

# TANGAZA COLLEGE

CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

**HAS “EVANGELIZATION” TRIED TO BRING ABOUT A DEEP FAITH IN  
AFRICA?**

**A CHALLENGING QUESTION TODAY.**

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**AN ACADEMIC STUDY IN MISSION THEOLOGY SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BACHELOR  
OF ARTS DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**FEBRUARY, 2000.**

**NAIROBI-KENYA**

# STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

Signed:     *Mukuka.*    

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Blessed Trinity the source of all wisdom, to my late father Mr. Joseph Lukwesa Mukuka who encouraged me to go to school, to my late sister Mrs. Luisa M. Malama and to my family (Mrs. Magdalene Kangwa Musonda Mukuka, Marcel, Michael, Julie, Mrs. Rosaria M. Kafumbwe, Enock, Mrs. Bibian M. Mbeye, Theresa, Joseph and Elias, Nephews and Nieces). Finally, to those whom no one ever dedicates anything.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In the spirit of gratitude and appreciation, I remember the following persons who have assisted me in the composition of this essay. My special thanks go to my tutor, Fr. Aylward Shorter, M. Afr., who inspired and encouraged me to make this effort, read the manuscript and commented on it. Thanks to Fr. David Blowey, O.F.M. Conv., Br. Ferena Lambert, O.F.M. Conv. and Sr. Lucy Mwesa, O.P. for their acceptance to proof-read my work and make vital corrections to it. Thanks also to my Custos Fr. Maximillian Marozzi, O.F.M. Conv., confreres, benefactors and others who put up with me through this work. With hope, courage and confidence, we look to a better future in times of difficulties, while labouring in evangelising the world that includes a person's intellectual gymnastics and praxis, physiological and psychological balance and finally, spiritual fulfilment.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Despite the centuries of achievement in the Church's missionary task, many of the African Christians feel alienated from their Christian faith. The flow of many African Christians to New Religious Movements, African Initiated Churches and the like are certain indications of this truth. This raises the question: Has "evangelization" tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa?

In trying to answer this challenging question today, we have proposed that effective "evangelization" is the only way which can bring about a deep faith in Africa. As such, this present work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter wrestles with the question: Has "evangelization" tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa? The second chapter deals with contradictory factors to the statement that "evangelization" tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa. As regards chapter three, deepening African faith through "evangelization": authoritative Church teachings and reflections are its pre-occupations. Chapter four tries to answer the objections raised in chapter two, whereas chapter five is centred on effective "evangelization" as the only way forward for a deep faith in Africa. This chapter is then, completed by a few suggestions on appropriate avenues for the present and future Church in Africa.

This scheme does not exhaust everything on "evangelization" as the only way of bringing about a deep faith in Africa, because each local church has some characteristics which distinguish it from other local churches across the continent at many levels. This makes the puzzle complicated. In any case, although generalisations and convenient simplifications necessarily distort, because every local

church is at once unique and one of the many, we shall make use of them with great caution on different aspects of the same reality.

Owing to the ambiguities which may arise in the use of terms, it is imperative to say that in some parts of this present work, the terms: “evangelization” and “mission” are used interchangeably to mean the same reality. This applies also to the following terminologies: (a) Latin Church or Catholic or Universal Church; (b) The Church in Africa or African Church and in some cases Local Church.

However, the topic of this essay is very important. What effective “evangelization” should ultimately bring to the African Christians is a deep faith. The royal path to this greatly coveted faith is effective “evangelization,” which entails providing suitable conditions for the spread of the “good news.” We hope that many genuine seekers of a deep faith will find their way through this essay.

## CHAPTER ONE

# **QUESTION: HAS “EVANGELIZATION” TRIED TO BRING ABOUT A DEEP FAITH IN AFRICA?**

## INTRODUCTION

In the meeting held between July 26 and August 8, 1999, one of the founding fathers of the AMECEA said:

The hope of the Church is here in Africa. Imagine a place of pagan background now has more vocations than the countries with 2000 years of Christianity! It makes us wonder (about) the secrets of God. I am challenging God to do his work in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

If we try to evaluate Christianity in Africa today, the emphasis should be put on the ‘Message of Life’ itself, on the evangelists, the preachers and pastoral agents, and on their methods and means of evangelization employed. This calls to our minds also the nature and depth of conversion and the impact of Christianity on our African world which has to be assessed by examining the quality of life of the Africans, their identity and history, their cultures and traditional religions, their morality and philosophy, their worldview, their struggles for liberation, and their contribution to the enrichment of Christianity and the universal Church at large.

In trying to evaluate and forge the future vision, many crucial questions have arisen, but at the moment only the following deserves special attention: Has “evangelization” tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa?

### 1. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Before we attend to the above question, it is important to understand what the

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<sup>1</sup> Luigi Anataloni (ed.), “Card. Otunga Blesses AMECEA”, *The Seed*, Vol. II, no.9, September 1999, p. 21.

term “evangelization” means.

The word “evangelization” comes from the Greek term *evangelion*, meaning the “good news.”<sup>2</sup> What is this “good news” if we may ask? It is the compassionate love of God for his people made visible in Jesus Christ. This idea of “good news” can be traced back to the tradition of the prophet Isaiah and the Psalms in reference to the messianic good news, the glad tidings that God’s universal reign has begun: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, ... who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’” (Is. 52:7).<sup>3</sup> In Psalm 96, this similar proclamation of God’s final reign over humanity is found. It is the “good news” about God’s favour towards those who mourn, who are afflicted, broken-hearted, captive and in prison.<sup>4</sup> This is seen clearly in the life of Jesus’ public ministry, more especially in the *Beatitudes* (Mt. 5:1-12).

## 2. EVANGELIZATION ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH’S UNDERSTANDING

Among many explanations of “evangelization” by some Church scholars, we find that the working explanation in our case will be the one given by Aylward Shorter. He says:

Evangelization is the spreading of the Good News about God’s Kingdom and the realisation of the Kingdom ... Evangelization, moreover, is essentially concerned with community-building, with changing hearts and improving lives. Evangelization is an invitation by the Church to stand with it and to work for the coming of the Kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

This idea of the Kingdom considered as a free gift is furthered by John Paul II in his Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, where he says that:

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<sup>2</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Wansbrough (ed.), *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Standard edition (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 1985). All Scriptural citation shall be taken from this version.

<sup>4</sup> Aylward Shorter, *op. cit.*, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

Salvation consists in believing and accepting the mystery of the Father and of his love, made manifest and freely given in Jesus through the Spirit ... the Kingdom of God comes to be fulfilled: the Kingdom prepared for in the Old Testament, brought about by Christ and in Christ, and proclaimed to all peoples by the Church, which works and prays for its perfect and definitive realisation.<sup>6</sup>

Bearing all these in mind and according to the Church's position, we see that "evangelization" encompasses a broader spectrum of human development such as the social, religious, political, economic, ecological, cultural, emotional and intellectual aspects. Since the human person is the centre of all these aspects, the "good news" has to permeate all these diverse aspects and many more for the betterment or rather well being of human life. For instance, in religious matters and more especially in the field of sacramental theology and the practice of the Church, a great deal of progress has been made in order, on the one hand, to discover the profound meaning and purpose of the 'sacrament' in the African context, and, on the other hand, to give back life and substance to the different sacraments.<sup>7</sup> In other words, a great effort in making a parallelism and comparison between the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and African Initiation Rituals has almost achieved its purpose: to make faith a reality in the lives of the African Christians.

To reach this far, some Christian scholars in line with the Church have proposed ways of what it means to be an authentic Christian:

2.1. *Evangelization as proclamation.*<sup>8</sup> Here, what is meant is the faith experience of the "good news" of the inaugurated Kingdom of God by Jesus Christ through his preaching.

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<sup>6</sup> John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, Encyclical Letter (Citta del Vaticano: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1991), No. 12, p.18.

<sup>7</sup> Sidbe Sempore, "The Churches in Africa between Past and Future", In: Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau (eds.), The Churches of Africa: Future Prospects (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), p.8.

<sup>8</sup> Aylward Shorter, op. cit., p.12.

In his preaching Jesus emphasised God's initiative. The "time is fulfilled" (Mk. 1:15) not on account of anything we have done in terms of preparing ourselves for the coming Kingdom but only because of God's sovereign decision.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to all triumphalistic expectations, the original form of the Kingdom is as unassuming as a "mustard seed" (Mk. 1:30-32), and yet already present and operative in history: "The coming of the Kingdom does not admit observation and there will be no one to say, 'Look, it is here! Look, it is there!' For look, the Kingdom of God is among you" (Lk. 17:21).<sup>10</sup>

Henceforth, for proclamation to be effective in our "evangelization", certain things have to be taken into account as proposed by Aylward Shorter when he talks about *verbal proclamation*;

2.1.1. *Language of the people*: This is the principal cultural mechanism for the communication of meaning by getting an understanding of the people's historical narratives, their myths and legends.<sup>11</sup>

2.1.2. *Print media and broadcasting*: This involves the selling of the "good news" on a commercial radio, television system or one's own broadcasting system.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis, here is put on the control of the medium one is using, of setting aside rivalry and directing the message to a receptive audience.<sup>13</sup>

2.2. *Evangelization as praxis*: This is an important component for the effectiveness of the proclamation of the "good news", that is, putting it into practice. Now in this present generation it is as evident as it was in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry (Mt.

