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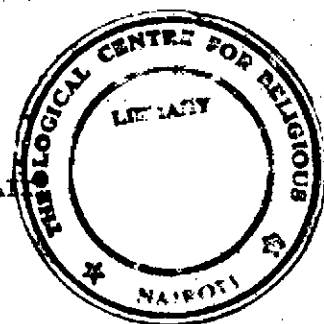
TANGAZA COLLEGE  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

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EVANGELIZING THE NEW AREOPAGUSES:  
A CHALLENGE TO OUR MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

BY

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>Acts</b>	<b>Acts of the Apostles</b>
<b>AFER</b>	<b>African Ecclesial Review</b>
<b>Cor.</b>	<b>Letter to the Corinthians</b>
<b>E.N.</b>	<b>Evangelii Nuntiandi (Apostolic Exhortation)</b>
<b>Gen.</b>	<b>Book of Genesis</b>
<b>G.S.</b>	<b>Gaudium et Spes (Conciliar Document)</b>
<b>L.G.</b>	<b>Lumen Gentium (Conciliar Document)</b>
<b>R.M.</b>	<b>Redemptoris Missio (Encyclical Letter)</b>
<b>SECAM</b>	<b>Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar</b>

All the Biblical quotations from this work are taken from *The Catholic Study Bible*, Edited by Dianne Bergant et Alii, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

*J. J. Smith*

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

After the Second Vatican Council which took place from 1962 to 1965, a kind of regular evaluation of apostolic activities has helped the different Popes to rekindle the fire of missionary spirit by drawing the attention of missionaries to the different challenges they now meet. Paul VI initiated this process when, after the third Ordinary General Assembly of bishops, he published the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) which inspired the bishops of SECAM in their Plenary meeting in Rome (1975) to re-evaluate their ways and methods of evangelizing their continent. Their insistence on having an African Council made John Paul II call for a special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops in 1989 to evaluate systematically their missionary work on this continent. In 1990 he published the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, in which he exhorted missionaries to have new parameters of evangelization. He also invited them to go beyond the traditional mission fields and evangelize the new areopaguses. In repeating this invitation in the post-synodal exhortation '*Ecclesia in Africa*', the Pope showed how important it is to have a look at the new cultural sectors and find strategies to evangelize them.

My aim in this work is not to give an answer to the thorny question of how to evangelize the new areopaguses, -- for as someone said 'An answer needs explanations and explanations need understanding' --, but to share my own experience in dealing with these cultural phenomena and also share some of my

ideas that might have been already expressed by experts in the matter. As it is often said: "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness".

In the first part of my essay, I want to share my understanding of some common terms that will be used in this work, i.e., my understanding of the terms Mission, Evangelization, Proclamation, Areopagus, etc., and try to see what method Paul was using when he tried to proclaim the Christian message to the members of the Areopagus. Then I try to identify some of the new areopaguses mentioned by Pope John Paul II. The Second part is a short historical review which allows me to understand the Church's relationship with cultures and specially how it moved from a single and united Christian culture to the acceptance of a pluralistic understanding of cultures. The third part is an analysis of the world in which we live with its new cultural phenomena, some proposals on how we can approach these different areas, and the challenges we are called to respond to. This essay is just an introduction to a topic that would need to be dealt with in a more greater detail.

## PART ONE

### BACKGROUND OF THE ATHENIAN AREOPAGUS

#### Chap. I UNDERSTANDING OF TERMS

##### 1.1 Mission, Evangelization and Proclamation

It is quite usual to hear people speaking of Mission, Proclamation, Evangelization, etc., without differentiating between them. Are they all equivalent? Before dealing with the core of my topic, I would like to say something about them, after which I will deal with the new missionary activity which is 'Evangelizing the New Areopaguses.'

##### 1.1.1 The Church's Mission to the world

It is very common to hear people speaking of their mission, of the Diplomatic Mission of an embassy, etc., just to mean the aim or the object of one's activity in a given area and at a certain time. As Fr. Latourelle tries to explain, the term mission may have a secular significance indicating a representational function, but as the Church commonly uses the term, it refers rather to the initial kerygmatic proclamation<sup>1</sup>. The term is used to indicate a sending on God's part, with the task of carrying his message with the purposes of converting people and establishing new churches<sup>2</sup>. "*The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since,*

<sup>1</sup> See Fr. René Latourelle et alii, SV Mission in: *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, (London: Crossroads, 1996,).

<sup>2</sup> Here we can discover the difference between the two important schools of Missiology: Munster and Leuven.

*according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>*

Nowadays, the idea of mission is fading away for many different reasons, and especially because of the false assumption that the Church has implanted itself everywhere. That makes the explicit proclamation be lost, giving way to social-type denunciations and dialogue. Can the saving works of Jesus be reduced to a merely social and political liberation? It ought to be announced and shared. We make a difference between 'Missio Dei' which is the Mission of God the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit to save the world, the 'Missio Hominis' which is the mission entrusted to some agents called missionaries, and the 'Missio Ecclesiae' which is the redemptive mission of the Church as a depository of salvation. All the three aim at the integral salvation of the human person.

### 1.1.2 Global Understanding of Evangelization

The term Evangelization, which is exclusively religious and has a Christian significance, is used to indicate the actual content of Mission: The proclamation of the Good News to all people, especially to non-Christians or to the de-christianized, that is, those Christians who do not practice their faith anymore<sup>2</sup>. It is an invitation first made by Jesus to the whole of humanity and repeated by his followers, to those who do not know him. It is an invitation to a union of love and

G.S. 2

<sup>1</sup> Pope Paul VI spoke extensively about this topic in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 52 and 56 respectively.

life, which leads to free and firm commitment. *"Evangelization is the first step by which those who have not yet adhered to the message, can be guided to their first real commitment."*<sup>6</sup> That is why this term is used to indicate the work of catechesis and permanent Christian training which embraces both the proclamation of salvation at the end of time and the proclamation of human liberation. Thus Evangelization is an effort to 'reach out' to those who are not Christians and a call to thorough going conversion. But as someone says: *"A program of evangelization which has its object merely the recruitment of new members for the Parish, the wanting of new churches or parishes or the reattachment of catholic identity falls short of the vision of evangelization in Pauli V's Evangelium Nuntiandi."* Evangelization is a process which goes from presence or witness to service and dialogue which culminate in the proclamation of 'Jesus, the Way, the truth and the Life.' *"The pulpit evangelization is not enough. Time, energy and creativity must be set aside to improve catholic evangelization techniques to put catholics back on the map."*<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, evangelization has to place its trust in God rather than in the instruments which it makes use of.

Evangelization does not mean bringing the faith to people, since faith comes from God's own action within us and from our free decision; but it transmits faith, deepens it and perfects it. It *"means bringing the Good News to all the strata of*

<sup>6</sup> John, Hotinger, *Evangelization and Catechesis: Are we really proclaiming the Gospel?* (New-York: Paulist Press, 1976), P.8.

<sup>7</sup> Richard, J. Quinn, *Who are stealing our sheep? The Great Omission: The Great Detection*, (Lincoln: Kulu Press, 1997), P.23.

humanity, through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new.”<sup>7</sup> It is through evangelization that people come to know what they can believe in. For a long time, people understood evangelization and carried it out as an ecclesial activity, and not just as the private enterprise of some individuals<sup>8</sup>. But as time went on, some individuals developed skills in some fields of evangelization better than the others, and now we find, even among the missionaries, some people being specialized in a certain area, not really involving the other colleagues. Evangelization needs to be an ecclesial activity that allows every baptized person, by virtue of his/her baptism, to feel being part of<sup>9</sup>.

### 1.1.3 Proclamation

Everything started with the coming of the Spirit promised to the Apostles by Jesus who filled them with the courage to pass on to others their experience of Him and the hope that motivate them. The Acts of the Apostles is a book that recounts the different styles of proclamation the first Christians had to do whether in public places, in prisons or in individual houses. Peter for instance recalls that Christ commanded them to preach and to testify<sup>10</sup> and anytime the apostles were challenged, they could conclude: “...and we are witnesses to these things.”

<sup>7</sup> E.N. 18.

<sup>8</sup> We can remember the institution of the Propaganda Fide and its objectives, and also the Jus Commisiones system in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

<sup>9</sup> We find that spirit in Acts 13:1-4

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Acts 10:42 ; 20:24.

Proclamation is, therefore, an affirmation of and a witness to God's action in oneself. Somehow the Good News proclaimed by witness of life, sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. Proclamation is then one of the main missionary activities of announcing the Reign of God. Some missionary Congregations in the past based themselves in the proclamation-sacramentalization approach as their missionary methodology. In fact in our missionary activities, proclamation is needed so that people can hear about God's saving acts in each one of us: but *"if proclamation needs to be present always, is dialogue in itself which is another missionary activity, a genuine form of evangelization?"*

## 1.2. The Cultural And Politico-Religious Background of the Areopagus

The Acts of the Apostles present Paul as having trouble with the Jews in Thessalonica. He is sneaked out from Berea to Athens where he found a different group of people with different reactions<sup>12</sup>. It is in the cultural centre of that ancient world that Paul will confront the pagan wisdom with the biblical message. Athenians were welcoming people, thirsty for what is new, and hungry for nice philosophical speeches.

