how to seek their own solutions and formulations. The role of the Church in Rome is to bring to the centre how cross-cultural exchanges could take place.

4. Formation of the local church

The biographies of Saints Cyril and Methodius tell us that for them it was very important to organise local hierarchy, because a well structured hierarchy of the local church assures that after the departure of missionaries, pastoral work will still continue. They also saw that the bishops and the local clergy are main agents of inculturation.

We have seen that Cyril and Methodius performed their apostolic work in the unity with the Church of Rome. In the Church of Rome they look for confirmation - whether their plans of inculturation of the Gospel into native cultures of the Slavic nations were right. Following the example of these great Saints, the agents of inculturation have to be convinced that deep inculturation cannot be without legislation and vigilance of those who have received this responsibility in the Church: the Apostolic See, the Episcopal Conference for its territory and the bishop for his diocese. Inculturation always brings some dangers: wrong inculturation could produce some negative effects on the faith of the people and their piety. There is always a danger of introducing elements that might appear to the people as a return to a period before evangelization.

The Church is Catholic because such is her dimension inscribed by Christ in the constitution of the Church. This Catholic dimension requires from the Church to respect the dignity of every person and nation. This respect issues from fraternal love for every person, but first of all from God's love for us, who respects the free will and freedom of each person. In this way the Church is able to present in every human context the truth revealed for us by Jesus Christ. For this reason the Church is able to meet the expectation of every person. In this field the merits of Saints Cyril and Methodius are great. The local bishops, clergy and the missionaries in Africa, should take the pastoral work of the holy Brothers as model because their effective inculturation and christianization of the Slavic nations through of:

- knowledge of native language;
- wise translation of the Bible and liturgical texts which allow their easy reception into a culture;
- developing of local liturgy;
- full collaboration of the local people with missionaries;
- the creation of the local hierarchy;
- communion with the Church of Rome.

D: Evangelization and Ecumenism

Ss. Cyril and Methodius were the pioneers of ecumenical dialogue as we can read in the Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli*: *Thus it seems in no way anachronistic to see Saints Cyril and Methodius as the authentic precursors of ecumenism, inasmuch as they wished to eliminate effectively or to reduce any divisions, real or only apparent, between the individual communities belonging to the*

same Church.¹⁴ They felt great responsibility, especially Methodius because of his episcopal office, for preserving unity of faith and love between the Church of Constantinople and the Church of Rome one side, and the Slavic Church on the other side. We know from history, how difficult their work in this particular field was, because of growing controversy between the Churches of the East and the West.

Today, with the help of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic church's teaching with reference to other Christian denominations is changed. Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue is seen as the way for a peaceful building of the Church of God. John Paul II stresses in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* an image which is very dear to the people in Africa, who see the Church as God's family. Dialogue and evangelization are strictly linked with each other. Evangelization should not be proselytism. Dialogue involves the respect for other religious traditions, and a sharing the life with other peoples; it involves openness and flexibility, respect for their culture and tradition. In today's Africa we can observe the crisis of dialogue. Since political independence, religious divisions have been added to ethnic and racial divisions. That this is the case, can be seen in conflict between Christian denominations in Uganda, conflict between Muslims and Christians in Sudan. Today we have still something that remained from the nineteenth century when Catholics were calling the Protestants *children of the Devil* and Protestants called Catholics *idolaters and followers of Antichrist*. The Christian denominations live stereotypes lives that have poor relationship with one another - some kind of safe distant. The question is coming: Where is the initiative of the African Church? In the situation,

¹⁴ John Paul II, *Slavorum Apostoli*, No. 14.

where the sects and new religious movements become a *pastoral challenge* for African Christians, a peaceful building of the Church of God is possible only with the help of persevering dialogue. Taking the example of Cyril and Methodius, obstinate dialogue with opponents brings more fruits than any hidden war. Today the world calls for unity, for consolation of the people. The effects of consolation within the Christian Church could be the answer to this calling. The Christians in Africa have to be convinced that dialogue is possible and that peaceful co-operation among the faithful brings true liberty and allows successful evangelization.

CONCLUSION

The evangelising work of the Saints Cyril and Methodius is very significant today, it has a universal dimension because they created a model for missionary and theological inculturation. During their pastoral work they emphasised the catholicity of the Christian faith. They could be examples for the missionaries and the local clergy, because their apostolic work happened in difficult time of evangelization: in time of conflicts, wars which always brings disaster for the people. In spite of this, they were heralds of the faith, which enriched the Slavic nations spiritually and culturally. The holy Brothers show that with the support of spiritual and cultural values it is possible to build great, international communities, without regard to space and time, crossing national and political frontiers. They brought to the Slavic people the treasure of the Word of God, the faith and liturgy which are the durable fundamentals of a Christian community.

They gave the example of true spiritual freedom, deprived from any prejudice or hostility, giving in this way the superiority of spiritual values. Following their example, the missionaries and the local clergy should unite themselves and should confirm the faith and hope, especially in some parts of Africa where peace is still in danger, where some people live in perpetual fear. Like Cyril and Methodius the African clergy should through the spiritual fatherhood and brotherhood serve all the people without fear, sometimes even in suffering, but all time with unlimited fidelity to God, the Church and the People of God. In order to serve people effectively, the African clergy have to have courage to undertake actions on behalf of inculturation of the Gospel to native

cultures and inculturation of native cultures to the Christian faith. The Synod of the African Bishops which ended in Rome in May 8, 1994, emphasised that inculturation in Africa is a right, not a concession, so the initiative is in the hands of the clergy, especially bishops who follow the example of the Brothers from Thessalonica. They should promote, guide and supervise the process of inculturation, always remembering to be in communion with the rest of the Church.