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Fogliacco, *Unpublished Lecture Notes in Christian Anthropology*, Tangaza College, 1998, p.115.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Aylward Shorter, *op. cit.*, p.12.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.13.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

23:2-3) that a mere theoretical way of proclaiming the “good news” is no longer sufficient. People, nowadays, are looking for a more convincing way of proclaiming the “good news”, moving the theoretical to a practical level.<sup>14</sup> This process entails the “good news” being productive, that is, producing visible and tangible fruits. As Jesus says, “Beware of false prophets ... You will be able to tell them by their fruits ...” (Mt. 7:15-20). This idea is furthered by one of the contemporary scholars who writes,

The chief fruit of evangelization is, of course, to verify that the Good News is really good, that it really does bring life and hope to people, that it really does bring peace and justice, that it really does gather people in the forgiveness of God.<sup>15</sup>

Henceforth, the proclamation and the praxis of the “good news” are indispensable and inseparable for effective “evangelization”. So then, what are some of the models for “evangelization?”

In answer to this question, we now move on to Jesus as the principle model of “evangelization.”

### **3. JESUS THE PROTOTYPE OF EVANGELIZATION**

Just at the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus began his systematic “evangelization” programme with a scriptural quotation adapted from the account of the prophet Isaiah which he read in the Synagogue of Nazareth:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. (Lk. 4: 18-19).

Insofar as this precedes other activities of Jesus like teaching, healing, the calling of the apostles and even the great sermon on the plain, it underscores one fact that in Luke like in any of the great prophets, Jesus’ zeal and authority for carrying

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

out his “evangelization” programme, is the *Spirit of the Lord*.<sup>16</sup> This vivifying power of God is seen at work in Exodus<sup>17</sup> as a Pillar of Fire and a Pillar of Cloud by night and day respectively as Israel journeyed toward freedom from slavery in Egypt. This same *Spirit of the Lord* continues to work in the call and life of the prophets, the anointing of the Kings (through whom God’s intention for the world came to be accomplished) up to the Messiah, the Anointed One<sup>18</sup> -- Jesus. Unlike the prophets and Kings in the Old Testament what is more striking here about Jesus is that he proves that he has divine authority and a mandate for his “evangelization” programme in his activities, as it is clearly spelt out in the Synagogue discourse at Nazareth from Trito-Isaiah 61:1-2. One of the crucial points Jesus brings out openly in his expansive activities with regard to his extensive “evangelization” programme is “... to bring the good news.” Our interest is not to find out how Luke puts this part of the verse together with others in his Gospel, but rather to unravel the importance of this clause with regard to Jesus’ evangelization programme.

### 3.1. *A brief exegesis of “... to bring the good news ...”*

Among other things, we see that the first activity of the Messiah is to bring the “good news” to the afflicted-poor who are called the *anawim* (Zeph. 2:3) whom Jesus preferred because they were loyal/faithful to God and were not idolaters of riches. He does so, however, as one sent out by God. According to J. A. Buhner’s translation of the Greek word *Apostello* which means “to be sent out” he emphasises the purpose of delivering an object or a piece of information as designated. Furthermore, applying the verb to mean completion of the assignment, Buhner says that it assumes the

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<sup>16</sup> Alan Richardson and John Bowden (eds.), A New Dictionary of Christian Theology (London: SCM Press, 1983), p.265.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.263.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.264-265.

meaning of commission.<sup>19</sup> As for Jesus both meanings are relevant and important. In the Synagogue of Nazareth he pronounces boldly the source of his divine authority, the purpose and commencement of his “evangelization” programme.

Hitherto, when Jesus says that he is sent to bring the “good news” to the afflicted-poor, he connects the “good news” with his life among the people, that is, his presence. This entails that wherever he is, the “good news” is there in its fullness. For instance, when the people asked him for signs as indicators for the coming of the Kingdom of God, Jesus simply responded “the Kingdom is among you” (Lk. 17:21).

Henceforth, the whole of Luke 4 shows immediately after the event of the Synagogue discourse in Nazareth that Jesus brings what he is sent with (the good news) to those who are ready to receive it. We see him speaking in Capernaum (teaching), casting out devils (liberating), and curing the infirm (comforting and healing). His “evangelization” programme brings to an end the reign of Satan and sin.

This clearly indicates that the extension of Jesus’ “evangelization” programme did not end with his Ascension into Heaven. Instead, this dynamism of bringing the “good news” to others continued to grow in the life of the Apostolic Church. In fact, the Day of Pentecost marks the official continuation of Jesus’ “evangelization” programme through his Apostles. We see Saint Peter delivering his powerful sermon to the public for the first time (Acts 2: 14-36). This, then, is furthered by Saint Paul’s Ministry to the Gentiles.

#### **4. SAINT PAUL AN “EVANGELIST” TO THE GENTILES**

Following the model of Jesus Christ, Saint Paul after his conversion around 35-37 AD, was instantaneously commissioned by the Risen Lord to proclaim the

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<sup>19</sup> J.A. Buhner, “Apostello” In: Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds.), Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol.1 (Michigan: William B. Eedmans Pub. Co., 1990), p.142.

“good news” to the Gentiles, that is, to bring Jesus Christ’s presence among them (Rom. 15:14-16). To do that, it is important to note that the shape of Paul’s missionary journeys was determined by Paul’s belief that those who experience the universal gift of salvation offered through Christ are the ones who respond to the gospel with faith.<sup>20</sup> Although this conviction “limits” the scope of salvation in a way, Paul was convinced -- through his own conversion experience and subsequent reflection -- that salvation was being definitively offered by God to everyone who responded by faith in Christ and not by the *law*.<sup>21</sup> Henceforth, the Gentiles who, from a Jewish perspective, had evidently not experienced salvation could achieve salvation only through faith in Jesus Christ and not by any means (including the law).<sup>22</sup> As such, he embarked on preaching the “good news” even beyond the boundaries of Israel. He did this through his three extensive missionary journeys as outlined below.

4.1. *First Missionary Journey (45-46 AD)*: This first wave of continued “evangelization” by Saint Paul covered areas like Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, Iconium and Derbe.<sup>23</sup>

4.2. *Second Missionary Journey (50-52 AD)*: This second one encompassed places like Lystra, Galatia, Phrygia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth. During this time Saint Paul wrote the first epistle to the Thessalonians.<sup>24</sup>

4.3. *Third Missionary Journey (53-57 AD)*: In this final phase of his ministry, he revisited some old places (Galatia, Phrygia and Corinth) and at the same time covered Ephesus as a new place. At this time, Saint Paul wrote the following epistles:

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<sup>20</sup> Donald Senior and Carrol Stuhlmueller, The Biblical Foundations of Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), p.176.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Aelred Lacomara, Unpublished Lecture Notes in Pauline Literature, Tangaza College, 1999.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Philippians, First Corinthians, and perhaps also Galatians and Philimon.<sup>25</sup> Later, he went to Rome where he was arrested and martyred.

This continuation of Jesus Christ's "evangelization" programme was further enhanced by Saint Paul's sound education which he got from Gamaliel, and through his knowledge of the Greek language and Hellenistic culture, his Roman citizenship and his birth at Tarsus -- a city and sea port. As a result, all these different aspects which made Saint Paul to be who he was, made him suitable as an "evangelist" to the Gentiles.

All in all, it suffices to say that just like Jesus Christ, Saint Paul did understand clearly his "evangelization" programme as a leader of the Gentile churches during his time, that is, he preached the Risen Lord to all during his three missionary journeys, and his life was a witness to the Risen Lord too.

Having widened our horizons in trying to understand what "evangelization" is all about, we now turn to the aforementioned question.

## 5. STATEMENT

To a larger extent we can say that "evangelization" has tried to bring about a deep faith<sup>26</sup> in many Africa Christians in concrete terms at least in three phases. The African Synod Fathers rightly endorsed this when they stated that:

God did marvellous things in the course of Africa's evangelization. It is a history which goes back to the period of the Church's very birth.<sup>27</sup>

What, then, are these three phases of "evangelization" in Africa which have tried to bring about a deep faith in many African Christians, if we may ask?

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> A deep faith refers to a confession of belief in Jesus Christ through the "good news" and being ready to sacrifice oneself to do the Father's Will. St. Paul calls this: *faith made operative by love* (cf. Rom 12:3-21; 13:8-10).

<sup>27</sup> John Paul II, The African Synod Comes Home: A Simplified Text (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), p.7.