### 1.2.1 The ancient city of Athens.

<sup>12</sup> Jacques Dupuis, SJ, *Toward a Christian Theology of religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), no. 371. This concern has also been expressed by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in *Dialogue and Proclamation*, no 82.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 17:15-15

Athens is known to have been an ancient city of the Roman Empire which had been granted autonomy and allowed to incorporate Greek cities. Though it was a politically insignificant city, it represented the centre of the ancient Greek culture. It had a total population of 5000 inhabitants who incarnated the philosophical tradition of that epoch. The Athens Paul visited was the great city that produced so much in literature and arts; it had not enjoyed political liberty since its defeat in 337 BC. It was the city which Romans regarded as the centre of philosophy and where anyone who wished to study must go. That is why there were many philosophical schools. The prominent ones were the Epicureans and the Stoics.

### 1.2.2 Epicureanism

this is a philosophy that was started by sextus epicurus promoting arguments for suspending any judgement. those are:

1- The disagreement between philosophical groups. For him, there is in life and among philosophers, a disagreement that cannot be settled, leading to the suspension of truth.

2- *Progressio ad infinitum*: according to him, the proof supporting a proposition needs another proof. And this can continue *ad infinitum*.

3- *Relativity* which means that an object is such or such according to the one who judges and according to what surrounds the observation.

4- The vicious circle: He meant that, that which is supposed to confirm an opinion needs to be proved by that very opinion itself...

Epicurus relied on Democritus for the atomic theory of nature as a reasonable answer to the physical world<sup>13</sup>. For him, there is only matter, and matter is made of atoms falling in space, colliding and clustering. These clusters of atoms are the things we now see. Epicurus was highly materialistic because human beings<sup>14</sup> for him are only matter and when their atoms come apart, they disappear and are liberated from pain, from fear of death, and from fear of God<sup>15</sup>. Another point of his philosophy is that the chief aim of human life is pleasure, and it is the basis of all conduct. Nevertheless, real pleasure is not in boundless enjoyment of the body, but in serenity, repose and tranquillity of mind. Hence the highest value of human life is the absence of pain and the control of one's desires by the mind<sup>16</sup>. Epicureans are not atheists, but strongly believe that God should not intervene in the course of this world that is guided by the 'laws of hazard and necessity'. Epicurean life is possible only for some cultivated aristocrats free from material needs and having as their only companions, a few pleasant and intellectually fascinated friends.

<sup>13</sup> Cf Unpublished class notes from Fr Hermann Bastinjs, *introduction to the History of Ancient Philosophy*, Kossogel, 1989.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

### 1.2.3 The Stoics

The main proponents of Stoicism were Zeno, Cleanthes, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. The Stoics made use of Heraclitus' notion of a fiery Logos permeating all things, to develop their thinking. Unlike the Epicureans, the Stoics accepted a world order, God, fate and providence. For them, the world is matter, but an active power, a force provides all material things with vitality. This active fire is the highest form of being and it is intelligent; this rational force is God. Hence God is in everything, and all events occur according to his decisions. Man's soul is part of God, and human rationality represents man's awareness of the order controlled by the Logos. Their moral theory is based on the conception of the world and of human being, anybody can attain happiness in this world ruled by necessity only through wisdom, and to be wise is to recognise what one can control, which are his attitudes and his emotions. One of the well-known Stoic principles is: "if one cannot change the world, He/she could change him\herself by making him\herself free from feelings and by developing apathy." They had a strong notion of cosmopolitanism and human relations had the greatest significance for them. Their doctrine contributed to softening the conditions of slavery of that period in the Greco-Roman empire. Their theory of universal brotherhood and the doctrine of natural Law and of justice paved the way to the biblical notion of universalism. There were of course many other philosophical groups around, and people enjoyed listening to their empty argumentations. It is in this context that Paul found himself after running from Thessalonica and Berea.

### 1.3 The Areopagus And Its Functions

#### 1.3.1 Terminology

The term Areopagus is not a very common term in the Bible, it was used there at a time when it had an ambiguous and controversial meaning.

The Areopagus<sup>14</sup>: It is known that one of the numerous hills of Athens bore the name Areopagus and it gave its name to the judicial assembly of the elders who met there at that time. This hill of Ares was as ancient as the city and was said to have taken its name from a legend of Ares being tried there by Poseidon for having murdered his son. The name was then given to the assembly of elders, made up mainly of old archons, nobles, lawmakers, and people of high moral character, who met to deliberate on judicial, religious and disciplinary matters that pertain to the right governance of the city. This assembly was given great powers and its functions were delimited by Solon in 594 BC, but declined greatly after 487 BC, to be abolished completely by the year 400 BC. In our modern era, the areopagus will represent mainly the institution preserving the cultural moral and religious identity of people; we give pre-eminence to the media that brings new cultural value to our world, the international bodies, . . . where serious decisions are taken and implemented.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E.F. Bozman (ed), *Everyman's encyclopaedia* Fourth edition, (London: J.M Dent and son Ltd. 1958).

### 1.3.2 Its Functions

The Areopagus in the time of Paul had more or less a precise function, which was defined by the Roman Emperor Cicero. One of the major functions was to make sure that the laws of the city were enforced. Its members tried people for homicide, murderous assault, conspiracy. It had not only the guardianship of the law but could also expound and create new laws necessary for the lives of people. It exercised the right to inquire into every Athenian's income, to punish idleness and immorality. It also had to preserve the traditions, to work in keeping law and order in the different philosophical schools and the different religious ideologies. It supervised education and the youth in general.

### 1.3.3 Its Membership

The members of the Areopagus were recruited from the nobles and the aristocrats devoted to Rome. They were elected and could normally stay for life. It was then a group of learned and very demanding thinkers, thirsty for knowledge and for anything new, though very sceptical toward anything that was strange. It is to this group of wise men that Paul tried to explain the Gospel of the Risen Lord. It seems to be Paul's first encounter or rather the first confrontation between the Gospel message with its underlining Judeo-Christian culture and the hellenistic intelligentsia, and it will be seen throughout as a paradigm for any encounter between the Christian message and another culture.

## Chap. 2 - THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE GOSPEL AND CULTURES

### 2.1. Inculturation?

Before proclaiming his message to the Athenians, Paul started a search for a common base between his culture and the one of the Athenians, so that he could soften a dialogue between his faith and the Athenians culture. Could this be the beginning of an inculturation process? Inculturation, according to A. Shorter, *"is the process of a deep, sympathetic adaptation to, and appropriation of, a local culture in which the Church finds itself, in a way that does not compromise its basic faith."*<sup>12</sup> To announce the Resurrection to Jews was not a difficult task but for the pagans of Athens, and mainly for the educated ones of the Areopagus, Paul had to borrow their natural knowledge of God the Creator and their idea of the final judgement to pave the way. Did Paul really try to incarnate the Gospel in the Culture of the Athenians? The speech he delivered assumed before hand that his gentile hearers had a knowledge of the true God and sought, by philosophising, to advance this supposition toward a monotheistic idea of God.<sup>13</sup> Someone said that it is from our religious heritage that we could perceive the divine call brought to us by the word of God. If this is really true, it could be said also that it is on our cultural heritage that the divine word can be grafted. In the Areopagus, Paul's

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<sup>12</sup> E.F. Bozman, *Everyman's Encyclopedia* 32.

<sup>13</sup> See L.E. Keck & J.L. Martyn, *Study of Luke's Acts*, (N.Y.: Abingdon Press, 1966) P.35.

Christian catechesis that he was addressing to the pagans, was using some elements of the Jewish apologetic.

It should be easy to see how the problem of adaptation had been put forward and solved by the cultured Hellenistic pagans. It is not really surprising that Paul used this existing experience—once used by the Hellenistic Jews, to convince his hearers who are gentiles from Athens, about the belief in one God Creator, who sent his Son to die and rise for our salvation. The reaction of the people is not something new to contemporary missiologists. It is not easy to penetrate the culture of people just by a supposition. *Culture requires a new type of evangelization, and that is what we call inculturation: the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be announced without a methodical, reflective and concerted effort, for today the pace of cultural change defies also the traditional way of christianising common behaviours and customs.*<sup>11</sup> Announcing Jesus to the modern minds calls for a profound revision of our traditional methods of evangelization. We need to think new forms of dialogue between the Church and the modern world, as was recommended the Second Vatican Council<sup>12</sup>. The work of inculturation is to make the Gospel relevant, to penetrate the cultures of people with the light of the Gospel. Evangelization will remain unfinished if it does not transform our culture. Cardinal Paul Zoungana of Burkina Faso was expressing his disappointment once,

<sup>11</sup> Hervé Carrier, "Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity," *Faith and Culture*, (N.Y.:Orbis Book, 1993) P.11.

