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**HISTORY'S LESSONS FOR TOMORROW'S MISSION:
MOMBASA REVOLT AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE IN
1631 AS A CASE STUDY**

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Paul Londe, together with other six members of our seven family, Gabriel, Petronella, John, Catherine, Agness and Francis Makumba.

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

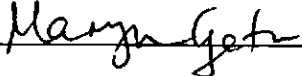
I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or University for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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This long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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PREFACE

In order to propose some essential “tools” to be implemented in our missions for today and tomorrow, we have to go back and scrutinize the past especially our case of reference Mombasa revolt against the Portuguese in 1631. The findings would then help us see clearly as to why the Mombasa people were not prepared to accept the Good News which was brought by the Portuguese missionaries.

It is in the same perspective that the Second Vatican Council, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* have called for the renewal of mission theology and methods. It is in this line that our case of study Mombasa Uprising against the Portuguese in 1631 falls. Furthermore, it explains how the Swahili culture in Mombasa suffered a great deal such that the richness of Swahili culture, which is the soul, and the seeds of revelation for Africans was suppressed.

I suppose that is why the African Synod of 1994-Proposition 29 with one voice concluded that Inculturation would be the only remedy to reconcile what was lost in the past. Inculturation is looked upon as the requirement in any given particular Church and as the only means to rooting firmly the gospel in Africa.

Thus, the emphasis in this paper is not principally upon repeating the proposals for “Inculturation Theology” with spiced language but also relating different experiences of various cultural damages caused by earlier missionaries in various mission territories. Some of these areas, which I visited during my research, include: Shinyanga diocese in Tanzania in particular Kilulu, Mwandoya and Bugisi parishes. It is evident in these

missions and the mistakes they made in Mombasa that only the proposed “tools” in view of inculturation in chapter three would harmonize the terrible condition left by those Portuguese and early missionaries in Tanzania.

When I stayed in Kilulu parish in Tanzania for two months collecting and interviewing priests in particular Fr. Patrick James, local people and my priests visits in the interior outstations, I was struck by one thing, how important it is to have “An Incarnated minister for today’s mission.” Incarnated minister is a missionary who takes up challenges of understanding a people by learning their culture and becoming a genuine witness for what he claims to be.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the study

It has been proved by many missiologists that the only way forward in planting the seeds of faith in various cultures is by genuine witness to what we claim we are-Christ's followers. This witness includes also how competent the minister is in Inculturation and its application in the given local culture. For example the Portuguese missionaries achieved nothing in their efforts to convert Swahili people to Christianity because their move towards Mombasa missions reflected more of their self-centredness in winning People for Christ!

Thus, the goal of this research paper is to highlight that during the 17th Century the Portuguese's approach in winning souls for Christ was like swimming against the tide. Hence, the remedy for this abuse of mission is by trying a new approach unlike that of the Portuguese method of evangelizing. I, therefore, thought of putting in place some essential tools on inculturation to help accomplish the job of realizing the seeds of revelation by God through Christ Jesus in any given culture.

INCULTURATION

Redemptio Missio defines inculturation as "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through integration in Christianity and the insertion of

Christianity within the various human cultures.”¹ It is in this light that this research has been very fundamental in that it has regarded the imposition of western culture onto Africans of Mombasa as a tyrannic way to suppress God’s revelation in a given culture.

In this 21st Millennium, culture is looked upon as a medium to communicate what the spirit is saying to both the missionaries and the people themselves. In other words, people should feel, move and have their being within their cultures.² Unfortunately, this humanly gift was tempered with by the Portuguese, thus, there is need to review missionary strategies in this age of missions in order to distillate good news from western cultures. For example, in today’s mission there is need for any minister to be familiar with what it means to inculturate our Liturgies and other ritual celebrations like marriages, funerals, baptisms, confirmation and reconciliation of the sick.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When a counselor encounters a new client, he/she begins with the critical analysis of his or her problem. Only after the root-cause of the problem has been ratified can the remedy or options be outlined. This principle applies to the problem at hand which is the problem of inculturation in any given local Church. How do we restore what was damaged? Thus, there is need to start with a correct “Analysis” of the problem if we want to know where to look for solutions.

Efoe’ Julien Penoukou, an African Theologian, perceives Africa and its present problem as not primarily that of spiritual growth but as identification with the ‘object’ to

¹ RM 62

² Acts 17 :4

be believed – in this case Jesus Christ.³ This research, on the other hand, includes another aspect of resolving the ambiguities, which exist in our present missions. The major cause of this unhealthy understanding of Jesus; of who he is and the security he offers for Christians was the mistake committed by the Portuguese missionaries when they were converting people to Christianity. It is in this line I would agree with Penoukou that the problem facing Christians today is the identification with Christ. Thus the solution consists in proclaiming Christ in a way that will help that identification, primarily through understanding the “tools” of inculturation.

The second observation I saw in these missions is that after hundreds of years of Christianity, some of the Africans have not yet identified Christ because of the way his image was portrayed. A person is not so much identified by his name or verbal claim but by the actions the person does as well. This is what happens about Christians of today. Hence, it follows that lack of identification derives from inadequate grasp of what Christ does for us. Furthermore, an ordained minister should be knowledgeable about the needs of the people and their cultural background before he/she could start imparting or witnessing about Christ.

Thus, Africa will identify Christ fully only when Christ is brought to bear on the deep spiritual needs, aspirations, hopes and desires of the African cultural souls. It is in this light that the Bishops of the African synod in Rome, 1994 seem to acknowledge this problem of identification after noticing in many missions the problem of double life among Christians: Rosary in the morning and witchcraft in the night.⁴ In today's

³ E.J. PENOUCOU, “*Christologie au Village*,” 72

⁴ C. MCGARRY, *The implications of the Synod Discussions for the Church in Africa*, 15-16

contemporary society mass media is another obstacle in blurring this image of Christ by bombarding Christians with secular myths of modernity.

Inculcating the gospel is very important in the life of the Church, not because it ratifies what went wrong in the past but also because it is through cultures that people live, move and find their being. It is also the Church's main concern today in effecting its evangelization when breaking new grounds.

HYPOTHESIS

In order for us to respond whole heartedly to the exposed problem of identification and inculturation we need to amend what was lost in the past by being so sensitive to any given culture we come in contact with. Culture is like a "soul" giving life and meaning to a given community. It is this soul that holds culture together and represents the real project for common living.

It is therefore inevitable that inculturation becomes the only way forward to spread the good news to the nations through missionaries. The Church holds the same view when Pope John Paul II stated, "Inculturation means the intimate transformation of authentically cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."⁵

This complements in two ways: from culture to Christianity and from Christianity to culture enriching both culture and Christianity. In return the faithful are invited along with their culture to celebrate the liturgy in the way it makes sense to them. The Church communicates to her believers her own values, which in most cases good elements are found in the already existing culture.

Inculturation is thus precisely this insertion of the gospel message into cultures unlike what the Portuguese did. This implies integrating the paschal mystery with the given local culture. In other words, the Church in Africa suggests the paschal event as a source of criterion for discernment and development of values, which need to be discerned.⁶

It is a great mistake, therefore, to apply Christian views and values that developed in other cultures of western world with a view of imposing them on African cultures instead of preserving those views which Christ himself recommended and which could be acknowledged through the activity of the Holy Spirit who is the principal agent of inculturation for the African church.