5.1. *The First Phase:* Back to the roots, the Church on the continent of Africa has very old roots. Right from the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch by Philip (Acts 8:26-39), until the African synod was held in Rome -- 1994, the seed of the “good news” through “evangelization” has taken place slowly and steadily on the continent of Africa.

In the *early centuries* of Christianity, “evangelization” encompassed the whole of Egypt and North Africa.<sup>28</sup> Not until the end of its existence (3rd or 4th C.), the state (Roman Empire) and the Church were one and the same thing, more especially in their administration. It was difficult to separate the two. Furthermore, the religion of the Emperor was the religion of his subjects. Consequently, since Egypt and North Africa were part of the Roman Empire and Christianity was the Emperor’s religion, all Egyptians and North Africans embraced Christianity.<sup>29</sup>

The logical conclusion, therefore, is that Christianity did flourish in North Africa, with Alexandria and Carthage as centres. Africa produced excellent theologians, scholars, saints and martyrs both men and women as it is attested below:

great doctors and writers like Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine; great women like Perpetua, Felicitas, Monica and Thecla; the first monks in the desert like Paul, Anthony and Pachomius, and saintly Popes.<sup>30</sup>

Synchronising all these African Christians, we can further say that the Coptic Church in Egypt and the Church in Ethiopia and in Nubia in the heart of the continent are witnesses to Christian faith in Africa dating from the Apostles.<sup>31</sup> According to historians, furthermore, Africa introduced in the Church the monastic way of life,

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994), p.20.

<sup>30</sup> John Paul II, *op. cit.*, p.7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

which soon spread to the East and West. Indeed, during these first centuries, Africa contributed a lot to the growth of Christian doctrine and morality.

As it were, this first phase of African Christian evangelization could not resist Islamic invasions. Actually Christianity was totally wiped out from the northern parts of the Continent, except in Egypt, where it survived only in a very few places. Even in Nubia, after a flourishing time going from the 8th to the 13th century and culminating in the creation of the Christian Kingdom of Nubia, faith died out, following the Turkish invasions. Only in Ethiopia did the Church survive, though it failed to be missionary. Along the centuries, various attempts to revive the once vibrant Christianity in Northern Africa failed.

5.2. *The Second Phase:* This second wave of “evangelization” in fostering a deep faith among the African Christians took place in the *15th and 16th centuries* and involved the parts of the continent south of the Sahara.

Due to sea expeditions or rather voyages of discovery and conquering of the African Continent, the Portuguese explorers eventually brought the “good news” to the coastal regions of Benin, Sao Tome, Angola, Mozambique and Madagascar. Worth noting, here, is that the great King of Congo, Nzinga a Nkuwu, asked for missionaries to proclaim the “good news”. The positive outcome was that Don Henrique became the first Bishop of Black Africa.<sup>32</sup>

With regard to the interior of Africa, more especially in the Mwene Mutapa Empire -- Zimbabwe, the Tonga Mission (1560-62) was opened, followed by the first conversion of the Emperor of Gold (1561).<sup>33</sup> Later, new missionary attempts were made once again in 1577 by *Dominican Fathers* on their way to Madagascar under

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> John Baur, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

Christian Mwene Mutapas ... and this was reinforced by *Jesuits* who went there in 1607.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, because of many difficulties, practically all the missions south of the Sahara disappeared. According to historians, they identified at least two main causes which led to the disappearance of Christianity south of the Sahara. The first one is that Christianity could not co-exist with the heinous slave trade. Second, that the *patronage* system -- whereby the King of Portugal was entrusted by the Pope with the foundation and endowment of episcopal sees, chaplaincies and converts, and with the right both to appoint parish priests and to levy tithes -- was characterised by an obstinate rejection of missionaries from other countries, seeing in them a potential threat to the Portuguese empire. Quite soon, then, lack of missionary personnel made it impossible to sustain the work started.

5.3. *The Third Phase*: This phase of “evangelization” is marked chiefly by a new and extraordinary missionary effort which began in the *19th Century*. As it were, this period has been defined as ‘the greatest epoch of conversion in the entire history of the Church’.<sup>35</sup> Many African Christians, foreign missionary institutes, and the Catholic Church as a whole are very proud of what this new evangelization attempt has achieved. The African Synod Fathers rightly acknowledged that the splendid growth and achievements of the Church in Africa are due largely to the heroic and selfless dedication of generations of missionaries, our ancestors in the faith. This period of Africa’s encounter with the “good news” is characterised by the Saints whom modern Africa has given to the Church like: the Holy Martyrs of Uganda,

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.82-83.

<sup>35</sup> John Mary Waliggo, “The Challenging Vision of the Church in Africa in the 21st Century: The Dream of the Dreams”, *New People*, no. 61, July - August 1999, p.16.

Blessed Clementine Anwarite (Virgin and Martyr), Blessed Isidore Bakanja from Democratic Republic of Congo; Blessed Victoria Rasoamanarivo of Madagascar, and Blessed Josephine Bakhita of the Sudan.<sup>36</sup> This third phase of “evangelization” is still continuing even today.

## CONCLUSION

Synchronising all the aforementioned three phases of “evangelization” on the African Continent, we can conclude that faith in many African Christians has deepened and is still deepening. Statistically today, we count more than 500 dioceses within the Continent, and many of them under African bishops.<sup>37</sup> African priests and religious men and women are in thousands so to speak. Coming to the baptised, they are in millions. As for Catholic families, they too, are in millions.<sup>38</sup> In the case of schools, health units, development projects, they too, are numerous. If we talk about African theology<sup>39</sup> -- with its various trends -- we see that it has made a tremendous advance. Finally, the Second Vatican Council brought with it new life into the African Church; the 1994 African Synod<sup>40</sup> has also given new incentives and a sense of direction with a vision.

We now move to the second chapter in which we shall be pre-occupied with those who say that “evangelization” on the African Continent has failed to reach the deep recesses of many African Christians as far as faith is concerned.

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<sup>36</sup> John Paul II, *op. cit.*, p.8.

<sup>37</sup> John Mary Waliggo, *op. cit.*, p.16.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> It is important to note here that the African theology debate is still going on.

<sup>40</sup> Even to date, sometimes you may find in publications that some people still think that the 1994 African Synod was hijacked by the Vatican.

## CHAPTER TWO

# CONTRADICTORY FACTORS TO THE ABOVE STATEMENT THAT “EVANGELIZATION” HAS TRIED TO BRING ABOUT A DEEP FAITH IN AFRICA

### INTRODUCTION

The African continent just like any other continent in this world has really heard the “good news.” “Evangelization”, however, has failed to bring about a deep faith in many African Christians. The situation today is saddening for there is a disparity between being a Christian and having a deep faith as a Christian. This entails that among the baptised, there are many with a superficial faith and conviction. More often than not, very many of them lead a ‘dualistic’ existence, having failed to integrate Christianity with the demands of their African traditional religion and morality. Worst of all, in the past thirty years, many African Christians have left the Latin Church. This can be attested by the following three main points, namely: the rise of New Religious Movements (N.R.M.), the rise of African Initiated Churches (A.I.C.) and finally, some current factors.

#### 1. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (N.R.M.)

By New Religious Movements we mean all those groups that have mushroomed in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries due to an “exodus” of Catholics who are leaving the Latin Church and those other reasons highlighted in the Vatican Report on *Sects or New Religious Movements: A Pastoral Challenge*.<sup>41</sup> From this and other sources we can draw the following objections.

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<sup>41</sup> Vatican Report on Sects or New Religious Movements: Pastoral Challenge (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications - Africa, 1985), pp.8-12.

### 1.1. Objection one: *On Quest for Belonging (Sense of Community)*<sup>42</sup>

In most of our African countries, evangelization has failed to call many African Christians to a deep faith because it does not seem to offer solace to them. This is so because the fabric of many communities has been destroyed; traditional lifestyles have been disrupted; homes are broken up; people feel uprooted and lonely, thus the need to belong in order to fill up the vacuum.

However, New Religious Movements seem to offer: human warmth, care and support in small and close-knit communities, sharing of purpose and fellowship, attention for the individual, protection and security, especially in crisis situations, re-socialisation of marginalised individuals (for instance the divorced, unemployed).

### 1.2. Objection two: *On Search for Cultural Identity*<sup>43</sup>

Among many African Christians, “evangelization” has failed to foster a deep faith in their lives because it has not given an alternative life to a society which has found itself greatly dissociated from the traditional, cultural, social and religious values. Thus, it has created a real identity crisis, especially in those Christians who are unable to absorb the values that inspire the Christian culture, namely Gospel values like love, hope, charity and faith. Furthermore, in as much as this problem is mentioned here, it is also prevalent in the African Initiated Churches.