<sup>12</sup> Cf the decree of the Church in the Modern World, G.S.

saying that his Catholics were being twisted between their Catholic faith and their traditional belief. They come to pray on Sundays, but on weekdays go to consult witch-doctors, for their security is still in their traditions and cultures. Unless our traditions are evangelized, the work of evangelization will remain unfinished."<sup>10</sup> Inculturation is a fight for justice that respects our cultural rights: *"The fight for justice that does not respect cultural aspirations leads to injustice."*<sup>11</sup> So inculturation has to be global, including the economic and the political condition for an integral development, without betraying justice, nor culture. *"Inculturation is not only a local event. It also has a regional or macrocontextual and macrocultural manifestation."*

## 2.2. Interreligious Dialogue

was Paul's encounter with the pagans at the Areopagus a beginning of dialogue between Christian and non-Christian cultures? what really happened is that in Athens, Paul took time to go round the town and admire the positive values of the Athenians before sharing with them his religious values. Here Paul seems to be concerned with dialogue that reaches across differences of faith, ideology and culture, though the protagonists did not agree on important central aspects of his message. But in the end, Paul was trying to convince his hearers to join him, to convert them and make them adhere to his faith. As Vatican II notices in *Caudium et Spes*, dialogue is something not to be avoided, but greater prudence

<sup>10</sup> This is also expressed by Benzet Bujo, quoted in *AT&A* 1976, no 38.5, p. 293

<sup>11</sup> *Interreligions*, op.cit., p.5

may be required for it presupposes that each side wishes to know the other's point of view, and wishes to increase and deepen its knowledge of the other. It also demands respect for the other as he/she is. Above all, dialogue is not the same as confrontation. For the object of dialogue is that one person, knowing well his faith, decides to reach out to another person in order to understand better his/her faith. Could be said that Paul's approach to the Areopagites was an initiation to interreligious dialogue? Mgr Diarra says:

*Les conditions générales qu'exige le dialogue interreligieux relèvent principalement de trois ordres:*

*Des dispositions psychologiques que quelqu'un a appelé: le décalogue du dialogue. "Il faut une attitude positive qui dispose à la découverte et à la reconnaissance du mystère présent et actif en eux; la modestie pour marcher ensemble vers la vérité; la sympathie sans laquelle la vraie compréhension est impossible.*

*Des exigences internes au dialogue lui-même. Il s'agit notamment d'entrer dans l'expérience religieuse de l'autre. C'est le dialogue "intra religieux" qui vise la connaissance de la religion de l'autre jusqu'à entrer dans sa peau et dans sa mythologie.*

*La connaissance surisante de sa propre foi et une adhésion sans faille. Chaque partenaire entre dans le dialogue avec toute sa foi professée dans un caractère spécifique et son identité propre. La sincérité du dialogue*

*n'autorise aucune mise entre parenthèses, même provisoire, de la foi; son intégrité interdit tout compromis avec elle, et toute déduction.*"<sup>4</sup>

If that is the case, we could easily say that Paul's encounter with the Areopagus was not really a dialogue with other religions, though he showed that elements of non-Christian religions and the culture they influence can enrich Christian catechesis and worship and find in them their deepest fulfillment; but he did not substitute that for his Christian understanding of things. We need to initiate dialogue with people of other faith, people who know what they believe in and are ready to share with us, in order to make the message of Christ known to all.

Dialogue is necessary in any encounter between faith and culture.

### 2.3. Incursion Of The Culture Of Modernity Into The Traditional Faith?

#### 2.3.1 Meaning of the Term Culture

The term culture seems to be a term very well known, and we have the tendency to withhold our full attention to all its complications. Culture is, according to some anthropologists, a comprehensive concept that embraces all that individuals acquire and learn as members of a society. One of the functions of culture is to help people relate affectively, rationally, and behaviorally to experience. It concerns the entire human reality of every human being. It always has a dynamic character because it is tied up with human life. It is a "living" and organic thing, something that moves, changes and submits itself all the time to modification.

<sup>4</sup> Mgr J.C. Diarra, *Le Role irréductible de la bible, de la Tradition et du magistère*. In: *Colloque Théologique, L'Évangile de Jésus Christ et la Rencontre des Religions Traditionnelles*, Unpublished, Abidjan, 1996.

*"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."*

### 2.3.2 The Culture of Modernity

It is somehow hard to speak of modernity as a culture. But there are cultural traits of the modern world which are an aggregate of representing the typical culture of our epoch. The culture of modernity will be seen as a set of behaviours and learned patterns *"pertaining to present and recent time, not ancient nor remote. They reject traditionally accepted or sanctioned forms and emphasize individual experimentation and sensibility."*<sup>1</sup> It is then a state of mind, a mentality or a culture based on the daily life of a whole society, which involves every aspect of life.

### 2.3.3 Culture of Modernity versus Traditional Faith

*"It is acknowledged that the modern culture has provided humanity with advantages that no previous period had even dared hope for."*<sup>2</sup> At the time of the apostle Paul, Athens was a city of ancient culture in the sense that the long standing philosophical schools and speculations were taking their insights from the ancient traditions. Nevertheless, there were new understandings and new concepts of things arising from new philosophical thoughts. If the Epicureans were

<sup>1</sup> B. F. Stuart and C. H. Leonore, *Modernity in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd edition unabridged.*

<sup>2</sup> H. Carrer, op. cit., p. 38

sceptical about the existence of a God creator of all, a God who created the atoms and assembled them, the Stoics discovered the existence of a fiery logos permeating everything. This divine force is God controlling everything. The transition from an atheistic situation to a pantheistic situation is quite a move toward modernity. Modernity as seen in that era, was good and longed for. However, it inspired as much fear as fascination. *"Though it may be wonderful in its creations, in its wake it brings contradictions and latent threats that rack the uneasy collective unconscious."*<sup>7</sup> The message Paul gives to the Athenians is something totally new, never heard of; and this modern understanding of things could have been an obstacle for the Athenians to accept this new modern faith that rose from a modern culture.

### Chap. 3. THE MODERN EQUIVALENCE OF AREOPAGUS

*"At the time of Paul, the Areopagus represented the cultural centre of the learned people of Athens; today it can be taken as a symbol of the new sectors in which the Gospel must be proclaimed."*<sup>8</sup>

In Acts 17:19, Luke portrayed the great opportunity and also the immense stumbling block to any mission to the hellenistic intelligentsia. His presentation of cultured paganism illustrated the kind of approach in which faith meets with cultures and at the same time admits that the Gospel can seem foolishness to the

<sup>7</sup> H. Carrier, op. cit., p.39

<sup>8</sup> R. M. no 37c, p. 65.

Greek, or at least to most of them”<sup>29</sup>. In his encyclical letter, the Mission of the Redeemer, the Pope redefines briefly the modern equivalence of Areopagus and calls for a new way of evangelizing them, which will be methodical, reflective and communitarian. But what are these areopaguses that need our care?

### 3.1 The World Of Media

*“The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals families and within society at large.”<sup>30</sup>* By the means of social communication we mean the print media (novels, leaflets, magazines, newspapers, books,...) and the Audio-visuals or multimedia (Radio broadcasting, i.e., video and audio cassettes, films, slides, posters ...), and in the Church, we could also talk of the liturgy, catechesis, witness and educational system. These are instrumental in changing or reshaping the existing culture of a given population. The print media in Nairobi for instance, is something that cannot be controlled. There is an enormous quantity of novels, books and news magazines circulating in this city. Out of 79 young office workers I approached, 51 of them, especially young women, read novels during their free time, and 32 read romantic ones and circulate them among friends. I once saw in a catholic primary school a young girl of 12 who had a pornographic magazine, to the amazement of the teachers. Our dailies are 45% full of advertisements and a quarter page of

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. 1 Cor: 2:18

<sup>30</sup> R.M. 37c, P.66

horoscope (the stars), besides hard news and reports. One Sunday after mass, a group of young people rushed on my Sunday Nation. To my amazement, they were all looking for their stars before looking at the cartoon, and if time allowed, they would read "Lifestyle" and the "Young Nation"; perhaps they would also read the news. It is through reading that people learn; but in these dailies and novels, we rarely see an explicit mention of God. Is God totally absent from people's lives? Is he forgotten or is he an old fashion? This new culture needs, more than any other area, a real evangelization.

The audio-visuals are the more efficient media for the transmission of news and at the same time in influencing and changing cultural patterns. Radio broadcasting is sometimes used for political ends, and some of the things that are broadcast reflect the political orientation of the ruling party. There is a new phenomenon spreading on the continent, and that is the appearance of the FM stations. Here in Nairobi, most of the youth, if at all given the chance, would prefer tuning their radios to Metro FM or Capital Radio, for they give exciting rap, slow jam, Lingala and Caribbean music. The local radio station like KBC Swahili or English services are tuned into from time to time when the need arises. T.V. occupies a lot of our time; there is no more time for socializing, for telling stories, for discussing family matters if there is something attractive on T.V. And as Fr. Shorter noted: *"Violence is everywhere: in newscast, documentaries, soap operas and commercials. It is even to be found in cartoons that are screened for children and in the video games they enjoy so much. From the youngest age, Kenyans are being taught by the*

*electronic media to respond violently to every obstacle and every problem.*"<sup>31</sup> The T.V. is a medium we can use to evangelize by inserting in general programming a religious message which is sensitive to the spiritual and religious aspects of human life. We can use it for evangelization, because of the impact it has on its viewers. Shorter noted that it is not strange to see in Nairobi the number of video clubs where one can go and get the film of his/her choice, badly recorded, for viewing. In the remotest areas, the poorest slum areas, we even have video rooms, where anyone can easily get in and see the most rated violent or X films, dubbed with very bad quality machines. There is also a new wave of pedagogical and apologetical movies, made locally to answer some of our basic questions. In most of them, no matter what is the ending, God will intentionally be hidden. They do not really oppose God, but they report things as if God does not exist at all. Many of the values presented are human values but it becomes just a played value. The communication media creates an imaginary world in which real things do not matter any more. *"As long as the media continue to exercise their present secularizing influence on society, religion will continue to be relegated to the private subjective sphere"*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A. Shorter, & E. Onyancha. *Secularism in Africa: A case study: Nairobi City*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> *Ib.* p.85.

