

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA
DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

**THE METHODS OF EVANGELISATION OF THE MONTFORT MISSIONARIES
AND THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN
MALAWI**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
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OF LICENTIATE IN SACRED THEOLOGY

BY

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, research, and reflection. It has never been submitted to any college or university for academic credit. All information from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS NOT EXPLAINED IN THE TEXT.

AFER: African Ecclesial Review.

AMECEA: Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa.

CHIEA: Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa. This is what is currently known as Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).

CIIR: Catholic Institute for International Relations.

SECAM: Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

SMM: Society of Montfort Missionaries.

Sq. Km: Square kilometre.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Aim and the Rationale of the Thesis.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the evangelising methods of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa in Malawi. Evangelisation is a wide topic, therefore I intend to limit my analysis to their contribution in areas of Catechetical Approach, Peace and Justice and Inculturation. This will give guidelines and recommendations for the future and effective evangelisation of the country.

Rationale of the Thesis.

The choice of this thesis is dictated by the pastoral situation in which the Catholic Church in Malawi is. In the first place, the Missionaries of Africa were the first Roman Catholic missionaries to bring the good news to Malawi in 1889. Twelve years later, in 1901, the Montfort Missionaries arrived in Malawi at the invitation of the Missionaries of Africa to work with them as auxiliaries. In their agreement the Montfort Missionaries were to work under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Nyasa who happened to be a Missionary of Africa.

The two missionary groups had different ways of approaching evangelisation. After some time working together, rivalry between them necessitated the creation of another vicariate in the south. This took effect on the 3rd of December 1903 and the new vicariate was named Shire Vicariate with Rev. Fr. Auguste Prezeau as its prefect apostolic. This new vicariate was then entrusted to the care of the Montfort Missionaries.

The importance of this study cannot be underestimated, as it will highlight the differences in their approach to evangelisation. This study will also serve as a guide for evaluation of the past, present and future of missionary evangelisation in Malawi.

Historically the church in Malawi will celebrate the first centenary of existence in the year 2001. Therefore this study is timely and very important.

The Central Question of Investigation.

This study will analyse the contribution of both the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa toward the evangelisation of Malawi. As reflected in their specific evangelisational approaches through their evaluations and analysis this will help us to evaluate the strength and weakness of each method and point out recommendations for the future pastoral planning. As earlier said, my main focus will be in the areas of catechesis, inculturation and justice and peace.

Working Hypotheses.

I have three working hypotheses:

1. That the Missionaries of Africa had well formulated missionary methods of evangelisation than the Montfort Missionaries in terms of working together to help people to understand and deepen their Christian faith.
2. That the Missionaries of Africa had a longer period of catechumenate and this created the impression that they were more serious in their approach than the Montfort Missionaries.
3. That the Montfort Missionaries were better at itinerant preaching, renewal retreats and village visitations than the Missionaries of Africa.

Methodological Considerations.

In writing this thesis I will follow the See-Judge-Act method which is characteristic of what is commonly known as the pastoral circle.

This work unfolds into four chapters:

1. Chapter one discusses the general background and the short history of Malawian society in which the church is called for to fulfil her mission. The first section of this chapter will treat the demographic and economic data, the Social, cultural, political, religious and the challenges facing Malawi.
2. Chapter two discusses the Catholic church in Malawi with some general information, statistics and history. Particular focus will be on the activities of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa and how they helped the church expand in the country. This will include the role they played in the country on socio-political issues. This focus on the two missionary societies will include a description of their charism and mission.
3. Chapter three will be on social analysis on the pastoral approaches of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa on the particular themes of inculturation, catechetical approach and justice and peace This will correspond to the 'see' and 'judge' part of the pastoral circle.
4. Chapter four will be dedicated to proposing an elaborated project of integral evangelisation and mutual collaboration in mission and ministry and will correspond to the 'act' part of the pastoral circle.

CHAPTER 1

MALAWI IN BRIEF

Introduction

For any effective evangelisation and pastoral programme to achieve its aims, the agents of pastoral action and all those involved in its implementation need to be familiarised with the society and the people they want to evangelise. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to give a general picture of Malawian society. I will focus on facts and issues that are relevant to the understanding of the background and the evolution of the current state facing the society and church in Malawi. This in turn will allow me to come up with relevant recommendations for effective evangelisation towards the third millenium.

1.1 General Description of Malawi.

1.1.1 Demographic and Economic Data.

The Republic of Malawi is a landlocked country in South Eastern Africa with an area of 118,485-sq. km. of which the land area is 94,916 sq. km. The country extends 853 km north to south and 257 km from east to west. Malawi shares its total international boundary of 2,768 km with three neighbours, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia.

The name 'Malawi' has two fold nuances. It is derived from the term 'Maravi' which in the first place was used to cover people living north of the Zambezi river on either side of the present Lake Malawi. Secondly it means light glow or flame depicting the effects of sunlight on the lake. It also refers to the glow made at night in the sky by the forges which the early people built to smelt iron ore.¹

¹Oliver Ransford, Livingstones Lake: The Drama of Nyasa (London: Camelot Press, 1966), 22.

The population of Malawi as recorded by the final results of the 1987 Population and Housing Census gave a total of 7,988,507 persons. Of the total population enumerated in the 1987 Census, 50 per cent were in the Southern Region, 39 per cent in the Central Region and 11 per cent in the Northern Region. This implies that the Southern Region, with about a third of the total land area, accommodated about half the population of Malawi. About 89 per cent of the population lived in the rural areas while about 11 percent lived in the urban areas. As a summary of the findings of the 1987 Population And Housing Census, Malawi's population was about 8 million with a population density of 85 persons per square kilometre and a sex ratio of 94 males per 100 females. Malawi has over the years experienced rapid population growth.

Malawi's economy is entirely dependent on agriculture. However the weather conditions and world prices for agro-commodities constantly dictate upon this kind of economy. There are no valuable mineral sources and mines. Basically Malawians are farmers and they grow tobacco, tea, sugar, groundnuts maize rice and cotton. Until recently young men worked in the mines of South Africa to get better pay to support their families back home. Between 1965-1979 Malawi saw growth in outputs, exports, labour migration and remittances and in internal wage employment, although little changed in the lives of the common people. Most growth was in agriculture, but with a significant rise in production in the manufacturing sector: this was mainly in import substitution and agricultural processing part of the export sector.² The Malawi GNP was more than twice its figure in 1964 from \$88million to \$190million, and government expenditure on development had increased by 25 times the 1964 allocation.³ The major characteristic of Malawian agricultural policy since the late 1960s has been the concentration of resources on the estate sector. This has focused on cash cropping and exports, the most important

²Malawi A Moment of Truth, 17.

³Trevor Cullen, Malawi, A Turning Point (Edinburgh: Pentland Press Ltd, 1994), 22.

being tobacco, sugar and tea. Technically Malawi has a free market but former President Banda dominated the economy through his control of the two companies that monopolised large sectors of it: The Press Holdings and the Agricultural Development and Marketing Organisation (Admarc). After 1979 the economic growth which had seen was beginning to face difficult times. This led to the adoption of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural adjustment programme. This resulted with a drop in the inflation, a deficit in the balance of payments and an increase in investments. It was in the 1980s when inflation rose. The guerrilla war in Mozambique blocked Malawi's access to the port at Beira. Alternatively imported goods were redirected to neighbouring countries like South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and finally into Malawi. This added an extra 38 million pounds to the annual transport bill and forced an increase in domestic prices. By 1988 a four-year IMF Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) had to be negotiated.⁴ An earthquake in 1990 and floods resulted in food shortages and also over a million refugees from neighbouring Mozambique strained the economy. Corruption caused economic downfall. Malawi is classified as a least developed country with an estimated GNP per capita of \$230 in 1991, and ranks among the 15 least developed countries in the world.

In May 1992, Western donor nations suspended all but urgent humanitarian aid to Malawi, pending an improvement in the Governments' human rights record. Aid was gradually resumed, however, following the June 1993 referendum on the introduction of multi-party democracy. Since independence, Banda implemented economic policies that have reaped rewards for him and the small elite who were around him. With his many tobacco estates, he managed to employ thousands of relatively unskilled labour that to a certain extent provided a source of living and employment. However the workers were exploited with long hours of work, poor working conditions and low salaries.

⁴Third World Guide, 1993-94 ed., s.v. 397.

1.1.2 Social-Cultural Context.

The people of Malawi are almost entirely of Bantu origin. The main ethnic groups are Chewa, Yao, Lomwe, Tonga, Tumbuka, Nyanja and Ngoni. The society is characterised by the patrilineal system in the North and in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts in the South, and the matrilineal system in the Central and the remaining districts in the South each having its own set of social rules. The extended family remains the chief production unit and the main source of social support. The village is organised under customary law with authority vested in the traditional village headman helped by elders. Clusters of villages are grouped under prominent headmen, sub-chiefs, and traditional chiefs.⁵ Traditional beliefs, customs, ceremonies and other social and cultural factors have powerful influence on community life. These factors determine social relationships, decision-making patterns, inheritance rights and so on.

The new national alignments are regional, political or religious rather than ethnic in character. Most Europeans and Asians constitute only a small percentage of the population. They live in the urban areas of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. They continue to exercise an influence in the administration and economy.

The Malawian people have got very rich cultural values such as respect for everyone, especially elders, politeness and solidarity. Malawians are known for friendliness and hospitality. Like in many African societies one of the key values of Malawian traditional culture is the great sense of solidarity in all aspects of life. The intensity of this solidarity is differently expressed and experienced. The bonds vary from nuclear, extended and neighbourhood levels. There is a great sense of community and this is especially noticed in initiation ceremonies, marriage and funerals. It is difficult to conceive of a village or place where these values are not upheld. Even in urban areas there

⁵UNICEF & UNDP report, Situation Analysis of poverty in Malawi, 1993 ed., s.v. 15.

is a great sense of solidarity and community although its expressions may differ from those of a rural setting. Though communal solidarity still exists in the Malawian society, it is slowly weakening under pressure from modern civilisation.

The Malawian 'traditional setting believed' and still believes in a communal network of relationships and interdependence. Although individuals in social groups retained their freedom of conscience and initiative, this freedom always weighed against the responsibility to strive for and to safeguard the communal welfare. The heads of families, elders and other leaders of the community at different levels of society, were the chief guardians of that value, but practically every member of the society or community had a role to play through a network of permanent and non-permanent duties and rights. It should be noted that this communal network and solidarity has its shortcomings. It can hamper personal progress in the name of maintaining the good of the community and it can also deform the conscience of the individual persons in the community by giving up everything according to the will of the group.

1.1.3 Political Data.

Malawi was declared a British protectorate of Nyasaland in 1891. The British had their interests in the country especially in agriculture and to find cheap labour to send to their mines in Northern and Southern Rhodesia. With this colonial rule and the oppression and abuses that went with it, Africans began to be aware of the hardship they encountered at the hands of the colonial government. It was not until 1915 that John Chilembwe led an uprising against the British but unfortunately it failed to achieve its goals. This did not end in vain since many prominent people were still trying to find ways and means of driving the Europeans away. In 1944, the first national political organisation, the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) was formed. Banda, then working in North London was an active

NAC supporter. In 1953 Nyasaland was linked with two other British dependencies, Northern and Southern Rhodesia now (Zambia and Zimbabwe), to form a Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.⁶ This federation lasted a period of ten years. NAC feared that the federation would mean domination and they actively opposed it. This explains why in 1957, the leaders of NAC invited Banda to Nyasaland to assume the leadership of NAC in order to help them mount a resistance against the colonial government.⁷

Dr. Banda returned to Malawi in July 1958 after 40 years of absence and in August the same year was elected as party leader. In early 1959, Banda launched a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience. He was arrested and sent to Gweru prison in the then Rhodesia and was released on 1st April 1960. In 1961 Nyasaland held its first general elections and the Nyasaland African Congress party were victorious. The Malawi Congress Party was formed to replace the Nyasaland African Congress. Malawi gained self-rule in 1963 with Dr. Banda as its first Prime Minister.

On the 6th of July 1964 Nyasaland became the independent state of Malawi with Dr. Banda as its first president. Two years later Malawi became a Republic still maintaining links with Britain through the British Commonwealth. In 1971, Dr. Banda became the Life president of the Republic of Malawi. From 1964 to 1994 Banda was the sole president of Malawi with only the Malawi Congress as a legal party in the country.

The thirty-one years of Dr. Banda as president were marked with oppression, intimidation and fear. These years exposed Banda's tendency towards authoritarian rule and created an exiled opposition movement. Dr. Banda could not allow anybody to question his decisions because he believed he knew everything. He took the government as his own personal property. Only two months after independence in July 1964, Banda dismissed four cabinet ministers for disagreeing with his foreign policy towards South

⁶The Europa YearBook, 1994 ed., s.v. 1903.

⁷Cullen, 11.

Africa, Portugal and his recognition of the People's Republic of China. The ministers included Kanyama Chiume, Orton Chirwa, Augustine Bwanausi, and Rose Chibambo. The other ministers resigned in protest and were forced into exile in Zambia.⁸ As the political icons were weakened, the old man, Kamuzu Banda, consolidated his power grip on Malawi. He continued to create a climate of fear with threatening remarks against his opponents:

These people are wild animals. They must be destroyed. No beating about the bush. Arrest them, but if they resist arrest, well anything you do is all right as far as I am concerned.⁹

The generation gap that existed between Banda and his ministers made it difficult for him to relate to any one on equal terms. He even reached the extent of addressing his ministers as, 'My boys'. All the ministers were expected to do was to carry out Banda's orders. At the last mass rally before independence he clearly stated:

The Malawi system, the Malawi style is that Kamuzu says it's just that, and then it's finished. Whether anyone likes it or not, that is how it is going to be here. No nonsense, no nonsense. You cannot have anybody deciding what to do.¹⁰

It was in 1983 that government ministers spoke out against Banda. Banda wanted to go abroad for a longer time that set off a constitutional crisis. A faction led by the then official hostess Mama Cecilia Tamanda Kadzamira wanted Mr. Tembo her uncle to be the caretaker president. This move was challenged by three leading cabinet ministers, Aaron Gadama, Minister for the Central Region and leader of the house, Twaibu Sangala, Minister for health, Dick Matenje, Secretary General of the MCP, and David Chiwanga, MP for Chikwawa. Official government reports said the four were killed in a 'car accident'

⁸Ibid., 13.

⁹Philip Short, Banda (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 256.

¹⁰Ibid., 256.

on their way home from a cabinet meeting. However the police who arrived on the spot discovered fresh bullet wounds in each of the corpses. They were directed by police headquarters to put the coffins in sealed coffins and were ordered not to open them even for viewing before the burial.

Malawian critics residing in the neighbouring countries were sought out. In 1983 Attati Mpakati, was found murdered in a storm drain in Harare. Mkwapatira Mhango, a journalist exiled to Zambia for criticising Banda's autocratic rule, died after a bomb attack on his Lusaka home in 1989. Ten people including Mhango's two wives and young children were killed in the attack. Those living in the country had to suffer many reprisals. Banda could detain without trial for years anybody whom he feared. The detention of Jack Mapanje, the countries leading poet and former head of English at Zomba's Chancellor College is a typical example. He was detained in September 1987 and imprisoned for three and a half years. He was never told the reason for his arrest.¹¹

As far as foreign policy is concerned, Malawi is largely pro-western and the most outstanding feature of Malawi's foreign policy has been its alliance with the apartheid government in South Africa. Banda established formal diplomatic relations with South Africa in 1967. In return South Africa provided aid for building the new capital of Lilongwe and other prestigious projects. Portugal and South Africa backed Banda in hostile dealings with his neighbours, who made frequent allegations that Malawi and South Africa had a military agreement. It is also alleged that Malawi provided supply, rest and training camps to Renamo, and the right-wing movement in Mozambique.¹²

For some 25 years after independence, politics in Malawi followed a rather quiet pattern. After 1989 the life president's declining age was apparent. Since 1986 power actually rested with the official Hostess Cecilia Kadzamira and her uncle and then minister

¹¹Cullen, 14 - 17.

¹²Malawi A Moment of Truth, 19.

of state Mr. John Tembo. Both Tembo and Cecilia were unpopular and they were alleged to be entirely ruthless in pursuing their own political ambitions. This led to increased dissatisfaction of the masses and the bishop's letter of March 1992, came at the right moment to express the people's grievances.

The Catholic Bishop's pastoral letter of March 1992, which was critical of the government's violation of justice and human rights, opened the people's eyes and acted as a catalyst for democratic change. This forced the government to agree to a referendum in 1993. People voted in favour of multiparty democracy. Since then political organisations have mushroomed in Malawi. The Malawi Congress Party was the sole party between the years 1966 and 1993. In June 1993, the constitution was amended to provide for the introduction of a multiparty political system. Eight political parties were authorised to participate in the multiparty elections of May 1994. These were the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), Congress for the Second Republic (CSR), Malawi Congress Party (MCP), The united Democratic Front (UDF) formed in 1992, with Bakili Muluzi as president.¹³ With people voting for multiparty democracy, in May 1994, Malawi held its first multiparty general elections that saw the United Democratic Front winning. This was an end to Dr. Banda's 30 years of autocratic rule. Dr. Bakili Muluzi was then sworn in as the first president in the new political setting.

After the defeat of Banda the country enjoyed a mini boom of exiles and new investors brought money to the country. The people now could express themselves freely unlike the days of Banda when freedom of expression meant detention. There is now a big challenge since the transition from a one-party system to multi-party is still on. Basically the people are the same and so there is a lot of talk in the papers to improve the quality of democracy in the country.

¹³The Europa YearBook, 1994 ed., s.v. 1911.

1.1.4 Religious Data.

According to unofficial sources, an estimated 65% of the population of Malawi is Christian, of which 22% are Catholics: 16% is Muslim and 19% people of other faiths. The first foreign religion to enter Malawi was Christianity. The official date for the arrival of Christianity in the country is 1861 when the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), established a mission at Magomero in the southern part of the country under Bishop Mackenzie. Unfortunately he died a few months later. UMCA withdrew to Zanzibar in 1863 because of malaria only to return to the east shores of Lake Malawi in 1881. Then in 1875 the Free Church of Scotland started Livingstonia mission at Cape Maclear. The Church of Scotland who started a mission at Blantyre in 1876 follows this. And the Dutch Reformed Church started a mission at Mvera in 1889.

The Catholic missionaries were spearheaded by the Missionaries of Africa who arrived at Fort Johnston, now Mangochi, in 1889 from Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). Due to difficulties on the spot they withdrew in 1891. It was not until 1901 when the Montfort Missionaries came to Malawi and officially planted the Catholic Church. That is why 1901 is the official date for the coming of the Catholic Church in Malawi.

There are many Muslims in Malawi mainly among the Asian community and some indigenous Malawians. Among the Protestant churches in Malawi we have the Baptist Convention in Malawi, The Anglican, the Free Church of Scotland and Dutch Reformed Churches. There are also a number of independent African churches that broke away from the established churches and from other independent African Churches. This was indicative of a desire to be free from the control of white missionaries,¹⁴ and in protest

¹⁴ Keneth R. Ross, Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1992), 129.

against white control and racial discrimination. These are characterised by emphasis on rituals and incorporation of African religious beliefs.

1.2 Traditional Beliefs and Practices.

1.2.1 Belief in God.

The Malawian tradition holds belief in one God called Mulungu. Several attributes define the nature of God:

1. **Namalenga (Creator)** This attributive name of God originated from the creating work he does in the world. The name literally means “the one who creates”. God is the sole originator of each and everything that exists on earth.

Among the Chewa, the myth of creation has it that God created the first human beings and walked on earth with himself. There was harmony between God, human beings and animals until one-day man playing with twigs one soft and the other hard made fire. He set fire to the bush and everywhere was destruction, smoke and ashes. All the animals fled for safety. Goats and dogs fled to man while the rest of the animals fled into the bush. Anger entered the hearts of both man and animals creating enmity between them. God could no longer live in this world of hatred where men had ruined his plan of peace. He went high up in the sky where he lived for fear of being suffocated by the smoke.¹⁵ This indeed suggests harmony between God, man and animals before man destroyed everything himself. However although God went up into the sky man kept contact with him by creating a shrine where he begged God for rain, blessings and protection. The duty of those who offer sacrifices to this rain shrine and others is to act as a link, intermediaries between God and the rest of the human population.

¹⁵Claude Boucher Chisale, “The Mystery of Life and Death,” KuNgoni Manuscripts, Vol. 1, No 1 (December 1996) 80.