New Religious Movements, however, seem to provide: plenty of room for traditional, cultural/religious heritage, creativity, spontaneity, participation, and a style of prayer and preaching closer to the cultural traits and aspirations of the people.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

### 1.3. Objection three: *On God Experience*

In search of God in difficult situations, ex-Catholics testify that they have experienced God in the New Religious Movements in a manner they never had in the Latin Church, that is, they have had a personal encounter with God the Father through Jesus Christ -- his Son -- in the Holy Spirit. In this regard, "evangelization" which has to bring about a deep faith, has failed in many African Christians.

Instead, the New Religious Movements seem to offer this personal encounter with the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit as a core experience among its members, for it leads to a personal conversion and transformation in attitude and lifestyle, and to a deepened Christian commitment.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.4. Objection four: *On Biblical and Catechetical Formation*

Here, faith in many African Christians through "evangelization" has failed to deepen their commitment to the gospel because tossed in a sea of uncertainty created by the rapid societal and post-Vatican Council II changes with regard to the power of God's Word in the Bible, ex-Catholics claim that Catholics are searching for doctrinal and moral certainty and security.

To this problem, the New Religious Movements seem to have successfully met the modern man/woman's need for certainty and security by affirming unequivocally that God speaks only through the Bible as literally true and that the Bible has answers to all the problems of life. It is a *religion of the Book*.<sup>46</sup> On the intellectual and catechetical levels, these New Religious Movements appear to have reached below the surface of the personality, to the level of the collective experience

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<sup>45</sup> Rowan Ireland, "Pentecostal Latin America?", *The Way: Contemporary Christian Spirituality*, July, 1998, p.214.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.215.

of the community, and to those yet deeper strata of the unconscious at which the African Christian is at one with all Christians everywhere.

## **2. THE RISE OF THE AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCHES (A.I.C.)**

By and large, the African Initiated Churches denote all those Churches which had broken away from 'Older' mother Churches (that is, those in continuity with the historic Churches of the West like the Latin Church) and had been established by Africans in Africa.<sup>47</sup> Since these African Initiated Churches are nearly innumerable, we subdivide them into *Ethiopian Churches* (that is, those which have put much emphasis on independence, with the retention of pre-existing church patterns) and *Zionist (Aladura) Churches* whose emphasis is on the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>48</sup>

All these African Initiated Churches have arisen simply because "evangelization" which has to bring about a deep faith in the lives of African Christians has failed in many of them to express the Christian religious faith and carry out religious practices in ways which are deeply meaningful in Africa. Thus, an absence of spiritual vitality is left in the hearts of so many African Christians.

To this end, from the African Initiated Churches we can now draw the following objections in order to show that "evangelization" has failed to motivate many African Christians to a deep faith.

2.1. Objection one: *On Lack of attention to Christian Healing by 'Older' mother Churches like the Latin Church.*

It has been observed that the ministry of healing forms a central part of the life

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<sup>47</sup> Dickson Kwesi A., Uncompleted Mission: Christianity and Exclusivism (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), pp.129-132.

<sup>48</sup> Lucy Kithome, Unpublished Lecture Notes in African Theology, Tangaza College, 1999.

of many African Initiated Churches.<sup>49</sup> Although Western medicine seem to be available in much of Africa and moreover, despite the work of many mission hospitals, healing often seems divorced from the African's understanding of God's healing relationship with his people. So, many of these African Christians in times of crisis quickly abandon that which they treasure most, that is, the Christian faith which they received whilst in their 'Older' mother Churches like the Latin Church and resort to African Traditional Healing Systems which seem holistic because according to their understanding they touch the physical, psychological and spiritual spheres of a human person.<sup>50</sup>

These African Initiated Churches, however, seem to encourage their members to take up the African Healing Ministry seriously by employing certain biblical quotations to support their view like: Our Lord himself sent his disciples out to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils (cf. Lk. 9:1-6; Mk. 6:7-13). Hence, many of these Africans find a home in these African Initiated Churches because to deny the reality of these powers as many have done in the past is neither biblical nor helpful.

## 2.2. Objection two: *On the Issue of Polygamy*

In Africa, polygamy<sup>51</sup> is a thorn in the flesh which "evangelization" as a way of bringing about a deep faith has failed to address adequately. In this regard, there has been a negative attitude hitherto used by the Latin Church towards members of polygamous homes which is a barrier to converts to Catholicism.

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<sup>49</sup> Charles Nyamiti, *Christ As Our Ancestor* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), p.55.

<sup>50</sup> Emmanuel Milingo, *Face to Face with the Devil* (Broadford, Victoria: Scripture Keys Ministries Australia, 1991), pp.7-8.

<sup>51</sup> Benezet Bujo, *African Theology in its Social Context* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1992), pp.47-48.

In this respect, the African Initiated Churches portray their churches as channels of Christ's redeeming power and grace, not his punitive instruments. For instance, instead of the Latin Church adopting a positive theological and pastoral stance in dealing with the polygamous status of a new convert from a non-Christian background, she (like the Greek Church) has failed to do so because of her emphasis on among other things on monogamy as the standard practice for home life based on the mind of Christ.<sup>52</sup>

### 2.3. Objection three: *On the Role of Women*

With a vigorous campaign for equal rights in our time,<sup>53</sup> women have asked for an equal participation in all spheres of life including the religious one. Unfortunately, women who constitute a greater percentage of the congregation in 'Older' mother Churches (like the Latin Church) than men, a more conservative view is maintained, and all-male leadership preserved.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, like the Pentecostal Churches in Latin America, African Initiated Churches appear to address those 'pathogens of poverty' that affect women particularly, and also appear to empower women to deal with them in their daily lives.<sup>55</sup> For instance, in the early Christian community women held some key positions (cf. Acts 2:17; 21:9-11; Rom. 16:1). In any case, this failure to recognise women's role in the Church today, especially in Africa, is a concrete proof that "evangelization" has not done well in bringing about a deep faith in many African Christians.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p.27.

<sup>54</sup> Lucy Kithome, *op. cit.*

<sup>55</sup> Rowan Ireland, *op. cit.*, p.215.

### 3. SOME CURRENT FACTORS

There is no doubt that, today, we face a religious situation which is extremely varied and changing, for people are on the move. The social and religious realities which were once clear and well-defined are increasingly complex (*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 32). As such, some of the following current factors pose a challenge to the Church in Africa today.

#### 3.1. Objection one: *On Lack of Closeness of Clergy to People*

Many ex-Catholics state that in the New Religious Movements, they are able to count on personalised pastoral care and support from their pastors, which they missed in the Catholic Church especially during difficult times.<sup>56</sup>

#### 3.2. Objection two: *On Lack of Friendly Liturgy and Preaching*

To some extent, it seems today that liturgy and preaching are not fostering a deep faith in many Africa Christians with regard to their life experience. For instance, many homilies have tended to explain the liturgical celebrations for intellectual purposes. Thus, failing to bring people to a community of faith. They simply become anonymous Christians.<sup>57</sup>

#### 3.3. Objection three: *On Lack of Real Initiation to Prayer*

There is a widespread opinion that many African Christians have not been properly initiated to prayer. For instance, many of them really do not know how to pray to the Father through the Son in the Spirit.

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<sup>56</sup> Tarcisius Maina, Unpublished Lecture Notes on Small Christian Communities and the Church in Eastern Africa, Tangaza College, 1999, p.17.

<sup>57</sup> From a one to one discussion on friendly liturgy and preaching.

### 3.4. Objection four: *On the “Crisis of Innovation”*

In the present situation, there is a “crisis of innovation” in the world which has brought about a complex and changing religious picture. The question facing the Church, in Africa for example is: How can the Church relate to a changed world where there is mass emigration, the flood of refugees and the like?

### **CONCLUSION**

The objections raised in this chapter are very important to us today. As such, we would be making a fatal mistake if we were not to recognise that any future vision of “evangelization” in trying to foster a deep faith in Africa should take each of the aforementioned objections seriously. Henceforth, before these objections in this chapter are attended to, we have to look at what the Latin Church, other theologians and myself have to say about “evangelization” as a way of bringing about a deep faith among African Christians today and tomorrow.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DEEPENING AFRICAN FAITH THROUGH “EVANGELIZATION”: AUTHORITATIVE CHURCH TEACHINGS AND REFLECTIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

In order to have a solid and sure foundation of “evangelization”, it is imperative to realise what has been taught by the appropriate authorities so as to gauge well the fact that “evangelization” has tried to bring about a deep faith in many African Christians. This theme is presented in the light of the Church’s official statements. There are also some theological and personal views on the subject matter.

#### 1. OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Knowing that the immediate point of reference and source of “evangelization” is Jesus Christ, we realise that he was sent by God the Father (cf. Jn. 3:16) and then from him he sent the Holy Spirit to the Church, as the first and living gift (cf. Jn. 15:26).<sup>58</sup> In the Second Vatican Council decree *Ad Gentes*, this truth is expressed succinctly and in an explicit manner as follows:

The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup>

What we see here first is the communion of the Three Persons (*the Immanent Trinity*) and second, the *divine mission ad extra*. This constitutes the source and primordial cause of the Church’s mission,<sup>60</sup> in particular, that of “evangelization”, which entails spreading the “good news” to the ends of the earth.