This step can be a success only if the Ordained Minister is well equipped with the problem of inculturation and of identification. Thus, history's lessons for tomorrow's mission would be : the problem of identification and inculturation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

A lot of material has been written on Inculturation; however, this does not mean my work would be a "copy and paste" kind of work to achieve my goal. Therefore, this work is my own interest in shaping my own mission theology in preparation for the awaiting great responsibility in our today's and in our tomorrow's field work. I also hope to challenge ordained ministers who have been in the field for a long time to re-consider their ways of handling a culture in which they found themselves. On the other hand this work will empower an average Christian to stand by her/his own ground each time a

⁵ R M 52

⁶ EA 61

given minister tries to rob him/her of him/her culture. In undertaking this work, I am not under the illusion that inculturation can be accomplished overnight. It demands a lot of time, energy, patience and a good listening ear.

Thus, I have taken an anthropological analysis on how today's missionaries could learn from history's mistakes of Portuguese missionaries of 15-17th century and its repercussions on today's Christian faith. Hence, missionaries need to be conscious of these errors before they could begin to evangelize in any local culture, in any given area. This approach would help us argue for the urgent need of purification of Christianity, each time, missionary presence is established.

To achieve this task I have borrowed some good ideas of Winston Churchill who was once a very popular rhetoric speaker in Britain. He has brilliant ideas on how to move people in order to communicate to them any important message like in this case the gospel. Spencer is another protestant theologian who with his talents and skills pointed out that which does not pursue the glory of God in the missions. These and other resources have helped me to deepen this research as a way of effecting our evangelization strategies.

METHODOLOGY

i} Limit and scope

The main barrier in this research is narrowing down the complex theology of inculturation to a specific mission in this case Mombasa. I could not also stay long in Mombasa to gather all the information I needed about the Portuguese's harsh approach to the local people. Instead, I filled in the gap by relating the similar Mombasa experiences

to other missions where the Society of African Mission Fathers are working such as in Lodwar diocese of Kenya (Rorugum Parish) and in Shinyanga diocese of Tanzania (Kilulu Parish). Largely, I concentrated on books in retrieving Mombasa scandals which occurred between 15th and 17th Century and then analyzing, Dom Jeronimo Chingulia's Father who was put to death because he could not act as a puppet king in Malindi.

ii} Source

My main sources have been Library Books, Interviews with Missionaries who are working in Mombasa and also those missionaries in Shinyanga diocese of Tanzania, local elders and finally I also used my own personal insights from Missiology studies and my own critical reflection of what is happening in our contemporary society.

iii} Division of the Work

The work is divided into three main chapters, which I feel respond to the issues of inculturation and identification with Christ. I have started with the experience in Mombasa, analyzing it and then looking at the Church's teaching before I could come up with possible strategies to be implemented by missionaries each time they cross frontiers borders; with the intention of witnessing to the Gospel in another culture. Thus, to accomplish this aim, I have, arranged the chapters as follows:

In Chapter one I have presented the concrete experience of the Mombasa Inhabitants with the Portuguese missionaries of 16th/17th, by looking at it critically without plunging into quick prejudices of the harm it caused to an African culture and

how later, it triggered many repercussions like double “dealing” of those who accepted the Christian faith.

Having analyzed critically this concrete problem which occurred in Mombasa, chapter two has tried to put into consideration the reasons why missionary objectives eventually were a failure. One of the problems is overlooking the local culture, I shall then try to present the revealed truth about inculturation and what the Church teaches by first bearing in mind certain steps like see, judge and act, which should be put into consideration when dealing with another culture. In other words, I need to present the new theology of mission renewal, which should ignite a positive response from the people of God within their context of celebrating the gospel.

Chapter three is an important part because it offers a kind of solution to the problem identified in chapter one. It has displayed the necessary tools needed to equip the given ordinary minister who is a representative of Christ, so that the people of God could feel inspired and reawaken in them their responsibility as baptized Christians. The transforming action of the paschal mystery, which is celebrated during the Mass, should be activated by people’s active participation. In this way, a missionary shall have accomplished what was lost and shall be assured of being on the right track. Thus, in this section understanding is seen as a special requirement for any missionary working in the mission.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research about the Portuguese missionaries is that their approach to the African culture succumbed to either Christians forsaking good news or if they happened to embrace it they again indulge in double-dealing: rosary during the day and witchcraft during the night.⁷ And the one to blame for this ambiguity is the given minister as in the past.

Thus, to avoid this syncretism missionaries have to be trained in spiritual, biblical training, professional training and finally in cross-cultural training. Along side with this formation a minister, unlike, the Portuguese of 15th -17th Century, has to be acquainted with the theology of inculturation. In this way, the people of God would identify themselves with the message of our Lord Jesus Christ who is a good example of incarnation- the word dwelling among us.⁸

The acceptance of God's message would finally be noticed in the way Christians celebrate their liturgy. The kind of participation they offer would detect the degree at which God is understood in their given local Church.

⁷ C. MCGARRY, *The need for a deeper conversion to the gospel*, 16

⁸ Jn 1:14

CHAPTER ONE

The Encounter Between the Portuguese and the People of Mombasa

1. Introduction

The seed of robbing African cultures was sown way back even before the 17th Century of Portuguese domination. The missionaries who attacked Malindi and the surrounding areas of Mombasa left an incurable scar on the local culture of the area. These missionaries used every kind of power to impose their western culture on the people. This is why it is noted that the Portuguese baptized many people yet equipped few leaders to carry on the work.⁹ It is in this capacity that this chapter analyses this “Theology of Mission” of that time, so that we may measure the effects of such approaches to today’s understanding of Mission.

Thus, the way the indigenous people of Mombasa retaliated against the Portuguese witness to the Gospel would stand as the main point of departure in this Chapter because it would show indirectly how Portuguese missionaries in general failed to reconcile a local culture with the word of God. This is why some scripture scholars

⁹ Z. NTHAMBURI, *From Mission to Church*, 6

like Basil Pennington, would say there is a huge gap between theology and spirituality. Meaning the theology we study in most cases does not help an average Christian deepen her/his ground of his/her center of being. In other words, ideas of theology does not integrate easily with the human heart.

Therefore, this chapter is crucial because it also traces some causes of syncretism in today's missions. It is in this light that this chapter is considered delicate because it is the pearl of this topic: History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission: Mombasa Uprising against the Portuguese as a case study.

1.1 General background to 17th Century (Portuguese Missionaries)

Pope Alexander VI allocated the world outside Europe to the kings of Spain and Portugal. He gave them total jurisdiction over them and those later to be explored.¹⁰ These jurisdiction functioned in the way we have dioceses today. The Bishop is the head of any given diocese and he can easily effect or pass any law depending on the given circumstance. At the same time the Bishop is answerable to the Pope in Rome. This is how power was delegated during Pope Alexander's time. During this period, the Pope had authority over the world not only politically also ecclesiastically. Thus, colonization was identified with the mission to Christianize.