2. **Chauta or Chiuta (big bow).** This means covering as a chicken does over its young ones. The name implies the shelter and protection God gives over whatever he has created. This action of protection takes the form of a bow. The rainbow is considered by traditional Malawians as the bow of God showing his protective power over his creation.
3. **Mphambe (lightning)** Mphambe is a word connected to lightning and thunder. This is a clear manifestation of God's power over the universe. Many peoples in Malawi do have a strong belief in God's divine providence that in other words is God's power in action. He is all powerful, all knowing, all present. He is the one who created the world and is Lord and master of everything on earth.
4. The fourth attribute is **Leza**. It means being meek, patient, slow to anger, and slow to punish. This shows that at one and the same time God is all-powerful and also like a mother very patient with his creatures.
5. **Chisumphu:** God is wisdom and wisdom is one of the qualities people admire. It is connected with age and the elders of the village are a treasure to society because life expectancy is a condition if one is to be considered wise. This wisdom is practical. For God it makes him possible to give the people rain. God gives part of his wisdom to people thus the wisdom that people have is nothing but a participation in God's Eternal wisdom. Before their conversion to Christianity many Malawians worshipped God under big trees (kachere, nsolo, and mthundu). It is here that they offered sacrifices to God through the ancestors who are departed people. These were places that were believed to be the dwelling place of the spirits. They saw this as a place of security and health worth worshipping God. They searched for God the source of their life.

1.2.2 Belief in Spirits.

Malawians believe in two categories of spirits. The first is the non-human spirits that comprises of the good and evil spirits. The good spirits are angels and the evil spirits are devils. Secondly we have the human spirits. These are the ancestral spirits. Most religious activities revolve around intermediary spirits and all the other practices are closely related to efforts to win the good favour of these spirits.¹⁶ This is an important element in most Malawian societies especially in the structure of the traditional religion. These spirits are considered beings of a higher status than that of human beings, it is commonly believed that spirits are what remains of human beings when they die physically. This becomes the ultimate status of men, the point of change or development beyond which men can not go... spirits are the destiny of man, and beyond them is God.¹⁷

The ancestors like all spirits are invisible but they may make themselves visible either by appearing in the form of a person who might have died some time past or in the form of animal. They also appear in dreams especially to diviners and medicine men. They make themselves present to society by way of spirit possession. The type of message they receive evidences many traditional types of spirit possession. For example almost a year after the death of my uncle, an aunt of mine told me she had a dream in which she saw my uncle. He was asking her to wash his cassock.¹⁸ She interpreted this dream as an invitation that it was high time they had a remembrance meal.

Traditional Malawian society also believes in some spirits different from the ones described in the preceding paragraphs. These spirits are bad and cause harm and havoc. As Idowu points out, "one important human spirit with which Africa has had to reckon very

¹⁶The *Encyclopaedia of Third World*, 1987 ed., s.v. 1246.

¹⁷Ibid., 79.

¹⁸Mama Greziana Matiki, interview by author, 15 July 1997, Magomero, Malawi, tape recording.

painfully, very disastrously, is the spirit of the witches.”¹⁹ That is also the reality to many Malawians. The methods witches use to operate are secret and so no one can find anybody to explain exactly what happens. However one thing is clear that they operate in order to cause harm to other people. It is not the competence of this paper to argue on the truthfulness of this or its falsity but what is clear is that people fear a lot. Even some people fear to build decent houses for fear of being bewitched as a parishioners once said to me;

Father this place is very dangerous, you cannot develop yourself the way you want. With all your education and financial capabilities, you cannot build a good house for fear of being bewitched. You have to build a house that fits the environment otherwise you invite hell upon yourself and your family members. You can only build a good house in town not in a village like this one.²⁰

1.2.3 Belief in the Ancestors.

Ancestors occupy a significant place in Malawian traditional belief. It is believed that they are always among their own people in spirit. They are looked upon as guardians of the individuals, families, and the community as a whole. They seek to please and preserve their living relatives, provided that the latter pledge to appease their ancestors. By the same token, if they are displeased the ancestors may bring heavy punishment to individuals and families. The ancestors have a role in traditional Malawian society of holding the community together. The community offers sacrifices asking them for their needs, for instance rain, and in times of epidemics they offer beer to appease them and to obtain blessings and protection.

Ancestors are those people who no longer are physically alive and yet are related to those who are still physically alive. This relationship as Dr. Nyamiti states can be a natural relationship between the ancestor and his earthly relatives or supernatural or sacred status

¹⁹E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Religions and Philosophy. : A Definition* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1973), 175.

²⁰Mr Bazilio Ndalama Gama, interview by author, 15 July 1997, Magomero, Malawi, tape recording.

acquired by the ancestor through death.²¹ The natural ties that existed before one died continue to exist even after one's death. The idea of ancestorship is very strong among the Chewa, Lomwe, Mang'anja and many other tribes in Malawi. There is a constant communication and contact which is facilitated by rites which involve pouring libation of beer or sweet beer under big trees or rocks. The people believe that the departed are still alive and present to the society they belonged to while physically alive. This presence involves active participation in whatever the living are doing. For example when one drops a piece of food while eating, one is not allowed to pick it and eat again. The dropping is believed to be caused by the ancestors who want a share. Or when some people go for drinking, they pour down a bit of the beer before actually starting drinking. They offer this to the ancestors. Thus the ancestors stand somewhere in communion with God and with man as Laurenti Magesa points out:

Ancestorship is an act of communion in remembrance that is also actualisation or resurrection. It constitutes making present among us here and now those who are remembered. Ancestors and their descendants on earth are in continuity and are in a communion and in a constant exchange of gifts and favours. While the living are obliged to seek ancestral communion for the sake of their well-being, the ancestors are not passive in this exchange, they also desire to be in communion with their living kin, to be remembered and honoured.²²

The ancestors are present in the society by those who are named after them. Newly born children are given the names that have relevance and meaning to the clan. People will name a child after a dead person they consider to be good and who had influence they want to see in the child. Naming involves the incarnation or actualisation of a person (an ancestor); a certain desired moral quality or value, a physical trait of power, or an occasion

²¹Charles Nyamiti, Christ The Ancestor, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), 15.

²²Laurenti Magesa, African Religion, The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life, (New York: Orbis, 1997), 78.

or event.²³ Some people will name a child according to the circumstances he was born. For instance I was named after my maternal grandfather and given the name 'Mabvuto' (problems). The name indicates that when I was born our extended family were having some kind of problems.

1.2.4 Fecundity and Procreation.

According to their world-view, vitalism is one of the aspects of Malawian traditional societies. Africans are people who are full of life, a life that is not static but dynamic. The fullness of life is to be prolonged to adulthood and to procreation. The ceremonies that surround the transition into adulthood are celebrated with joy and dignity. Like in many African societies fecundity is an important aspect in Malawian societies and this life which is dynamic has to be perpetuated at all costs because procreation guarantees the continuity of the family, the tribe and the clan. Because the human person is mortal, a way to foster this continuity is by getting married. It is in this context and understanding that impotence and sterility is regarded as a curse and a disgrace. A man or woman who is impotent is seen as a stumbling block to the continuity of life, and society regards such people with low admiration. If however the cause is diagnosed and rectified, the person is accepted.

1.2.5 Initiation and Puberty rites.

A child in traditional Malawian societies is not full member of the society until he/she can actively contribute to society. The child must grow out of childhood and enter into adulthood physically, socially and religiously. Puberty rites traditionally mark this growing from childhood to adulthood. In the local language these rites are called

²³Ibid., 89.

Chinamwali which literally means 'instruction'. Thus initiation gives a new status to those who undergo it and also gives new responsibilities. The instruction the individual received in childhood is supplemented with new ones according to his or her stage in life:

But the most significant instruction on the life of the clan, the individual's rights and responsibilities in society and then the transition from childhood to adulthood is achieved only at or around puberty during the process of initiation. This is the time when the individual's vital force and the power of life generally are formally confirmed and imprinted indelibly in the individual's rational consciousness.²⁴

As the future leaders of the Malawian societies, learning the values of co-operation and sharing and the central importance of belonging to a family, clan and a community as an integral and responsible member constitutes this initial phase of the initiation process.²⁵ It is this solidarity that is mainly stressed in the instruction in Malawian societies that help the individual to live with a community minded spirit.

The initiation process that turns a youth from a boy or girl into a man or woman points to marriage as the most basic expression of the desire to maintain life. Without its consummation in marriage, initiation remains incomplete. Whatever else a person has or is, without marriage and children, one is nothing. Indeed, such a person is seen as damned a lost soul. Without marriage and children, a person is most likely 'rotten' in religious terms, that is, completely dead.²⁶

The initiation of the young people is one of the key moments in the rhythms of the individual life that is also the rhythm of the corporate group of which the individual is part.²⁷ In many Malawian societies, initiation takes place at different ages. Among the

²⁴Ibid., 95.

²⁵Ibid., 96.

²⁶Mbiti, 121.

²⁷Magesa, 101.

Chewa this takes place when the boys were almost ready for marriage, while for the Lomwe, Mang'anja, and Yao it takes place when the boy is about ten years old. All these moments are important in their lives as they mark the beginning of entering fully in the society. After the initiation the individual acquires a new status in society and is more respected by the people and endowed with responsibility.

The initiation for boys takes place in a secluded place called 'Thedzo' or 'Simba' preferably near the river banks a good distance from the village. On the first day of the initiation, they are led to the place by their parents carrying a chicken that is given to the instructors as a fee. As soon as they enter the Simba, they are circumcised. An initiation operation gives a clear message that to be self-giving and to sacrifice oneself for the sake of the community is an essential aspect of life, even if this means pain or may even demand extensive suffering. Furthermore the operation is intended to tell the initiate that to know oneself and to appreciate the worth of others demands self-denial and a certain amount of suffering. The initiation operation also establishes the young person's identity as a member of a certain ethnic group and unites him in a very special way with the group's ancestors.²⁸ The days that follow are dedicated to instruction on adult behaviour, how to behave and relate toward elders, women and children. Singing does a lot of instruction. Depending on the previous behaviour of the initiate, the instructors may inflict physical pain and the whole initiation lasts from two weeks to one month.

The girl's initiation and puberty rites are performed at puberty on the first menstruation and first pregnancy. This is the only way a girl grows into adulthood. This is a school for shaping and moulding the behaviour of the young girls. They start with the girls' actual experience and move on to other things relevant to them. Everybody in the community has responsibility towards the girls growing into mature, free and responsible

²⁸Ibid., 101.

persons. In normal circumstances, the girls are kept in the bush for two or three weeks preferably near water. The instructress (Nankungwi) gets a record of the girl's behaviour from her parents or guardians and she works to improve on that in order to modify her conduct. An important part of the initiation is on sex education. The girls are taught many things concerning hygiene during their menstruation period, and the taboos that go along with it. In some tribes, for instance the Yao, initiation involves clitoridectomy, the excision or the enlargement of the labia minora, perforation of the ears or lips, scarifications of parts of the body, or a combination of these. These acts are aimed at satisfying man when the make love.

When a girl is reported to have the first pregnancy, it is taken as an important moment in her life. This is well celebrated when it is within the marriage structure. Any pregnancy outside marriage was followed by an initiation that was not dignified at all. A girl who gets pregnant outside the established norms brings shame not only to herself, but also to the parents and the whole extended family. The girl in such a situation on her graduation day is wrapped with the intestines of a dog. Conception is not seen as merely a result of man and woman coming together in the act of sexual intercourse. It is most basically understood as the result of a blessing from God and the ancestors. Without divine ancestral blessing, conception may well not be possible. God, ancestors, mother and father must co-operate for conception to take place.²⁹

Pregnancy is a clear proof that the girl is fertile and can continue the life process. Pregnancy is considered to be a delicate issue that needs special care and attention. The Nankungwi gives the girl proper instructions and regulations. Most of these instructions are taboos and restrictions to protect herself and the child growing inside her. These

²⁹Ibid., 83.

involve abstinence from sexual intercourse. She is forbidden to apply salt to anything when cooking for fear of causing harm to the whole community.

1.2.6 The Nyau Society.

An important factor especially among the Chewa people is the Nyau society and Nyau dance. They are of interest here because especially the Missionaries of Africa have worked within this cultural heritage. Nyau secret societies are found mainly among the Chewa people of Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In cosmic terms, the Nyau may be interpreted as a re-enactment of the primal co-existence of the three categories of men, animals and spirits in friendship and their subsequent division by fire. The society comprises of men who perform ritual dance while wearing masks. The masks are burned after use and fire is given importance as it reflects the turning point of man's life when he discovered it.

As Linden points out the Nyau is not simply a system of religious beliefs but a society with extensive claims on its membership.³⁰ The society embraces nearly all the important cultural values and activities of the Chewa. Originally the Nyau dances were performed during the communal female initiation rites at puberty, Chinamwali rites and at funerals. It is during the Nyau dances that boys are initiated, at the installation of a chief, death anniversary of an elderly person. The Nyau dance is therefore a social and religious phenomenon and cannot be ignored. The Nyau dance however has received a great deal of criticism from a cross-section of religious leaders both Catholic and Protestants. What people find difficult is that when the Nyau enter a village, they would steal things like chickens and other properties. People are supposed just to look on and say an animal has

³⁰Ian Linden, Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland (London: The Chaucer Press, 1974), 117.

taken the chicken and therefore one cannot claim anything from an animal. Secondly the Nyau are accused of using abusive language when performing their dances. They mention the private parts of men and women in public. This causes uneasiness in some people. Another accusation levelled against the Nyau is that they frighten and beat people. All these allegations could be true to a certain extent. Looking at the Nyau society from a cultural and religious point of view, it is indeed both entertaining and meaningful to the people since the dance is performed at very important stages of life.

1.3 Challenges Facing Malawi.

Malawi faces a number of challenges which can be tackled if well thought and planned. The economy, cultural and social life and the religious should come in harmony with one another and education for freedom and responsibility in democracy.

1.3.1 Reconciliation.

For as long as thirty years of Banda's rule, people participated in politics with an always-alooof mind. People could not even trust their own wives for fear that they would be reported to the members of the Malawi Congress Party. Under the slogans of 'keeping peace and calm, law and order, Malawians sacrificed their capacity for a critical outlook on the system. The thirty years of silence has had an impact on the Malawian people especially those who were aware of what was happening and could not do anything. University students felt they were underrated and made to be content sleeping in houses that do not leak and the like.

With the Multiparty democracy that has been in existence since 1993, we have noted that a lot of people have misunderstood the whole concept of democracy. A teacher

once complained to me how difficult it was to teach in the schools because of the misunderstanding of freedom and democracy:

Many of our boys and girls have completely misunderstood the whole concept of freedom and democracy. They think freedom is doing what they want, at the time they want without even thinking of other people's rights. This means they can say anything without giving it a second thought. They want to argue on anything. When you want to discipline a pupil you will often hear 'Zinthu zasintha', ano simasiku a MCP, (things have changed, these are not the days of MCP or single party system) We are now free. We are no longer under dictatorship and autocratic rule.³¹

A big challenge therefore is to do civic education on issues of freedom and democracy especially to the youth since at this stage of life, they are looking for an identity and autonomy in their lives. The right understanding of democracy and freedom can equip them to follow issues and help them to make free and responsible decisions.

The 1994 general elections that saw the fall of Banda revealed that voting was mainly on regional basis. The majority of the people from the northern region voted in favour of AFORD because the president of that party comes from the north. The Central region voted for MCP and the Southern region voted for UDF. The elections results have clearly shown that people voted along regional and tribal lines, consequently the current situation is that no party has a majority in parliament. It is important therefore to come to educate the people to vote basing themselves on the policies the parties or the individuals sell rather than to base oneself on where he is coming from. Politicians in the country have the responsibility to unite the people and to demonstrate in parliament that they are working for the people not just to feed themselves without delivering the goods.

³¹Mr Alex Makwiti, interview by author, Thyolo Primary School, 12 April 1997, tape recording.

There is a great need for reconciliation between those who were in the previous government and those in the present. The tendency has been to seek to revenge on the things people have suffered under the autocratic rule of Banda. Those in government today will not be there forever and so it is good to pursue policies that build the nation. Replacing one oppressor with another will not solve the country's problems nor safeguard the newly experienced democracy.

1.3.2 Stamping out official Corruption.

As said earlier on, Malawi is categorised as being among the less developed countries of the world. This is basically due to many factors ranging from lack of mineral resources, to lack of available land for cultivation. The country remains poor and also the previous government concentrated wealth in the hands of just a few individuals. Development aid was just used as a private property, only to benefit a few people. Indeed the Malawian people are caught up in poverty, hunger, malnutrition, diseases and death. The people lack the basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter. It is therefore imperative to root out all forms of corruption so that people may have equal benefits in sharing the country's resources.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the history of Malawi from pre independence times and how it gained self-rule through the leadership of Banda. The economy dependent on agriculture with many people working in South African mines. We have also seen the autocratic nature of Banda that made it impossible for the country to have true freedom even after attaining self-rule. This pointed that there was a great need to seek second liberation for a greater observance of human rights. This we have seen has been attained

with the valuable co-operation between the Bishops and the different groups aspiring for change. The role of the Catholic Church has also been spelled out.

The chapter has also dwelt on the traditional beliefs of the Malawians. There is belief in one God, belief in solidarity, family initiation and also the Nyau societies. These as we shall see in the coming chapters are ground for inculturation. The fact that missionaries were against initiation rites and Nyau and belief in ancestors and yet these things persisted up to now is both a challenge and an invitation to look closely in the culture of the people if they are to be true Malawians and true Catholics.

The challenges facing the Malawian society, namely corruption, reconciliation, need for civic education on freedom and responsibility in a democratic society can not be ignored if the country is to develop positively. The role of the government and the Church in this regard is vital. In the next chapter we shall see the coming of the Catholic Church to Malawi, the aims of the missionaries, their difficulties and their struggles in establishing the church.

CHAPTER II

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI

Introduction

After surveying the general situation of Malawi, I will now analyse the Church in Malawi. The first part will be a brief history of the church in Malawi. This will shed more light in its early stages of growth and the role it has so far played in different areas of life. I will first focus on its physical growth and then on the role it played in politics which has greatly affected the social life of the country. After that I will describe the pastoral approach it has adopted. Since almost forty years passed before the ordination of the first indigenous priest, most of what is said here will be the work of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa.

2.1 The Coming of the Missionaries.

2.1.1 First-Approach- the Missionaries of Africa.

Cardinal Lavignerie Archbishop of Algiers founded the Society of the Missionaries of Africa in 1868. It is a missionary institute of priests and brothers living in community. Its aim is to proclaim the Gospel to the people of the African world. Because of its origins the society has always had particular interest in Muslims. It has chosen as its name, 'The Society of the Missionaries of Africa.'³²

Apart from a few Portuguese missionaries who might have visited Malawi just in passing from Mozambique, the Catholic Missionaries first arrived in 1889. This was on the shores of Lake Malawi in a territory of a Yao chief called Mponda who was a prominent figure of the day. This was almost 28 years after the establishment of several Christian

³²Society of the Missionaries of Africa, White Fathers, Constitutions and Laws, (Rome: 1981), No. 1

denominations such as the Presbyterians and Anglicans and Dutch Reformed Churches. Five Missionaries of Africa were chosen for the Nyasa Region of Central Africa and they arrived at Quelimane in Mozambique in August 1889. Fr. Adolphe Lechaptois, Fr. Joseph Mercui, Fr. Heurtebise, Br. Antoine Verkuylen and Br. Chretien Hermann led the group. The group arrived in Fort Johnston (Mangochi), on 28th December 1889. Malawi was not the target of the Missionaries of Africa for evangelisation but they needed it as a staging post on their way to Uganda and Tanzania where their priorities lay.³³ They had hoped that from Lake Malawi they would be able to open up a route to the interior.