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<sup>58</sup> Adam Wolanin, “Trinitarian Foundation of Mission”, In: Sebastian Karotempel (ed.), *Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), p.37.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Chapter 1.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

In another development and in line with “evangelization” which has tried to bring about a deep faith in the Church here in Africa, Vatican Council II in the constitution *Lumen Gentium* teaches that the mission of the Church proceeds intrinsically and essentially from the Blessed Trinity and has a Trinitarian structure:

Hence the universal Church is seen to be a people brought into unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>61</sup>

Taking these official pronouncements seriously from the Church at a global level, we can state that “evangelization” has tried to bring about a deep faith in many African Christians in four major areas of human endeavours, namely, political, economic, social and religious spheres in a positive way. For instance, on the political front, many influential African politicians were once minor or major seminarians, religious and/or ex-priests, plus many others who passed through various Catholic Schools and Colleges. Politicians like the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (former President of Tanzania), Mwai Kibaki (Kenyan), Honourable Michael Sata, Paul Tembo (Zambians) and Her Excellency Wendy Sinkala (the present Zambian High Commissioner to Kenya) are a good example. In economics, the Church in Africa, more especially in the AMECEA region has tried its level best to help various governments of the day to put in place proper policies with regard to equal distribution of wealth or natural resources between the rich and the poor by insisting on good governance and elimination of corruption in various government functionaries such as the judiciary, legislative and executive branches. Socially, the Church has improved tremendously the quality of life of the African people by expeditiously getting involved in health matters like establishing dispensaries, clinics,

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 1.

hospitals, health institutions and training personnel, especially in the AMECEA member countries. It suffices to state that Nazareth and Mater Misericordiae Hospitals in Kenya, and Ibenga Mission and Zambia-Italia Hospitals are a good example. As for training personnel, Our Lady Help of Christians School of Midwifery (Chilonga) and Monze Mission Hospital in Zambia and other health centres in the AMECEA region are doing that. To this end, in the religious sphere, almost all African countries have “heard” or rather “received” the message of Christ -- the “good news.” Here, the vocation boom to both Christian marriage and consecrated life on the African continent is the best evidence, more especially where the Church has firmly established itself geographically. This is in line with what Pope John Paul II calls “witness” as the first form of “evangelization”. He furthered this in *Redemptoris Missio* (no. 42) when he says:

People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories.

In other words, this is the mission of Christ which we continue, for he is the “witness” *par excellence* (Rev 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness for all generations.

It is also important, however, to note that there is a widespread opinion that the Church is failing pastorally and that many Catholics do not know their faith. Thus, they are easy targets for the sects. This is seen especially during difficult times.

Having said all that, we now move on to some theological reflections and see how “evangelization”, has tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa.

## **2. SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS**

In treating this subject, it is imperative to present the current reflections on “evangelization” which has tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa with a special

emphasis on the Local Church.

Taking culture<sup>62</sup> seriously as an essential part among the African Christians, Justin Ukpong suggests that inculturation as a process in theology here in Africa is very crucial. He says:

The theologians' task consists in re-thinking and re-expressing the original Christian message in an African cultural milieu. It is the task of confronting the Christian faith and African culture. In this process there is interpretation of both ... There is integration of faith and culture and from it is born a new theological expression that is African and Christian.<sup>63</sup>

We see this challenge of inculturation<sup>64</sup> in Africa today well illustrated in the drawing of the 1994 African Synod entitled *Themes of the 1994 African Synod from the Roots Up - A Symbol of Inculturation*. The synod had been symbolised as a large tree having five branches with leaves that are marked by words: *Proclamation, Inculturation, Dialogue, Justice and Peace and Social Communication*.<sup>65</sup> It is with this understanding that the Synod Fathers dared to say that these roots of the tree penetrate below the ground marked "soil of the Local Church."<sup>66</sup> With this in mind, it is important to understand one of the great challenges of inculturation<sup>67</sup> in the Local Churches in Africa: to find a correlation between the African oral literature and

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<sup>62</sup> Culture, here, is defined as "both the meanings and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence; and as the lived traditions and practices through which those 'understandings are expressed and in which they are embodied.'" See S. Hall as quoted by Dominic Wamugunda in C.U.E.A. African Christian Studies, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1998, p.45.

<sup>63</sup> Justin Ukpong as quoted in Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), p.68.

<sup>64</sup> Inculturation in this sense is understood as "the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation ever more understood by people of every culture, locality and time ... a reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-pattern of each people." See Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1996), p.18.

<sup>65</sup> Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *op. cit.*, p.18.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> There is a need to understand the difference between inculturation, enculturation and acculturation. See Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), pp.3-16.

cultural symbols, and Christianity. The latter could express pastoral-theological reflections which would be meaningful to people's everyday life as a way of bringing about a deep faith in many African Christians.

In relation to "evangelization" which has tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa, Karl Rahner put the challenge of inculturation and contextualization very succinctly as follows:

The Church must be inculturated throughout the world if it is to be a World Church...This, then, is the issue: either the church sees and recognises these essential differences of other cultures for which she should become a World Church and with a Pauline boldness draws the necessary consequences from this recognition, or she remains a Western Church and so in the final analysis betrays the meaning of Vatican II.<sup>68</sup>

Knowing this challenge of inculturation of the "good news" in Africa, especially in the Local Church, Pope Paul VI in Kampala, Uganda, in 1969 expressed it this way that "You may and you must have an African Christianity."<sup>69</sup> This does not mean that it is simply a matter of taking the traditional customs of African culture and making the best ones *fit* into Christianity nor a matter of African cultural values being mediated through Western culture and thought patterns. But, rather it is to start from the reality of the African context and see how the "good news" can become a leaven<sup>70</sup> to it all through. As such, the implication here is that one has to be an African Christian and not a Christian African. If this is done, certainly "evangelization" can bring about a deep faith in Africa and will eventually become a reality more and more.

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<sup>68</sup> Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Investigation of Vatican II," Theological Studies, 40, 4 (December 1979), pp. 718 - 724 as quoted in Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>69</sup> Paul VI, Discourse at the Closing of the First Plenary Assembly of Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Kampala, Uganda (31 July, 1969), AAS 61 (1969), 575.

<sup>70</sup> Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, op. cit., p.19.

Finally, we turn to my personal reflections on “evangelization” just before we answer the objections in chapter two.

### 3. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

In as much as we understand the meaning of “evangelization”, culture and inculturation, it is also important at this juncture to clarify what we mean when we talk about faith in the light of God’s plan of salvation of all human beings and the entire creation. According to modern Catholic theologians in line with Saint Thomas Aquinas faith is defined as:

the act of the intellect when it assents to divine truth under the influence of the will moved by God through grace.<sup>71</sup>

However, we shall take Cardinal John Henry Newman’s understanding of faith as our point of departure. He says that faith is the offspring of love.<sup>72</sup> This means falling in love with Jesus Christ which becomes credible and galvanised by a believer’s imagination.

If we take Newman’s understanding of faith and apply it to the current African Christians *vis-à-vis* “evangelization”, it seems that faith has not yet been assimilated by the majority of the African Christians on this continent.<sup>73</sup> Besides, many African Christians seem not to understand that faith is a free gift from God. We find this reality at the grass-roots level of some Catholics here in Africa. The best examples of this reality from the panoramic view are:

3.1. *Failure*: Due to lack of inculturation, there is a ‘failure’ among some African Christians to find true solace in the “good news” in order to fill up the vacuum

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<sup>71</sup> John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), p.267. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II. q. 2 a. 9., p.1186.

<sup>72</sup> Erich Przywara (ed.), The Heart of Newman (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate, 1963), p.113.

<sup>73</sup> Gerard Eschbach, “The Prospects For The Faith among African Youth”, In: Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau (eds.), op. cit., pp.69-78.

created by lack of traditional models and ideals. Besides, the “good news” is equated to imported Western models and ideals, and not to faith. Thus, faith is not authentically practised.

3.2. *Difficulties*: In times of difficulties, especially serious ones like death, sickness, and the like, many African Christians fail to persevere in faith. Instead they resort mainly to finding the cause of all these ‘misfortunes’ by having recourse to traditional spiritual powers which -- according to them -- intervene and provide answers even in times of natural occurrences like sickness and consequently even death. What we find here is that those who fall in this category begin to question their faith. Eventually, these African Christians lose their faith if no proper care is taken by their pastors to help them persevere in difficulty times.

As it were, unless some of these issues are resolved as quickly as possible, “evangelization” will never bring about a deep faith in Africa and will be superficially lived by many African Christians in many Local Churches.