This right to send missionaries to join colonizers was so decisive that the activities and designation of the envoys to mission territories were to work hand in hand. This continued process of reinforcing those on mission with more personnel came to be called "Mission."¹¹ The "Mission" here denoted the extension of the western church to

¹⁰ D. J. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, 227

¹¹ D.J. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission*, 227-228

the whole world for the sake of saving souls especially those who were non-Catholics like African Traditional Religion and the Moslems.

However, besides Christianizing the Africans of Mombasa, it is suggested that some of these missionaries were also interested in commerce and civilization which they interpreted as *Modus Operandi* and seen as not an end by themselves.¹² Meaning any opportunity which presented itself to pursue the Portuguese's interests was being grabbed. All these evidence shows different motives Portuguese missionaries had in dealing with the local people, which might have contributed to the way Portuguese missionaries treated them.

Later, in 1622, the Pope introduced the sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, which assigned the ministry of non-converts to the Pope himself. The fact still remains even after introducing *propaganda fide* that mission had deeply intertwined with the colonizers even at the end of the 19th and 20th Century.¹³ This is why when in Africa freedom fighters fought against colonizers, mission fell into disrepute.

1.2 The development of the problem in the past

1.2.1 A Colony called Mission

It is evident that the Church of Rome backed up the Portuguese missionaries in their urgent 'missions' to gain territories and win converts left and right for the greater glory of God.

They believed that the church is the only legal institution, which can offer salvation by impacting on people the "word" of God, which was characterized by western

¹² Z. NTHAMBUVI, *From Mission to Church*, 7

culture. Therefore, to bring people to salvation millions of people were to be baptized regardless of their beliefs. The official Church at that time did not care much about the indigenous cultures. The church's policy for conversion was called "tabula rasa" a latin phrase translated as "to clear the table".¹⁴ It means imparting new knowledge on victims who lack knowledge about life in general. In this case it is knowledge of Christianity and its western values.

This understanding of African culture as devilish with no God's revelation in it, prompted the Portuguese missionaries to approach African culture without any respect. They had to "purify" it and Christianize it by use of all their closed theology of 'one way traffic and not a two way traffic!' Take for instance having the celebration of the liturgy in the language people did not understand-latin. All these practices show how the local culture was disregarded as having no place in understanding the God of creation.

This mentality was reflected in the catechism published in Rome way back in 1960s, yet, it was to be used by African local Churches, with a primary aim of evangelizing, so as to stamp out savage and immoral customs of Africans.¹⁵ Once this project was accomplished then they know something has been done and now Christian faith was taking root in their lives. A mission station community was considered as a nucleus for a new evangelization. It introduced a new way of worshipping God the creator whom every African knew about. In other words, mission was seen as a "propagation of faith," "conversion of heathen," "religious instruction of the ignorant" planting of the small churches as means for the expansion of the Kingdom of God.¹⁶

¹³ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, 25

¹⁴ D.A. DOEING, *The Prophet's Return*, 83

¹⁵ B. BUJO, *African Theology*, 42

¹⁶ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, 24

1.2.2 The Experience of the People in Mombasa

The Portuguese's presence in Mombasa portrayed a very bad image to the local people due to their cruelty and inhumanity.¹⁷ The following analysis will give us a clear picture on how the Portuguese presented themselves to the local people. The only thing I do know at the moment is that they were seen to be strange and different from their perception of things. In short people felt scandalized by the Portuguese's deeds and approach to convert the local people to Christianity.

History reveals that Swahili Culture was born out of interaction between the inhabitants of Mombasa (Sultan, Nyika), the Arabs and the Persians who brought Islam to Mombasa in 711 A.D.¹⁸ Their mission to convert people to Islam was a success because Islam had very strong traditional African elements. Batatu could justify to this when he described the Mombasa inhabitants as being very pious and honourable.¹⁹ This friendly approach of the Arabs attracted the Sultan and the people of Mombasa to be easily converted to Islam. Later, they started intermarrying because of the good rapport between them. A new language emerged as a medium of communication called Kiswahili, which is a mixture of Bantu language, Arabic and Persian words.

When the Portuguese went to Mombasa they found the Moslems (Arabs) steadily progressing in planting their religion because they mixed easily with the Africans. The

¹⁷ Z. NTHAMBUVI, *From Mission to Church*, 3

¹⁸ Benson Okello, *A history of East Africa*, 29

Portuguese, thus, developed a hatred for the Arabs and all those who pursued their faith. Hence, the Portuguese's first move was to conquer Mombasa with the aim of converting both Arabs and Africans to Christianity by force.

The Portuguese then had to plan their settlement in Mombasa. The soldiers and about fifty civilian families lived in white small communities called ghetto, opposite Fort Jesus down a street known as "*La Rapozeira or Foxhole*" following the line of the present day "Njia Kuu." They built houses which were of Portuguese traditional culture. The Misericordia parish Church, too, was constructed in the same form. In 1599, Augustinians reported about six hundred converts among whom was the king of Pemba.

Unlike the Arabs who won the hearts of the Africans in Mombasa by their human approach to conversion, the Portuguese's first move was to destroy Moslem strongholds at the coast. In 1505 Sofala, Kilwa and Mombasa were invaded by Almfida, the Portuguese captain by using superior weapons like cannons.²⁰ They were also skillful in naval warfare and as a result it gave the Portuguese an advantage over the Arabs and in 1588, Mombasa was in the hands of the Portuguese missions.

These violent attacks by the Portuguese left the Swahili people in a very poor condition. Furthermore, burning of houses, destroying of crops, devastation of towns, loss of lives and paying of heavy taxes left untold sufferings on the local people. Besides, the collection of taxes and tributes was carried out with a lot of harassments and brutality. This made their subjects like the King of Malindi very angry and they decided to rebel against the administration.²¹

¹⁹ Batatu, "Mombasa Missions" in Benson Okello, *A history of East Africa*, 18

²⁰ E.S Atieno Odhumbo, I.I. Ouso, J.F.M Williams, *A history of Eastern Africa*, 89

²¹ Benson Okello, *A history of East Africa*, 29

An eye-witness described what I may call “inhuman” approach to converting people to Christianity as follows: after the Portuguese had bombarded the town of Kilwa and now it was in their hands, a big celebration was to follow immediately. The Vicar General and some of the Franciscan Fathers were to appear on the shore carrying two crosses in procession and singing. They would then put the crosses down and the grand captain would pray.²²

This kind of attitude was a common practice of many such occasions. It ended up giving such image: excessive zeal with which they attempted to force Christianity upon all-non-believers. This also guaranteed them the bitter hatred of Moslems. Secondly, the drastic and brutal way in which they put down the slightest sign of hostility, plundering and destroying as they wanted. As a result the Swahili people hated the Portuguese, they later gave the Portuguese the nickname ‘*Afriti*,’ meaning devil.²³

1.2.2.1 Chingulia’s Hatred for the Christian Faith

Chingulia was the son of the chief of Malindi. This chief was killed by the Portuguese because he could not fulfill their expectations of paying tribute and following their orders. In other words the chief was expected to be a puppet king. In order to console the family of this chief, Chingulia was given special education by the Portuguese.

Chingulia was robbed of his culture due to the high education he received from the Portuguese as a compensation for killing his father who was once a king of Malindi but did not act as the Portuguese wanted.