The coming of the five missionaries to Malawi coincided with the Europeans' struggle for colonies in Africa.³⁴ According to Weller and Linden, the Missionaries of Africa arrived on the shores of Lake Malawi in the vanguard of Portuguese imperialism. On one hand the Portuguese wanted to use the Missionaries of Africa for their political advantage and on the other, the Missionaries of Africa wanted the protection of the Portuguese against British Protestant colonial rule. Mponda himself wanted the Missionaries of Africa in order to strengthen his own position. The Portuguese therefore planned to establish a mission at Mponda village on the southern tip of the Lake to give substance to their shadowy claims to the area; the Blantyre and Livingstonia missions

³³The Missionaries of Africa had co-operated with the Portuguese because the Abushiri rising in Tanzania and the Muslim wars in Uganda of 1888 had cut off so many of their men from contact with the coast. They hoped that from Lake Malawi they would be able to open up a route to the interior. Malawi was for the missionaries merely a staging post to Tanzania and Uganda, where their important stations lay. In 1897, Joseph Dupont was made Vicar Apostolic of the Nyasa vicariate stretching from Tanzania's border in the north to the Shire's confluence with Ruo in the south and from Lake Bangweulu in the west to Mozambique in the east. Bishop Dupont had three priests and one lay brother to help him and in any case his real interest lay in the Bemba people, to whom he was personally devoted. It was only the alarming realisation that Malawi with its delightful climate and complacent colonial office regime was becoming a Protestant playground with the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist, Anglican and Baptist Missions in all the choicest areas, which determined him to send any missionary group he could find to claim Malawi for the Catholic church.

³⁴Weller., 100.

seemed to them centres of British influence to be neutralised by a Catholic mission.³⁵ Portuguese wanted their political claims on Malawi through missionaries and that is why the Missionaries of Africa went to Mponda under Portuguese protection. As things transpired the missionaries found themselves in the middle of a dispute between the Portuguese and the British. Chief Mponda himself was more inclined to accept the support of the British than that of the Portuguese. There was not much left for the missionaries except to do charity work and teach children. They did not build any church, did not convert a single adult, and baptised only one child.³⁶ However the group remained at Mponda from December 1889 till June 1891 under very trying circumstances. Those were the hard times of the beginnings of the Catholic Mission in Malawi. Several years would have been needed for the missionaries to gain confidence from the people and found the first Christian community. After one and half years of presence they had to leave Mponda on the orders of their higher superiors. They left Malawi and joined their confreres who had settled in the south of Tanganyika.³⁷ On 19th October 1891 Mponda mission was shelled and flattened by the British.³⁸

Although the first mission at Mponda had to be abandoned, it remains the first attempt to evangelise Malawi. We may confidently believe that God blessed those first efforts made in deep faith and with great courage. The sacrifices the first missionaries made not least the one of having to leave their first foundation in obedience, were the seeds which would give birth to the church in Malawi.³⁹ This too shows how hard the missionaries worked. Although they abandoned Mponda, Cardinal Lavigerie and Bishop Dupont were contemplating the next move to return to the area again this time they needed

³⁵ Ibid., 100.

³⁶ Roland Vezeau, The Apostolic Vicariate of Nyasa, Origins and First Developments, 1889-1935, (Roma, Italy: Historical Department, Archives, Missionari d'Africa, 1989), 10-11.

³⁷ Linden, Mponda Missionary Diary, 13.

³⁸ Ibid., 31.

³⁹ Ian Linden, Mponda Missionary Diary, 5.

another Catholic missionary congregation to assist them. Their attention was on the Montfort Missionaries.

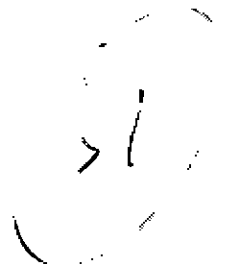
2.1.2 The Second Approach-The Montfort Missionaries.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort, the founder of the Montfort Missionaries, was called to preach the gospel, to be a missionary and was given the title Apostolic Missionary by Pope Clement XI. Born on January 31, 1673 in a small town called Brittany in France, Louis studied at St Thomas Becket College, a Jesuit School. During his college days, He underwent a deep personal experience of God and became vividly aware of the privileged place reserved for Mary in God's plan for our salvation. After his ordination Montfort wanted to go abroad for missionary work but Pope Clement XI assured Montfort that his place as a missionary was in his own country France. Before he died, God granted him the grace he had been praying for since he became a priest:

When I see the needs of the Church, I cannot help groaning in prayer and asking continually for a small, humble company of priests to work in the apostolate under the standard and the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁴⁰

Montfort is first and foremost a missionary. People knew him as a priest with a big rosary. His fundamental option is God alone. For him to evangelise is to do what Jesus Christ did, to depend on Providence and to give preferential care to the destitute. The most important means of bringing people to Christ was his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He is a vagabond preacher who in the last ten years of his priesthood spent his time preaching missions and retreats from one parish to another. During his sixteen years as a priest he gave between 150 to 200 missions and retreats.

⁴⁰Make Way for Jesus, . 7.



In practice of the apostolate, the four cumulative and necessarily linked elements of Montfortian Mission are evangelisation, Mary, availability and acting together. The Montfort Missionaries are called to preach the Good News of Christ to all peoples especially the least privileged in society. In places where primary evangelisation has already taken place, their task is to deepen the Christian faith by renewal of baptismal promises as is well articulated in the constitutions:

Our mission in the Church consists in revealing the mystery of salvation to those who do not yet know it and in helping those who have already heard the Good News to rediscover and deepen this mystery by a renewed consciousness of the meaning of their baptismal commitment.⁴¹

The Montfortian spirituality bases itself on the total consecration of oneself to Jesus through Mary. Since it is through the Blessed Virgin Mary that Jesus Christ came among into the world, is also through her that we must go back to him. Thus the missionaries dedicate themselves to further the reign of Jesus through Mary as the constitutions point out:

To highlight the role of Mary in the work of salvation has been recognised as one of the specific tasks of the Montfortian community. The missionaries seek to present the mission of Our Lady in such a manner that it is well understood by those to whom they are sent. Thus they promote an ever-deeper penetration into the mystery of salvation in this world.⁴²

When the Missionaries of Africa approached the Montfort Missionaries to assist them in Malawi, they accepted the offer in a spirit of availability since they had a missionary calling already. However their only missionary experience outside France was in 1871 when they opened a mission in Haiti.

⁴¹Montfortian Today, The constitutions of the Montfort Missionaries. (Rome, 1994), No. 9.

⁴²Montfortian Today, No. 41.

When the Missionaries of Africa left Malawi, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie and Joseph Dupont vicar apostolic of Nyasa⁴³ could not afford to see this territory left alone for the Protestants. It was the realisation that Malawi with its delightful and pleasant climate was becoming a Protestant playground that determined him to send any Catholic missionary group he could find to claim Malawi for Catholics. Luckily enough for Bishop Dupont, a childhood friend of his had become the head of the Montfort Fathers' seminary and through this friend it was arranged that three priests should go to Africa to set up a mission under the supervision of the Missionaries of Africa. Following discussions in Algiers between Father Maurille, the Superior-General of the Montfort Missionaries and Father Livinhac, head of the Missionaries of Africa, on the possibility of sending Montfort Missionaries to the Shire District of Nyasaland to counter the Protestant menace, a contract was signed on 12th January 1901 by Joseph Dupont and by Livinhac and Maurille. The Montfort Missionaries agreed under this contract to send three missionaries to staff a station in the Shire district. On 21 June Fr. Winnen, Fr. Prezeau, and Fr. Bourget boarded a steamer of the African Lakes Company for the journey up the Shire into Nyasaland. They were at Nsanje three days later, where Bourget disembarked and placed a Catholic emblem, the Miraculous Medal, at the foot of a baobab tree, signalling their intention of dedicating this land to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was a coincidence that Bourget chose a baobab tree at whose foot the Chewa people traditionally made religious offerings. In retrospect there is a certain irony that Bourget chose a tree that had evoked the religious aspirations of generations of Chewa. For the Montforts it meant the claiming of Nyasaland for Catholicism. For the people watching it must have looked like a European making an offering to the spirits of the land. In the ambivalence of this first act was contained both the

⁴³Nyasa Vicariate stretched from Tanzania's border in the north to the Shire confluence with Ruo in the south and from Lake Bangweulu in the west to Mozambique in the east.

similarity of Catholicism to traditional religion, and the gap that separated priests and people in their understanding of the world.⁴⁴

The Montforts arrived at a place called Nzama in the land of Chief Njobvuyalema⁴⁵ in Ntcheu district on 25th July 1901. By the time the Missionaries of Africa returned to Nyasaland again in 1902, the Montforts had had a year to themselves to evangelise Nzama. They built a brick house and translated the lords prayer into Chichewa. The Missionaries of Africa upon their arrival opened Mua mission.

2.1.3 Dispute with Propaganda Fide.

A dispute ensued between the Propaganda Fide, the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa. The Missionaries of Africa had decided to send the Montfort Missionaries to staff a mission without the prior permission of the Propaganda Fide who are responsible for missions. Dupont delayed due to ill health to inform the Propaganda of their contract with the Montfort Missionaries. This angered the Cardinal Ledochowski who was then Prefect of Propaganda and he ordered the withdrawal of the Montfort Missionaries from Nyasaland accusing them of starting a mission illegally. Negotiation ensued and within a few months the Propaganda was circulating a reminder of Leo XIII's constitution on missions of 8 May 1881, *Romanos Pontifices*:

All Ordinaries under the authority of the Propaganda will abstain from this time forth from permitting Religious Institutes to open houses in their territories, without prior authorisation from this Congregation.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Linden, *Catholics*, 46.

⁴⁵Chief Njobvuyalema is one of the Ngoni chiefs of the Central Region of Malawi.

⁴⁶Linden, *Catholics*, 45.

Further negotiations were made explaining the cost of getting the priests back to Europe. In the process Cardinal Ledochowski died in July 1902 and was replaced by the Cardinal Protector of the Montforts Missionaries, Cardinal Gotti, as Prefect of Propaganda. Finally a settlement was made and it forbade sending new Montfort Missionaries to the region until otherwise directed. Then the Congregation reached a decision for the Propagation of Faith to subdivide the Nyasa Vicariate and erect the Shire Prefecture Apostolic on November 24th, 1903. It took four months for the missionaries to get the news in Nyasaland. Shire Prefecture was then entrusted to the Montfort Missionaries, while the Vicariate of Nyasa continued to be under the care of the Missionaries of Africa. In practice this meant that the whole of the Southern Region was in the care of the Montfort Missionaries while the Central and Northern Regions were under the Missionaries of Africa, thus ending the stand off. However there was still some tension around the person of Bishop Dupont who blamed the whole saga with the Propaganda and his difficulties on his association with the Montfort Missionaries. It was providential then that the two institutes stayed together only for a short time and then parted company.

With the division of the vicariate both missionary groups started expanding their areas and receiving new personnel. In May 1903 the Missionaries of Africa founded Kachebere and Likuni missions. By 1904 the missionaries were in five stations, three staffed by the Missionaries of Africa; Kachebere, Likuni and Mua and two staffed by the Montfort Missionaries namely Nzama and Nguludi. In 1906 Neno was opened, 1908 Utale, 1910 Bembeke, 1912 Nankhunda, 1918 Chikwawa, 1921 Nsanje, Limbe, Zomba, Mulanje, Mwanza and Nsipe, 1925 Kasina, 1928 Nambuma. Sixty years later saw a total of seventy-one Catholic mission stations established throughout Malawi.

2.1.4 Shire Vicariate and its Development. .

When in 1903 the Prefecture Apostolic of Shire was formed it was entrusted to the care of the Montfort Fathers. On 14th April 1908, the Shire Prefecture was raised to the status of Vicariate Apostolic with Bishop Louis Auneau as its Apostolic Vicar. In 1952 the vicariate was again divided into two new vicariates, Blantyre and Zomba. Blantyre was entrusted to the Dutch Province of the Montfort Missionaries and Zomba Vicariate remained under the competency of the Mother House of the Montforts, an international responsibility. In 1959 Zomba vicariate was raised to the status of diocese and Blantyre to the status of archdiocese with Jean Baptiste Theunisen as Archbishop of Blantyre and Fr. Hardman as bishop of Zomba. The establishment of the national hierarchy was marked by a pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1959. In March 1962 the Nyasaland Catholic Secretariate was established to co-ordinate the various activities of the church and to act as the executive office of the Episcopal Conference. By 1963 the Montfort Missionaries were established in 27 residences in the two southern vicariates of Blantyre and Zomba.⁴⁷

When independence was declared in 1964, Archbishop Theunisen felt that it was time to hand over to a Malawian successor, the present Archbishop James Chiona who was installed in 1965. His example was followed by Bishop Hardman who retired to make way for Bishop Matthias Chimole. In 1966 the Archdiocese of Blantyre was further divided to form Chikwawa diocese under Bishop Eugene Vroemen. Similarly Zomba diocese was divided to form Mangochi Prefecture, in 1969 and was entrusted to the Italian Montfort Missionaries. Four years later in 1973 it was raised to the status of a diocese under the care of Bishop Alexander Assolari. This became the sixth diocese in Malawi. This state of affairs left four dioceses in the previous Shire Vicariate, and three in the then Nyasa Vicariate.

⁴⁷The Church in Nyasaland, 1963, 15

2.1.5 Nyasa Vicariate and its Development.

The division of Nyasa vicariate in 1903 left the vicariate under the Missionaries of Africa. After four decades the name Vicariate of Nyasa changed to Likuni Vicariate in 1951, and finally became Vicariate of Lilongwe and was raised to the status of diocese in 1959.⁴⁸ The Apostolic Vicariate of Dedza was erected in the territory of the Likuni Vicariate of the Missionaries of Africa on 30th April 1956 and Bishop Cornelius Chitsulo became the first Malawian Apostolic Vicar. The last diocese to be formed in the territory of the Missionaries of Africa was Mzuzu. It was erected in 1961 under the care of Bishop L. Jobidon. Thus by 1963 there were five dioceses, two headed by Monfortist bishops, two by Missionaries of Africa and one by a Malawian bishop.

2.2 Pastoral Approach.

2.2.1 Aims of Evangelisation.

From the very beginning the Catholic missionaries wanted simply to draw Africans into the universal Church, first as laity but also as sisters and priests. In contrast with their Protestant counterparts who hoped for economic transformation and the development of an urban society, the Catholics saw their work as a gradual Christianisation of existing village institutions. They wanted to raise a peasantry devoted to family and farm, loyal and respectful towards authority. Most of the Catholic clergy had been brought up on small farms in Europe and as such had little ambition to alter the lives of the people they encountered in the villages. They conceived virtues of the lay people as loyalty, affection for the family, respect for superiors and regular piety. They recognised these qualities in their African congregations. They considered that God would bring these qualities to perfection. At the beginning the colonial government did not trust Catholic missionaries

⁴⁸The Catholic Directory of Malawi, 1974, 1-9.

1974

but later changed their attitude when they discovered that Catholics remained loyal to the colonial government during the 1915 Chilembwe uprising. The Catholic Missionaries were a model of peace, law and order, unity, loyalty and discipline.⁴⁹

It is a laudable development that the gradual Christianisation gave the missionaries a tolerant attitude towards popular religious observances. For instance, ancestor veneration was practised everywhere and although Catholicism officially disapproved of it as worship of false gods, it easily co-existed in the minds of converts with their Christian belief. After all Catholicism had its own cult of the dead and veneration of the saints and the priests noted with satisfaction the enthusiastic crowds who processed to the cemeteries on the feast of All Souls Day each November. They however were against Nyau and initiation ceremonies which they later realised were two key social institutions.⁵⁰ This is important because later it will become evident that the Church in the area of inculturation had to do something about these two key institutions.

2.2.2 Notions of Conversion.

It is probably true to say that the two missionary groups had different notions of conversion. For the Missionaries of Africa, formed in the Jesuit mould, conversion was primarily an intellectual assent to the basic Christian truths. The candidate for baptism was given an examination, and the catechism answers to such questions as 'who is God', 'who is Christ', were expected. The four-year catechumenate was seen as a simple training in Christian Doctrine and Ethics. The Montfort Missionaries who had been reinforced in their evangelism by the nineteenth century 'Missions de France', brought a more Wesleyan idea

⁴⁹Ian Linden, Catholics, 88.

⁵⁰Weller, 102.

of conversion to Malawi. Conversion was primarily a personal assent to Christ. The catechumenate was only three years.

While it is possible to discuss with some assurance the idea of conversion of the two missionary groups and their theology, the same is not true of the African reaction to these ideas. African conversion to Christianity was an amalgam of religious, psychological, and intellectual, needs, social and political considerations, and personal inclination. It was instrumental, spiritual, and sometimes magical in motivation. The missionaries were distinguished from planters and colonial administrators, they were taken both as powerful Europeans and as religious leaders; Christianity was seen as an intrusive religious system in its own right as well as an aspect of European rule.⁵¹

The mission was first seen as a source of work within the district. Even when not directly providing work, the missionaries' presence was felt to be some protection against the colonial administrators. They were required to act as mediators between the people and their colonial rulers, they were also expected to protect them from witches and sorcerers.

Common to both missionary groups was the primacy of the Eucharist in the devotional life of the mission. The Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and its reception in Holy Communion were the central acts of worship. The central core of Christianity preached by the Montfort Missionaries was the same as that of the Missionaries of Africa. They encouraged the saying of the Rosary and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

2.2.3 Policy towards Expansion.

The policy of the two missionary groups towards expansion was different. The Missionaries of Africa, following Lavigerie's missionary strategy, laid a great emphasis on the slow, patient evangelisation of a small area, a long catechumenate and heavy concentration of personnel in a small region. The Montfort Missionaries had no rigid policy of evangelising one area in depth as Ian Linden remarks:

⁵¹Ian Linden, *Catholics*, 54 - 55.

They began to spread out from Nzama and Nguludi. They seemed to have viewed the introduction of Catholicism in the typically ecclesial sense of establishing the institutional structures of the Church over as wide an area as possible. While the quality and degree of commitment of their Christians was considered important, they were marginally more willing to accept large numbers of semi-converts than the Missionaries of Africa. The revivalist tradition of de Montfort was most applicable to a situation in which there were large numbers on nominal church members. They excelled at retreat sermon and once the churches were packed they felt sure that the quality would come later.⁵²

The three-years catechumenate of the Montfort Missionaries in contrast with the four years of the Missionaries of Africa show that the Montfort Missionaries wanted to strive mightily to gain a foothold in a predominantly Protestant country. As was the case in the previous section, the missionaries and not the people saw this difference in the policy towards expansion.

2.2.4 Evangelisation without the Bible.

The criteria that the missionaries used to choose a mission site were the population density, water supply and the friendliness of the local chief. Once the site was given it was the responsibility of the lay brothers to start buildings always with the assistance of the local people. Though poorly paid, many chiefs provided land for missions for job opportunities. Bush schools were immediately opened at which Christian Doctrine was taught from the catechism which was translated into Chichewa; a book of New Testament stories 'Za Mpulumutsi' (about the Saviour) and a companion volume summarising the Old Testament 'Mulungu Yekha' (God Alone) took the place of the full Bible.⁵³

With the bush schools came prayer houses. A group of catechists had been given rudimentary training and a network of schools and prayer houses were put in place for the

⁵²Ibid., 71.

⁵³Ibid., 90.

station to extend its influence to villages about thirty kilometres away. The official colonial policy demanded that an officially recognised school be at least five kilometres away from the schools of any other denomination and should have the approval of the headman; however the prayer houses in which basic skills of literacy classes could be offered were permitted anywhere. The missionaries regularly inspected the schools and prayer houses on foot. They were able to spend weeks sleeping in the villages, receiving hospitality from the people around the prayer houses.⁵⁴

2.2.5 The Early Catechists.

Without the catechists and the 'akulu a mpingo' (Church elders) the Roman Catholic Church in Malawi would never have taken roots. Since the missionaries knew very little of the peoples customs and way of life, it was the elders who were guiding them in their work. They helped the missionaries to gain an understanding of the people they were evangelising. It was the duty of the catechist to brief the priests about what was really going on in the villages and through him the priest would communicate whatever he judged worth. They were priests in all except in the administration of sacraments. The Catechist therefore bore a great responsibility as Vezeau comments:

They taught in the bush schools; on Sundays the most trusted preached at the prayer meetings which they led when the priest did not come to say mass; they conducted negotiations with headmen over the schools, they selected candidates for the Catechumenate and they investigated the increasing number of marriage cases which the priests had to settle on their visits to the out-stations.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Weller, 102.

⁵⁵Vezeau, 120-123.

2.2.6 Formation of the Local Clergy.

Right from the beginning of the missionary presence in Malawi, the missionaries concentrated in sowing seeds for the formation of the local church. They decided to form the natives into the local clergy. Thus the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa did not start recruiting young men for their own congregations. They waited until the national hierarchy was formed with enough local clergy to take over the mission stations. As early as 1912 they started seminary training. The first batches of seminarians in Malawi were sent to Kipalapala seminary in Tanzania. The first Malawian priest was Fr. Cornelius Chitsulo, ordained at Bembeke in 1937 followed by Frs. Andrea Makhoyo and Alfred Finye in 1938.