### 3.2 Commitment To Peace, Development And Liberation Of People.

We can easily talk of the wars in all parts of the continent, the progressive and uncontrolled development plans, the still oppressive attitudes toward young people, women, children and minority ethnic groups and our lack of respect for our eco-system. That is what we can express in a nut-shell about our continent. There are a lot of groups being formed here and there to monitor peace in the belligerent countries. Here in Kenya, there is the organization 'People for Peace', the 'Kamatusa peace' emissaries; at the regional level the 'Arusha Peace Committee', the 'Great Lakes Peace Committees' shared by the Kenya and South African governments; we have the 'ECOWAS peace-keeping forces'; at the international level, there also is the 'UN peace keeping forces' in Bosnia; we have the 'Middle East peace talks'; we now have the American emissary going to mediate between Cyprus and Turkey. . . . At the UN level, a lot of efforts have been made to ensure peace in the world. But we are still far from reaching that goal. Some emissaries try to make sure that their interests are respected. There is a need for Catholic peace mediators, like the St. Egidio Group, to join these humanists and make Christian values be felt and lived.

We have a new phenomenon in our world, that under the disguise of development, contributes to bringing in secularism. A story in Tangaza Vision notes: A multimillionaire who had put up a magnificent building in a bushy and rocky place invited a priest to visit his property. The priest was indeed impressed

with the view and the whole set-up. . . and said: *"God is wonderful" "He surely is,"* agreed the millionaire, *"but you should have been here three years ago when God had all this to himself. Then it was nothing but bush."* While we all agree that development should have a close relationship with God's commission to man to tame the garden<sup>33</sup>, the secular world will not really think of God in their development plans. Here in Kenya, we have the 'virus' of 'private developers' who grab lands belonging even to churches, schools, charity homes. . . , who even evict slum dwellers (Soweto case) to put up their dream buildings. One of the UN habitat meetings in Istanbul elaborated a funny housing plan that could force people to use artificial birth control methods. If we go by the definition given to that word development, that is to evolve, to exploit the natural resources, to build on or prepare land for building. . . we will really fail to put God at his right place. The Gospel needs to penetrate this group of development conscious people in order to bring them to respect of God and of their fellow human beings.

The international human rights group, Amnesty international, has never ceased reporting on the deteriorating human conditions in many parts of the world. Every person has a right to live decently. But we realize that in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, the rights of the individuals, e.g., women, children and minority population are just an illusion, and those who rule us and are supposed to see that every person is treated equally are most of them of Christian background. On the other hand, individuals become expert in asserting their rights. Such an

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Gen. 2:15*.

approach to life can mean that individuals' lives become atomic, lonely, separate or even parallel, unless there is a balanced recognition of other people's rights and responsibilities.

In Africa, we still harbour a lot of unjust cultures, cultures that contribute to alienating some groups of people, the case of the caste system, the status of women, the dowry or bride-wealth system and many more. Sometimes our cultures help us keep a certain bias toward those people. It is time for us to look into our traditional culture and bias laws, and commit ourselves to the liberation of peoples. Isn't that an area for evangelization? A good evangelization has to penetrate all our cultures: *"Individuals must be evangelized within their cultures..."*<sup>1</sup>

St. Paul made Christ's message accessible to Greeks and other gentiles, and the Gospel was preached to Romans and to all the areas of the Roman empire. Cultures, for Christian evangelizers, could be perceived as the aspirations, spiritual needs and secret hopes of people, and for that we need to establish a new style of dialogue between the Church and the different human Culture for Pius XI reminded us: *"We must never lose sight of the fact that the aim of the Church is to evangelize not to civilize. If the Church civilizes, it does so through evangelization."*

### 3.3 The Group Of Scientists And International Relations

In his definition of the new Areopaguses, the Pope singled out the body of scientists and researchers to be evangelized. There is no doubt that the discoveries about the human being were a real revolution and can influence or even change

<sup>1</sup> A. Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), P.28.

the existing cultures of people. Two years ago, the Pope expressed to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences his concern regarding the discovery about the human genome that will be a non-ending discovery. " *This gradual discovery of the genetic map and the increasingly detailed knowledge of genome sequencing are an advance in scientific knowledge which first of all causes justifiable wonder particularly with the reconstruction of the DNA chain the chemical basis of genes and chromosomes*"<sup>49</sup> and this discovery can help to make progress in medical research. It could also reverse and become a way of eliminating the undesirable foetuses, the unborn having malformation or bad genes. If these bodies of scientists are not illuminated by the Gospel, they will forget all moral, metaphysical and ethical truth about the human person, and start misusing them. They could be reminded that science alone cannot claim to account for the transcendent origin and purpose of human existence.

<sup>49</sup> The Human person must be the beginning, subject and goal of all scientific research, in: *Osservatore Romano*, Nov. 1994, no 45, P.3.

## PART II

### HISTORICAL REVIEW

"A man with no memory or past is like a pilot without a compass."

(O. Bimwenyi Kweshi)

Quite often, we have the tendency of wrongly labelling the Church in her relationship with the cultures of the world, without understanding the movements of history. Our attempts at understanding always start from a determinate standpoint which for us will be the review of history. It is good to note from this history that the Church implanted itself by substituting many traditional elements, that is by giving to the Hebraic and Hellenistic traditions a Christian flavour, then progressively moulding her own culture, before accepting to dialogue with the different cultural and human structures.

#### CHAP.4 THE MISSIONARY METHODOLOGY IN APPROACHING THE DIFFERENT AREOPACUSES

##### 4.1 The Early Church Or The Stage Where Culture Swallowed The Gospel

###### 4.1.1 The Church and Jewish Culture

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the apostles started by praying in the synagogues and by worshipping in the Temple like any pious Jews. They

progressively transferred the Jewish sabbath to the Christian 'day of the Lord' giving a Christian meaning to the unleavened bread and the wine for the commemoration of the Exodus event. They did the same with baptism, the berrakah, etc. Symbols changed their meaning slowly, with of course a little bit of opposition here and there before finally becoming acceptable.

#### 4.1.2 The Church and Gentile Culture

For the benefit of the gentile converts, St. Paul pleads at the council of Jerusalem that the Jewish traditions not be imposed on them: *"No need of circumcision to become Christian."*<sup>27</sup> It had been very hard for the Judeo-Christians to accept this newness, but progressively it was agreed that the circumcision was not part of the new faith. In the aftermath of the Apostle Paul, the first Fathers of the Church did not hesitate to give a Christian meaning to the existing cultures. Some juridical terms, for instance were used to explain some sacraments like baptism, to explain some ambiguous terms like mystery, and to explain even some theological intricacies like the relationships between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This stage is called functional substitution, a *"process whereby, over a period of time, a Christian meaning is substituted for a non-Christian understanding of an action or an expression."*<sup>28</sup> The Church, in the beginning of its existence was very humble to accept that in the existing cultures there were a lot of elements it could

<sup>27</sup> Acts 15:10

<sup>28</sup> Gerald A. Arbuckle *Earning the Gospel: an Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Worker* (New York: Orbis Books, 1990) P.10.

give a Christian understanding to so that people could feel at home with them. This spirit lasted until the time of the recognition of the Church, with the Constantine Peace treaty.

The early Christians, remained free and uninhibited by culture. Their assumption was: whatever exists, whatever is good in culture and creation comes from God and exists for God through Christ. Hence they felt quite free to use even the gentile's culture, concept and life experience to proclaim the Gospel, as the need arose. It was the same attitude that inspired St. Paul's reference to the Greek poets, philosophers and the unknown God of the Athenians. It inspired the Gospel writers to use Hellenistic culture to announce the Risen Lord; the author of the letter to the Hebrews used a lot of platonic ideas as later on St. Thomas will use Aristotelian ideas to develop his Christian anthropology and philosophy. Christianity and traditional Culture were seen as complementary.

#### **4.1.3 The Apologists and their Relationships to traditional cultures**

The apologists were Christian intellectuals of the second and third centuries who wrote works to defend (apologia) and justify their faith and practices. They were explaining their faith to pagans who were attacking and persecuting all those who believed in Christ. They also used local cultural elements to make their faith acceptable to all. Among these works are the apologies of Justin Martyr, the author of the Epistle to Diognetus and those of Clement of Alexandria.

### Justin Martyr (+165)

He was a philosopher and a teacher of pagan public at Ephesus and Rome. After his conversion to Christianity, he made use of his philosophical ideas and ways of thinking, familiar to the pagans, to explain the basic truths of his faith. He also attacked the polytheistic mythologies and confronted them with philosophical ideas of the one true God. For him God spoke to the OT prophets, but also spoke through "*such eminent people as Heraclitus, Socrates. . .*"<sup>38</sup> By giving the examples of Greek poets, Sibyls, oracles, the Iliad, the Odysseus and other myths, he showed that the 'Seeds of the Word' were also planted in the pagan culture, thus opening the way to a positive consideration of the traditional cultures.

### The Epistle to Diognetus

While refuting pagan religion as idolatrous and the Jewish practice as ritualistic, the Epistle shows that the Christians are living in a world in which they are not distinct from others: "*Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by either country, speech, customs, etc. They use no peculiar language, they cultivate no eccentric mode of life. . . . They conform to the customs of the country in dress, food and mode of life in general.*"<sup>39</sup> For the author, Christians and even the Church have no culture of their own but live in human culture, which the Gospel values have to penetrate.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Herbert Jedin (ed), *History of the Church, Vol.II*, (London: Burns & Oates, 1980) P. 174.

<sup>39</sup> Luigi, A. Clerici, *A Reader in Early Patristics, examples of discerning inculturation*, (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1995) P. 34-37.