²² E.S Atieno Odhambo, I.I.Ouso, J.F.M Williams, *A history of East Africa*, 82

²³ E.S Atieno Odhambo, I.I. Ouso, J.F. M Williams, *A history of East Africa*, 83

He left for Goa for studies and in the process was converted to the Christian faith after which he was baptized. His baptismal name became Dom Jeronimo Chingulia. By the fact that he was highly educated and brought up by the Portuguese missionaries he ended up marrying a Portuguese lady and was ready to settle in Mombasa in 1627. His life in Mombasa was a total ridicule because he could not fit well in the culture and faith of the local people. A Swahili historian describes him as:

He had been brought up among the Portuguese; he ate pork like them He ruled in the most tyrannical manner; he compelled the people to eat pork, and was wicked, and an infidel. He seems to have been an unstable personality and to have had successive quarrels with the commander of the fort. He then secretly reverted to Islam, a fact that came to light in 1631.²⁴

In 1632 Chingulia himself fled back to the faith he used to hold before. His departure left a lot of killings at the fort and eventually the Portuguese had to take control of the Island. Thus, hatred and animosity between Portuguese and the Moslems rekindled. In 1696 the Swahili people who were a mixture of Arabs, Africans and Persians drove the Portuguese away. In early 17th Century things looked rosy in Mombasa's ecclesiastical garden until 1631 when tragedy struck. There was a lot of killing at Fort Jesus' harbour. Chingulia was the main character when the killing started for he was not in good terms with the Portuguese captain of Fort Jesus. In this incidence about three hundred "martyrs" were killed. The Church today still investigates this matter for it is not clear whether these victims of death could be canonized as true martyrs or not, considering this wrong precedent of converting people to Christianity.

1.3 *The Lesson: a tree without roots*

Christianity collapsed because of the great influence of the Moslems troops later in 17th Century after the Portuguese were massacred by the Omani Arabs. But the main

²⁴ E. CORCORAN, *Mombasa Mission 1888 – 1990*, 7

contributions to the fall of Christianity were caused by the Portuguese already growing corruption, no respect for culture like the Arabs and the untold suffering they caused on people.

Spencer Trimingham observed the following mistakes as the cause of failure of Christianity in Mombasa:

-The Christian Church remained exotic and never became indigenous, like Islam which adapted itself.

-A foreign Religion. Christianity came as a new cult associated with foreigners and a foreign culture.

-A Foreign Language. Latin! The life and the will of a people cannot be expressed through a foreign language and a foreign hierarchy and therefore the spiritual life sank to a very low ebb and no movement for reform ever sprang up.²⁵

-Lack of Personal Commitment. The decisions of Vatican II concerning Liturgical language are of great importance for the African Church if it wants to avoid the pitfalls of Mombasa Christianity.

- Portuguese were known to keep concubines as well as being cruel and inhuman.

Trimingham's words were heard in St. Peter's and found their way into the constitutions and decrees of Vatican II. These documents tell us that we have to adapt to the local environment, accepting customs and indigenous ways which are not contrary to the Catholic Faith and that this variety does not break the unity of the Church. These are the lessons we have to learn from the past mistakes.

1.3 THE PROBLEM IN TODAY'S MISSIONS

1.3.1 Syncretism

As Penoukou pointed out in his article "Christologie au Village" (Christ in the Village), Africa's main difficulty today is that of identifying genuinely with the risen Christ. And this raises questions on why after over 100 years of Christianity in East and Southern Africa, most of African people seem to play a double standard game. In the morning they go to Church and in the evening they go to see the fetish man. The problem with this practice is that most people who go to see the fetish are very insecure and want to pin point within the extended family as to who could be the cause of suffering or death. This leads to fighting and suspicion within the community.

We need now to go back to history's mistakes and be able to point out where the problem lies. After doing this then the time would be ripe to call about the new theology of mission renewal as in the next chapter.

Bishop Mugadzi of Zimbabwe highlights more on this matter when he writes: "After the first evangelization many Christians find themselves leading double lives. One foot in African tradition and another in the church."²⁶ This experience is true in many parts of Africa: Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Togo, Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania. It is true that all these places tend to identify with the Church from outside their hearts but when they are fallen with tragedies they still fall back on the remedies offered by traditional culture and religion. The religion which is characterized with witchcraft and

²⁵ Afer (African Ecclesial Review), 1967, Jan Vol.1 No.1, 42

superstition. This kind of practice detects the root cause of death or any suspected problem which does not seem to be natural in their eyes.

1.3.2 Parallel Witness between a Minister and the People

Parallel witnessing is when an ordained minister cannot touch the lives of the people in their real life situation. Instead, he intends to be abstract due to the class orientation he has received characterized with theological concepts than with practice. Such ministers teach implicitly or explicitly that God requires proper doctrine, even if their behaviour does not correspond with their beliefs still God will accept the people.

This is very sad because during Jesus' time Pharisees were known for this practice, yet Jesus condemned them forcefully by telling them you know this but you act differently.²⁷ In our day a lot of theologizing falls in the same way. On the other hand, theology being westernized it thus asks and seeks to answer questions raised within western Society and ignores those not asked by westerners.²⁸ Thus, a lot of theology is largely captive to western cultural ways of thinking and tends as a result to be an academic subject which interests specialists than ordinary people to whom we preach.

Generally speaking western theology tends to settle for philosophizing about how life ought to be than how life actually is. The discipline operates in the atmosphere of peoples ideals than the realities of everyday living. This is why I suppose the Portuguese were a failure for being impractical and not paying attention to real life and its problems as perceived by ordinary people.

Today's theology relies entirely on written accounts and analyses even when dealing with highly personal oriented problems such as sex roles or moral behaviour. It is

²⁶ C. MCGARRY, *The implications of the Synod Discussions for the Church in Africa*, p15-16

²⁷ Matt

only here in Tangaza where I have seen some efforts of integrating the theology with anthropological courses which attempts to focus on empirical – what is rather than what ought to be.

In other words, culture tends to bridge the gap between God and human beings. This understanding of God by Africans is noticed through a given culture which was overlooked by Portuguese missionaries. In today's society sometimes the culture of modernity is being overlooked by the ordained ministers as a result their homilies remain floating in the air without "scratching where it itches". In other words, preaching ideas which do not walk on earth. It is only through culture that human perception is attained. I therefore, suggest that cross-cultural perspective would help deal with human experience than buying western experience to be applied in Africa.