2.2.7 The Church and Politics in Malawi.

I have mentioned in the previous sections that the Catholic Church was viewed with suspicion at the beginning because the British colonial administration which was Protestant, suspected the Catholic missionaries to be the agents of the Portuguese or French government. It changed this attitude when in the 1915 Chilembwe uprising, Catholics remained loyal and did not take part in the rebellion. This is partly because the missionaries upheld respect for authority and the theology of only to be concerned with the thing of heaven. 'Kwathu kwenikweni ndi kumwamba ndife alendo pansi pano.' This phrase literally means, 'Our real home is heaven, we are just visitors on earth'. This kind of reasoning made people concentrate on getting to heaven without caring about the present conditions.

After independence during the nationalist movement the church had the same stand towards the state. The church did not interfere with politics and the government was glad to leave many tasks under the responsibility of the church. However the contribution of the

Catholic Church in Malawi to the process of democratisation from 1960 to the present time cannot be ignored. The involvement of the church in politics before the issue of the 1992 Lenten Pastoral Letter is generally regarded by many people as not only negligible but also as insignificant. The popular opinion is that the church broke its long silence and started making a significant contribution when the Catholic Bishops issued the Lenten Pastoral Letter, *LIVING OUR FAITH* on 8th March 1992. However to concentrate on the Pastoral letter only is to be unfair to the Catholic Action which led to the writing of the letter.⁵⁶ It is important to note that since 1960 there has been a valuable contribution on the part of the church towards the social, economic, religious and political development of the people of Malawi.

In 1960 the Catholic Church was attacked in a New Paper, 'Malawi News' the official organ of the Malawi Congress Party. It accused late Most Rt. Rev Dr J. B. Theunisen former archbishop of Blantyre, of starting the Christian Democratic Party⁵⁷ to challenge the Malawi Congress Party. In actual fact a lay faithful by the name of John Chester Katsonga started the party after seeking views from the Archbishop. This was construed to mean the Archbishop was behind the scenes. The paper said:

We are pleased with one thing and that is that the Archbishop has not got the support of any other Bishop in the country. The Bishop of Lilongwe is a good friend of our leader Dr Banda. We shall not tolerate any church to meddle in Malawi politics. The pulpit should be distinct from the political platform.⁵⁸

This was an apparent attempt to sideline the Archbishop. However the Archbishop and bishops of Malawi signed a statement which was read both in English and Chichewa to

⁵⁶Joseph C. Chakanza, "The Pro-democracy Movement in Malawi: The Catholic Church's Contribution, 1960-1992" in *Church, Law and Political Transition in Malawi 1992-94*, ed. Matembo S. Nzunda and Kenneth R. Ross (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1995) 59-63.

⁵⁷The Christian Democratic Party was formed by John Chester Katsonga; a Catholic lay person after seeking advice from Archbishop Theunisen.

⁵⁸*Malawi News*, 22 October 1962, 18.

members of their congregations during services on Sunday, 31st October 1960. Part of the English text reads:

We, the Archbishop and Bishops of Nyasaland, dismayed by the recent unjust and un-called-for attack on Holy Mother the Church, on the Archbishop and on all the members of the Catholic Church, mindful of Our duty as Shepherds of the flock, wish to set forth to all the people the true position of the Catholic Church in Malawi. We having so much at heart that this country be free, fully encourage and support the legitimate desires for independence. However we do not enter the field of mere politics. The Catholic Church should not be identified with any political party or type of government but is willing to co-operate with any, provided it adheres to principles of charity and justice. It is definitely our obligation to make known to all the laws of God upon which every society must be build to safeguard human rights. The Archbishop having been approached by a number of Africans has merely followed his duty by advising them on fundamental laws of God and human rights, as he would have done for anyone else, regardless of their political or religious affiliation. We fully support him.⁵⁹

This was really the first encounter between the church and the Malawi Congress party in support of democracy, human rights, charity and justice. As it transpired, the church continued to guide the nation. As Malawi was closer to gaining self-rule, on 20th March 1961, the bishops issued a pastoral letter: "How to Build a Happy Nation." The reasons for the pastoral letter were stated clearly. It was to enlighten and guide the nation in building a happy nation. The letter stressed that civil society must acknowledge God and obey his authority, respect human rights and must co-operate with the Church in matters of devilmment.

It must be noted however that after the pastoral letter 1961, individual church persons tried to preach a gospel of justice and peace. There was a long silence when Dr Banda came to power in 1963. The totalitarian character of the government made it difficult or impossible for the church to enter any meaningful dialogue. With Vatican II, the church was empowered again to see that the commitment to the promotion of justice and peace is a constitutive element of evangelisation. It is with this growing awareness

⁵⁹Catholic Bishops, "Bishops reply to attack by Malawi News," The Nyasaland Times, 1st November 1960.

within the church and the people in general that the Lenten Pastoral Letter of March 8th 1992 was written to articulate the growing concerns of the people. The church entered solidarity with the poor, the dispossessed, the exploited and the marginalised. The pastoral letter was written with the perspective of a preferential option for the poor. Its social critique opens with these words:

In our society we are aware of a growing gap between the rich and the poor with regard to expectation, living standards, and development. Many people still live in circumstances that are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Their life is a struggle for survival. At the same time a minority enjoys the fruits of development and can afford to live in luxury and wealth. We appeal for a more just and equal distribution of the nation's wealth.⁶⁰

The changes that came with the pastoral letter need not be mentioned here. The contribution of the Catholic Church was really great considering the events that followed leading to the change from dictatorship to multiparty democracy. Now a great awareness has come in the lives of the people concerning their rights and responsibilities. It remains a challenge to educate the masses on the responsibilities that go with democracy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I articulated the historical development of the Church in Malawi first at the hand of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa, leading to the formation of the local hierarchy and Catholic Secretariate in 1962. We have also noted the struggles of the missionaries in establishing themselves in an area that was already under the influence of British colonial policy which being Protestant, was very suspicious of the Catholic missionaries. In the same vein, the Catholics coming twenty-eight years after the establishment of Protestant denominations, worked hard to gain confidence among the

⁶⁰Malawi Bishops Pastoral letter, Living Our Faith, 2.

local population and the colonial administration. The work of the missionaries is therefore laudable.

For any Church to come up with such positive results, it must have a working strategy or approach. In this chapter too I have shown how the missionaries relied on the catechists for their first contacts with the people and for translation. The catechists themselves have commendably taught in the bush schools about God and the teachings of the Church and also the moral demands of following the person of Jesus Christ. Of particular importance in this chapter is also the relationship between the church and the state, first during the colonial times, the independence and after. The coming of the democratic wind of change blowing across Africa in the early 1990s has also been enunciated.

All these developments, coming from two missionary societies point to something important or raise a number of questions. Were they just working as diocesan priests the way they would do in Europe? Were they just working as one missionary congregation with the same approach? The fact that these two missionary congregations have different charism and orientation should help us to analyse what the impact of their differences and similarities were in terms of Catechetical Approach, Inculturation and Justice and Peace.

CHAPTER III

THE EFFICIENCY AND DEFICIENCY OF EVANGELISATION

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen the coming of the missionaries to Malawi and their efforts in laying foundations for evangelisation. We have also seen the development of their approaches, village schools, and their involvement or lack of it in social political matters. In this chapter, will analyse the efficiency and deficiency of evangelisation of the two missionary groups. The previous two chapters have shown that after working together for a few years, the missionaries were entrusted with particular areas to evangelise. This chapter is aimed at evaluating the methods that they used for the evangelisation of Malawi.

The first section in the analysis is dealing with inculturation. Inculturation is a wide topic on its own; for the scope of this study I have limited myself to their adaptation to the local language and culture, liturgy and the initiation of boys and girls in the society. The second section is dealing with the catechetical approach. This will be a link between inculturation because if the gospel is to be received by the people it has to follow an inculturated catechesis. The final section will be an analysis of their approach to Justice and Peace. Each section will have to subdivisions the period before and after the Vatican II Council.

3.1 Inculturation.

It is important to briefly state the evolution of the reality of inculturation since during different periods of the church, different terminologies were used. The term 'inculturation' may be recent within Christian language and theology. However the reality it signifies has been present in various degrees in the church since its beginning.

The word 'adaptation' has been used over the years to designate the same reality. Adaptation implied the selection of certain rites and customs, purifying them and integrating them within Christian rituals where there was some similarity. Later the word 'indigenisation' came into use to refer to the process of the promotion of indigenous church ministers in every locality. With Vatican II the term 'reformulation' was used to refer to the reformulation of the Christian doctrine in the thought and language that are understood by contemporary person. The term 'incarnation' also came into use to refer the reality of Christ who became man to save humanity, so Christianity was to do like Christ. Finally we have inculturation which expresses the importance of cultures as instruments and means for realising the incarnation of the Christian message.⁶¹

If efforts to make the gospel relevant are to bear fruit, there must be an understanding of the culture we want to evangelise. Different people define inculturation differently but always signifying the same reality. John Mary Walligo states that:

Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation ever more understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are ever dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become well understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity truly feel at home in the cultures of each people.⁶²

Thus the missionaries who came to Malawi and made attempts in the area of inculturation followed the evolution of the term inculturation in each period of their operation as will be shown.

⁶¹John Mary Waliggo, "Making a Church that is Truly African" in *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*, eds. J.M. Waliggo, A. Roest Crollius, T. Nkeramihigo, and J. Mutiso Mbinda, (Kampala: St. Paul Publications, 1986), 11-12.

⁶²Ibid., 12.

3.1.1 Montfort Missionaries.

The early Montfort Missionaries who came to Malawi engaged in inculturation in obedience to their founder and to their constitutions:

According to Montfortian Apostolic inspiration, the proclamation of the Gospel by the missionaries must always analyse the needs of the present day world and most especially within their own immediate environment, and that they discover how to forge modes of apostolic action truly adapted to the social and cultural conditions of the people they must evangelise.⁶³

3.1.1.1 Language and Life Style.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

From the outset of their arrival in Malawi, the Montfort Missionaries had a genuine desire to learn the peoples' traditions, way of life and to eat their food. Their approach was one of understanding. They wanted to get acquainted with the peoples' way of life as soon as they arrived in the new land.

On their arrival at Nzama, the missionaries did not know the local language. The language they used was just gestures of charity. As soon as they arrived they cleaned the feet of their porters. The following day they treated the wound of a little girl suffering from a tropical ulcer. The day after, the number of patients increased. These gestures of charity spoke a universal language of love and solidarity. This was taken by natives to be a welcoming spirit. As they could not speak the language yet, but by taking care of the poor and sick, they gained the confidence of the people and from here they now started learning the local language and began to proclaim the Good News. The diary of Nzama attests to this:

⁶³Montfortian Today, No 52a.

Handwritten notes in the bottom right corner, possibly a signature or reference, including the word "Nzama" and some illegible scribbles.

The sick came for treatment. Our Lord himself, did He not begin by caring for the sick before preaching of his Gospel Message? Is this not a good omen for our Mission? King Njobvuyalema arrives... and we tell him that our sole intention is to work for the material, and more especially the spiritual benefit of the people. He seems to be content. Day after day the number of patients increased, and although the healing of the sick take a lot of our time, it is preparing the way for the message we want to proclaim.⁶⁴

As the missionaries started learning the language of the people it helped them to understand the people better, to discover what pains them and the joys they encounter. It is through learning and using the local language that the missionaries discovered the values, convictions of the people and paved the way for a balance of approach in distinguishing between the traditional values and the values of Christianity.

In order to equip themselves for the all-important task of evangelisation and education, they began studying the local language, 'Chimang'anja'. Many hours were spent and meetings held in order to translate the sign of the cross, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary each word of the translation was carefully considered before it was selected.⁶⁵

Learning a language meant an interest in communicating with the people they were supposed to serve. The fathers discovered such values like communal living and hospitality of the extended family, which decades later easily paved way for the Small Christian Communities.

The common orientation of living together as evangelising communities came to disintegration in the years between 1945 and 1965. During this epoch there was a wearing down of internal unity and a common pastoral approach by individualism and lack of community spirit. New missionaries who came during this period were inexperienced in mission work and eradicated important elements that were build by their predecessors. There was indeed no history of common struggle to bind men together. Another factor was the introduction of one-man parishes especially in the archdiocese of Blantyre thereby

⁶⁴ Nzama Missionary Diary, 26 July 1901.

⁶⁵ Raijnaerts, Nielssen, Schoffeleers, eds, 28.

destroying the spirit of community living among the missionaries. One priest per parish led to the serious temptation of individualism in mission work; thus an individual could run a parish in his own way and get funds for his own projects without reference to others.

Another sad development in the Montfortian circles was the division of the missionaries working in Malawi into four different regions by different nationalities. Each nationality, Dutch, Italian, French and English, had their own area of operation. To the people around it was difficult to understand they were one congregation since each had their own approach.⁶⁶

Having divisions of this sort despite the reasons behind it had a great impact on watering down any hope for a common approach to issues as a congregation. Having a common vision for which all are bound helps to have a sense of direction in pastoral approach. In this epoch seeds of individualism and nationalism were sown which gave a negative sign of unity. Living in one-man parishes in a country where the value of community and familiness is so strong was another less attractive sign and was against the spirit of community living. Today efforts are made to have apostolic communities that come together to plan pastoral approaches. Although regions exist based on home provinces, a few international communities have been tried. A challenge still remains to be more united in common projects.

3.1.1.2 Village Visitations and Renewal Missions.

A practice that helped the Montfort Missionaries to immerse themselves in the lives of the people was the strategy of routine village visitations. They started the policy of making journeys from village to village, preaching the word of God and instructing the

⁶⁶Hubert Rajnaerts, Ann Nielsen, Matthew Schoffeleers, Montfortians in Malawi, Their Spirituality and Pastoral Approach, (Blantyre, CLAIM, 1997), 367-378.

people. The fathers did this in turns accompanied by a catechist and they ate the food of the people and sleep in the villages. Like their founder Montfort, they went like vagabonds from village to village proclaiming the word of God:

To communicate the Father's gifts to all humankind, they become, like Montfort, close to those whom they evangelise, sharing in their life, their sufferings, their hopes. They accept after the manner of Christ and in Christ, the common destiny of their kindred, even to the cross.⁶⁷

The gesture of the missionaries in learning the language of the people as soon as they arrived, and visiting the villages, sleeping out instructing the people gave them an advantage in evangelisation. The people themselves saw the difference between the missionaries and the colonial officials who had no interest at all in the life of the people and their language. Sleeping in the villages and instructing the people the Montfort Missionaries, like their founder, were prepared to share the joys and difficulties of the people.

Connected with the system of making journeys to the villages were the renewal missions which the fathers were making once a year in their small stations within the parishes as Fr. Leo Mohr points out:

The preaching of a mission may be very helpful to maintain and improve the Christian way of life. It should last one week at least. It must be well organised so that all Catholics attend, including the weaker ones and those who have marriage cases to be looked into. The church elders and the members of the legion of Mary can be useful in this work. Preparation for the mission might take the form of special prayers, the rosary, visits to each and every family and on the last day of the mission, there should be some significant events for example: a public procession, renewal of baptism vows and consecration to Our Lady, or an act of Reparation.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Montfortian Today, 1994, no 12.

⁶⁸Leo Mohr, Some Suggestions for our Missionary Work, (Blantyre: Blantyre Print & Publ., 1955), 19-20.

3.1.1.3 Inculturation of the Liturgy.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

Early attempts by the Montfort Missionaries to inculturate the liturgy came from their founder himself. The fathers from the beginning realised that the liturgy was an important area that could not be neglected. It was the most powerful tool by which the community lived its faith experience. Liturgy is indeed the way in which the Christian society functions when it meets to propagate its faith and worship its God. The first missionaries said the mass in Latin but to encourage participation of the people, the songs were sung in the local language. Thus upon their arrival in Nzama, the Montfort Missionaries translated the Lord's prayer into Chichewa and helped the people to recite especially the Catechumens.

The Montfort Missionaries arranged suitable texts in the local language from the popular church melodies they brought along with them from their native countries. When they introduced this type of religious music among the people, they meant it to be a popular and easy means of encouraging their neophytes' fervour. These melodies served the religious needs of the people to some extent. It is now that we have begun to realise that many people have been influenced by these foreign melodies that they brand the traditional melodies as 'inferior' and 'profane', and therefore unfit for worship:

The first Chichewa hymns were set to French and other foreign tunes, but after a short time Father Winnen had familiarised himself even with some of their traditional songs, playing them on his harmonium. Following the example set by their founder, the three pioneer Montfort Missionaries laid the foundations for the inculturation of the liturgy and stimulated the participation of the people.⁶⁹

⁶⁹Ibid., 30.

Post-Vatican II Era.

Some attempts have been in the area of inculturation. The first has been in changing crucifixes dark skinned to look like and African. As early as 1968, some missionaries introduced drumming in the liturgy but this was short lived.⁷⁰ The ordinaries had to put a stop to this. This prohibition was on the ground that, the drums were associated with pagan dances and so drumming during liturgical services seemed to many as allowing pagan practices. For a long time, the bishops forbade the drumming or play any traditional musical instrument. Instead they preferred to play organs from Europe. The mentality of 'the more European, the more Christian,' was prevalent. A clear evidence of this was in 1989 when the pope visited Malawi, the mass in Blantyre was accompanied by the organ and other non-traditional musical instruments.⁷¹

For many years liturgical dance was not encouraged even by the local ordinaries. Where it was introduced it showed strong results of good participation and very lively liturgies. Drums and other local musical instruments accompany these liturgical dances. With the African Synod people have been encouraged to look for ways of making the liturgy lively. Many people like a lively liturgy full of dancing, clapping and ululating.

3.1.1.4 Initiations for boys and girls.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

The Montfort Missionaries, who occupied the southern region of Malawi, had a very critical attitude towards some traditional customs and practices against which they dedicated most of their time. The advent of Catholicism among the people posed a threat to their traditional pattern of life. Accepting the new faith meant a compromise on their

⁷⁰Brother Andrew Kaufa, interview by author, 28 April 1997, Magomero Parish, tape recording.

⁷¹Alberto Petro Mwankana, interview by author, 14 April 1996, Ulongwe Pastoral Centre, tape recording.

traditional customs and practices that were considered incompatible with Christianity. This caused anxiety and tensions in the lives of the converts and the missionaries. The missionaries themselves divided things into the ecclesiastical and the secular spheres

Bishop Louis Auneau made attempts to Christianise Chinamwali (initiation) as early as 1940. The idea behind the move was to bring about inculturation. The children had to gather at a church centre to be told what chinamwali was all about so that they should not be curious to join pagan initiation rites. They told the children the facts of life in a Christian way and atmosphere. The agents were well selected, women for girls and men for boys. All of them had to be under supervision from the priest or catechists. Seclusion was generally one week, teaching about taboos and how to behave towards elders. Despite this, people still continued sending children to the pagan initiation. Those who had on purpose sent children to the initiation ceremony were given a penalty of the sort after which they could be allowed to receive sacraments. By and large this shows that Christianity has not been totally infused in the daily life of the people

Post-Vatican II Era.

Initiation for boys and girls in parishes is done by people who have good standing in society. They merge the traditional teaching and add gospel reflections. They leave out what is not in line with the gospel and form a Catechesis of their own. Every day for a week they start with mass and other forms of prayer and go on to expound their teaching. Generally the boys are instructed in how to be polite as young men, how to be responsible as members of society and of the church. As for the girls, they are made aware of the role they will play in society as future mothers, how to conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner. In some cases they have even been taught how to satisfy a man in bed. A lot of practices in the initiation process, are not explained at all, some simply do because their forefathers did the same. And there is a lot of confusion regarding the Christian and

pagan values. The initiation that takes place at the parishes though offering an alternative, is considered by many in the villages as superficial. It leaves a lot of areas untreated which are taken to be of vital importance by the people, namely education for boys and girls in their sexual roles, for the girls how to treat their husbands and how to make themselves sexually attractive. There is fear of the people being torn into two worlds, the traditional and the Christian. The fears of Koffi Appia Kubi can not but be taken seriously:

It has been increasingly clear and disturbingly so that the church has been speaking in Africa and to Africans in strange or partially understood tongues. We must be thankful to God that despite mans' weakness, and short sightedness, the miracle of grace has been taking place, all over Africa. Nevertheless, we realise that both the tools and methods of evangelisation as employed in this continent are now calling loudly for a careful overhauling.⁷²

Chinamwali has not been completely Christianised nor its condemnation by some clergy been taken seriously. That is why this has created an attitude of deception for some people who feel that the initiation that takes place at the parish leaves out too many important things considered vital traditionally. This explains why after the initiations at the parish centre, those who are not satisfied go out into the villages and hire somebody to 'complete the instruction' labelling the initiation at the parish as shallow. Indeed if the Christian message is to transform the people's lives it depends on the reception of the gospel by the local community. What is taught may be understood but only what is relevant to the people will be received and retained. Initiation rites clearly show that people wanted to embrace Catholicism but found it very difficult to abandon their traditional practices leading to dualism.