### Clement of Alexandria (c.150-215)

He studied in several philosophical schools before becoming a theologian and teacher in the Alexandrian catechetical school. He tried in his teaching and mainly in his writings, to reconcile Greek philosophy and Christian faith. He considered philosophy as a "preparatio Evangelii", i.e., as preparing the way for the Christian revelation. In his apology, 'Pedagogus,' he encouraged the Pagans to accept the Christian Faith and wrote extensively about Christian marriage. These people added a positive outlook to the Church's relationship with Culture.

### 4.2 Moulding A Christian Culture: A Period Of Acculturation (476-1453)

After that period, Christianity was a settled religion, though it was still unofficial, and its adepts were persecuted. But there came a time when Constantine made it the official and only true religion (324). People were forced en masse to join that religion. With the acceptance of these favours, the already existing 'Christian culture' had to change and then identify itself with the Roman culture. Evangelizers had to accept the symbols and everything in the imperial culture. We all know what followed: the Church adopted the secular symbols of the empire; bishops adopted the power symbols of royalty, the priests accepted authority over the people and somehow forgot their role as servants; the centre of worship moved from the homes to the big cathedrals; the roman legal system entered the Church which became an institution. All the elements of the other culture were accepted and integrated in the existing 'Christian culture.' We could speak of a

period of acculturation for, as Shorter says: *"By acculturation is meant the encounter between one culture and another, or the encounter between cultures. This is perhaps the principal cause of cultural change . . . . Acculturation is an encounter between two symbols and conceptions, two different interpretations of experience, two different sets of social identities. Unreflective and unprogrammed though it may be, the encounter is fraught with complexity"*<sup>40</sup>. The mistakes of the evangelizers were so obvious that after the attack and destruction of the Roman empire --by the barbarians and pagans (476)--, which was largely identified with Christianity, a tremendous crisis arose. People were overpowered by the pagan culture and went back to their natural religions with the appearance of rites, magic, etc.

#### 4.3 New Hope For a Christian Europe

The Church from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries tried to bring together the idea of good relationship with cultures. Great figures appeared who tried to make the Gospel accessible to people, and to give new hope to 'pagan Europe'

##### **Saints Cyril and Methodius 825.**

Before the arrival of these two brothers at Salonica, the German and Italian Missionaries were so faithful to Rome that they were doing everything in Latin, a language not known by the population. The Prince of Moravia, after his conversion to Christianity, called upon Byzantium to come and help them understand their faith. They then sent the two brothers who, immediately through

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<sup>40</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988) p. 7.

pastoral concern and for the purpose of evangelization, invented the letters of the Slavonic alphabet and translated the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospels and the liturgical texts. They also created codes of Church and civil laws. Their crowning achievement was to have developed and unified the Culture of the Slavs in the act of evangelizing it.

#### **Cluny 910:**

The monastic tradition came from Egypt and spread through Eastern Europe before reaching Italy, France... and Switzerland. Most of the monasteries were under the rules of Augustine and Benedict. In 910, the Abbey of Cluny appeared and spread quickly, setting at the cross-roads, putting up solid buildings. It restored the main principles of the Benedictine rule. Unlike the old monasteries, it stressed liturgy and continuous prayer, and added manual work in the field to its timetable, intending to make a link with the nomads and to link them with their land. It tried, in doing so, to bring to the people, a religion that became personal, with its unique way of relating to God. It managed to mold a new Christian culture suited for people, with its motto: 'Ora et Labora.'

#### **University of Paris: 1231.**

During this period, the intellectual activity was almost entirely confined to the monasteries. The culture was now based on faith; e.g., next to the Roman Law appeared the Canon Law. The University of Paris tried to promote cultures outside the Church by promoting the cultural knowledge and the development of Christian art like theatre, architecture, etc.

### St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

At the time of all these uncertainties appeared the great theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, who tried to revive Christianity by using the theories of a pagan philosopher, Aristotle. This type of witness brought back many faithful to the Church. It was in that way that the Gospel spread once again through Europe with the leaders converting together with their clans. More than ever, the Church took on the Culture of the age.

## 4.4 Relationship of Church And Culture During the Age of Discovery:

### Adaptation (1453-1962)

#### 4.4.1 Adaptation of European secular culture

The Church, by the mid-fifteenth century had become so intertwined with the European secular culture that no distinction could be made between them. Conversion meant acceptance of the European cultural expression of the faith, what the council of Jerusalem had rejected right from the beginning of Christianity. But historically, in the mid-fifteens, Europe became physically landlocked, blocked by the Ottoman empire and Islam. The only way out of that landlocked continent became the Atlantic ocean, and the existing means of transport could not easily link Europe to other markets outside it. But the fact that it was landlocked pushed it to try harder to go out for economical reasons. These led it to a lot of discoveries and helped it to start its ambitious expansion programmes. The three major events that helped in the expansion of the European culture were:

a) The discovery of printing by Gutenberg (1453), which will have a great influence on the origins of modern Europe. Printing helped people to spread knowledge about Greek, roman and Christian roots, and this gave to Europe also a great sense of pride and of cultural superiority.

b) The second event was the development of gun-powder already in use at the battle of Crecy in the 1300s, which allowed the conquistadors to impose their own culture on people.

c) The third event was the improvement of navigational aids, which helped the explorers to go out of Europe and to bring with them their ideas of cultural hegemony.

These three events were very instrumental in discovering new worlds and in colonising them. In 1493, came the idea of Padroado accepted by Pope Alexander VI, allowing Portugal and Spain to use any means to evangelize the West and the East. Their evangelization method was through conquest, and so could replace completely the local culture with a Portuguese or Spanish culture and model of worship. Religion became an instrument of oppression and cultural alienation. There appeared also the famous slave trade which was somehow master-minded by Christians. This situation lasted until 1622 when the Church decided to take missionary activity into her own hands.

#### 4.4.2 The Institution of Propaganda Fide (1622)

There came the institution of the Propaganda Fide designed to monitor missionary activity in the world. It founded a seminary for the training of the local clergy, it ordained some Chinese bishops and it instructed the missionaries on what to do: *"Do not make any effort or use any argument in favour of forcing the people to change their customs or traditions, as long as these are not clearly opposed to religion and morality. What could be more absurd than to import France, Spain or any other country of Europe into China?"*<sup>41</sup> This instruction shows a completely different approach and a certain rising conflict between the newly instituted Propaganda Fide and the Padroado.

The tension and controversy went even out of hand, and inside the Propaganda Fide, some attitudes of reserve and withdrawal arose. In China, the Jesuit Matteo de Ricci's (1552-1610) approach to evangelization aroused a lot of controversies after his death and was condemned in 1742. He had attempted to enter into dialogue with the rich Chinese culture, inventing the modern Chinese writing, using the traditional Chinese terminologies to express his Christian ideas in the theology and liturgy. He got the permission in 1615 to translate the whole Bible in Chinese. Since the cult of the ancestors was very popular, and well rooted in the lives of people, he allowed his converts to perform, under certain circumstances certain rites in honour of their ancestors. He also adopted a different liturgical

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<sup>41</sup> S.C. de Propaganda Fide, quoted in: A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, P. 155.

colour for the vestments, and even welcomed Chinese and ordained them for the different ministries. It was the period when the church really opened its doors to accept plurality of cultures and of worship. This was really to respect the dignity of the people with whom they live. *"The goal was to achieve a Christian reinterpretation of Chinese culture which would, in turn, provoke a Chinese reinterpretation of Christianity presented in this sympathetic Chinese form"*<sup>42</sup>. But in 1744, all these attempts at inculturation were stopped and the old style of evangelization imposed. The Church went back to the Eurocentric vision of the world and of religion. *"According to that model of evangelizing and Church, there was little need for evangelizers to understand cultures."*<sup>43</sup> What only mattered was the salvation of souls; cultures had little or even nothing to do with salvation.

#### 4.4.3 The New Missionary Founders and Cultures

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Catholic missions became practically non-existent, owing to the anti-ecclesiastical policy of the French governments.<sup>44</sup> The Propaganda Fide disappeared together with some religious orders. But this did not prevent some individuals from taking initiatives that could revive the missionary zeal. In the nineteenth century, there were some attempts to replace this European-centred cultural and individual soul-oriented model of missionary

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<sup>42</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p. 158.

<sup>43</sup> G. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel*, p. 13

<sup>44</sup> This is also expressed by the Historian Gili Aida in his documents: *History of the Comboni Missionary Institute, from its foundation to the death of Daniel Comboni: 1867-1881*, Studium Combonianum, p.3

action. The example of St. Thomas was reintroduced, that is, using the local culture to explain Christianity. But this could not prevent some missionaries from exalting their own culture. The eurocentric approach was found in ecclesiastical administration, in worship, even in seminary formation (for example, in the heat of Togo, priests and religious were urged to walk about in black cassocks); terms like accommodation, indigenization. . . seemed to be a way of transplanting the European civilisation, culture and faith in the so-called mission countries. It was in a way what politicians called assimilation. But the Popes, advocated the establishment of local churches with local clergy: *"The ultimate goal of missionary endeavour, which should never be lost to sight, is to establish the Church on sound foundations among non-Christian peoples, and place it under its own native hierarchy"*<sup>45</sup> giving impetus to some missionary founders, remarkable in their approach to evangelizing Africa.

#### Venerable F. Libermann

He started his congregation (The Holy Ghost Fathers) for evangelizing Africa in 1841, which later on will be fused with another congregation to give strength and new ideas to the evangelization programme in Africa. His teaching on culture to his members were almost the teaching of the Propaganda Fide, exhorting his missionaries not to *"judge things according to appearances nor to what you have been accustomed in Europe. . . . Become Negroes, with the Negroes and then you*

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<sup>45</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Evangelii Praecones*, in: *the Popes and Mission*, p. 32

*will regard them as they should be regarded . . . . Adopt their customs and manners and habits as servants do of their masters*<sup>46</sup> . The missionaries will know their traditions and customs, and be able to take the good out of it and use as means of evangelization.