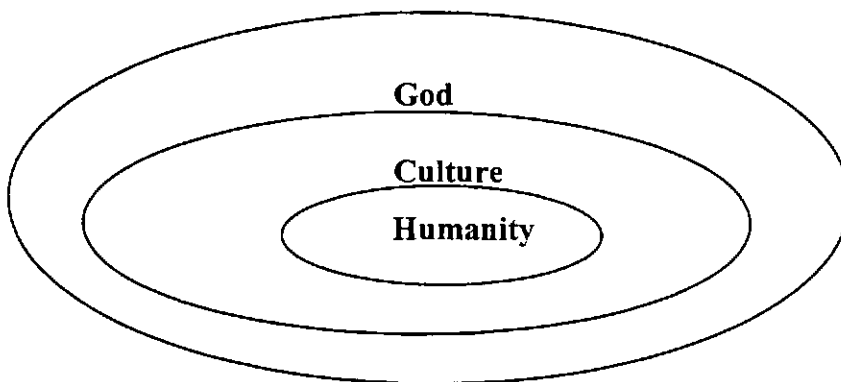


Fig 1 God in relation to Culture and humans within culture. God, who exists apart from culture, relates to and interacts with human beings in and in terms of the cultural waters within which humans are immersed.²⁹

²⁸ C. H. KRAFT, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 88

²⁹ C. H. KRAFT, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 91

1.4 Conclusion

The missionaries of the 17th Century had played a big role in robbing people's culture and should be held responsible for some of the "confusion" experienced at least by many people of God today. In this confusion syncretism is part of it.

However, as Penoukou pointed out the African problem after all this struggle of taking another faith which was not properly sown is that of identification with Christ.

We need now to go back to history's mistakes and be able to point out where the problem lies. After doing this then the time would be ripe to call about the new theology of Mission renewal as in the next chapter. This theology should be centred on Mission as Inculturation.

This means a large part of missionary evangelization should appreciate and enrich best values in every culture and its way of life. What may seem foreign to the teaching of Christ, must then be challenged and transformed.³⁰ However, in every culture there has been the spirit of God working even long before the missionaries arrived for formal evangelization. That is why, unlike, the Portuguese missionaries, ordained ministers should in the first place be able to trace and celebrate this work of the spirit, linking cultural values to Christian ideals than to cultures of the west!

Missionaries must allow the gospel truths, values and symbols to permeate the consciousness of the local people so that people could be challenged by the gospel to certain aspects of their existing society. The mistakes made by the Portuguese were their poor witness to the gospel. They were known to keep concubines as well as being cruel

³⁰ D. DORR, *Mission in Today's World*, 91

and inhuman. The local people were not moved to that type of gospel that was not lived through human relations. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that “Christianity was judged by local people of having a negative attitude toward their Christian faith, a lesson for modern missionaries and Christians should note.”³¹

In the contemporary society mission theology has to be re-visited, to integrate it with anthropological insights because it deals with people as people than the dominated theology of ideals of academics.

The next chapter will therefore try to come up with a theology of inculturation by arguing for integrating of the teaching of the Church with the African culture as Evangelii Nuntiadi 18-19 puts it.

³¹ Z. NTHAMBURI, *From Mission to Church*, 3

CHAPTER II

Theological Reflection

2. Introduction

Having presented the Mombasa Controversy in which local people could not respond to the “good news” which was presented to them without proper witness, this chapter would state how the theology of inculturation should act as the remedy to history’s mistakes on the Mombasa invasion.

The chapter reviews the previous approach to mission in order to retrieve what was lost before. Furthermore, it includes other models like that of St. Paul, to highlight certain aspects, which might need some attention as we come in contact with other cultures.

It also brings out the role of the Spirit, which is the principal agent of missions emanating from the paschal mystery. Thus, it is the duty of the Minister to discern the works of the Trinity in mission so that he/she may not lose track of his/her vocation.

2.1 Clues from the Portuguese view of mission for Africa today

The Church in Africa after Vatican II has learnt a lot from history’s mistakes. Today the Holy Spirit through the sacred scriptures, the teachings of the Church Fathers and the Magisterium of the Church, is guiding the Church in Africa. It is through these

reflections that contemporary Christians are able to comprehend, strengthen and deepen the meaning of the proclamation of the gospel through their own respective cultures. Human programmes and temporal human activities cannot replace the proclamation of Jesus Christ who is the centre of all missionary activities. The following will highlight this point.

2.1.1 “Signs and Wonders”

Unlike the Portuguese missionaries, another aspect of missionary presence is signs and wonders. That which is unique, fresh and new about the message and the missionaries. That in St. Paul’s terms that no eye has seen and no ear has heard; the hidden wisdom that was once kept hidden but now has been revealed through the mysteries which we preach.³² This evidence is clear from the sacred scriptures that a proclamation without any manifestation of God’s presence is sterile. Its root in Greek “*semeia kai terata*” is almost found all over the biblical tradition.³³ Again and again we see how for instance Peter in his public proclamation of Jesus Christ, God witnessed to him by signs and wonders in the midst of the people.³⁴ It was reported that theologians of the school of Salamanca in 16th Century insisted that no faithful had to accept the first proclamation unless he sees the signs that confirm it.³⁵ This could have been why may be Portuguese Missionaries were a failure in sowing a Christian faith in Mombasa.

However, the above experience of the early Church could be applied today by the way the ordained minister touches the lives of the faithful. He has to speak to the

³² 1Cor. 2:6

³³ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, 99

³⁴ Acts 2:22

³⁵ *Ibid*, 99

people's needs by addressing the root problems faced by the faithful and be able to respond effectively to the situation. It is an opportunity for the Minister to answer many people's questions in the pew. This is the meaning of the presence in the pulpit.

Once this is accomplished the faithful would develop affinity, credibility, confidence, trust and they would rightly say this is the Man of God who identifies with us. He knows what he is talking about and speaks with convictions. For instance, some of the concerns of the village parishers could be improving their condition of living by providing clean water, good education and giving some deep insights on human development as a whole. Furthermore, never preach social justice first but always preach spirituality first, in this way people would be full of hope to live for tomorrow.

2.1.2 "Parresia" (Boldness, freedom and Vigour)

"Parresia" as translated above is conveying the good news with no other hidden agenda except delivering it in its purity and transparence as in the early Church of the Acts of the Apostles. Redemptoris missio 24 backs up this gesture by saying that true proclamation must be carried out in true spirit inspired by faith, giving rise to enthusiasm in the missionary. In Mark 8:32; John 7: 26 we see how Jesus himself proclaimed frankly and with courage the goodness with this expression "Parresia."

Thus, a minister needs to be bold in persuading the congregation in a way that is healing to their souls. This is so because the minister is looked upon as the prophet, interpreting the gospel of Christ into the given life experience of the people. He reads the signs of the times and thus should give guidelines as to what God expects from his people. He should as well assure them that they are trying hard than being all the time the

prophet of doom! For instance, never install fear in people just because they are finite sinners and human. Every average Christian feels encouraged when he/she is told you are of great service to our community as a Chairman or Chairlady.

2.2.3 Dialogue

Dialogue with the Moslems was a big problem during the 17th Century. There was a very ridiculous true story, which occurred in Mombasa. It happened that each time a Moslem believer's chicken entered "the ghetto." that is a white Portuguese community courtyard; these white families interpreted that the chicken trespassing in their courtyard was seeking Christian faith! The implication is that Moslem faith was not true. Today dialogue between Christians and other world religious denominations holds a special place especially in enriching each other. The spiritual and moral truths and the socio-cultural values found in other religions must be preserved, encouraged and promoted.

Dialogue is thus valid in regard especially to various possibilities of salvation offered to all humankind. In the Redemptoris Missio of 28 "...the presence and activity of the spirit touches individuals but also Society and history, peoples, cultures and religions."³⁶

However, God offered to the Church through Christ the unique plan of salvation to the whole humanity, as the universal sacrament of salvation even for believers in other religions through the spirit. It is an instrument or sign to which all humanity in search of God and on pilgrimage look upon for their destination.