⁷²Bolaji E. Idowu, "Introduction" in Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs, ed. A. K. Dickinson and P. Ellingworth (New York, Maryknoll, 1969), 15.

3.1.2 Missionaries of Africa.

The involvement of the Missionaries of Africa in the area of adaptation and inculturation follows too their founder's inspiration and their constitutions:

The incarnation of Christ is the model for our mission. It expresses God's own respect for people and his concern for their freedom and for their development as individuals and as communities. Hence in our mission we are mindful of the cultural riches of people and we try to penetrate those cultures in the light of the gospel.⁷³

Apostolic love requires us to be all things to all people, to be welcoming and open, to live close to the people and to be simple with our relations with them. It entails a thorough study of their language and customs; acknowledge of their history and culture and of the current events of their country. It means above all an active involvement in every effort to make the gospel come alive in every culture.⁷⁴

3.1.2.1 Language and Life Style.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

The contribution of the Missionaries of Africa towards adaptation was based on the missionary strategy of Cardinal Lavigerie. He stressed that missionaries to a particular country should study the local language of the people and use it among themselves. They should also study the local customs in order to distinguish between those that were compatible with Christianity and those that were not. It was with this in mind that as soon as the Missionaries of Africa made a second attempt to evangelise Malawi, they immediately started studying the language and the culture of the Chewa people whom they were to evangelise. The policy of adaptation to local culture and conditions, which had characterised the Missionaries of Africa's missions among the Arabs, was to be adapted to the new situation in Malawi. The spirit that prevailed among them was to draw as near as

⁷³Society of the Missionaries of Africa, Constitutions and Laws, No 5.

⁷⁴Ibid., No 19.

was prudently possible to the African way of life in everything that was compatible with Christian and priestly life. This was a great help as Ian Linden states:

In their second attempt to evangelise Malawi, the Missionaries of Africa brought to the country twenty five years' experience in Equatorial Africa...There was an equal insistence that the high demands of poverty and obedience, required of the priests, could only be fulfilled if they had a strong community life. Each station was to have a minimum of three missionaries and its daily life should be centred on prayer, spiritual reading and meditation.⁷⁵

Missionaries are guaranteed a sufficiently long period to enable them to undertake a serious study of the language and culture of the people among whom they will be working and to receive an introduction into the pastoral practice of the local Church. Candidates doing their apostolic training in Africa begin it with this study.⁷⁶

Indeed the experience of the Society in certain areas of Africa helped them to realise the value of learning the language and to learn the culture. It was with this spirit that the second attempt to evangelise Malawi was to study the local language from the very beginning. The Missionaries of Africa cultivated an educated interest in local culture. They recorded details of the religious, political and economic life around them. An important aspect in the study and interest shown in the Malawian culture by the Missionaries of Africa was the making of Chichewa dictionaries and grammar. The translation of the Bible into Chichewa was a breakthrough because it then allowed a wider circle of Malawians to read and participate in Church life.

Post-Vatican II Era.

This period is characterised by a more acquainted period on both missionary groups. There was a rapid growth for the church in Malawi and expansion in mission stations. Missionaries who came around this period continued to study the language as

⁷⁵Linden, Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland, 51

⁷⁶Society of the Missionaries of Africa, Constitutions and Laws (Rome, 1981) no 136.

soon as they arrived in the country. Differing in approach at this period is the fact that the Missionaries of Africa continued to stay in international communities of three to four people per mission station while the Montfort Missionaries continued to stay in communities based on nationalities and home provinces. Again in contrast to the Missionaries of Africa who stressed a community of three per mission station, it was not uncommon for the Montfort Missionaries to stay alone in a parish station.

3.1.2.2 Inculturation of the Liturgy.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

The Missionaries of Africa, from the early days of arrival in Malawi, worked to make the liturgy more Malawian in character. They translated the prayers of the Church like the Lord's prayer to make the liturgy lively for their congregations. Putting the songs in the local language boosted the participation of the people.

As far as adaptation is concerned, the missionaries accepted the rain cult of the people since it was believed to influence rainfall although for them it was superstitious. None the less the missionaries accepted that the shrine liturgy reflected genuine religious aspirations. Their informants described the shrines as 'little churches'. The priests knew that prayers that were directed to spirits of the deceased, chiefs or commoners, according to the shrine indicated that the people had a definite concept of a high God. Since the supplicants approached the shrines in a reverent way asking for forgiveness and pleading with God, the Missionaries of Africa were willing to see the cult as an expression of genuine natural religion, a preparation for Christian revelation.⁷⁷

⁷⁷Linden, Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland, 191.

Post-Vatican II Era.

Just after Vatican II there was a growing awareness within the clerical circles on the need to make Malawians feel at home with their liturgy, to make the people worship in ways and means that were familiar to them. A step in the direction was the changing of the medium of Mass from Latin to Chichewa. The impact of this change was clear that whereas in the previous years people attended Mass without understanding what was really happening, now the people could participate and understand what was to happen during these times. A comment by the elders on this was clear to show that the people did appreciate the change:

The fathers made the right decision to change the language of Mass from Latin to Chichewa. We attended mass and could not exactly follow what the priest was saying. All we knew was that the priest was praying and nothing else. The hymns we were singing were all in Latin and although the meaning was explained to us, we could not exactly feel part of the worshipping community. Now it is different, we can understand what the theme of the liturgy is, we can understand what the priest is saying and we can sing hymns that are understandable by everyone, we can even ululate and clap our hands unlike in the past.⁷⁸

A specific area of inculturation in the liturgy has been the involvement of women, men and girls dancing around the altar. The Liturgical dress has also been designed with African fabrics and Malawian patterns in them. The chasuble and other mass vestments have also been made to suit the local environment. A lot of woodcarvings of Our Lady and Jesus designed as Africans were put in churches. At first there was resistance from the local people until they understood. Now there is a general understanding that the message of Jesus is relevant to us Africans as well:

When the fathers started putting carved statues of Jesus and Mary depicted as an African in our churches, we did not understand what they wanted to do. We started resisting all this because previously we have seen statues and images that depicted Jesus and Mary as white people. It took the fathers a lot of explanations to convince us that Jesus could also look like an African without distorting His message.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Peter Bwanali, interview by author, 15 May 1997, Mua Parish, tape recording.

⁷⁹Mr. Alfonso Ntambalika, interview by author, 16 May 1997, Nzama Parish, tape recording.

Another area is the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. This has been modified with respect to the local culture. On Good Friday people come to lay wreaths as is done when there is a funeral in the villages. New as it is, it expresses the deep need to pay the last respects to the Lord. In the parishes where this is practised, there has been a positive response from the people; it becomes a real event and not just a commemoration.

As early as 1969 Claude Boucher started working on the liturgy bringing in Malawian musical instruments. At that time it was not easy at all. Other people thought doing this was betraying the Catholic Church. Due to this misunderstanding he was thrown out of the diocese for a couple of years. Never giving up, the only field he could pursue was in art. Bishop Kalilombe encouraged him to wait until the time was ripe because he felt that it was not what he was doing which was wrong but the timing. Fr. Boucher continued the same sort of thing but under cover of art.⁸⁰

It should be mentioned that efforts to inculturation were not accepted whole sale by the parishioners. Many people thought that nothing in the local culture was good enough hence their resistance to inculturating in preference to the Roman liturgy and Latin mass.

3.1.2.3 Liturgical Experimental Parish.

The Missionaries of Africa, seeing the urgency of inculturation, decided to choose one parish where deep studies and experiments could be made, and to act as a reference point. The choice was Mua. At Mua parish there is an inculturated liturgy for the major feasts of the church. The group of liturgy, men, women and young people come together to prepare these feasts. Composition of songs using the local expressions has also taken roots. Many people are invited to compose these songs based on the local culture. Again here

⁸⁰Fr. Claude Boucher told me his difficulties with Bishop Chitsulo regarding his efforts in the inculturation of the liturgy and church statues. He was not allowed to stay in Dedza diocese for some time until his issue was resolved. When he came back to the diocese he continued his efforts on inculturation under cover of art and sculpture. He felt that the time was not ripe.

there is a very positive response from the parishioners who feel it is their responsibility to find ways and means of making themselves feel at home in the liturgy. This initiative is promoted by the attitude of the priests as Fr. Boucher comments:

If people feel like dancing in the liturgy we leave them. We should not be afraid of letting people express themselves the way they feel like. If they feel like standing let them stand, if dancing let them dance. The liturgy is the liturgy of the people and not the liturgy of the priest alone, because as a priest you are only the minister of the liturgy. You cannot force people into what you like and what you do not like. A notable achievement is that we have come so far as to bring the idea that the liturgy is not the priest celebrating, but the whole community worshipping God; then you have the young, the old and everybody involved with different roles to play. The choir, women and men are able to sit together and look at the text of the day, look at the type of songs they are going to sing and the different symbols to be used. This is a communitarian thing not just the work of one person.⁸¹

3.1.2.4 Initiation for boys and girls.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

During this period the Missionaries of Africa passively opposed the Chewa female initiation rites. Not only did they involve the Nyau dances which the missionaries did not like but also practices they found immoral such as the manipulation of the labia minora, and ritual intercourse with a man known as fisi (Hyena). There had been instances of Christian girls being snatched from their huts to be initiated forcibly, but as the missionaries gained strength, the rites were increasingly limited to pagan girls. As for the Ngoni people their initiation was acceptable to missionaries since they lacked the overt physical acts of Chewa customs. The missionaries however like their Montfort counterparts in the south, attempted to counteract pagan ceremonies by developing a Christian initiation for girls. However this proved to be little more than private instruction in sexual matters and marital conduct. It lacked the communal public dimension of acceptance into the reproductive

⁸¹Fr Claude Boucher Chisale, interview by author, 16 May 1997, Mua Parish, tape recording.

community of traditional initiation. For the majority of Christians, the Christian practice of initiation did not replace the Chewa culture but rather grew alongside it. Thus villagers would attend mass but they also participated in Nyau dances, a girl or a boy might receive her first communion or attend initiation at the parish and later secretly undergo the pagan initiation to ensure acceptance in the community. It is clear that the missionaries failed to create an impact on the people though they genuinely tried to offer a Christian initiation. What came out were double standards on the part of the faithful, wanting Christianity on one hand and clinging to traditional customs on the other.

Post-Vatican II Era.

A decisive element in the approach of the Missionaries of Africa to initiation is the fact that they themselves are initiated in the Chewa life and culture. Culturally speaking, nobody can have authority in the villages unless he himself is initiated. Only after initiation is the individual considered to have a certain authority over others. It is for this reason that the priests in Mua parish are initiated themselves in the local Chewa culture. The Catechists who have authority in the church of are also initiated in the local culture so that they attain authority and be recognised by the community they serve not just in church matters but also in the traditional setting. This initiation involves being captured, staying in seclusion for two or three nights during which they are instructed in the customs and traditions of the people. On their graduation the whole community comes around and there is a public correction of whatever they know of their previous behaviour. This is done to those who are in a position of authority. This practice has been a break-through because it shows the respect of the missionaries to the local culture and as a result people feel at home in the church.

The Nyau generally got negative reception from those who do not understand them. They perform at funerals and other important ceremonies in the villages. They are often

accused of using obscene language, stealing and violence. The good Nyau will not do such a thing according to Fr. Boucher who was initiated in this culture. There are those who take advantage and do all sorts of bad things. The obscene language they use is not intended to hurt anybody. If you call a male or female organ by its name it does not necessarily mean that you are obscene. This is sometimes used in the context of initiation or marriage instructions.

As of initiation, Mua parish does not ask people to come for instructions at the parish, as is the case in many parishes. They let them have it in the villages by the traditional leaders themselves. Afterwards they come to the parish where they are asked to say the good things they learned from their initiation. The common feature is that all of them say that now they are considered as adults in the society having rights and responsibilities. It is at this point that the church personnel teach the newly-initiates on how as Christians they are also to mature in their faith, in their responsibility to the church and to personal life. The same is done with those who joined the Nyau. In the past those who did so were not allowed to receive sacraments. However now they are asked the good things they learned from the Nyau. They are encouraged to discard bad practices like stealing and intimidating people. In this way the missionaries have managed slowly to see value in the traditional customs and invite people to complement this with gospel values.

Fr. Boucher who has been member of the Nyau societies for the last twenty five years says there is no way a man will research about the Chewa without being a member of the Nyau societies because Nyau is present in all the aspects of Chewa culture whether initiation, birth or death, commemoration of funerals, spirit-possession. All these occasions must have a Gule wamkulu performance. This is intrinsically linked to the whole Chewa approach to any life crisis. At the traditional burial where Nyau dance is performed Fr. Boucher testifies:

I heard the people singing that the dead man was going to meet Mary and Jesus in heaven. I was very struck with this and realised that inculturation is working both ways. It is not just a matter of taking good values from tradition and bringing them in the church, but it is also tradition taking Christian thoughts and beliefs in their own culture. It is like two sides of the same coin.⁸²

3.1.2.5 KuNgoni Cultural Centre.

The Missionaries of Africa in the person of Fr. Boucher established what is known as KuNgoni art and craft centre. This comprises of a Museum in which people go to see elements of Chewa, Ngoni, Yao and the culture of the local peoples. The missionaries see that inculturation is not just the liturgy in church but it has to do with the whole person, the whole way of life, death, funerals and the like. To learn the liturgy of the people, liturgy of life and liturgy of death. The cultural centre and museum is there to train people, especially leaders, to get them rooted into their own culture and to appreciate the wealth of their culture and how to bring that into Christianity.

The same cultural centre started a school of carving and painting in 1970. The main goal is to inculturate church furniture and paintings to make them suit the African context and world-view. The KuNgoni cultural centre with the school of painting and carving has produced people and formed a team that goes around the parishes to paint pictures and make carvings that depict the local cultures. Upon invitation the team has produced inculturated pictures and statues throughout the Churches in Malawi and abroad. This same centre trains peoples and interested groups from the parishes of the Missionaries of Africa and others in the area of inculturation. When people go to their home parishes after training they work in collaboration with the other parishioner sharing whatever they have learned from KuNgoni cultural centre.

⁸²Boucher, interview by author, 16 May 1997, Mua Parish, tape recording.

3.1.2.6 Comparisons.

This section on inculturation has shown some similarities and differences on the approach of the missionaries according to their understanding and view of mission. The first similarity is that as soon as they arrived in the country, both missionary groups took an interest in learning the language of the people, translating the catechism and other books for the people and the study of the local culture. In this regard, the Montfort Missionaries had a particularly effective way of going out to the people, eating their food and sleeping in the villages. Once established the renewal missions they were making revived the newly embraced faith of their people. A weak point in this method came when the missionaries divided themselves into different nationalities, and even within the same group allowing one man parishes. Community life was greatly compromised. This meant a decline in having a common vision and pastoral approach.

As far as the liturgy is concerned before Vatican II, we have seen how both missionary groups took an interest in promoting participation by introducing local hymns to be sang in place of the Latin. However for the Missionaries of Africa made a great breakthrough in studying the traditional rain shrine liturgy that was directed towards ancestors, and eventually to God. In the Post-Vatican II era, it was here that the Montfort Missionaries tried to make the liturgy Malawian in character by introducing liturgical dance. The Missionaries of Africa in the same period introduced drums and liturgical dances in the liturgy. A major breakthrough was a decision taken to have one parish, Mua, where experiments in the liturgy could be explored and train people. This showed that the Missionaries of Africa were willing to work as a team to find way and means of making the gospel Malawian in character in contrast to the Montfort Missionaries where inculturation was based on individual interest and not as a project of the congregation.

For the initiation of boys and girls before the Second Vatican council, we have seen how the Montfort Missionaries initiated the system of Christian initiations parallel to the traditional ones. There were some limitations in this approach because one of the purposes was to discourage them to participate without actually offering something substantial. The same was true of the Missionaries of Africa who condemned especially the Chewa female initiation rites because of the overt sexual nature, clitoridectomy and the ritual sexual act between a man and the initiates. After the Second Vatican Council was a change in the attitude of the Missionaries of Africa to this since, in order to understand this very well, the missionaries undertook a serious study of the customs, getting themselves and their catechists initiated in the local culture. By allowing initiations to take place traditionally and then gathering the initiated at the parish for a day or two to supplement the initiation has brought tremendous results. Bad things are discarded and good ones integrated in their Christian Growth. Thus the missionaries can now say that inculturation is working both ways.

A final and most important development is the introduction of the KuNgoni cultural centre that undertakes to study in depths the different aspects of the cultural life of the people and brings them in the liturgical life of the people. Thus the centre has a reputation of researching, teaching and leading people of all parishes to acquire and initiate inculturation in their own areas. Again the Missionaries of Africa, working and reflecting and executing things together have an advantage of being effective and relevant to the people.

3.2 Catechetical Approach.

An important area in the Church's mission of evangelisation is catechesis. The missionaries working in Malawi for the first evangelisation placed a great emphasis on

bringing the Good News to the people. To a greater or lesser extent they moved with time to respond to the needs of the people in obedience to the mission of the Church and their constitutions.

3.2.1 Montfort Missionaries.

The founder of the Montfort Missionaries placed great importance on catechesis. In his rule for the missionaries, he gives directives that are to be followed by them in catechesis to establish the reign of God.

One great principle that must be followed is to put a lot of questions to the children while saying very little himself. Afterwards, at the end of the lesson, he or another missionary can give a talk of about fifteen minutes. The topic of this talk will be one of the great truths of our faith so that, after the children's minds have been enlightened by the questions on the catechism, their hearts may be softened and touched by this exhortation. It is a fact of experience that this is the best of all methods for teaching catechism in a short time and for turning the children's hearts to God.⁸³

Pre-Vatican II Era.

From the outset of their arrival in Nzama and the years that followed, the Montfort Missionaries started working on village schools from which they were teaching the catechism. They made their first task the training of catechists, who would have a double role as teachers and auxiliary evangelists. They opened the first catechetical school in 1902. Everyday morning and evening there was reading, writing, elementary arithmetic and catechism. This was an excellent preparation of Christian life and ethics. The mission had many centres of instruction in the villages around.

The compilation by the early missionaries of a simple catechism enabled them to impart the truths of faith and the Good News of Christ. The question and answer method of catechetical teaching was more prevalent at this time. For the early Montfort Missionaries,

⁸³Montfortian Today, No 83.5.

they had a catechumenate of four years following the guidelines of the Missionaries of Africa but soon reduced this practice to two years after they gained their own autonomy in missionary work.

One outstanding feature of the Montfort Missionaries was the fact that, their catechumens mainly all of the adults were allowed to attend the mass. The parts of the mass were explained to the catechumens. Later in this period, the catechumens used to attend mass from just before the offertory.

Post-Vatican II Era.

The main source of evangelisation was direct pastoral and catechetical contact with the people. Since much of the Christian formation was given in village schools, and agents of evangelisation were scarce, catechists worked hand in hand with the fathers to reach the people. The method that was used to instruct the catechumens and those preparing for first communion and confirmation was the one of question and answer. The catechumen had to memorise the basic truths of Catholicism. This question and answer method lasted for a long time till the 1970s in many parishes and it is still used in a few parishes today. When I was preparing for my first communion in 1974, this question and answer method was still in practice. I had to succeed in memorising all prayers and basic questions to be admitted to first communion. In 1978 I was preparing for confirmation and the method was the same. I had to memorise the same catechism and recite the same prayers. Little was done to adapt the teaching to the people and age.

Traditionally in the villages instruction to children and people of all ages in the ways of the society took the form of stories and folk tales from which a lesson would be drawn. This method was adapted to catechetics with positive results. The traditional method of instructing people using stories and folk-tales was introduced in catechetics especially in the instruction of children for first communion and confirmation, and also

adult catechesis. The stories of Jesus and Zachaeus are related in the way stories are told at home and in their own villages. These stories brings with it real life situations of the people.