#### **Blessed D. Comboni<sup>47</sup>**

He started the Comboni Missionaries in 1867 out of his zeal for regenerating Africa. He elaborated his plan of action in 1865 in which he insisted on the internationality of his communities and insisted on his vision of saving Africa by Africans. He insisted that those Africans be trained in Africa, using to the maximum the African cultural elements, customs and languages so that they will not feel aliens in their own countries. This idea of regenerating Africa helped the revived missionary movements to think of a subsequent plurality of cultures and no more believe in Christianity as the only perfect culture.

#### **Cardinal Lavignerie<sup>48</sup>**

A Church historian and Archbishop of Algiers, he founded the missionaries of Africa in 1868 for the main purpose of evangelizing Africa. He laid emphasis on the formation of indigenous helpers on the premises already expressed by D. Comboni , to evangelize Africa by Africans themselves. He also insisted that his

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<sup>46</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, p.168.

<sup>47</sup> More information can be found in the works of the founder, and In Gill Alda's book already cited.

<sup>48</sup> More informations can be found in the "selected texts of Lavignerie", in *Bulletin de litterature Ecclesiale, Cardinal Lavignerie*, or in A. Shorter, *Christianity and the African Imagination*, 1995.

missionaries should not only learn the local languages, but they should also speak them when they are together. He exhorted his missionaries to enter scientific and cultural observations in a journal which is still useful today for the history of the Church in Africa and to collect legends, myths, historical narratives of the different tribes so that they could use them for their Christian instructions. Local liturgies and catechisms were written in the mission countries to help facilitate the work of evangelization. The great work done by these great missionaries for the learning and composing the alphabets, writing the dictionaries for the vernacular languages and collecting historical information helped to know the local cultures ignored by all and to promote them, leading the Church to the idea of plurality of cultures. By that they contributed enormously to the survival of the indigenous culture.

## CHAP. 5- VATICAN II AND THE POST-CONCILIAR CHURCH

Theologians, looking back at the second Vatican Council, note that people can talk of it as an occasion of liturgical recovery and biblical retrieval of lost elements within the Christian tradition; others will see it as a period of important Christian renewal and of theological reforms; others will even speak of a revolution in which the liberal theologians took over the conservatives. But the real point in Vatican II is about the Church coming to grips with the culture of modernity. Vatican II was a time when the Church really decided to open her windows and let the fresh air of modernity penetrate. That is why I would like to deal here with the relationship the Church had before and after Vatican II.

### 5.1 The Period Preceding Vatican II

In the late nineteenth century, i.e., after the council of Trent that merely blocked the Church's attempts to openness, there were many attempts by individuals and groups to bring the Church to a good relationship with cultures, which ended up with condemnations on the part of the Church's hierarchy. The most important ones are:

- In 1863, a German theologian called Ignaz von Dollinger<sup>49</sup> met with some of his companions to ask the Church to allow a bit of academic freedom and especially

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<sup>49</sup> This man was a Church Historian and one of the leading German Catholic Theologians who refused to accept the decree of Papal Infallibility in 1870 and joined the Old Catholics. His historical research and his belief in freedom of religion brought him into strong opposition to the policy of Pius IX. Some of his ideas were condemned by the Syllabus Errorum issued in 1864. See Dollinger *in: Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

to replace the scholastic theology and philosophy by a critical theology that would be able to face the realities of the time. His idea was not welcomed by Pope Pius IX who issued a letter of condemnation entitled: Tuas Libenter<sup>50</sup> (1863). The following year the Pope wrote the famous Syllabus errorum (1864), condemning the culture of modernity.

- Even the First Vatican Council did not spare those who attempted to reconcile with modernity. In 1890-1910 there rose the modernist movement which was also strongly condemned by Pius X in his letter Pascendi Dominici Gregis<sup>51</sup> in 1907.

- In 1940 in France there appeared a movement called La Nouvelle Theologie, which was also challenged by Pius XII in 1950 in his letter Humani Generis<sup>52</sup>. All these attempts show that in the mid-twentieth century, the Church was always seen in a position of defence against the rising concern about her relationships with the world and its cultures. The hierarchy of that epoch could not accept that faith could encounter other cultures especially the culture of modernity. These could help us to understand and appreciate Vatican Council II.

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<sup>50</sup> This letter was written to Gregor von Scherr, Archbishop of Munich-Freising concerning the Convention of Theologians in Germany. It warns against the tendencies of the school of Dollinger.

<sup>51</sup> This was an encyclical letter deploring that partisans of modernism were found even among Catholic laity and clergy.

<sup>52</sup> This letter is a condemnation of those who contend that catholic doctrine must be made acceptable to the modern mind; it approves prudent research and condemns false 'irrenicism.' It also stresses the obligation of ecclesiastical institutions to further the progress of the sciences within the limits necessary for the protection of the truth.

## 5.2 The Second Vatican Council: Discovery Of Culture

If the main issue at stake in the First Vatican Council was about the relationship between Faith and Reason, in the Second one the problem was about the relationship between Faith and Culture. The reading of history has shown us that throughout the centuries of Christianity, there have been moments of real co-operation between faith and culture, but in the nineteenth Century the Church started building a wall around itself, and thereby, isolating itself from human culture. When John XXIII was calling the Council, he exhorted the Fathers to open the windows of their hearts and let the Holy Spirit work in them. This 'Aggiornamento' was a real call to go beyond the dogmas and the defensive attitudes and confront the Culture of Modernity. The documents that this Council produced were obviously an appeal to the Church to re-evaluate its relationship with traditional culture and also with the culture of modernity. Sacrosanctum Concilium exhorted the Church to abandon *"the uniformization of liturgy in language and even in rites and the standardisation based on the medieval philosophico-Theological tradition which had to be formulated in a dead language"*<sup>53</sup> promoted by the Council of Trent. Nostra Aetate and Dignitatis Humanae tried to show that the Church has to leave its 'cultural ghetto' attitude and enter into dialogue with even the non-Christian religions, and that everyone has the freedom of worship. The most revolutionary one was the Pastoral

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<sup>53</sup> Marcello De Carvalho A. SJ. "Inculturation and the challenges of modernity", in: *Inculturation. Working Papers on living faith and culture*, (Rome 1983), p.8

Constitution of the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*. In that constitution, the Church definitely embraced the Culture of modernity. In the second part of the document, the Church redefined human culture and boldly expressed the ways it intends to collaborate with these cultures (see G.S. 58, 59,62). It was really a sigh of relief for all those who understood that without evangelizing human cultures, it is difficult to penetrate the human mind. Vatican II really symbolised a Church anxious to enter into genuine dialogue with contemporary culture. It put the Church in motion, ready to meet and confront the modern culture instead of decreeing dogmas and adopting a defensive attitude toward modernity.

### 5.3 The Attitude Of The Post-Conciliar Church Toward Culture

After the Council which lasted five years, the Church decided to continue ameliorating its relationships with the different human cultures. Pope Paul VI, during his first visit to Africa in 1969, explicitly addressed the question of faith and culture. He talked about the adaptation of the Gospel to African Culture and then went on to affirm with nuance cultural pluralism<sup>54</sup>. He said: *"A burning and much discussed question arises concerning your evangelising work: and it is that of adaptation of the Church to African culture. Must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental... or must she be African? ... The expression that is the language and mode of manifesting this one faith may be manifold. Hence it may be original, suited to*

<sup>54</sup> see the Kampala Address

*the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one faith*".<sup>55</sup> In 1973, the Vatican affirmed in Mysterium Ecclesiae that the formulae of faith are historically and culturally conditioned. Then in 1974, after the Synod on Evangelization, Paul VI produced Evangelii Nuntiandi in which he speaks of the different types of evangelization and insist that *"the split between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time"*.<sup>56</sup>

Pope John Paul II is the Pope who has invested a lot in making the Church feel at ease with the cultures of the world. In 1979, he produced Catechesi Tradendae in which he proposed a way forward in the debate about faith and culture by recommending the principle of inculturation as a way of describing the proper relationship between faith and culture: *"Evangelization through inculturation, he says, is a process by which catechesis takes flesh in the various cultures"*.<sup>57</sup> It was the first time that the new theological expression appeared in a papal document. This same pope established the Pontifical Council for Cultures in 1982 to promote dialogue between the different cultures and the Gospel. In his introductory speech he said: *"Since the beginning of my pontificate, I have considered the Church's dialogue with the cultures of our time to be a vital area, one in which the destiny of the world at the end of this century is at stake... One of the functions of the council*

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<sup>55</sup> Paul VI to the Inaugural 1969 SECAM meeting in Kampala, In: T. Okure, Paul van Thiel et alil (ed.), *Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications), pp.34-35.

<sup>56</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (Nairobi, St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1975), No19.