³⁶ R M 28

Thus, the Church has a role and responsibility to the whole humanity, movements and religions.³⁷ Moreover, dialogue is a means of honoring God's ways of dealing with human beings through revelation. Therefore, dialogue cannot be dissociated from the need for truth, freedom and justice. This is effected especially in the way international communities interven and combat "*Sharia Law*" which claim that any woman found in committing adultery should be stoned to death.

2.2 The Dynamics of the Pauline Mission

2.2.1-Confidence in Spirit

St. Paul's conviction about the works of the Holy Spirit is at the summit of his mission. This spirit had to preserve, guide and pastor the infant Church in his absence. This was not the case with the Portuguese, for them there was no heart in what they were witnessing as a result of the poor harvest. In the case of St. Paul's bedrock conviction the Spirit does its work at every level of the Church building.³⁸

Thus, any given local Church should be planted in such way that she continues to share the divine life from Jesus even to the neighboring Small Christian Communities in the hinterland. The effectiveness of this communion between the Church and its Small Christian Communities depends on how much the spirit has been discerned in the mission.

³⁷ R M 20

³⁸ 2Cor. 8:1-6

2.2.2- Inspiring power

Two dimensions for the work of the Spirit were evident in the pioneer stages of the new Church planting: Effectiveness of Preaching and Joyful reception of the word by the people. The preaching which was spiritually oriented penetrated the hearts of the listeners. In other words, the spirit powerfully drove home the truth of the message to the mind and consciousness of the listener-producing deep conviction or full assurance of God's loving power.³⁹

This had great impact on the believers as a response to their faith unlike the "Mombasa believers" whose focus was on human thinking. St. Paul, Titus and Timothy were deeply convinced and were unrestrained with joy, which were the hallmarks of the spirit's works in their lives at the initial proclamation of the gospel.⁴⁰ Hence, believers were characterized with continual rejoicing, unceasing prayer and thanksgiving in all situations.⁴¹ This response of the people is a result of proper foundation which was laid by St. Paul which present missionaries could imitate.

2.2.3- Collaborative Ministry

Paul's goal was to create and prepare an independent church in order to allow the local Church the freedom to develop their own patterns of life and worship under local leaders (1Thess 2:17-3:13). This was the main pastoral concern for the church. Furthermore, he also develops the image of the Church as a body of Christ made up of many parts; each part taking a different role of service. He says, "Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the Church to be,

³⁹ 1Thess. 1:5

⁴⁰ W.L. LARKIN, J.F. WILLIAMS, *Mission in the New Testament*, 80

first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues.”⁴² This is what it means to be in communion with one another and not to look at the body of Christ as a pyramid. Collaborative ministry in Paul, is an identification of the giftedness of each individual for the community at large. This approach is totally different from that of the Portuguese who looked at evangelization as one way traffic.

The Church being mission by its nature, it thus, needs leaders who promote collaboration and who cherish cooperation with the faithful, believing in them and in the gifts of each one, for “the complementarity and variety of gifts is the basis for community and collaboration.”⁴³

2.2.4- Intercessory Prayer

Paul’s intercessions and those of believers are grounded in the priestly intercession of the exalted Christ “for us” (Romans 8: 34). Again and again Paul prayed for this concern and for the spiritual growth of the Churches (Rom 8:26-27). Paul openly verbalizing his intercessions for Churches (Rom 15:5,13); and model “wish Prayers” are concern for spiritual welfare of the recipients; spiritual unity (Rom 15:5); overflowing hope (Rom 15: 13), abounding love and moral purity (1Thess. 3:12-13); sanctification (1Thess.5: 23); hearts encouraged and strengthened for witness in the word and deeds (2Thess. 3:16) and finally continual peace- (2Thess 3:12).

There were some of the elements, which were lacking in the Portuguese evangelization in Mombasa. Pauline mission could be taken as the model for Missions in

⁴¹ 1Thess. 5:16-18

⁴² 1Cor. 12:27-28

Africa today because it outlines clearly the wonderful gift we all need through prayers to touch people's hearts, inspire their minds and move them to action.⁴⁴ In this way God enables us to carry out a vital ministry leading people beyond their everyday experiences, concern and opening them up to the beautiful, marvelous and mysterious aspects of life drawing people to Christ Jesus.

2.3 Gospel in the Midst of Cultures

The truth still remains that through cultures people find their own identities (think, feel and act) and meaning of their lives, thus, it is worthwhile that the gospel be wedded with the particular culture. This is what *Redemptoris Missio* 52 is all about. Furthermore, the word which became flesh and dwelt among us" is exactly how the goodness must take root in the cultures.

However, one should not lose his identity in order to become a Christian. A gentile convert once raised this question in Acts when he asked whether he should become a Jew to be Christian. St. Paul clarified this by saying goodness was God's message given within that culture. It is not limited to that cultural frame.⁴⁵

The Portuguese equated Christianity with western culture, reinforcing their cultural superiority. As a result the gospel of the Lord was made foreign to the local people of Mombasa. They forgot that crossing frontiers must be accompanied by respect and sensitivity to the cultural values and norms of the local culture.⁴⁶ This is why today

⁴³ L. SOFIELD, *Building Community*, 70

⁴⁴ D. DORR, *Mission in Today's World*, 168

⁴⁵ P. G. HIEBERT, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 53

⁴⁶ J. A. SCHERER, S.B. BEYANS, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization*, 30

mission studies talk of proclaiming the gospel through the receiving culture; otherwise, it destroys the existing one.

It is clear that Portuguese mission disintegrated the local culture; it denied participation, equal rights and sharing. It dehumanized and alienated people from their cultural roots. This foreign culture was sustained by a growth-oriented value that disregards the dignity of the human person and the integrity of creation. It was guided by uncritical secularization that affirms the human at the expense of the divine.⁴⁷

Thus, culture which is a self-expression of a group of people, is an expression of vital life as Temple Placid said and embraces the wholeness of language, beliefs, instructions and customs that hold a community together.⁴⁸

2.4 Relationship between Gospel and Culture

Gospel is God's revelation of himself through Jesus Christ to humanity. This revelation is traced in any given culture. However, there are dynamic tensions between gospel and human cultures. Thus, below there are three principles to help us understand the implications between the two:

2.5 Gospel belongs to no one Culture

Portuguese Missionaries presented the gospel within their culture such that other cultures they met were deeply suppressed and regarded as if there were no seeds of spirit working in it. This move triggered enmity between the people and the missionaries. The people were not moved in anyway by their good news because there was no

⁴⁷ J.A. SCHERER, S.B. BEYANS, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization*, 30

⁴⁸ T. PLACIDE, "La Philosophie Bantu," 44

correspondence between what they preached and what they lived. This is evident also in some of our missionaries today. They should not treat people as though they are their workers in their vineyard!