Fr Eysen a Montfort Missionary introduced parallels between the sacrament of confirmation and initiation. In the church, the sacrament of confirmation empowers one to be strong in faith and a mature Christian and follower of Christ. In the society, those who undergo the initiation, are considered mature members of society. They also have responsibility over those not yet initiated. To be a mature member has its rights and obligations too. Making parallels between the sacraments of communion and confirmation on one hand with the different stages of initiation augured well with the people's understanding. It also paved way for the inculturation of the catechetical approach.

3.2.1.1 Village Catechism.

An important aspect in the catechetical approach of the Montfort Missionaries has been the establishment of village catechism schools in Small Christian Communities. Whereas in many parishes the practice is that those preparing for first communion and confirmation go to the parish twice a week for instruction, the Montfort Missionaries preferred to go out to the people themselves in the village. Thus through the Small Christian Communities of a particular village, volunteer untrained catechists are chosen to give catechetical instruction to those preparing for the confirmation and first communion or those in the catechumenate. Once a month all the volunteer catechists are then called to the parish to be given some sort of training especially on the stuff they are to teach the month that follows. This is a kind of ongoing formation for the teachers. Save for the two weeks when an intensive preparation of the sacraments is organised, all the people now go

to the parish where they meet all the others from other villages. This is then followed by the day of first communion, confirmation or baptism.

This method of having catechetical instruction in the villages or the Small Christian Communities has been a helpful tool in promoting the idea of familiness. The faithful realise it is their responsibility to take care of those preparing for the sacraments. Secondly the fact that this instruction is done in the villages, promotes the fact that the Small Christian Communities are the Church in that neighbourhood. The concerns of the people, are also the concerns of the members of the Small Christian Communities and giving instruction in their neighbourhood makes them feel at home and that the Word of God is to be proclaimed, taught and lived in the concrete realities and living condition of the faithful. It is here that the church as a family is felt.

3.2.1.2 The Use of Modern Ways for Catechetical training.

The Montfort Missionaries in response to the call of *Catechesi Tradendae* to use modern means of communication for catechetical purposes opened a catechetical centre in Ulongwe where catechists are taught in the use of the video. Biblical parables are acted out and put in videos for use in the parishes. Another important aspect is the Montfort Media that produces a lot of booklets and translates others for Christian teaching. A lot of material for youth, adult and children catechesis is produced. This is a breakthrough in the evangelisation of the church.

3.2.2 Missionaries of Africa.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

The first approach of the Missionaries of Africa did not differ much from that of the Montfort Missionaries. Upon their second attempt to evangelise Malawi and having

founded Mua parish, the fathers embarked immediately in forming the catechist who would go in the village schools as auxiliary evangelisers. For several years each mission had to train its own catechists. That early training was rather rudimentary. Together with the most essential elements of religion, reading and writing had to be taught to candidates. Their training was done by short stages. Catechists were taught for two or three weeks at the mission station. Then they were sent out in the villages for four to six weeks two by two to teach what they themselves had just learned. This was done three or four times a year:

Each morning the catechists attend two special classes that are given at the station. In the afternoon they go out two by two into groups of villages assigned to them in order to teach catechism and give classes. The missionaries supervised their teaching and, when needed, corrected their imperfections. The missionaries were aware that such training by short stages, although imposed by circumstances, was far from being ideal. What we need most is well-instructed catechists; we must give a continuous training to catechists by opening a training school.⁸⁴

Like their Montfort counterparts, the Missionaries of Africa, embarked as soon as was possible in translating catechisms and literature that was judged suitable for catechetical training and instructions. The method used was that of question and answer. Some explanation was given concerning the different parts of the Mass. Their catechumenate was rigorous and lasted for four whole years.

Post-Vatican II Era.

3.2.2.1 Dramatisation of Word of God.

In the realm of catechesis, the Missionaries of Africa encouraged the dramatisation of the Word of God. On a given Sunday, just after the gospel is read in the mass, a group

⁸⁴Mua Diary, 1909, 28.

of people, young and old would dramatise the gospel not in a literal way, but taking the central themes of the message, love, charity, forgiveness, etc. This dramatisation always depicted the actual living situations of the people and gospel values. This has been a powerful tool to make the gospel relevant to the people lives. Thus liturgical though in nature, it acted as a catechetical tool in the basic message of Christ. The value of this dramatisation cannot be underestimated.

Together with the dramatisation is the use of proverbs and local wise sayings in the instruction. The content of Catechesis has always been God creator, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the life of the Church and Sacraments. As of catechetical material, they were trying to use a lot of pedagogical form of teaching. It entailed getting away from the classroom mentality to promote active participation.

3.2.2.2 Visual Material.

As early as 1969, the Missionaries of Africa realised that there was a need to educate people using visual material that depicted the life of Jesus and the sacraments. They started a slide project in Dedza diocese using local pictures. These slides were ideally suited to catechetical work, the main subject being based on Christ's public ministry up to the Ascension. Father Boucher photographed various scenes throughout Malawi that corresponds to events in the life of Christ. The significant thing about these slides is that they are entirely Malawian in character and design. They are very valuable in making the gospel message more meaningful and relevant to the Malawian peoples. Comments from many people who have seen the slides indicate that the project is far superior to similar attempts in the field of catechetics.

In order to bring the figure of Christ closer to the people, all the characters represented in the slides are Malawians, the setting and scenery too. A great effort is put to

colour Jesus' life with Malawian customs manners and institutions. The project makes use of Malawian geographical features like lakes, rivers, and marshes in order to make people realise that God has indeed become man and dwelt among us. It tries to alert the people to Christ's presence today, to Christ's action in the Malawian setting; Christ incarnated as a Malawian, Christ speaking a local language in terms of gesture, position and attitude. In a related development they started stories for teaching and adapting the method of catechetics to a more Malawian social context.

3.2.2.3 Comparisons.

This section has shown that the Missionaries of Africa and the Montfort Missionaries, both took the translation of catechism from their homelands seriously in order to use them for catechetical instruction. The methods that they used before the Second Vatican Council were first training catechists and the question and answer type of instruction. A difference in this epoch is that the Missionaries of Africa, insisted on a longer period of catechumenate while the Montfort Missionaries were content with a three-year catechumenate. Ian Linden says the Montforts had a shorter catechumenate because they wanted to baptise people and quality came later.

We can say that while the Missionaries of Africa had a tradition of evangelising one area in depth, the Montfort Missionaries had the typical policy of establishing the institutional structures of the Church over as wide area as possible. Quality would come later.⁸⁵

The Post-Vatican II era brought new inventions and initiatives in the catechetical approach. For the Montfort Missionaries we have seen a change of approach from the question and answer to the deductive method. Use of narratives helped indeed to make the

⁸⁵Ian Linden, 71.

message of Christ more understandable to the people. As of the Missionaries of Africa, there was more emphasis placed on the use of local proverbs in preaching and catechetical instruction, dramatisation of the word of God, visual material with Malawian features.

The Montfort Missionaries with the use of modern catechetical materials have managed over the years to reach a wider circulation of people. The parables and gospel episodes that were acted out and video recorded can only but be helpful to people especially in this age. The Montfort Media also with its print material continues to catechise modern people in the demands and commitment of their faith.

If we see the catechetical approach of the Missionaries of Africa, it becomes clear that it is inculturated especially the slide project. By making slide that depicted Jesus as a Malawian and also using proverbs, gestures and scenery, they inculturated catechesis. The use of stories in catechesis was similar to that of the Montfort Missionaries.

3.3 Justice and Peace.

The missionaries coming to Malawi in the early days had a positive genuine desire to proclaim the gospel and to act in fairness and to promote this among the people. They preached the liberation that was preached by Christ. After the Vatican Second Council, interest in the promotion of justice and peace was highlighted. The 1971 Synod of Bishops, Justice in the World, stated clearly that it is the mission of the people of God to further justice in the world. Many people are drawn to give authentic witness on behalf of justice by action for justice, action inspired by love. The synod identified social analysis as an important tool to identify internal and external root causes of injustices. The 1981 SECAM exhortation Justice and Evangelisation in Africa also articulated this:

Participation in public life in view of the establishment of justice presupposes, in fact, an analysis of the environment and of the situation. We cannot promote justice

at national level without knowing all forms of oppression and the causes of corruption with vitiate the social order.⁸⁶

Ecclesia in Africa in a similar vain urged members to be witnesses and promoters of Justice and Peace by their own way of life:

To achieve this effectively, the Church as a community of faith, must be an energetic witness to justice and peace in her structures and in the relationships among her members. The Churches in Africa are also aware that, in so far as their own internal affairs are concerned, justice is not always respected with regard to those men and women who are at their service. If the Church is to give witness to justice, she recognises that whoever dares to speak to others about justice should also strive to be just in their eyes.⁸⁷

3.3.1 Montfort Missionaries.

Pre-Vatican II Era.

The involvement of the Montfort Missionaries in Justice, Peace and Development is a response both to the call of the church and their founder St Louis De Montfort.

According to Montfort's apostolic inspiration:

The proclamation of the Gospel requires that the missionaries analyse the needs of the present world, most especially within their own immediate environment, and that they discover how to forge modes of apostolic action truly adapted to the social and cultural conditions of the people they evangelise.⁸⁸

During this period of first evangelisation, the most outstanding feature in the method of justice, peace and development has been the verbal proclamation of the Word of God and preaching. Through the liturgy of the day, the missionaries saw in the gospel an invitation to personal and communal action. Thus for most of the missionaries the homily was an occasion to speak out against injustices that were taking place in the villages and families. They often preached against wife beating, polygamy, witchcraft, etc. They also

⁸⁶Justice and Evangelisation in Africa, No. 28.

⁸⁷Ecclesia in Africa, No 106.

⁸⁸Montfortian Today, No 52a.

encouraged the parishioners to be faithful to the Ten Commandments and to church rules and regulations.

Sometimes the missionaries acted as judges of the people where there was dispute. As said earlier, the mission station offered protection for the villagers from the colonial officials who were harassing them. Ian Linden points clearly about the conduct of the missionaries in this regard:

Before the arrival of the Missionaries of Africa in Nyasaland in 1902, the Montforts had a year to themselves to evangelise Nzama. They build a brick house, opened their first school on 2nd February 1902 and punished a Portuguese soldier who had stolen money from one of their pupils and translated the Lord's prayer into Chichewa.⁸⁹

Post Vatican II Era.

The involvement of the Montfort Missionaries in Justice, Peace and Development issues has been encouraged by their own vision of mission and in response to the Social Teaching of the Church. Their own 1993 general chapter reaffirmed the previous ones in this way:

The promotion of social justice and the defence of human rights is recognised as a constitutive dimension of evangelisation and an invitation to be conscious of our responsibility. We see many confreres are actively engaged in concrete initiatives in this area.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Linden, Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland, 48.

⁹⁰Montfortian Mission, (General Chapter, 1993) No. 10b.

3.3.1.1 Preaching and Witness of Life.

After the Second Vatican Council the way to practice justice, peace and development has and for many still is preaching the Word of God. Comments by a Montfort Missionary can only confirm this:

I have worked for Justice and Peace by trying always to pay just wages, by objecting to unjust decisions usually of parish councils when sacking people of other faiths in favour of Catholics. This contribution towards justice and peace has been normally done by word of mouth, often in preaching and frequently by examples. The laity are involved but it is not enough. Intellectually they are involved but in reality what is said ends at the boundary of the parish.⁹¹

Formation of the Home Based Care as a way towards charity to the neighbours in the parish. As individuals, speaking out against injustices in parish, families, writing in news papers and trying to give just wages to the people.⁹²

As a practice most parishes run by the Montfort Missionaries were engaged in preaching against injustices which were common in the villages like wife beating, distribution of property especially when a husband dies and relatives of the husband want to take everything. The practice of limiting justice and peace issues to the pulpit was due to the climate of fear created by the dictatorship of Dr Banda as Fr. Hubert Louis comments:

As far as Justice and Peace in Malawi is concerned, we did not do much. May be as a congregation we did not know that we had a voice to speak. After the case of Bishop Theunisen involving the formation of a political party, people were afraid. Our political awareness was minimal; we tended to keep off. It was difficult to engage directly on these issues due to the Malawi Congress Party, which successfully created a climate and culture of fear. Any involvement the expatriates meant deportation within 24 hours. Thus up to the early 1990s many missionaries feared deportation and so nothing outstanding was done on justice and peace. Even today in 1997, not many people are aware of what is happening in the country and the problems they face and how to root out these problems. People are now free to say what they want but justice is not yet there. The building of schools and caring of orphans is a way toward justice and peace.⁹³

⁹¹Fr. Owen O'Donnell, interview by author, May 1997, Namitembo Parish, Questionnaire.

⁹²Frs. Habets & Schcepens, interview by author, 11 April 1997, Thyolo Parish, tape recording.

⁹³Fr. Hubert Louis, interview by author, 10 April 1997, Mitengo Parish, tape recording.

3.3.1.2 The Saint Montfort Media.

As early as 1985, the Montfort Missionaries in the person of Fr Piergiorgio Gamba started the Montfort Missionaries Print that was later changed to Saint Montfort Media. This was the first Catholic independent print. The work of this print has been a breakthrough. It has and still continues to publish catechetical material, books and booklets and many other literature. The beginning of the 'Lamp' a non-partisan magazine (Christians, Politics and Culture) in 1995, was a way forward. Through this magazine, the Montfort Missionaries have managed to bring to the surface the need for justice and peace education. It is a tool that has brought effort of many missionaries and the local clergy and Christians in general, to create awareness on major challenges affecting the Malawian society. Issues like death sentence debate, democracy, corruption, and inheritance of property when husband dies, human and religious rights and the Social Teaching of the Church. This has been a great contribution to the country as a whole. The printing of catechetical material and other literature related to the Christian way of life has increased participation in the reading of the faith that affects the people.

Linked to the St Montfort Media is the beginning in 1995 of the Catholic Journalist Association in Malawi that was initiated by the Montfort Media. This has brought journalists throughout the country as Christians and Catholics to enter into educating the masses on responsible journalism and issues affecting them. St Montfort Media has also initiated the Prison Reform Group that comprises of religious personnel, governmental and non-governmental organisations. It aims at creating awareness on the conditions of prisoners in the country.

3.3.2 Missionaries of Africa.

The constitutions of the Missionaries of Africa compel its members to work for issues of Justice, Peace and Development.

Sharing the sufferings of others and making their aspirations our own demands of us particular care for the poor, a commitment to justice and peace, a concern that people's lives be fuller and richer, more truly human. In this way will the dignity of each and everyone as children of God be more acknowledged.⁹⁴

As followers of Jesus Christ we are sent to bring the Good News to the poor, to proclaim the kingdom of peace and justice and brotherhood. By our actions, our words, and our life style, we wish to bear witness to the special love God has for the poor and lowly.⁹⁵

Pre-Vatican II Era.

Missionaries of Africa who came to Malawi got involved in all areas that they saw as liberating. Like their Montfort counterparts, they did everything possible to create around them a situation that brought peace to the area. In the area that was occupied by the missionaries there were frequent rivalries between Chewa and Ngoni tribes. The presence of the missionaries preaching a gospel of love and reconciliation among people brought a climate of unity. The missionaries acted as judges to these opposing groups.

Post-Vatican II Era.

3.3.2.1 Preaching and Witness of Life.

According to the political climate that Malawians experienced for the last thirty-one years of Dr. Banda's rule, there were no way issues of justice and peace could be aired

⁹⁴Missionaries of Africa, Constitutions and Laws, No 6.

⁹⁵Ibid., No 18.

without dire consequences for the missionaries and the church at large. Missionaries had to content themselves to the pulpit, build schools and hospitals and do charity work:

The Missionaries of Africa in the early 1980s formed a justice and peace commission and also one of their members was till 1996, the head of the Justice and Peace commission at the Catholic Secretariate. Now he is the head of the Justice and Peace commission of the Diocese of Lilongwe. Another contribution would be the protection of the rights of orphans and widows. Visiting prisoners, giving of just salaries to catechists. Since the 1970s the missionaries of Africa took up an option for justice and peace.⁹⁶

3.3.2.2 Training For Transformation (TFT) Seminars.

The Missionaries of Africa, having formed a justice and peace commission within their own society, embarked on giving seminars to their confreres and the lay faithful themselves. It is interesting to note that with these seminars it helped the people to be aware of their rights and duties injustices taking place around them.

The Training for Transformation method (TFT) was employed with encouraging results as one catechist commented:

Justice and peace awareness started in Mua Parish in the late 1980s. The main stress was justice and peace in the families. Traditionally women were not allowed to speak at most public functions in society and this was taken up a bit in the Small Christian Community meetings. They could not be allowed to express themselves freely. However with the coming of the Justice and peace awareness it became clear that women were denied their right to take part fully in the discussions. They were then given the freedom to participate fully in the life of the Small Christian Communities. Being created in the Image and likeness of God, they too discovered that they could even occupy positions of authority in the Church. Changing the mentality of a people is a slow and long process. The same was true of the idea of women taking positions of leadership in front of men. The response of women has been positive with this development. Justice and peace awareness has given women new status and freedom. A major change is the question of who gets property when somebody dies. Is it the woman and children or it goes to the family of the husband. It used to happen and still happens in some quarters of society that the woman who is left behind got nothing while relatives of the deceased husband carried all the property away. This has caused and is still causing untold suffering

⁹⁶Fr. Julio, interview by author, 7th May 1997, Chilinde Parish, tape recording.

to those who remain. With justice and peace and seminars on Training for Transformation, we see things changing.⁹⁷

The seminars conducted by the Missionaries of Africa to different interested groups led to the creation of justice and peace groups within their own parishes and dealt with specific areas of concern. The lay faithful began to realise that it was not enough to point fingers at the government but to start in their own families.

3.3.2.3 Justice and Peace within the Society of the Missionaries of Africa.

As early as the 1980s, Missionaries of Africa started a Justice and Peace Commission of their own. This was a response to their 1980 General Chapter that resolutely endorsed the well-known statement of the 1971 Roman Synod of Bishops:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.⁹⁸

The chapter of 1980 clearly pointed out the urgency to make commitment to justice, peace and integral development a major aspect of their mission to proclaim the gospel.⁹⁹ The three themes of justice, peace and development had already been associated in *Populorum Progressio*. Pope Paul VI said 'Development is the new name of peace and integral development is associated with the removal of injustices at all levels'. Because of the atmosphere of silence about some issues in Malawi, the Missionaries of Africa started a justice and peace group of their own. However they always remained very conscious of the fact that they should aim at having a proper collaboration with the local church.

⁹⁷Patrick Sani, interview by author, 15th May 1997, Mua Parish, tape recording.

⁹⁸*Convenientes ex universo*, No. 6.

⁹⁹*Missionaries of Africa*, (General Chapter, 1980), No. 45.

They stressed that justice, peace and development become an integral part of their pastoral vision, of their catechesis and of evangelisation as a whole. Again their 1986 Chapter went further than that of 1980 and actually urged the Society to initiate its members to social analysis. They explicitly asked the:

Provincial and Regional Councils to plan and co-ordinate sessions of social analysis for all their members using qualified personnel to facilitate the analysis of the situation, the identification of the local needs as well as the root causes of injustices. The selection of meaningful ways to take action for Justice, Peace and Development. Moreover each community should evaluate its development projects within the context of social analysis.¹⁰⁰

As a follow up to these recommendations of their General Chapters the Missionaries of Africa in Malawi formed a Justice, Peace and Development (JPD) of their own. They started organising seminars and invited competent persons to teach them social analysis. Input was given on justice and human rights according to the social teaching of the church and to the pedagogy followed in the human rights awareness and research methods, theory and practice on research methods, efficient planning and plan of action. The confreres were then given skills to analyse situations of justice and peace in their own areas of work. They confirmed that social analysis is at the same time a general pastoral tool and a most efficient method of tackling justice and peace issues. Thus the involvement of the Missionaries of Africa in Malawi in areas of justice, peace and development and social analysis, is nothing but a concrete way of realising the fundamental insights of Vatican II in general, and *Gaudium et Spes* in particular. It is also an implementation of the basic orientations of the 1980 and 1986 chapters. The commitment to Justice, and social analysis is practical way of applying principles to the problems facing both the Church and the World in the last decade of the 20th century.

¹⁰⁰General Chapter of the Missionaries of Africa, 1986, Nos. 85 & 99.

Forming a justice, peace and development commission of their own, the Missionaries of Africa were better equipped to analyse situations of injustices in the country, to find root causes and suggest plan of action for all. Since the commission meets three times a year to research, update, and enrich each other it is a catalyst in the service of the their missionary approach.