<sup>57</sup> Pope John Paul II, "Catechesis Tradendae", 53. Quoted in *Ecclesia in Africo*, 59, p.44

*for Culture will be the promotion of an encounter between the salvific message of the Gospel and the multiplicity of cultures". He added that "the synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith. A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought out, not fully lived out".<sup>58</sup>*

In two different major addresses: one in 1980 to the Zairian bishops on Inculturating\Africanizing of Inculturation, and the other in 1982 to the Mozambican bishops on Inculturating Christianity in Africa, the Pope repeatedly exhorted the bishops to enter into the traditional cultures, know them and then evangelize them. In 1991, he wrote Redemptoris Missio in which he redefines the modern cultures and called for an in-depth evangelization. There he included the media saying that :*" The first areopagus of the modern age is the world of communications, which is unifying humanity and turning it into a global village. . . .* This he will repeat in Ecclesia in Africa and add:*" They constitute a new culture that has its own language and above all, its own specific values and counter-values. For this reason, like any other culture, the Mass Media need to be evangelised"*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in *Osservatore Romano*, June 28, 1982, pp.1-8.

<sup>59</sup> Message of the Synod quoted In *Ecclesia in Africa*, no 71.

## PART THREE

EVANGELIZING THE NEW AREOPAGUSES AS A  
CHALLENGE TO OUR COMMITMENT

From time immemorial, "the Church has been acquiring an increasingly clear and deep knowledge that evangelization is its fundamental mission; and that it cannot possibly carry out this mission without an ongoing effort to know the real situation and to adapt the gospel message to today's human beings in a dynamic, attractive and convincing way"<sup>60</sup>. This also has been expressed strongly during the Second Vatican Council and even at the Synod for Africa; but the timely call of the Pope for the awareness of the new areopaguses and for bringing the Gospel's message to them also, is at the same time, a call to a new missionary activity and a challenge to other missionary commitments. Nevertheless, this call is not to be ignored by the missionaries of the twenty first century. My aim here is to mention the context in which we are called to evangelize, the different steps of evangelization towards the areopaguses, and the challenge to our missionary commitment, to be able, in the end, to give a proposal for pastoral orientation.

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<sup>60</sup> Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops, *Puebla Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America*, (London: Billing & Sons Limited, 1980) no.85.

## Chap. 6. EVANGELIZING THE NEW AREOPAGUSES

### 6.1 Characteristics Of The World In Need Of Evangelization

A critical look at what is going on in this modern world reminds us of what we read or heard from the Apostolic Church. The reasons why the Second Council of the Vatican dealt a lot with the relationship between faith and Culture, is that this relationship was at a certain moment deteriorating and going back to the remarkable hostility of the Church toward the culture of modernity. Despite the efforts to reconcile them, we find a wave of characteristics proper to this world emerging and somehow making our work difficult:

#### 6.1.1 Materialism and Consumerism

Modernity leads people to more materialistic and consumeristic attitudes. Life and customs are becoming so secularized that it raises a kind of moral deviation. People who already have enough for their living want to have more. At the same time the person is valued for what he\she has and not what he\she is. This reminds us of the situation in Apostolic times where the first converts had to confront pagans who find business in everything they do. The only difference we have is that the modern world is more sophisticated than that of the Apostolic times.

#### 6.1.2 Rationalism

Another characteristic of this modern society is that reason denies more and more that science and religion can meet. The Bible which is the custodian of religious truth, is no longer weighty and can not be the source of enlightenment to scientific

questions, neither does the magisterium give a helping hand to these. Adherence to the Gospel and acceptance of the Magisterium of the Church continue progressively to lose its visible and inspirational dimension on the civic culture. Politics and economy cannot rhyme with ethics, because of the capitalistic attitude and competitiveness people have to face. Positivism and scientism ended up by eliminating from the cultural horizon everything which goes beyond and cannot be verified experimentally.

The discoveries of new machineries and technologies have given an impressive achievement to the economic, technical and even social structures; but at the same time they lead to a real loss of ethical and spiritual values, thus creating new forms of poverty, misery, marginalization and murders<sup>61</sup>.

### 6.1.3 International and Humanitarian Organizations

Another characteristic is that modern civilization has given life to many international and humanitarian organisms of Justice and Liberation. Quite often, the humanitarian aim of these organisms can be lost in the heavy bureaucracies. On the other hand wars have multiplied, arms production and distribution have accelerated, thus exalting moral deviation, violence, struggle for power and money and revenge killings.

Of all these characteristics, the main and most important observation is that the modern world is changing so fast that quite often the missionaries fail to

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<sup>61</sup> The best example is the slum and squatters system in big cities of Africa like Nairobi, and where the small tenants are chased out of their lands without any compensation, and left to their misery

understand it and to respond to its challenges. A question of great importance will be how to be a Missionary, witnessing to the Gospel in a world that is rapidly changing in all its aspects? Should we keep to the "charisms" of our founders or to their initial vision, without a real capacity of adaptation and flexibility?

## 6.2 The complexity of Social Communication

Going from a mere observation, we can say that the development of the media in Africa in general, is catching up, with Europe and the Western world<sup>62</sup>. The radio has spread throughout the continent and the number of TV sets in the urban families has greatly increased; people can get, at an affordable price, a copy of a regional, national, local or diocesan newspaper or any other literature. Most often, people think that what is portrayed in the media is what life should be<sup>63</sup>. But the most negative part of the profusion of the Media is that it often shows scenes of violence and immorality. Even our African cultural values are distorted in a way that is detrimental to our African way of life.

Despite the profusion of the means of social communication, there is no doubt that more than half of the people in Africa do not know how to read or even how to listen actively to news broadcasts. A vivid example here is that when someone read a sermon or a speech, people notice it immediately because they do not feel at ease with one who does not express him\herself spontaneously<sup>64</sup>. The low

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<sup>62</sup> E.g. for the adverts of the cellular phones, we see the picture of a Masai herdsman communicating to a friend through cellular phone.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. In Nairobi young people have become more American than Kenyans through following American T.V. programmes.

reading culture of the society show us that people tend to go back to the traditional oral communication rather than to use the modern print media. This has been instrumental in the development of F.M. stations all over Africa. If the written or print media is used, especially in urban centres, we still have to question the language we often use. We often have problems to read and understand the pastoral letters of our Bishops because of being too technical. Sometimes, we also have precious information that is sandwiched between jokes or simple stories. Serious matter put in the middle of unimportant things loses its value. How then can we bring the Good News to these strata?

### 6.3 Globalization

Since the 1990s, we are more and more aware of what many experts call the 'Global Village.' While many people appreciate this globalization, others are more and more aware of the dangers it carries. Mr. Barnett<sup>65</sup> once described globalization in terms of our intersecting 'webs' of global commercial activity that are effectively replacing the patterned and politically demarcated nations on a map. He goes on to define it in four areas: The Global Cultural Bazaar, citing the network of media that shape people's goals and homogenize their tastes and attitudes towards money, what to aspire to in life, and people's desired fantasy lifestyles.

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<sup>64</sup> an example is the president of this country in front of his audience in official occasions.

<sup>65</sup> Richard Barnett is a member of a Washington DC-based institute for policy studies. He once worked in South Africa and helps a lot of countries and organizations to study and make policies that can sustain them.

He also spoke of the Global Shopping Mall<sup>66</sup>, in the form of a planetary supermarket, which is working through the vehicle of advertisement. With the spirit of competitiveness by the Transnational Corporations (TNCs), workers and communities can be eliminated at any time without compensation.

Another dynamic is the Global Financial Network which allows easy transfer of cash and information. That network can even weaken the government's ability to guarantee the value of its own national currency and to ensure economic stability<sup>67</sup>. He finally mentioned the 'Global Workplace', a result of new technologies which are making capital become more mobile. The effects of that globalization are numerous:

There is a constantly growing migration, and while workers are not allowed to cross the borders easily, TNCs are allowed to cross national boundaries with minimal regulations. Another effect is that it fragments and undermines families and communities, breeds religious fundamentalism and even ethnic intolerance because people are desperately looking for some sense of identity. A result of all these is the rise of violence in homes, on the streets, among youth who are

<sup>66</sup> Fr. Peter Henriot talks extensively about it in an article published by the Missionaries of Africa in which he shares his worries about these global dynamics which bring nations closer to each other but at the same time destroy their cultural heritage. See P. Henriot, "Justice and Peace, The Impact of Globalization on Sub-Saharan Africa", in: *Petit Echo of the Missionaries of Africa*, no 885, 1997/9, pp. 447-451.

<sup>67</sup> In R. Barnett & R. E. Muller's book *Global Reach, the Power of the Multinational Corporation*, (New-York: Simon & Schuster, 1974) P. 29, the authors give an example of uncontrolled state money: ". . . 268 billion Dollars all managed by private persons and traded in private markets, virtually uncontrolled by official institutions anywhere. . . more than twice the total of all international reserves held by all central banks and international monetary institutions in the world. . . ."

uncertain of their future, among nations competing for markets and even lands. . . The governments also are weakened by this globalization because those TNCs contribute in degrading the governments' accountability. Globalization becomes an undesirable phenomenon.

## Chap. 7 METHODS IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION: PROPOSITIONS AND CONCLUSION

### 7.1 Evangelization Of The Media

#### 7.1.1 Evangelizing the World of Communication

We cannot talk of 'evangelizing the New Areopaguses'<sup>68</sup> without having a real concern about it. The missionaries themselves need to understand communication as an important and inseparable part of the social process before passing it on to their pastoral agents. This awareness can awaken in them the need to participate actively in the task of cultural creativity and in the production of media material. This will mean that our task will be to get involved in the training and formation of the communicators, not only in imparting to them a technical training, but also a theological and spiritual formation, an accurate knowledge and a real motivation<sup>69</sup> ; it will also be to assist the popular sector in the production and

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<sup>68</sup> cf. *R.M.* 37c

<sup>69</sup> At the Uganda Martyrs University, there are some christian formation courses that are compulsory for any student enrolling in campus programme, e.g. Ethics, Philosophy, Christian Anthropology. This really aims at an integral formation of the young students.

distribution of themes, and perhaps to lead our own structures to creating opportunities for sharing, so that such communication can be produced, distributed and used. We could also share our experiences with government institutions responsible for elaborating communication policies in each country, influencing, encouraging, analyzing and acting to help meet the needs and aspirations of people.