## CONCLUSION

For “evangelization” to have a stable and solid ground in the hearts of many African Christians, we suggest that it should be impartial. The provision for this is that it should be integral by emphasising on bodily, mental, political, economic, social and spiritual liberation. At this juncture, we are now put on the right track to address in the chapter that follows those concerns raised in chapter two.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANSWERS TO CHAPTER TWO'S CONTRADICTIONARY FACTORS

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, it is important to state that we shall begin by trying to answer the aforementioned objections raised in chapter two and at the same time, re-affirm the point that “evangelization” has really tried to bring about a deep faith in many African Christians at both levels of behaviour and of knowledge.

#### 1. NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (N.R.M.)

##### 1.1. Answer to objection one: *On Quest for Belonging (Sense of Community)*

On the one hand, the sense of community portrayed by the New Religious Movements is not something far fetched among African Christians. This can be seen even from the disciples at Jerusalem. According to Luke’s understanding of this early Jerusalem community, we see that the spiritual-material solidarity which characterised the life of these people continued to be the distinctive identity (mark) even beyond the boundaries of Judaism. The very Holy Spirit who guided Jesus in his public ministry and constituted the disciples as an authentic community of witnesses is the one who continued to guide this early community at Jerusalem and the one who guided the evangelization of Africa for the last hundred years.<sup>74</sup>

With the coming of the Second Vatican Council’s ecclesiology, this sense of belonging among some African Christians has materialised in a way through the formation of Small Christian Communities (S.C.Cs) like those in the East and Central African region.<sup>75</sup> In them people who live together do encourage each other to be

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<sup>74</sup> John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Encyclical Letter (Washington DC: USCC Publishing and Promotion Services, 30 May, 1986), nos. 25-26.

<sup>75</sup> The East and Central African region referred to here are the following eight countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia which make up the Association of

permanent witnesses. This sense of belonging in the Local Churches here in Africa is nicely described by Pope John Paul II in his document *The Church in Africa* as the “Family of God.”<sup>76</sup>

On the other hand, many Catholics join these New Religious Movements because they truly lacked a sense of belonging in the Church. If we analyse S.C.Cs we see that most of them are not even pastorally oriented in their respective parishes. Hence, lacking the ecclesial aspect of witnessing to Christ within their Local Churches and the Universal Church at large. Besides, many ex-Catholics claim that they do not see any connection between liturgy and their daily life, especially in the area of forgiveness which is so important in Christian Faith. So, there is a need to orient S.C.Cs and liturgy towards these goals if we want faith to deepen in many African Christians today.

#### 1.2. Answer to objection two: *On Search for Cultural Identity*

Taking the importance of culture in the African Church seriously, the Second Vatican Council has moved at least a step towards inculturating the Gospel. This entails *making the gospel incarnate in different cultures and then introduce different people with their cultures into the culture of Christ gradually.*

More often than not, especially after the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and through the help of the Lay Apostolate Movements like the Focolare and many others, the Church in her “evangelization” programme is trying to bring about a deep faith in the hearts of many African Christians on the continent according to the needs of various cultures by going out of its way to meet the faithful and other people where

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Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). Somalia and Seychelles are affiliate members.

<sup>76</sup> John Paul II, *op. cit.*, pp.20-23.

they are,<sup>77</sup> warmly, personally, and directly, pulling the individual and the community out of anonymity, promoting participation, spontaneity, responsibility, commitment, and practising an extensive follow-up through multiple contacts, home visits, and continuing support and guidance.<sup>78</sup>

Singling out the S.C.Cs once more we see that they have not been successful pastorally in many Local Churches. In this area the Church in Africa has to do much more in order to establish a solid cultural identity based on gospel values of faith, hope and love.

### 1.3. Answer to objection three: *On God Experience*

It is universally true that God experience in the life of a Christian everywhere is of vital importance. On the one hand, the God-experience meditated by the New Religious Movements has its deficiencies: it tends to be private, spiritualised and emotional. Catholic Tradition on the other hand, has stressed that God experience be incarnational and communitarian. Currently, for example in liturgy and sacraments, God experience has been fostered to facilitate and celebrate this encounter<sup>79</sup> by going beyond cerebral, ritualistic faith which is unrelated to the human life situation.

On the other hand, much more on God experience has to be done in the African Church. For instance, the Church on this continent should strive to bridge up the gap between personal and communal encounter of the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, this way may lead many African Christians to a personal and communal conversion and transformation, and thereafter lead them to a deep

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<sup>77</sup> This refers to the apostolic journeys already made by Pope John Paul II in his tenure as the Vicar of Christ.

<sup>78</sup> James J. LeBar, *Cults, Sects and the New Age* (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1989), p.238.

<sup>79</sup> Tarcisius Maina, *op. cit.*, p.16.

Christian commitment in faith.

#### 1.4. Answer to objection four: *On Biblical and Catechetical Formation*

On the one hand, the Word of God is of fundamental importance for the building up of a strong and vibrant Christian community. In this line an effective faith formation demands that it be rooted in the Word of God. Encouraged by the Second Vatican Council to study and live the Word of God in the Christian life, the faithful on the African continent have shown their knowledge and understanding of it.<sup>80</sup> This is evident, particularly, in their ability to respond to the distorted interpretations of the Scripture and attacks on the elements of Catholic teaching by the New Religious Movements.

At the intellectual and catechetical levels, the Church moved a step forward by reaching below the surface of the personality, to the level of collective experience. For instance, in our liturgical gatherings, large as they are, the faithful, more especially those who are out-going feel welcome, accepted, supported, cared for, and they participate, share and above all, experience an interpersonal communication founded on the model of the early Church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35) in which a wide variety of lay ministries was exercised.

On the other hand, the situation at grass-roots level in the African Church is that the Word of God and liturgy seem to be removed from the lives of the faithful. Perhaps the Church in Africa should implement an effective faith formation which demands that it be rooted in the Word of God and liturgy, and which will include Church History and the doctrinal teaching, moral and social teaching of the Church, more especially at the S.C.C., parish, diocesan, national and regional levels.

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<sup>80</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, Christian Thought, Its History and Application (London: London University Press, 1923), pp.21-35.

Furthermore, the Church in Africa should encourage her faithful to have more access to the Bible, preferably in their own languages.

## **2. THE RISE OF THE AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCHES (A.I.C.)**

2.1. Answer to objection one: *On Lack of attention to Christian Healing by 'Older' mother Churches like the Latin Church.*

It is true that healing is central to the African world-view. This ministry includes restoration of the broken -- physically, psychologically and spiritually. This entails, a return to wholeness in a precise manner, that is, it includes inner healing and the rebuilding of broken relationships. To this end, the process also incorporates the holistic ideas of God's power, the spiritual world and the ancestors.<sup>81</sup>

On the one hand, it is not true to say that the Catholic Church, especially here in Africa has paid no attention to Christian healing. Looking at the gospels more carefully, we see that healing was often at the centre of the ministry of Jesus. Consequently, Jesus Christ mandated his first disciples in clear terms: "Preach and heal" (Lk. 9:2). Jesus himself proclaimed the "good news of salvation" in a holistic way when he said that:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (Lk. 4:18).

In Africa today, where there is a hunger and thirst for healing, for an experience of the "emotional" and "feeling" aspects of the faith and a deep desire for wholeness, the Church on this continent, especially after the Second Vatican Council has revitalised its charismatic nature which had lain dormant for some time by harmonising theology and the praxis of healing. We see these new efforts emerging,

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<sup>81</sup> Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *op. cit.*, p.298.

for example in regular masses of anointing, schools of “evangelization” that emphasise the laying of hands, and Charismatic Prayer Groups.<sup>82</sup>

On the other hand, the Church in Africa has to do more. For instance, the African Church should realise that there is a great need today -- more so than ever before -- for not only personal, but collaborative pastoral care for the sick and all the people of God both in private homes and hospitals so much so that sickness and medical treatment may be seen within the wholeness of God’s salvation. Subsequently, the Church in Africa is being asked to encourage her faithful in praying for the renewal of the gifts of healing and exorcism by such means as prayer and the laying on of hands.

## 2.2. Answer to objection two: *On the Issue of Polygamy.*

On the one hand, we agree that the issue of polygamy is frequently a burning one between the Catholic Church and African Initiated Churches.

In the first place, it is important to refute the allegation levelled on the Catholic Church that it has adopted a negative attitude towards members of polygamous homes with a genuine intention to convert the household to Christianity. Instead, the Catholic Church has realised right from its inception that it is a minister and/or instrument of Christ’s redeeming power and grace.

In the second place, it seems that the Church understands that polygamy in its traditional form is passing away; hence she has intensified her teaching role trying to educate her members through *marriage encounter programmes*, for example; thereby moving towards a more stable Christian family life based on the mind of Christ, which, among other things, includes *monogamy* as the sole Sacrament of the Church

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

between man and woman.<sup>83</sup>

On the other hand, the Church in Africa through the African Synod is ambivalent on the issue of polygamy. Prior to this famous synod, there was a proposal in the working document that the Church in Africa should address not only polygamy, but marriage as a whole with an open mind concerning the African situation. Nonetheless, this point was dropped and never discussed by the Synod Fathers up to this day. It is for this reason, therefore, that the Church in Africa is being asked to take up this issue seriously and come up with something concrete pastorally, for polygamy is still prevalent in some parts of Africa.