3.3.2.4 Justice, Peace and Development Offices: Nkhotakota Case.

In chapter one we had noted that Malawi depends of Agriculture for its economy and the most important cash crop is tobacco. According to surveys, tobacco tenants and farm workers along with their dependants number over 1.2 million people in Malawi, about 12% of the population. However the contribution of tenants and workers is never recognised. They are left behind in development. The problems that they face are many:

Many landlords woo tenants with sweet promises of how they would look after them and their families by feeding them and clothing them in return for their services until harvest time and sales. The tenant is told that all his yearly expenses would be deducted from sales of the proceeds. Little does the tenant know the complexities of such a deal. Things turn sour after the tenant has committed himself. He discovers that the price of food is double that of the local market, for his clothes and those of his family, he is given second hand clothing for the price of new ones; fertiliser is at least one and half the market price. But because the tenant is poor and has no money to buy food, he continues to get supplies on the terms of the landlord. At the end of the year, the tenant has invariably been found to be indebted to the landlord. He is then asked to do one year to make good the loan. To his surprise the tenant finds that things are worse at the end of the second year than they were at the end of the first. He eventually becomes the slave of the landlord and can only go away at the pleasure of the landlord. He goes away without anything and poorer than he came.¹⁰¹

Working in an area with these kind of problems, the Missionaries of Africa of Nkhotakota parish, decided to make a social analysis of the situation in order to find the root causes of such injustices and plan for action. It did not take long to realise that the

¹⁰¹The Monitor, (Blantyre) 22nd June 1994.

landlords were taking advantage of the poverty and ignorance of the people in terms of their rights:

Almost all the tenancy contracts are verbal and the landlords have an advantage in that they can always change the terms by insisting that they said one thing not the other. Since most of the tenants are illiterate, the landlords play on their ignorance. They take the liberty of doing what they like on their farms and flout even the few regulations that should give protection to the tenants. Sad enough, tenants are not in a position to stand for their rights even when they see the original agreement being flouted.¹⁰²

As a result of these findings, the parish organised meetings with the tenants to hear their grievances. They resolved to deliver a signed petition to the District Commissioner outlining their grievances. Over 10,000 tenants signed the document. Opening a justice, peace and development office with a layman chosen to work full time as co-ordinator followed this. The project received support from all the Missionaries of Africa. The co-ordinator started visiting farms, meeting tenants and inviting them for seminars. As a result of its active awareness programme, other workers besides tenants also came to seek the support of the office. Widows looking for advice on inheritance rights, and company workers come for advice. The help given to such people has mainly been giving advice, helping them to articulate their own complaints to relevant authorities and where possible to physically accompany them and lending support when they lodge their complaints. They continue to create awareness on the rights and duties of both the tenants and their landlord.

A great achievement of this office is that now it is affiliated to the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (M.C.T.U). It is seen that such injustices needed the collaboration of all people involved as bishop Ziyaye of Lilongwe diocese clearly pointed out on the occasion of the opening of the Justice, Peace and Development office at Nkhotakota parish:

¹⁰²Missionaries of Africa, (Talk to AMRIM) 1993.

In any industry, if the necessary preconditions are not present, if all parties cannot voice their concerns and be listened to, then there is the tendency to exploit the weaker and exclude him from positive and active participation. The tenants feel downtrodden and are denied a satisfactory remuneration for their work. It is not simply a matter of money, but also concerns human lives, respecting the dignity of every person, the right to associate and the right to legal protection.¹⁰³

Our role as a Church is one of highlighting and bringing to the fore the predicament of the tenants and asking for the co-operation of the Government, the Landlords, the Trade Union Movement and other interested bodies in tackling the sources of injustices faced by the tenants.¹⁰⁴

The involvement of the Nkhotakota parish team in protecting the rights of the tenants is a great step to evangelisation and liberation.¹⁰⁵

3.3.2.5 Comparisons.

Having seen the approaches of the two missionary groups to issues of justice, peace and development, it is now necessary to see the differences and similarities. This will lead us to a better assessment of the methods of evangelisation.

Common to both missionary groups is the fact that for many years after their arrival in the country, they engaged in charity work, preached in favour of justice and peace and gave examples from their own lives. After the Second Vatican Council, although the missionaries were aware of the injustices around them, they contented themselves to preaching and sacraments, building schools, hospitals and churches, for fear of being deported due to the autocratic rule of former president Banda. For some missionaries there was failure to see that the poor are so because of the social, economic and political

¹⁰³Bishop Ziyaye, Speech delivered on the opening of the Justice, Peace and Development Office at Nkhotakota parish, No 10. (Laborem Exercens, No 12.1)

¹⁰⁴Ibid., No 1-2.

¹⁰⁵Aylward Shorter, Evangelisation and Culture, 9.

structure of the day and therefore did not pre occupy themselves tackling the root causes of injustices.

Both the missionary groups are members of the Association of Men Religious In Malawi (AMRIM). Together with other members they worked hand in hand especially in pushing the bishops to come up with a statement against human rights abuses. The efforts that AMRIM did in translating the 1981 SECAM document of Justice in Africa, though the bishops refused to publish it, was a way of working together for a common project. However things were not followed up in the congregations as a result of the bishop's refusal.

A difference in the approaches of the missionary groups is that for the Montfort Missionaries, efforts in the promotion of justice and peace and development are done as an individual enterprise. There was and still is less enthusiasms as to what the constitution is saying or recommendations by the general chapters. Working as individually without following community projects run the risk of taking justice and peace issues as if they were hobbies. In contrast to the Montfort Missionaries, the Missionaries of Africa have a common vision and pastoral priorities that are sanctioned by the whole group. All the members therefore are bound by that common vision to work together as confreres evaluate together and plan for the next course of action.

Secondly we have seen that to work effectively for the implementation of justice, peace and development issues, the Missionaries of Africa, in obedience to their general chapters, started a justice, peace and development committee of their own. The committee organises refresher courses to its members on issues that need attention. It is the same committee that briefs members on findings and helps them in concrete realities. Having a committee of their own, the Missionaries of Africa are better equipped to create an interest within their own circles for the promotion of justice and peace. When we come to the

Montfort Missionaries, although members are promoting justice and peace, there is lack of direction and enthusiasm as a group.

A third difference is the programmes for Training for Transformation. It has been clear that the Missionaries of Africa, in order to create awareness among themselves and the people whom they evangelise on issues touching them, use the social analysis method and conduct training sessions for all their parishes even on the diocesan level. This action empowers the laity themselves to be agents of their own liberation. As Montfort Missionaries in Malawi, there is nothing of the sort. The efforts of the Montfort Media in introducing a magazine called the 'Lamp' which aims at educating Christians on their responsibility in politics and society in general is a step in the right direction. Laudable as this may be, it still calls for greater support from the whole Montfortian community in Malawi.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen the approaches of the Montfort Missionaries to Inculturation, first on language and their life style which was more going out of the mission to visit the people in the villages. The task they took in translating the catechism and other church literature. We have also seen how the Missionaries of Africa in a similar fashion translated also material for instruction.

In catechesis we have seen the desire of both missionary groups to make the gospel appreciated by the to people in their own cultural context. The Missionaries of Africa took on a more inculturated approach to catechetics. With the coming of modern means of communication, both missionary groups have made use of them to live up to the demands of modern man and woman.

The last was an analysis of issues of justice, peace and development. We have seen that both missionary groups adhered to the mandate of the Church, their constitutions and also general chapters to foster justice and peace and to plan a course of action. The coming chapter will be suggestions for evangelisation towards the third millenium. This will provide guidelines for effective evangelisation as we enter the second epoch in the history of the church in Malawi.

CHAPTER IV
SUGGESTIONS FOR EVANGELISATION IN THE THIRD
MILLENNIUM

Introduction

In the previous chapter we have seen the approach of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa in inculturation, justice and peace and catechesis. It is the goal of this chapter to put up a few suggestions for evangelisation in the third millennium to make the gospel address the issues affecting people at this time in the history of Malawi. The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I propose the inculturation model of evangelisation as a guideline. In connection with this inculturation is also the view of the Church as Family. In the second section I propose the shift in emphasis from the inductive to the deductive method in catechetical instruction. In the third section I propose the liberative and prophetic models of evangelisation for the church in Malawi, and for the two missionary groups.

Suggestions and proposals for evangelisation that are discussed in this section are not only directed to the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa, but also to the whole church in Malawi. Since both missionary groups are working within the structure of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, the suggestions will inevitably affect the whole church of Malawi.

4.1 Inculturation.

4.1.1 Inculturation Model of Evangelisation.

For the church in Malawi and all the congregations working in this field of evangelisation, I would like to propose an integral approach to evangelisation that will not

leave certain peoples or cultural values out. Removing and condemning the cultural values of the people will result in people being displaced because:

Missionary concern no longer arises out of fear of hell but out of love of God, whose goodness and love, we want to make known to the whole of humanity. Secrete longings for fulfilment must be detected, interpreted, and so answered that the Church, Sacrament of Salvation for all, says to them not a word of damnation but salvation and hope.¹⁰⁶

The reign of God is meant to embrace all things. Everything present in a culture needs to be recognised and weighed in dialogue, according to the criteria set by the Gospel. There must be inculturation of Christianity and the Christianisation of culture.¹⁰⁷

The church in Malawi must work to find out the cultural values that affect the people. This will happen if the church is sown and not transplanted into the cultures of the people. For integral evangelisation to take place we do not start by condemning the main cultural heritage of the people as was the case with the early missionaries against initiation rites and Nyau societies. Pastorally if inculturation is about incarnating the Christian faith and the gospel into the totality of the life and culture of a given people, it should tackle the primary expressions of that culture if at all the whole process is to bear fruit. It is imperative now to take on the inculturation model of evangelisation as a starting point. Starting with this theological vision will help to influence praxis that is relevant. Unless the inculturation model of evangelisation guides the church in Malawi, it will not only lose track but also neglect an important area of evangelisation. It is therefore imperative for

¹⁰⁶Wabert Buhlmann, The Church of The Future: A Model For the Year 2001, (Slough: Orbis Books, 1986), 11

¹⁰⁷David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, (New York: Maryknoll, 1991), 455.

theologians in this field to come together and see how the inculturation model of evangelisation can be adapted to the Malawian pastoral approach.

For real inculturation to take place in Malawi, it is not enough to have drums in the church. It is important also to inculturate the structures of the Church. The best way is to look at the Church as a Family. The African Synod Fathers emphasised that this image highlights the care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelisation will aim at building up the Church as family, trying to encourage reconciliation and true communion, favouring solidarity and sharing.¹⁰⁸ Already the Small Christian Communities are an expression of this wider family.

4.1.2 Commissions of Inculturation and Experimental Parishes.

Inculturation is such an important topic in the Church of Africa and because of its urgency in Malawi, it needs to be explored from all possible angles. Since it touches the lives of the people it is important that the Episcopal Conference of Malawi take up this topic in a serious way. Inculturation should not be left to individuals or missionaries alone as if it were a private hobby. The whole community has to be involved in this task.

The Church should get specialists in all the fields of inculturation especially in the area of the liturgy. It should be taken slowly and with caution to avoid misunderstanding. I propose that the Episcopal Conference of Malawi set up within its administration a commission of inculturation. This commission can comprise of the young and the old, clergy and religious: in short all people in the Church must be represented.

Those in authority in the church must begin to realise that the efforts or private initiatives of individuals or small groups in their local churches can be no substitute

¹⁰⁸Ecclesia in Africa, No. 63.

for an official programme of inculturation. Only when these authorities take a leading role in the backing of such efforts and initiatives does inculturation become public, open, measurable and comparable instead of being regarded as an underground activity. Only then can the different parties to the task, social scientists, cultural and liturgical experts, as well as pastors and their congregations comfortably enter into the process of scrutinising and assessing inculturation efforts such as are already taking place.¹⁰⁹

The local people themselves have to take a lead in inculturation since they understand their culture much more than a foreigner. Each diocese and parish should also have such a commission that will give seminars, creating awareness and founding new and valid ways of expressing the Christian faith in the local setting. In the same line, each diocese is to have an experimental parish where research can take place, involving the Christians, suggestions put up and experiments carried out. From this parish then people can go out in their home parishes to explore the treasures that have been worked out by the commission. Thus the experimental parishes, together with the diocesan commission of inculturation can send delegates to the national commission of inculturation. It will be the task of these commissions to suggest some topics of exploration each year starting with the most pressing ones. It is only by working and exploring things together as a family of God that the church in Malawi will move forward in the area of inculturation.

To ensure a broader participation, each religious congregation should be represented either at the diocesan commission and at least one male religious to represent all male religious and one female religious to represent all women religious at the national commission. Each congregation could have their own commissions that in turn could be contributing to both the diocesan and national commissions. This should be imperative especially for those congregations that deal with direct pastoral work with the people.

¹⁰⁹Alex Chima, "Inculturation: A Challenge to The Church in Malawi," The Lamp, No 12, April-June 1998, 33.

4.1.3 Formation of Priests.

If inculturation is to move forward in Malawi, there is a great need to give adequate training for the future agents of evangelisation. It is important to equip the major seminaries with subjects on the topic of inculturation. Inculturation should be one of the most important subjects to be given to those training for the priesthood. There should be an emphasis on exploring the richness of the Malawian culture in order to get the seminarians to appreciate their own culture. Unless people see the good and values in their own cultures, there will be no meaningful inculturation. It is therefore important to give seminarians and all agents of evangelisation a serious training.

The Christian message needs to be presented in a way that appeals to people. We are far from it, the customs have not been seriously studied to determine which ones to keep and which one ones to discard. It is good to teach people Christian values and principles and leave them to see what to do according to their culture and see how they can express the same values using their own thought patterns and symbols.¹¹⁰

It is important to start with the seminarians because when they are ordained and put in the parish, it will be their responsibility to see to it that efforts in inculturation are encouraged in their parishes. Many a time priests have been a stumbling block to changes in favour of a more inculturated liturgy. For inculturation to take place in an effective way, it is important that the agents be ready for such endeavours. The agents of inculturation are not just the hierarchy but the whole community of the faithful. John Paul II reaffirmed the importance of the agents of inculturation in the process especially to the missionaries:

Missionaries, who come from other Churches and countries, must immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent, moving beyond their own cultural limitations. Hence they must learn the language of the place in which they work, become familiar with the most important expressions of their local culture, and discover its values through direct experience. Only if they have this kind of awareness will they be able to bring people the knowledge of the hidden mystery in a credible and fruitful way. It is not of course a matter of

¹¹⁰Fr. Idel, Interview by author, 17 May 1997, Nkhatabay Parish, Malawi, questionnaire.

missionaries renouncing their own cultural identity, but of understanding, appreciating, fostering and evangelising the culture of the environment in which they are working and therefore of equipping themselves to communicate effectively with it adopting a manner of living which is a sign of the Gospel witness and of solidarity with the people.¹¹¹

It is not only missionaries who must cultivate this attitude but all the agents of evangelisation. Unless all pastoral workers subscribe to this conduct it will be difficult to have any meaningful inculturation.

4.1.4 Ancestor Veneration.

In chapter one we treated that life is very important in Africa. We have the yet to be born, the living, the living dead and ancestors. Life does not come to an end but continues. It is therefore important to merge this with All Saints Feast and the All Souls Day. Just as we pray through the intercession of our patron saints, or any other saint, we should also pray to our ancestors, our dead brothers and sisters. Malawi being a country that depends on agriculture, rain is very important for the people. It is important to find a workable liturgy that can incorporate the asking of rains to God through the ancestors and the saints. The Feasts of All Saints and All Souls would be ideal for this kind of thing.

Critical moments in the life of the individuals such as birth, initiation rites, marriage or death: have to be seriously studied and incorporated in the Church. Leaving this out is tantamount to leaving a big group of Christians outside church. These are important occasions in the life of any individual in a village and a serious research has to be done in order to come up with a liturgy that is relevant to people.

¹¹¹Redemptoris Missio, No. 52.

4.2 Catechetical Approach.

4.2.1 Shift From a Deductive to an Inductive Method of Evangelisation.

Evaluating the catechetical approach in the previous chapter we saw that the method mainly used by the two missionary groups was Didactic-Sacramental Evangelisation. This method is doctrine-centred and aims at orthodoxy, at mental assent to the doctrines revealed by God and taught in an authoritative way by the church. These models presuppose that people are evangelised when they receive the sacraments of initiation, and live in the Christian community. It is true that the doctrine-centred model of evangelisation still predominates in the church of Malawi today.

However, it is time that we present the gospel message in a form that is at once clear, convincing and relevant to the people's way of life. This can only be achieved if our catechetical pastoral approach shifts from deductive to inductive. The inductive method proceeds from the observance of data and facts and sees what is true about them thus arriving at general principles and laws upon which one can act.¹¹² Doing this we follow Jesus Christ who inserted himself in the life of the people. Because of this he was able to give them true revelation and Good News. According to the General Catechetical Directory:

Christ himself preached the kingdom of God by illustrating its nature with parables from the experience of human life. He called to mind certain human situations...in order to explain eschatological and transcendent realities and then teach the way of life which these lives demand of us.¹¹³

Thus the life of the people becomes the starting point of our evangelisation. The inductive method has the advantage of being directly in touch with what is experienced by

¹¹²'Induction' paraphrased after Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged edition, Mckechnie, J. L., ed. Collins and Ward, Havana, 1975, 934.

¹¹³General Catechetical Directory, No. 74.

people at grassroots levels. It is therefore important and more so at this point in the history of the Catholic Church in Malawi, to make a shift in this approach for a broader effective instruction.

4.2.2 Modern Means of Communications.

We are at a point in the history of Malawi where the media commands a lot of influence in the society and in the church. From school age children to adults there is quest to rush into the papers to see what people are discussing. Mass media is such an important area that the Church in Malawi can use in order to act as an instrument of guidance in the midst of confusing opinions concerning issues affecting society. Although efforts are already in place, there is more to be done in order to enable the message of Christ have an impact on people. I propose that the church authorities in Malawi take seriously the demands of the day and produce competitive audio and video material that will have a great impact on the people. Unless this is taken seriously we as a church will be losing an opportunity to catechise our people.

4.2.3. Forming Catechetical Commissions.

We have seen for a greater part that sporadic initiatives in the areas of inculturation as well as catechetics, have been made on individual initiatives without really the backing of the congregation or the Episcopal Conferences. As we have opted for the model of the Church as a Family, it will be a contradiction to continue working individually in this area. A family works together in all aspects of life and the same should be true of the family of God that is the church. Evangelisation can be made more effective through a team ministry especially through collaborative ministry. This means bringing together different conditions and classes of people in order to make evangelisation more effective.

It is therefore imperative now that a National Catechetical Commission be formed in order to bring people of all walks of life, from all the seven ecclesiastical dioceses to plan, execute and evaluate the methods of catechetical training that are used in their respective dioceses. This will enhance growing together in different fields of catechetics and catechesis. The catechetical commission can then work hand in hand with the commission of inculturation that I proposed in the previous section, to map out and find ways of inculturating catechesis. If the people are to understand well the Christian message, it has to be brought to them in an inculturated way. Already we have seen in the villages the most important way to teach or instruct is by using stories and proverbs. The same can be encouraged in any catechetical endeavour.

4.2.4 Training of Catechists.

Catechists play a very important role in evangelisation, they are in touch with the people and they are priests all things except sacraments as was the situation of the early catechists. Given their nature of work, it is important that they be given serious training in the preparation for pastoral work. So far most of the catechists though doing a lot in pastoral work lack enough education to be able to commit them at a higher level. My proposal as we approach the third millennium is to recruit people who have a minimum of Junior Certificate of Education for catechetical training.

The Catechetical Colleges in Malawi, need to be handed by people who are qualified for this kind of work in order to offer a maximum and quality education to the catechists. We can not rely only on the good will of individuals to run such centres.

Training is very important and given the number of people educated in Malawi, it is good to meet also the educational standards of those whom we evangelise in order to render an effective witness.

The role of the catechist has been and remains a determinative force in the implantation and expansion of the Church in Africa. The Synod recommends that catechists not only receive a sound initial formation...but that they continue to receive doctrinal formation as well as moral and spiritual support. Both bishops and priests are to have their catechists at heart, seeing to it that they are guaranteed suitable living conditions so that they carry out their mission properly. In the midst of the Christian community the catechists' responsibility is to be acknowledged and held in respect.¹¹⁴

It is with this understanding that everything be done to ensure a serious training of the catechists to effectively meet the demands of the day.