Another thing we can do is to educate and train people for understanding communication as an inseparable art, and evangelization as an authentic process of communication. This education may include creating awareness, awakening the communicative potential of people and also providing, if possible, technical instrumentation so that they can communicate in an authentic and efficient way. Maybe we could attain efficiency in working closely with other non-denominational organizations that specialize in communication research.

Despite the electronic media's miracle and all other forms of communication, people still rely on oral communication. There is still a *"relationship between the message and the medium. The oral medium seem to be more important than the written one"*.<sup>70</sup> Here in Nairobi, we could see public places packed with people at lunch time who want to hear someone preaching. Every Sunday afternoon, many

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<sup>70</sup> J.N.K, Mugambi, *The Church of the Future of Africa. Problems and Promises*, (Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, 1997) P.59.

people go towards Uhuru Park to listen to an excited preacher<sup>71</sup>. People like going to movies and watching drama on weekends. The TV has become a powerful and uncontrollable medium. In this case where orality takes preeminence, we should consider that the pulpit could perhaps remain the most powerful and the most accessible instrument of communication here in Africa, especially in the rural areas where the majority of people will continue to live throughout the twenty first century without being able to read or write. We should then use the pulpit to proclaim the Risen Lord and the new hope he gives to all. Biblical reflections, well-prepared and reflecting the life of the people to whom we speak, do more than anything else.

Another idea will be to invest in putting up private radio services, for *"many are convinced that radio provides not only the greatest opportunities, but the most effective and intimate medium."*<sup>72</sup> The Catholic radio stations and programs can offer an opportunity for evangelization, religious formation, inspiration and trustworthy information in addition of broadcasting the rosary, the way of the cross or the liturgy of the hours.

We could not talk of evangelizing the media without talking of the print media. Though I believe in the importance of the Catholic press as an instrument of information, formation, inspiration, continuing religious education, says Archbishop

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<sup>71</sup> The same concern is expressed by Fr. Richard Quinn in his booklet *Who are stealing our Sheep, the Great Omission, the Defection*, (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1997).

<sup>72</sup> Address by Archbishop John P. Foley, President, Pontifical Council for Social Communications, 11th Plenary Assembly of SECAM, Midrand, South Africa, September 23, 1997.

Foley, I believe that we must seek not only to have our own religious media, but also to have a religious message in the general media, not only through specifically religious programs, but also in general programming which is sensitive to the spiritual and religious aspect of human life<sup>73</sup>. Works like Fr. Kizito's Diary of every Sunday or the 'Thoughts for Sunday' have an impact on the readers and have certainly increased the sales of the Newspaper.

### **7.1.2 To be Masters of the Local Languages and Customs**

It happened in the past that some missionaries stuck to one language which they often did not master very well. The learning of a language is a sign of respect, of a desire to be at home in this milieu. Even if people do not know the complexity of their own language, they are still aware that their very identity is wrapped up in it. They can afford to speak it badly, but they will not tolerate that the foreign missionary use it inadequately.

Together with a good mastery of the spoken language goes an awareness of the role of non-verbal cues and a realization of how they function in the other culture; the knowledge of all the rules about how to ask a question, how to say no, how to vary communication patterns. Not to understand all these in a given culture is failing to communicate with the people. For this knowledge can help us to be as

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<sup>73</sup> John Foley, Archbishop, "The Media and the New Evangelization," in: *Catholic International*, (July 1997), P.308.

much a part of that people as we possibly can. It is time we could now attempt to transcend our own view of life, words, etc. and begin to think with people.

### 7.1.3 Missionary in the 'Global Village'

Faced with globalization, our role as missionaries will be : " *to directly counter the actions of these TNCs, which actually oppose justice, favor economic disorder, and in the final instance, constitute the leaven of a society opposed to the spirit of the Good News.*"<sup>74</sup> And to counter these negative effects, we need to make the right parties aware of what is going on; to continually expose to the world that the TNCs breed an economic culture of impunity which allows them to walk away from any responsibility to their workers. We need to speak prophetically on this, and speak the truth, and at the same time promote small scale initiatives toward sustainable economies. We can also press that economic decision-making be democratized and empower specially women and young people in that process. That is the way the Gospel's values can be incorporated.

## 7.2 The Challenges To Our Missionary Commitment

Faced with these new missionary situations, we need to rethink our missionary commitment and become aware of all the challenges such an activity can bring us. Not paying attention to them might be losing the meaning of the mission of the Redeemer to the whole world with its different strata.

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<sup>74</sup> Ian McCrae, *Global Economics, Seeking a Christian Ethic, a Workbook for Beginners*, (New York: Friendship Press, 1993) p.80

### 7.2.1 Creating awareness of the existence of the New Areopaguses

It is when reading through history that we realize that most of our missionary Congregations started when there was a remarkable hostility between the Church and world Cultures, when the Church had neither the mood nor the theological motivation for approaching them. For achieving their aim which was to proclaim Jesus Christ and to implant new churches, people of great vision decided to bring together committed people who would be bound together by a vow or oath to work together to bring that Kingdom here on earth. In this changing world, the objective still remains the same; but perhaps the challenge we face is how to re-orientate ourselves (thoughts, desires and behaviour), how to evangelize the human person and his culture? Many Missionary Congregations have in one way or another neglected the new areopaguses and its demands. We could first start by sensitizing ourselves so that we really find reasons to accept these cultural phenomena as a field for evangelization. Perhaps our missionary congregations could create more positive attitudes vis-à-vis the different areopaguses.

### 7.2.2 Involving the Laity

Speaking of the areopaguses, we can say that the actors of the new missions are not only priests and religious, but also lay people. Several cultural fields (90%) are in the hands of the laity for our religious Congregations do not have enough personnel and resources to pursue them all. There also is the growing conviction that lay people can collaborate with religious Congregations as 'associates', co-operators or collaborators to work in those fields. Another challenge will be to

accept that lay people join our congregations, and to put emphasis on developing the formation of lay people to a missionary mentality, and to the task of going to these fields armed with our missionary visions. Otherwise, we will have to invest all our personnel in these new missionary fields.

### 7.2.3 Collaborative ministry

Together with admitting that lay people collaborate with us in our missionary activity, we could also think of a possible collaboration with other institutions for the apostolate. We can say that collaborative ministry is extremely important. The magnitude of the challenge of this evangelization forces us to put together our resources and personnel for achieving important goals. There are some forms of collaborative ministry:

- Inter-congregational co-operation. This will provide ways for many different missionary institutes and religious Congregations to pool their resources in the process of evangelizing the New Areopaguses. The example we have is the Africa Justice and Peace Network based in Brussels. Its staffing, financing and programming are done by a group of religious Congregations or Societies. There is also a group of missionaries forming a lobby group at the level of the UN which aims at influencing the decisions taken about Africa. Another example we cannot fail mentioning is the very presence of Tangaza College which is formed and run by several missionary and religious congregations in collaboration, and has as its aim the training not only of religious but also of lay people, in different fields, for evangelization in Africa and worldwide. This experience of inter-congregational

co-operation could be extended to other fields so that our effort would have more effects in the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

- Ecumenism. This is another type of co-operation. In Africa mainly, we have an increasing number of Christian churches and people seem to be confused. We could put together our efforts for evangelizing these areopaguses. We can create an ecumenical environment with other Christians, where we can share our experiences of working in the different fields.

#### 7.2.4 Presence with the International Bodies

Another challenge we should take up seriously is our presence in scientific Organizations and in International Relations. There we are invited to do 'Mission in bold humility', i.e., sometimes to forgo the idea of explicit proclamation. Our work will be to just be present and ready to enrich each other, and progressively instill the human and Christian values which are mainly the values of the Kingdom. It is a humbler approach which will not aim at explicit proclamation and conversion, but at influencing the trends<sup>75</sup>. The most important thing for us will be to know and realize that we are dealing with qualified people, people who do not need our exhortations, but a rational and scientific approach to their world. Our approach to these bodies will be what someone said "... to take off our shoes for the place we are approaching is holy..."<sup>76</sup>, i.e., presenting our Christian view

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<sup>75</sup> E.g., the Catholic influence at Cairo and Beijing has been very important in shaping the form of the final communiqué.

<sup>76</sup> Nnyombi Richard, "Take Off Your Shoes, Dialogue and World Religion", Quoted In *Tangaza Vision* December 1996, P.14.

without mentioning explicitly the Bible. The missionary activity will then be witness and dialogue rather than explicit proclamation.

### 7.2.5 Educate in Cross-cultural Communication

For the past ten years or so, most of our missionary Congregations or societies are becoming more and more intercontinental and interracial, and this is a real witness to our world in which ethnicity and tribalism are becoming common features. We really need a model to be able to enrich not only ourselves but the people with whom we live, so that we could penetrate the new areopaguses. One of our challenges will then be to train ourselves for cross-cultural communication, either in our communities or in our apostolic fields. For ours is to witness, to tell people, even tacitly, that people from different cultures, tribes, language, etc., can stay, plan and work together. We will also have to find more means and strategies for that, to pass from simple exhortation, such as we should live as one family despite our differences, to a formation (spiritual, cultural intellectual...) on how to live this multiculturalism and how to communicate despite our differences.

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