### 2.3. Answer to objection three: *On the Role of Women*

It is true that nowadays there has been an increased pressure, not only in the Church circles, but also in the political, economic and social settings, for equality between men and women. This call *in se/per se (in itself/by itself)* has been hinged on women's full participation not only in terms of leadership, but also in terms of decision - making and dignity.

On the one hand, the role of women, more especially consecrated women has been taken seriously in the Church. This can be attested to by Pope John Paul II in *Vita Consecrata* when he says:

The Church fully reveals her varied spiritual richness when she overcomes all discrimination and welcomes as a true blessing the gifts lavished by God upon men and women, considering them in their equal dignity .... Consecrated women therefore rightly aspire to have their identity, ability, mission and responsibility more clearly recognised, both in the awareness of the Church and in everyday life. Likewise, the future of the new evangelization, as of all other forms of missionary activity is unthinkable without a renewed contribution from women, especially consecrated women.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Nicholas Halligan, *The Sacraments and their Celebration* (New York: Alba House, 1986), p.153.

<sup>84</sup> John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, *Encyclical Letter* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1996), no. 57, p.56.

In line with Pope John Paul II, we see that necessary urgent and concrete steps -- beginning *by providing room for women to participate* in different fields and at all levels, including decision-making processes, especially in matters concerning women themselves -- have been in place in many Local Churches in Africa. For instance, the single mothers as a group has been recognised by and established in some parishes of the AMECEA region.

Moreover, in trying to foster “evangelization”, which is trying to bring about a deep faith in Africa and above all in the universal Church, Pope John Paul II states that the formation of consecrated women, no less that of men, should be adapted to modern needs and should provide sufficient time and suitable institutional opportunities for a systematic education, extending to all areas, from the theological-pastoral to the professional.<sup>85</sup> To this end, the role of women in the Church in respect to “evangelization” has been attended to with the seriousness it deserves, and certain Catholic institutions like “The Catholic University of Eastern Africa” together with its constituent colleges like Tangaza can bear witness to that. At these institutes we find Catholic and non-Catholic women lecturers holding some high offices. This simply confirms that on the part of the Catholics on this continent, “evangelization” is trying to bring about a deep faith, for there are some visible and tangible results in this regard even in the highest institutes of learning.

On the other hand, and basing ourselves on observations concerning Church attendance in Africa today, we see that women form a larger percentage of congregation than men. In this line we feel that there is a need to train, motivate and

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 58, p.57.

empower women according to their specific role(s) in the Church, such as animators, evangelisers, commentators even on gospel passages, Mass Servers and the like.

### 3. SOME CURRENT FACTORS

#### 3.1. Answer to objection one: *On Lack of Closeness of Clergy to People*

By and large, given the size of some parishes and the paucity of priests, it is not surprising that the relationship between some priests and the faithful is largely functional (bureaucratic/business-like) and not personal.

A new model is required, however, the model already found in the early Church. The early Church rejoiced in a wide variety of lay ministries.<sup>86</sup> If this early Church model is implemented, it will obviously foster a deep faith in them through “evangelization.”

#### 3.2. Answer to objection two: *On Lack of Friendly Liturgy and Preaching*

In the first place, in its liturgical celebrations and preaching, the Church in Africa has recognised that she is at prayer, offering adoration, praises and thanksgiving to God. At the same time, she seeks and celebrates reconciliation. For example, in her celebrations of the sacraments, she tries to prepare her faithful at different levels for the reception of sacraments through liturgical catechesis.

In the second place, since the principle of incarnation demands that we renounce our too facile rule of uniformity and transposition, in order that Christ might find on the African continent and at the heart of various communities *all* the human means through which to signify and communicate his salvation,<sup>87</sup> sacramental celebration has to celebrate the mysteries of life. Here, creativity in liturgical

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<sup>86</sup> Norbert Brockman and Umberto Pescantini, A History of the Catholic Church (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1991). pp.23-25.

<sup>87</sup> Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau (eds.), op. cit. p.9.

catechesis and preaching is needed in the Local Churches in Africa. It has to look at life in terms of human experience, namely: the moment of birth and death, love and sin, sickness and health, freedom and slavery, togetherness and loneliness, peace and anxiety<sup>88</sup> and so on. If this is done, surely the Church in Africa will become vibrant with serious people committed to their Christian faith.

### 3.3. Answer to objection three: *On Lack of Real Initiation to Prayer*

Although the Church in Africa has done pretty well in some aspects of private and communal prayers like meditation, prayers of the Church (Breviary and the like), real initiation to prayer has not taken place. This is a big challenge in our present situation.

It is high time the Church in Africa started initiating its faithful to prayer by looking at the relationship between the *Trinity* and *Prayer*.<sup>89</sup> The emphasis here is that people should embrace the prayer of doxology in Mass in which we realise two things: that prayer is addressed to the Father, especially when we have the Solemnity of Our Lord; and that by ourselves we cannot call God, Father. This implies instructing people that the doxology in Mass as our starting point has three main parts:

3.3.1. *From/To the Father ( The source of all divine life)*:<sup>90</sup> This life comes to us from the Father. As Jesus in John's Gospel says that no one can come to me unless one is drawn to me by the Father (6:44). Thus, everything and each one of us has (whole creation included), come from the Father. This should be the first initiation to prayer.

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<sup>88</sup> Tarcisius Maina, *Unpublished Lecture Notes in Catechesis*, Tangaza College, 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Nicholas Fogliacco, *Unpublished Lecture Notes in The Self-Revelation of the Triune God*, Tangaza College, 1998.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

3.3.2. *Through the Son (Mediator):*<sup>91</sup> He is the full revelation of God's grace, through whom our prayer is directed to the Father (the redemptive aspect of Jesus Christ has to be emphasised). Second initiation.

3.3.3. *In the Spirit (the principle prayer in us):*<sup>92</sup> Knowing that prayer is not ours, African Christians have to be instructed that they have the inner principle of prayer (divine life or sanctifying grace) which was given to them by virtue of baptism. Thus, it is this inner principle of prayer which elevates each one of them to adore, offer praise and thanksgiving to the Father through the Son. Third and final initiation.

Thus, we feel that the above approach to prayer will definitely deepen the faith of many African Christians provided the Church here in Africa remains open to this gradual process of initiating her faithful to an intimate relationship with God through prayer.

#### 3.4. Answer to objection four: *On the "Crisis of Innovation"*

It is correct that the world has changed. In the first place, we cannot dispute the fact that missionary work has been very fruitful throughout the world (Africa included) with well established Churches which sometimes are so sound and mature that they are able to provide for the needs of their own communities and even send personnel to evangelise in other Churches and territories. At times they are even able to re-evangelise traditionally Christian areas (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, no.32).

In the second place, apart from some of the difficulties enumerated in *Redemptoris Missio* (no.32, par.2), the Church in Africa has to do more in trying to foster a deep faith in Africa. To this end, there is a need for "collaborative ministry"

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

in “evangelization” in trying to address certain evils on this continent such as the culture of consumerism vis-à-vis communication, the culture of violence/ethnicity, corruption, domestic violence, child abuse, secularisation, debt on many African countries and so forth, if the present religious situation is to be relevant and meaningful to modern man and woman.

## **CONCLUSION**

We advocate an objective approach to issues raised in chapter two on the part of the Church in Africa in her “evangelization” programme bearing in mind always to take the side of the impoverished and their plight.

Having said that, it is absolutely necessary to answer the question: Why bother about “evangelization” which is trying to bring about a deep faith in Africa? Additionally, it is also worthwhile to offer some appropriate avenues towards an effective and efficient “evangelization” which can bring about a deep faith in Africa in the Third Christian Millennium. This will be our pre-occupation in the last chapter of this presentation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **WHY BOTHER?**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Today, just like any other period in history, our God who is a God of love and mercy always communicates to his people in view of saving them (1 Tim. 2:4). In the past, he spoke to the fathers in various ways through the prophets (Heb. 1:1). Later, when the fullness of time had come He sent his Son, the Word made flesh, anointed by the Holy Spirit, to preach the Gospel to the poor and to heal the contrite of heart (Lk. 4:18).

It is with this understanding that we feel challenged to respond to God's salvific plan by carrying out today the mandate Jesus Christ left to his disciples and to the Church of proclaiming the "good news" to the ends of the earth. This is why "evangelization" has stood out as the only effective way, challenging us to bring about a deep faith in Africa.

#### **1. EFFECTIVE "EVANGELIZATION" AS THE ONLY WAY FOR A CALL TO A DEEP FAITH IN AFRICA**

"Evangelization" in its proper sense is not optional nor private. It is not a matter of choice nor a personal affair. Instead, it is a mandate from the founder of the Church, Jesus Christ: "As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you ." (Jn. 20:21).