4.3 Justice, Peace and Development.

4.3.1 Liberative and Prophetic Models of Evangelisation.

The Church in Malawi at this point in history needs to adopt a liberative and prophetic model of evangelisation. This model is hands on-centred. It places emphasis on gospel-inspired activities. It strives to liberate people and communities from all that oppresses them, such as personal and structural sin, which are linked. Jesus advocates a political love, a love that is situated in history and that has visible repercussions for human beings.¹¹⁵ This model of evangelisation owes much to liberation theology and the Social Teaching of the Church. It bases itself on the fact that Jesus' option for the poor was directed towards their liberation. Therefore committed solidarity with the poor helps one to understand the true meaning of the Good News. Effective evangelisation in Malawi should be seen to empower the poor and emphasise their birthrights as human beings to share in the good things this world provides. The Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa should work to make the poor and oppressed agents of their own liberation.

This liberation takes different forms. It can be seen in structural terms; namely that there are laws and institutional arrangements in society which are oppressive, evil and

¹¹⁴*Ecclesia in Africa*, No. 91.

¹¹⁵Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads*, (London: SCM Press, 1978) 379.

alien to gospel values. These need to be identified by means of analysis, social and otherwise, to be challenged and to be changed. By showing compassion and love in these practical ways, not only do they witness the Good News but also, they themselves are evangelised in the process. Indeed this model in Malawi will affirm all forms of humanisation for instance; liberation from the enslavement of society, injustices and poverty. Hence the church in Malawi should be a sign and instrument of liberation, justice and peace. In the past and in many circles, struggles for liberation alongside the oppressed has provoked persecutions and martyrdom. However if our pastoral work consisted solely of preparing and instructing people in the reception of sacraments, and if we were only doing this, then we would be missing the point. We realise that we need first and foremost to reform our lives and give the witness of a just way of living and acting. We will lack credibility if we ourselves fail to live up to the demands of justice and ask the Christian community to be just.

In line with the liberative model is the church's prophetic mission that is not just an object of pastoral work but as a model of evangelisation. The people of God carry out their prophetic mission by assimilating practices, discerning, witnessing and teaching the faith they have received. This prophetic model is here used in the sense Rahner describes to mean the constitutive:

elements or qualities of a prophet and his task, so that it is not a merely neutral record, but a constructive criticism of religion and society, an interpretation of historical events, and indeed as such, an intrinsic element of these events.¹¹⁶

The church is called to bear witness to Christ by taking courageous and prophetic stands in the face of the corruption of political or economic power; by not seeking her own glory and material wealth; by using her resources to serve the poorest of the poor and by imitating Christ's own simplicity in life. The Church and her missionaries must also bear the witness of humility, above all with regard to themselves a humility that allows them to make a personal and communal

¹¹⁶Karl Rahner, ed. *Encyclopedia of Theology* (Guildford: Burns & Oates, 1986), s.v. "Prophetism," by Karl Rahner.

examination of conscience in order to correct in their behaviour whatever is contrary to the Gospel and disfigures the face of Christ.¹¹⁷

4.3.2 Pastoral Circle as a Tool of Pastoral Action.

The first task of the Church in Malawi, following the Liberating and Prophetic model of evangelisation which I have proposed, is to educate its agents, priests, religious, and catechists, in the role of the church in justice and peace issues. Involvement in justice and peace should not be left as a hobby of a few but a constitutive element of preaching the Good News of Christ.

The first point of evangelisation suggested by the inductive method necessarily involves a critical analysis of the social situation in the light of the Gospel. It would be futile in Malawi to attempt to tackle and promote justice without tackling the root causes of the problems. Social analysis is a privileged tool of pastoral action. It is the most systematic way of tackling root causes and plan effective action. It helps to identify internal and external factors of injustice. The 1981 SECAM exhortation on Justice and Evangelisation in Africa, invites pastoral workers and lay people to make a serious analysis of local and international situations;

Participation in public life in view of the establishment of Justice presupposes, in fact, an analysis of the environment and of the situation. We cannot promote justice at national level without knowing all the forms of oppression and the causes of corruption, which vitiate the social order.¹¹⁸

Henriot and Holland observe that this method emphasises the ongoing relationship between reflection and action. The first moment of insertion locates the geography of our pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities. The second is social analysis that analyses the situation in order to understand people's experiences and

¹¹⁷Redemptoris Missio, No 43.

¹¹⁸Justice and Evangelisation in Africa, No, 28.

how they interrelate. It examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages, and identifies actors. The third stage of Theological Reflection is an effort to understand more broadly and deeply the analysed experience in the light of the living faith, scripture, Church's social teaching and the resources of tradition. The final stage of Pastoral Planning makes the decision for action. Plans coming up as a result of the pastoral circle can only be implemented in the concrete situation from where the data of life and experience is derived. The goal of pastoral action in Malawi should always be the transformation of society in the light and force of the Gospel. This justice is a form of love and is an essential requirement of the gospel message.¹¹⁹ Through the pastoral circle and action in Malawi:

The church as an institution must question anything that tolerates or condones injustice in this world. This means it must also shake the political neutrality that implicitly lines up on the side of the oppressive structures of the status quo. We are on the side of the poor when we struggle alongside them against the poverty that has been unjustly created and forced on them.¹²⁰

4.3.3 Justice, Peace and Development Commissions.

One of the most important tools in effective pastoral ministry is the formation of justice, peace and development commissions in the congregations and dioceses. The Missionaries of Africa have already their own and it is high time that the Montfort Missionaries form their own in order to act as a body that enlightens its own members in the demands of this area and provide research and propose a plan of action. Since now each diocese is putting up such commissions, it is important that each religious congregation be represented in the diocesan commission and one religious represent all the

¹¹⁹Jon Sobrino, *The True Church And The Poor*, (New York: Orbis, 1984), 47.

¹²⁰Clodovis Boff and Leonardo Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (New York: Orbis, 1981), 4.

others at a national level. This is because as religious we are working in collaboration with the local ordinaries and their pastoral plan.

As was seen in the previous sections, a lot of development has been done in terms of building structures to answer the needs of the people. Many schools have been build to offer education to the masses. This is an act of justice. Hospitals, social centres and women groups have also been initiated. While all these served a good cause, it is good at this point to see that real developments must involve the people themselves and not just do things for them creating a situation of dependence and paternalism:

As a body organised within the community and the nation, the Church has both the right and the duty to participate fully in building a just and peaceful society with all the means at her disposal. Here we must mention the Church's Apostolate in the areas of education, health care, and social awareness and in other programmes of assistance. In the measure that these activities help to reduce ignorance, improve public health and promote a greater participation of all in solving the problems of society in a spirit of freedom and co-responsibility, the Church creates conditions for the progress of justice and peace.¹²¹

Any venture in development project must therefore make the people themselves agents of their own change and create an active participation for them. This ensures that dependence is not encouraged on the people.

4.3.4 General Chapters and Common Projects.

Working for justice and peace and development, like any other area of pastoral life is a communal activity and not to be left to individuals alone. As Christians we are a family and working together as a community is not only encouraged by the Church but also offers

¹²¹Ecclesia in Africa, No. 107.

witness. Agents of justice and peace in Malawi therefore have to work together in order to render effective their pastoral work.

At this point in time I propose that all projects in any pastoral endeavour be communal projects. Examples still show that there are certain projects that are just started by individuals and have no bearing on the congregations as a whole. When the initiator dies or is transferred to a new place, the whole project collapses. It is important to decide together as a community, which projects to pursue and ensure continuity despite the transfer of individuals. In the same line, the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa and other have the advantage of having general chapters every five or six years. Here the mission of the congregations is enforced with recourse to the global church and the particular places. I urge both the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa to make use of their general chapters in order to remain relevant and faithful to their charism and to be effective in their mission of evangelisation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to propose a plan of action for the evangelisation of Malawi for the third millennium. We have seen that for effective evangelisation to take place the missionaries must work together as a family in all areas of pastoral life. We can no longer afford to continue working individually as if the church or evangelisation was just another private business.

To be able to move together as a church I have proposed an inculturated model of being a Church in Malawi. To be able to achieve this all the members of the Church should work hand in hand. I have also proposed the formation of a commission on inculturation on the national level and as per diocese and also experimental parishes where research can

take place. For all this to work out well, all the agents of evangelisation should be given good training in order to carry out this task efficiently.

On catechetical approach, we see a great need to present an inculturated catechesis. Unless we speak to people in a language and symbols that are relevant to them, we risk being ineffective. Great emphasis has also been put on the training of catechists in and formation again of the National Catechetical commission. To be relevant to the demands of the present world, there is a great need in Malawi to move from the inductive method to the deductive method of catechetical instruction.

Finally on justice, peace and development, I have proposed the prophetic and liberative model of evangelisation to be the guide. I also propose social analysis as a tool of pastoral action in order to find root causes of problems. Working together on justice peace and development issues is important in order to co-ordinate the effort of diocesan, religious and lay peoples' initiatives. Forming commissions of Justice and Peace in the religious congregations is also seen as a way forward.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa in Malawi, working hand in hand with other agents of evangelisation and the local hierarchy have a mission to continue proclaim and practice the gospel in a society that is changing rapidly. It is now almost a hundred years since the first permanent settlement of Catholic missionaries in Malawi. A lot of hard work of the part of the missionaries has enabled a good number of people to embrace the Catholic faith. The result of this hard work is seen in the fact that the gospel message can instil in people virtues that would make them face the challenges that the world poses.

Despite the fact that the Missionaries of Africa and the Montfort Missionaries have worked hard to spread the gospel of Christ in Malawi, the majority of the population profess the Christian faith but in many cases that faith is superficial or disoriented. Some people are Catholics only by name; they officially remain members of the church simply to keep their social identity and to have a Christian burial after death. It is the task of the missionaries together with the local hierarchy to ensure that people observe church rules and regulations not as an end in themselves but as a means to go to Jesus Christ. Although the missionaries have tried to create this understanding, it remains a challenge today to make people have the right motivations for following these church guidelines. It would be sad to succeed in getting people to faithfully cling to rules while in actual fact they are losing the essence of the gospel.

The pastoral approach that the church has been using for a long time has been successful in bringing masses to the church but not forming them in the Christian values to a degree in which those values would become part and parcel of their personality. The Church in Malawi has to allow the gospel have an impact on the people's daily life. The Word of God has to be proclaimed not in abstract terms; but must be interpreted in the

light of concrete challenges and situations of life. Those who proclaim that Word of God and all who profess the Christian faith must practice it so that they can be credible and their example may attract and encourage those who see or listen to them. The Christian faith should not be confined to private morality, but must embrace the whole society and all its problems. If the Church in Malawi is to succeed in bringing integral evangelisation, it must foster full participation and create full awareness of all its members during liturgical celebration or other forms of worship. Only in that way will those acts and moments of worship be for them a source of grace and strength to apply their Christian faith to all their activities.

In this comparative study of the methods of evangelisation of the Montfort Missionaries and the Missionaries of Africa I treated the areas of, inculturation, catechetical approach, justice, peace and development. An important factor is that both missionary groups have worked hard in all these areas. This paper has brought forth that in terms of inculturation both the Missionaries of Africa and the Montfort Missionaries as soon as they came into the country were interested in learning the language and customs of the people and translating the catechism in the local language. In the liturgy both groups have tried to encourage participation by either introducing liturgical dance or drums. A difference has been the formation of experimental parish for the Missionaries of Africa. Working as a team to research on issues of inculturation made them more effective than the Montfort Missionaries. Linked to the experimental parish the KuNgoni Cultural Centre boosted the study of the local culture and training for the people. As we move towards the third millenium I have proposed that the Church in Malawi, take the inculturated model of evangelisation and the model of the church as a family. It is important to make this a goal and also to form a commission of inculturation on the national level to make inculturation the project of the whole church and not a hobby of a few individuals. In line with the

inculturation model of evangelisation is the idea of the Church as a Family. The Small Christian Communities in Malawi are already reflecting this.

On the catechetical approach we have also seen the efforts of both missionary groups before Vatican II in translating catechism from their countries of origin and adapting this to the Malawian setting. The question and answer method of teaching still continues today although some in response to modern catechetics have started on using proverbs and stories for catechetical instruction. As a move forward this paper has suggested a shift from a Deductive to an Inductive method of evangelisation. An important feature in this area is to use modern means of communications, the print and electronic media and also a more comprehensive training of catechists.

In justice, peace and development, we have seen that it is part and parcel of preaching the Gospel of Christ. The missionaries have worked in this area since their coming. A challenge today is now to work for justice and peace as a team. For this I have proposed the liberative and prophetic models of evangelisation. I have also proposed that each missionary group be represented in the national commission for justice and peace. As of the Montfort Missionaries I proposed that we form a commission of our own in order to render our mission effective.

Lastly in this comparative study, I have argued that Missionaries of Africa, because of their long experience in missionary work prior to their coming to Malawi, were better prepared in mission work and approach than the Montfort Missionaries. The strengths of the missionaries of Africa have been working together in all areas of mission life, having common projects and faithfulness to the missionary guidelines of Cardinal Lavigerie. Cardinal Lavigerie, himself a scholar and product of 19th century missionary theology, was better equipped to instruct his missionaries on missionary strategy. Montfort on the other hand, a man of the 17th century and a missionary to his own native country France, did not

have the same tools of foreign missionary work as was the case with Cardinal Lavigerie. The experience of the Montfort missionaries in mission work was therefore a matter of learning from their counterparts and from the experience of their own founder although they lived in completely different epochs. This explains why the Montfort Missionaries excelled in village visitations and itinerant renewal missions. A great challenge in their pastoral approach is to work on the common vision in collaboration with all the members in forming apostolic communities, moving together as a family.

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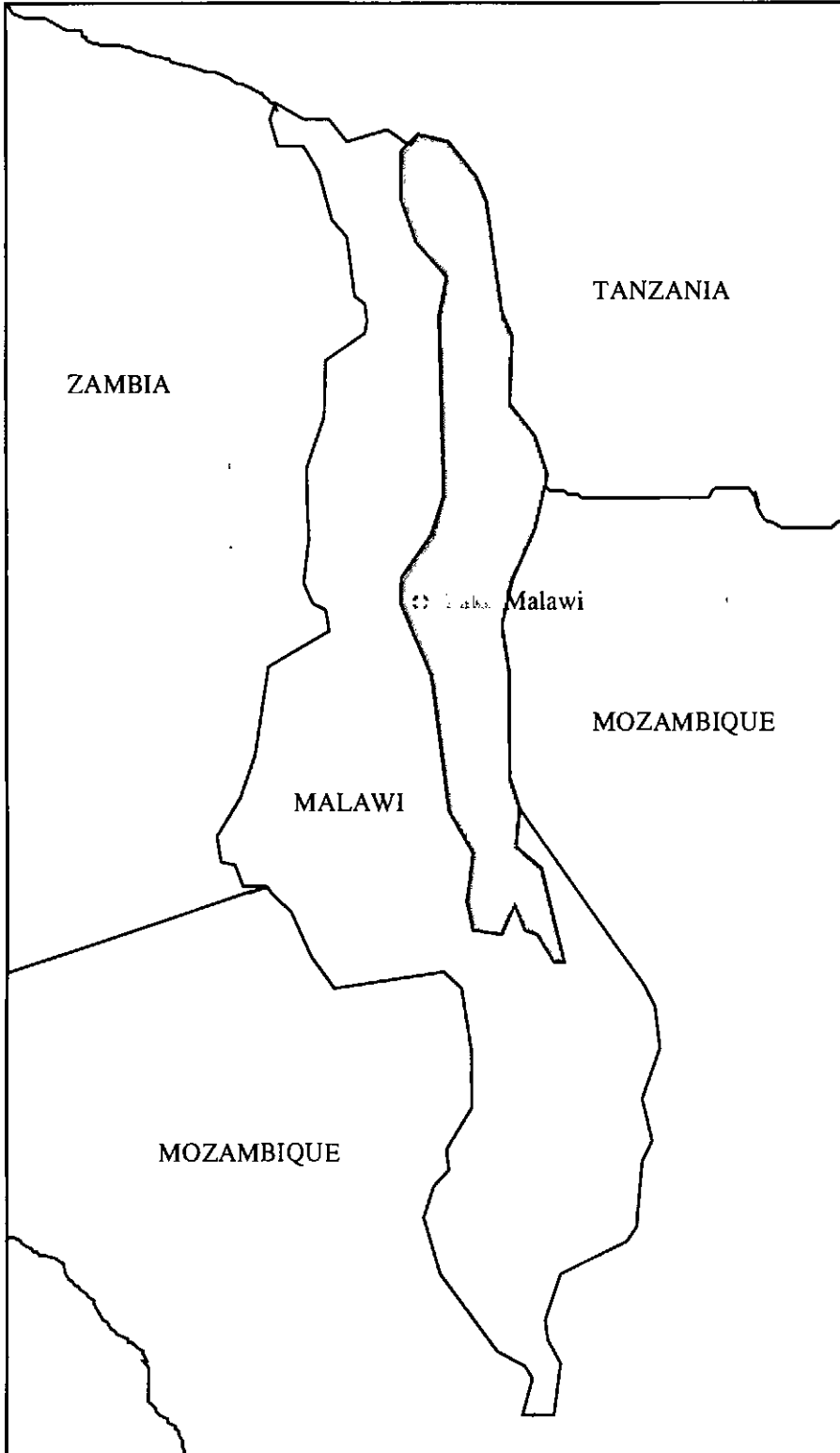
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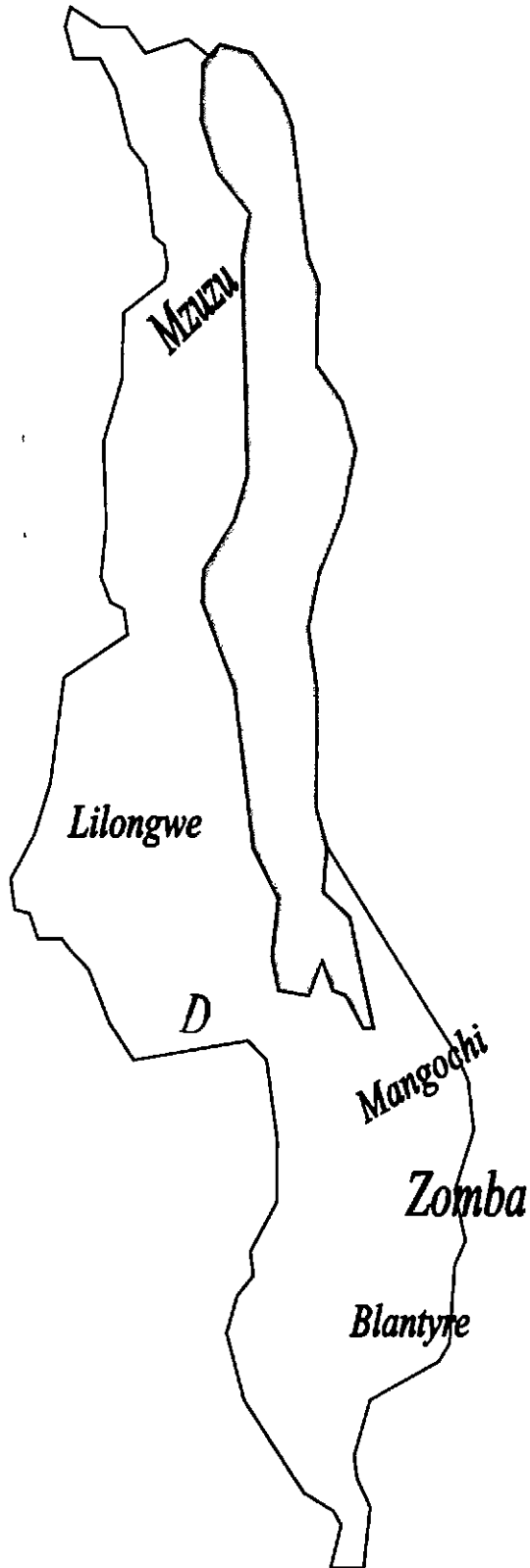
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APPENDIX No.1
MAP OF MALAWI



APPENDIX No.2
DIOCESES OF MALAWI



APPENDIX No. 3

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI	
Population	12,790,000
Catholics	2,350,000
Dioceses	7
Parishes	121
Bishops	9
Diocesan Priests	245
Religious Priests	152
Sisters	660
Brothers	84
Catechists	6,369
Lay Missionaries	6

Source: AMECEA IN BRIEF 1998.

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