Most modern missionaries today pay little attention to understanding local cultures such that it has now become a weakness. In many ways most missionaries preach the Good News by use of their own cultural background instead of the local people. They always say the culture is too hard to grasp! This is related to “Mombasa Scandal” of converts- who rejected the Good News not because they did not want the Lordship of Christ, but because the conversion meant a denial of their cultural heritage.⁴⁹

2.6 The Gospel in Culture

It is now evident that the Gospel is distinct from the culture yet it should be preached in cultural forms. Christians should receive it using their language, symbols and rituals on three levels: On *emotional level*-where people are expected to experience the awe and mystery of God; One *evaluative Level*- the gospel must challenge them to respond in faith. Through, contextualization the gospel can be translated in to culture.⁵⁰ In other words all cultures should serve as vehicles for the communication of the gospel.

2.7 The Gospel to Culture

This is the most critical of all because it challenges all the cultures to strike a balance. There might be some evil practices within a given culture which may not lead to the glory of God, and thus needs to be eliminated as a means to purify the culture as a

⁴⁹ J.A. SCHERER, S.B. BEYANS, eds., *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization*, 53

⁵⁰ J. A. SCHERER, S.B. BEYANS, eds., *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization*, 54

whole. This is why Christ had to be put on the cross because he condemned the evil structures of that particular culture. All cultures in other words should be shaped according to the kingdom of God.

All cultures have some evil practices like oppression, apartheid, exploitation, slavery, dehumanization and positive aspects like communitarian and other norms and values. The gospel has a prophetic function, showing us the way God intends us to live as human beings and judging our lives and our cultures by those norms.

Where the gospel has lost this prophetic voice, it is then in danger of being wedded with beliefs and values that distort its message.⁵¹ A theological consideration of inculturation cannot fail to begin with a study of divine revelation as model and source of all inculturation.⁵²

Many missionaries today have learnt more than they have taught and have received more than they have taught. The fact is that culture is the seed of revelation, however, missionaries would like to articulate the missionary call rooted primarily in the command of Jesus (Missionary task): preach-baptize. Which is a one-way approach to mission.

This attitude is no longer appropriate today in Africa; the image has changed to invitation (Act 1:9; Lk 24:47) punctuated with love and freedom. Missionaries inspired by love are more effective than those driven by grim duty. Thus, like Jesus we are called to bring life and love to other people and to the world itself- Jn 10:10. At the heart of Christian faith, is a deep challenge to an individual. Jesus made it clear to be alone, to fail

⁵¹ J. A. SCHERER, S.B. BEYANS, eds., *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization*, 55

⁵² S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, 116

to be in solidarity with others is to betray not just our Christian faith but also our very humanity.

2.8 Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as the principle agents of Mission

It has to be made clear that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the revelation already brought by Jesus Christ. The role of the Spirit is to make us know Christ, just as Christ's role is to make us know the Father. Matta-EL-Meskin develops this thought when he says, "No one goes to the Father except through Jesus Christ and no one is able to say Jesus is the Lord except through the influence of the Spirit."⁵³

Jesus Christ's ministry was compatible with the work of the Holy Spirit. If we look at Luke 1:35 and at the beginning of Christ's work of redemption we will see that the Holy Spirit becomes the principle agent. At the same time it was the Spirit, which strengthens the Apostles and guides them along the difficulties and new paths of mission⁵⁴. The apostles were deeply aware of the promised Spirit (Acts 1:8) working alongside them. The apostles gave witness to their work as Peter once said; "We and the Holy Spirit are witnesses to these events" (Acts 5:32). This is all to affect the work of salvation always and everywhere.⁵⁵

The missionary should acknowledge the Spirit, which reveals to him Christ's ministry and teaching. At the same time he is successful to an extent to which he is an attentive and faithful helper of the Spirit like the apostles. Only through this can a missionary become 'spiritual' and give an effective witness. Pope Paul VI said

⁵³ S. KAROTEMPREL, *Following Christ in Mission*, 112

⁵⁴ RM 87

⁵⁵ AG 4

evangelization is impossible without the action of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we need the guidance of the Spirit to know when to face anything that is part of the mission.⁵⁶

2.9 CONCLUSION

This is an important chapter of the whole paper because it synthesizes the broad theology of Mission and that of inculturation. These two aspects of dealing with the culture of the people are compatible. In other words, the gospel has to be incarnated within the given culture because it is through culture that people live and have their being.

Hence, presenting the Good News to another culture today requires certain “tools” on inculturation so as to be equipped on how to witness. Otherwise, missionaries might fall in the same trap of ignorantly abusing the indigenous culture. As a result the Good News of the Lord would suffer.

Also gone are the days when Portuguese Missionaries perceived African Culture as of having no needs of God’s revelation in it. The fact is “God has been, and continues to be, active in every culture, even before evangelization” came.⁵⁷ People have virtues and natural norms of life which to a greater degree certifies their basic understanding of God. Thus, people should not be regarded as “*tabula rasa*” or *vaccum vessels* but as God’s creatures created in the image of God.

The next Chapter will therefore give some “tools” on how a culture should be studied and then understand it for the good of the foreigner who has gone to share his Christian faith with any given local Church. These “tools” equip him to somehow see as

⁵⁶ D. DORR, *Mission in Today's World*, 180

⁵⁷ G. A. ARBUCKLE, *Earthing the Gospel*, 15

the native people see, to think as they think and perceive things as they do. Thus, today's mission would be very effective only when we put into consideration the tools about our culture into practice. It will as well trigger a good response from the people.

Chapter III

Tools to finish the “job”

3. Introduction

The fact that we were born in a given society we therefore perceive and interpret reality according to this given time and space. Hence, the identities, values and aspirations we shape depend on our own “world (s).” Therefore, this chapter would highlight a general rule on how people form their culture in which they live, move and have their being as St. Paul puts it.⁵⁸

The Portuguese missionaries in Mombasa, to the contrary, did not consider African culture as relevant in their ministry to evangelize to the local people because they regarded their own culture as superior to other cultures as a result their mission was a failure.

Nonetheless, ordained ministers of today have a lot to learn from the Portuguese missionaries. It is evident that the Portuguese missionaries violated the local culture of the inhabitants and robbed it of its values by imposing their own western values, this was resulted in downfall on their part. Culture is thus a determining factor of success in mission. We need, therefore, special tools to help us understand what a culture is and what difference it can make if it is considered as essential.

⁵⁸ Acts 17:28

This is what Winston Churchill meant when he said, “Give us the tools and we will finish the job.”⁵⁹ Pope John Paul II in his address to the Diplomats in Nairobi pinpointed the same fact indirectly that of considering an African person, if diplomats were to minister to them by first starting from the truth of the African person in his **concrete** and **historical** setting.⁶⁰ This African reality is imbued in the way identity, values and aspirations are received, preserved and passed on. This is what I intend to analyze in this section.

3.1 Receiving Identity, Values and Aspirations

A missionary has to understand that people have different ways of perceiving things depending on their historical and cultural backgrounds. The background has deep roots in the “world” in which people grew up called a “theological book” which sometimes is unread. However, it is the people who interpret this book depending on their concrete local circumstances.⁶¹ Hence, if we understand on how people give their meaning to this “book,” then we would uncover something of their identity, values and aspirations.