At the same time, it is an affair of the *Qahal* -- the People of God, who in this case include the entire baptised faithful regardless of who they are. By its very nature and existence, the Church is an evangelising community. As such, the Church's nature of "evangelization" and indeed, her very existence, have as their immediate point of reference and their source in the "evangelization" programme of Jesus Christ.

Christ himself, however, was sent by God the Father (cf. Jn. 3:16) and then from Him he sent to the Church, as the first and living gift, the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 15:26). It is the Holy Trinity, therefore, who constitutes the ultimate source and foundation of the Church's nature and existence in terms of "evangelization" and/or mission (cf. AG 2). In other words, one can say that between the Church and the Holy Trinity there exists an ontological link or that the Church is the *icon* of the Holy Trinity<sup>93</sup> through Jesus Christ. This is explicitly expounded by the following statements:

1.1. *Final Goal*: In *Lumen Gentium* (no. 17) the Trinitarian character of the mission of the Church in relation to its final goal is indicated by the following words:

In this way the Church simultaneously prays and labours in order that the entire world may become the people of God, the Body of the Lord, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and that in Christ, the Head of all, there may be rendered to the Creator and Father of the Universe all honour and glory.

1.2. *Sharing in the Communion*: In his encyclical letter entitled *Redemptoris Missio* (nos. 23 and 47), Pope John Paul II recalls that:

the ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son, emphasising the Trinitarian nature of the Church's mission in direct relation to baptism, in which we are born anew to the life of God's children, united to Jesus Christ and anointed in the Holy Spirit; baptism is the Sacrament which signifies and effects rebirth from the Spirit, establishes real and unbreakable bonds with the Blessed Trinity, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

1.3. *Testimonies*: In some testimonies of the apostolic community and other Christian communities of the early Church, the vocation and spiritual life of Christians, which is the object of mission and concern of the Church, have a genuinely Trinitarian character: God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, predestining us to be his adopted children through Jesus

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<sup>93</sup> Adam Wolanin, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

Christ ... receive the seal of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:3-4).

1.4. *Divine Mission*: Finally, in relation to the effects of the divine mission, Saint Paul the apostle writes:

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are a son then an heir (Gal 4:4-7).

Therefore, effective "evangelization" is the only way out to a call for a deep and constant faith in Africa just like in the Universal Church. There is no other way which can substitute "evangelization". Thus it is the task of the entire community of believers -- the People of God (the Church) to devise new ways of bringing about and fostering a deep and constant faith among the African Christians and future converts to Christianity through "evangelization". As such, some of these urgent new ways are elaborated below.

## **2. APPROPRIATE AVENUES WITH REGARD TO "EVANGELIZATION" WHICH CAN BRING ABOUT A DEEP FAITH IN AFRICA**

Pope John Paul II's designation of our time as "this fluid and turbulent period of history" on the occasion of giving the Bishops of Africa his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *The Church in Africa*, as a pastoral plan of action for their Local Churches, is very important to take into account today. Taking this seriously, the AMECEA Bishops have taken account again and again of the rapidity of change that is engulfing our present world, sometimes designated today by the term 'globalization'. The Bishops recognise the depth of change that is taking place in all their countries and the falling away of so many good African traditions in the face of the global secular and pervasive culture that is propagated everywhere by an ever more powerful communication technology so much so that war, violence, moral

decadence and the infringement of human rights are seen clearly as part and parcel of the obstacles to “evangelization”.<sup>94</sup>

Jesus Christ’s tells us that:

The Kingdom of God ... is like a mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth. Yet, once it is sown, it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches, so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade (Mk 4:30-32).

As such, the points below (before we officially begin the celebration of the Great Jubilee 2000 since the birth of Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Liberator of humankind, the Lord of the entire world and of the cosmos), have to be fostered among African Christians so as to achieve a deep and constant faith in Africa whilst bearing in mind that faith is a free and unmerited gift from God, which simply calls for the recipient’s openness.

2.1. *Inculturation*:<sup>95</sup> Knowing that this is a sensitive issue in our time, Pope John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Exhortation - *The Church in Africa* - talk of inculturation in African Christianity as:

... an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa. It is a requirement for evangelization, a path towards full evangelization, and one of the greatest challenges of the Church on the Continent on the eve of the Third Millennium.<sup>96</sup>

In this regard, what we are proposing as a way forward to evangelization which calls for a deep faith in Africa is courage and freedom of thought for a genuine, deep and wise inculturation, so much so that an active participation of all African Christians can be attained. It is not a sheer or rather superficial inculturation of a mere translation from faith to culture, but rather the inculturation which also

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<sup>94</sup> Message of the AMECEA Bishops from the 13th Plenary Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya (26th July - 8th August, 1999), no. 6, p.2.

<sup>95</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), pp.447-457.

<sup>96</sup> John Paul II, *op. cit.*, p.26.

begins from culture and the real context of the people to faith, from injustice to integral salvation.<sup>97</sup>

2.2. *Integral Salvation*: Looking at Africa, we see that the continent like any other continents is rich in humanity, cultures and natural resources.<sup>98</sup> However, at the beginning of the 21st century, Africa has become the poorest of the continents, more especially economically. As such, we see that unemployment has reached alarming statistics in almost all countries on the continent.<sup>99</sup> Orphans, street children and the like are also a big problem to many governments. The way forward, therefore, is that the Church in Africa has to take its clear stance and mandate to be a true agent of liberation, and stand in solidarity with all God's people by challenging certain social structures like slums and say no to anything that has made the Continent enslaved, poor and rejected for so many years and centuries. Certainly, if this is done, "evangelization" for many African Christians will pave the way for a deep faith on the continent.

2.3. *The Formation of All Agents of "Evangelization"*: In the 13th Plenary Assembly of the AMECEA Bishops in Nairobi - July 26th to August 8th 1999 - it was audaciously stressed by member bishops that in order to meet the challenges we face today in the Church, there is a need to transform the Church more and more into a community that will be experienced by all its members as a family to which they truly belong, in which they feel at home, and in which they will commit themselves to exercise their responsibilities to the full.<sup>100</sup> The Bishops stressed also the need for the

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<sup>97</sup> Walbert Buhmann, *Forward, Church!* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1977), pp.80-81.

<sup>98</sup> John Mary Waliggo, *op. cit.*, p.19.

<sup>99</sup> Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, *Encyclical Letter* (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1971), no. 8, p.10.

<sup>100</sup> Message from the AMECEA Bishops, *op. cit.*, no. 8, p.3.

formation of catechists and the laity. They also looked at the kind of on-going formation they themselves as bishops need. Finally, they tried to evaluate the importance of the initial and on-going formation of those who co-operate so closely with them in their ministry, namely, the priests and religious (both women and men). Not forgetting also the need for seminarians to be given and to take more personal responsibility of their own formation.<sup>101</sup>

To this end, it suffices to say that this need to form agents of “evangelization” should encompass also the following areas: communication (the radio, television, the print media and electronic media with their coverage of topics that water down Christian principles and beliefs), mass migration, the flood of refugees, the youth, mega cities, world of the poor, justice and peace, cultural dialogue and world of spirituality searching for meaning in life (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 23).

## CONCLUSION

All these initiatives taken by our Local Bishops here in Africa and in union with Pope John Paul II’s document on *The Church in Africa* (nos. 54 and 121) will expeditiously enhance “evangelization” and help to bring about a deep faith in Africa.

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Effective “evangelization” entails providing suitable conditions for the spread of the “good news.” As such the future of the Church in Africa, with regard to effective “evangelization” as the only way for deepening the faith among African Christians, lies in its rejuvenation and authenticity. Born at least a century ago, the Church in Africa has to pass from the culture of dependence based on borrowing “everything” to a culture of interdependence based on mutual responsibility. Archbishop Tchidimbo of Conakry puts this tersely and elegantly when writing from prison: “Christianity is above a religion of the future. There lies the secret of its youth, its eternal youth”.<sup>102</sup>

To sum up, for effective “evangelization” to take deep roots in the African Church, every Local Church should take the following aspects into consideration, namely: inculturation, integral liberation, organised Bible-sharing in S.C.Cs, recognising the role of women in the Church’s activities, establishing a proper policy concerning the issue of polygamy, paying particular attention to Christian Healing Ministry, real initiation to prayer and the like. Over and above, we also need to have our eyes fixed on preparing the future pastoral agents who will have the duty to greatly improve on what was started and to achieve the expected vision in the 21st century with full trust and confidence in the Holy Spirit as the protagonist of “evangelization”. Furthermore, we dare say that “evangelization” has tried to bring about a deep faith in Africa, but it has not always succeeded. This is a challenging question for us today.

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<sup>102</sup> Claude Geffre and Bertrand Luneau (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.11.

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