Pope Paul VI in Kampala, Uganda in 1969 invited Africans to inculturation in the following words: *You may and you must have an African Christianity.*¹⁵ Taking into consideration his own field, Archbishop Anthony Mayala of Mwanza, Tanzania calls all the pastoral workers in East Africa “to inculturate our church so that it may be like a mirror in which we believers see ourselves and recognise our true face and feel completely at home in our Christian faith.”¹⁶ The African culture challenges the Catholic Church to be truly universal. The Church should bring the Good News to all the cultures in a way compatible to them lest the woeful events in Rwanda could be repeated in each other African country. One Rwandan bishop once commented that many citizens of Rwanda remain good baptised pagans, happy to be doubly religious. In Africa the missionaries and the local clergy make Christians and then life takes them away from the Church. Something has to be done, otherwise the Church will loss a lot more attractive people to the independent churches or religious “sects” in which inculturation of the Christian faith is underway.

¹⁵ Joseph Healey, Donald Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996), 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Today African Christians are asking about the future of their Church: Will the African Church have the will and the freedom:

1. to speak to God and to read the Gospel in her own African way?;
2. to pray and celebrate liturgy according to her own African rites rather than Latin rites which are Africanized?;
3. to celebrate the sacraments which are fixed properly into particular African culture?;
4. to find her own ecclesial structure?
5. to find an African way of the formation of priests?

These points go far beyond what the holy Brothers have done, however, since their time the situation in the Church has changed. The authorities of the Church are now more open to initiatives which are coming from local churches.

The reflection on the kind of inculturation created by the Brothers from Thessalonica brings us few main points:

- Inculturation is the essence of all missionary actions;
- The Christian message contained in the Gospel is the object of inculturation;
- Inculturation cannot be artificially introduced, she should come spontaneously from inside of the person, expressed within the symbols of his or her particular culture;
- Inculturation of the Gospel by Christians of another culture is beneficial for the whole Church;
- Inculturation changes culture, heals wounds which are open after force incarnation of the Christian Gospel to local culture;
- Through inculturation Christ becomes really alive in local culture;
- Inculturation invites Christians of the local community to deepen their faith.

One missionary few years ago described the transformation which happened in his missionary life. Instead of being the one who brings a precious pearl to local community, he became the one looking together with the local people for the treasures of grace and truth present among them, but hidden. Instead of seeing himself as the person who has answered to all the questions, he looked at himself as the man of collaboration who brings some positive values for the local community and who at the same time learns from them some new values. Since that time he really started seeking for full revelation of Jesus Christ together with the local people. This was the action by which he was able to learn from others as much he was able to hand over to them. I think that this is good picture of the Universal Church who is seeking for true catholicity, which constantly proclaims the immeasurable richness of Christ.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Church's Documents

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*, Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy (nn. 37-40). Catholic Desktop Library: Pauline Books and Media, 1994.

John Paul II, Encyclical Epistle *Slavorum Apostoli* in Commemoration of the Eleventh Centenary of the Evangelizing Work of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Catholic Desktop Library: Pauline Books and Media, 1994.

John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*. Nairobi: St Paul Publications - Africa.

John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995.

Encyclopaedias

Devos, P. "Cyril (Constantine) and Methodius, Ss." in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1966, vol. IV; reprint, Palatine: Jack Heraty & Associates, 1981.

Books

Bellagamba, Anthony. *Mission & Ministry in the Global Church*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992.

Carrier, Herve'. *Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993.

Comby, Jean. *How to Understand the History of Christian Mission*. London: SCM Press, 1996.

Ela, Jean-Marc. *My Faith as an African*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Healey, Joseph, and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996.

Jenkinson, William and Helene O'Sullivan, *Trends in Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991.

Luzbetak, Louis, J. *The Church and Cultures*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Miniak, Michał. *Wierność i kłatwa* (History of the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius). Warszawa: Zakład Wydawniczy Odrodzenie, 1971.

Nossol, Alfons, Waclaw Hryniewicz, and Stanisław Celestyn Napiorkowski, *Cyryl I Metody Apostołowie I Nauczyciele Słowian, Część 1: Studia* (Cyril And Methodius The Apostles And Teachers Of The Slavs - Studies And Documents, Part 1: Studies). Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1991.

Nossol, Alfons, Waclaw Hryniewicz, and Stanisław Celestyn Napiorkowski, *Cyryl I Metody Apostołowie I Nauczyciele Słowian, Część 2: Dokumenty* (Cyril And Methodius The Apostles And Teachers Of The Slavs - Studies And Documents, Part 2: Documents). Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1991.

Salvoldi, Valentino and Renato Kizito Sesana, *Africa: The Gospel Belongs to Us*. Ndola: Mission Press, 1986.

Schineller, Peter. *A Handbook on Inculturation*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990.

Shorter, Aylward. *The African Synod*. Nairobi: St Paul Publications-Africa, 1991.

Shorter, Aylward. *Toward A Theology Of Inculturation*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989.

Articles

Szyjewski Andrzej. *Inkulturacja- W Napięciu Miedzy Synkretyzmem A Ortodoksja*. (Inculturation - The Tensions Between Syncretism And Orthodoxy) in *Znak* 472 (September 1994): 46-54.