St. Thomas Aquinas shared this same view by starting from the order and the beauty of creation. It is from this “theological book” that the great organizer of the Cosmos is traced. This whole process is called “Ascending Contemplation” due to the

⁵⁹ Mission Studies, *Give Us the Tools to finish the Job*, 97

⁶⁰ John Paul II, “Address to Diplomatic Corps,” AFER (African Ecclesia Review) No. 4 (Vol. xxiii, August 1980), 212

⁶¹ Mission Studies, *Give Us the Tools to finish the Job*, 101

fact that it first begins assessing the created things in order to reach the image of their God.⁶²

If we have to uncover these aspects of the culture we need to know the significance of certain geographical features of a given place. Furthermore, the ordained minister has to understand and why people perceive something as sacred, evil or hostile. In the same line myths can also contribute more on the image of the world that people live in.⁶³ These facts tell us about the past events, which can be used to justify the social action in the present. It contributes to the common values, identities and aspirations.

In other words myth provides answers to questions like where did I come from? What is the meaning of existence and does it end with death? It can as well act as a sanctioning function. For instance, playing a role on social control and giving answers to taboos as to why incest is forbidden, or respect for elders is valued.⁶⁴ Myth and ritual belong together because they present human primordial expressions of the experience of the impact of the universe, exploring and expressing the great mystery of the world (life in the world) which has to be integrated in the lives of the people.

3.2 Preserving Identities, Values and Aspirations

In any given culture missionaries should distinguish what is sacred and what is profane. In Africa, “the normal everyday (profane) activity is withdrawn with ease into ritual time, thereby heightening the interplay between religious ritual and profane

⁶² R. MEJIA, *Reading Signs of the Times*, 105

⁶³ R. PAGLIARI, *Forteen Steeps to Dynamic Preaching*, 26

⁶⁴ Amecea and Imbisa, *Communication, culture and community*, vol. 2, 31

activity.”⁶⁵ In this way, a missionary would look with respect at all those rituals and symbols which need to be preserved for human psychological wholeness.

In many African places, sacred time is marked by rituals and ceremonies which protect and give identity to people as they progress in the rites of passage.⁶⁶ In Israel such evidence always pointed to historical event like the Passover. In other words, the natural form of space may designate it sacred like a special tree, a stream or a mountain. These natural forms constitute sacred space where often divine and human worlds converge. This has to go with special behaviour to the “mediators.”⁶⁷ If there is a long draught for example, sometimes it may be that people have not been respecting those sacred observances and have become disobedience. Therefore, a sacrifice has to be offered to the God of the rain to restore back the good relationship between God and the people.

Profane on the contrary is referred to as something ordinary or routine while sacred as anything extraordinary and mainly characterized by ritual actions. The following is how they relate to the sacred boundaries.

3.2.1 Purity

Humankind separates, scrutinizes and groups those aspects of reality into categories for meaning to be ascribed. These realities include laws governing bodily openings such as excretion. On the other hand, there are other elements of separation, transition and incorporation. These rites of passage however can make somebody free from evil spirits through performing certain rituals and later being pronounced pure.

⁶⁵ E.E. UZUKWU, *Worship as Body Language*, 220

⁶⁶ Mission Studies, *Give Us the Tools to finish the Job*, 105

3.2.2 Sacred Boundaries

This could be a sacred forest which may be governed by sacred rules such as fasting, silence, washing, shaving, casting and celibacy. It includes sanctions imposed and sacred functionaries.

3.2.3 Social control: law, blessings and curses

Social identity can be maintained in many ways: by encouragement, flattery or rewards of various kinds of gifts but also by punishment. Social control is employed for preventing chaos and maintaining law and order by tradition.⁶⁸ Law may be promulgated through a living tradition, while blessings and curses must actually be uttered through the spoken word. Thus, taking of Oaths (As God is my witness) and perjury (Oath in vain) is considered a major disruption of the social order.

Law reveals a peoples' understanding of their place in nature and society, their relationship with God and others and their notion of accountability and responsibility. Blessings and curses are for legitimate approval and disapproval. Authentic blessing is the legitimate use of God's supernatural sanction.⁶⁹

This corresponds to the place of God in Israel's law and how values are safeguarded by observance of law. At the same time, it shows a sense of responsibility. Israel also believes that authority is a gift from God given to some chosen members who in return bless or curse the community.

This analysis above is the hermeneutical key for both passages from scripture and for understanding of cultures. All these themes are for preservation of people's identity,

⁶⁷ E. E. UZUKWU, *Worship as Body Language*, 240

⁶⁸ *Mission Studies*, 107

values and aspirations. The careful study will disclose many examples of human values and aspirations. In every culture, therefore, there is a repository of both sin and grace and its up to the missionary to discern where these fall.

3.3 Passing On Identity, Values and Aspirations

3.3.1 Alliance and descent: Kinship and genealogy

A living community is replenished when it procreates and nurtures a new generation. People need a sense of identity of belonging of relatedness and of having a common story.

Descent is concerned with membership in a noticeable group over several generations. The inheritance of goods such as land and rules governing these falls in the same category of descent. Alliance is concerned with the safety and replenishment of the group through intermarriage. Alliances are often motivated by imperatives of kinship, religion, economics and self-preservation.

Kinship is for recognized social relationships usually based on blood ties, approved marriages and affiliated and affinity (patrilineal/matrilineal) to a community of both living, unborn and dead. Genealogy is used to justify past, present and future or provide legitimacy for relationships.

All these natural ways in which communities function contributes as to how a culture is lived and how it is passed on to the next generation. However, this manual may differ from one ethnic group to the next though the framework of transition maybe the same. It is thus to the advantage of the ordained minister if he gets to understand these

⁶⁹ A. SHORTER, *Prayer In the Religious Traditions of Africa*, 14-15

functionaries within a given ethnic group. It will help him incarnate the gospel into their own understanding of issues.

3.3.2 Messages and Media: Oral and Literacy

Messages could be the content of tradition while media in this case presents the channels through which the message is transmitted in drama, dance, epic and parables. Normally, the significant person in the community tells the story in which wisdom is conveyed.⁷⁰ Such people are patriarchs, prophets, kings and parents. The figurative language in these medium of exchange reflects their life experiences in society.

On the other hand, proverbs reflect the society's physical and social environment such as the Lion roars in the bush meaning a hero is seen on the battlefield. The strength of the crocodile is in water meaning a man is helpless without his own kin; once a baboon has tasted honey, it does not touch earth again meaning once power is tasted, its hard to detach from it.

Proverbs is thus a "mirror in which community can look at itself, describing its values, aspirations, preoccupations, appreciate realities and behaviors. Idowu refers to them as "Scriptures and breviaries" of African Religions.⁷¹ Therefore, a missionary can learn more from these parts of speeches on how people live and communicate the meanings of their cultures.

⁷⁰ P.O. GAGGAWALA, *Fully Christian ... Fully Human*, 48

⁷¹ *Communication, culture and community*, 32

3.4 Culture in general

Culture has been defined as the human made part of the environment. Every community has rules on movable and unmovable property and on how property is distributed and protected.

It is for this reason that inculturation is concerned with the whole person and the whole culture. Thus, evangelization means bringing the good news into strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it anew.⁷² *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 18 states that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert both the personal and the collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage and the lives and concrete milieus which they inherit.

If the Church is to be in the position to offer all people the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among all these groups in the same way Christ, by his incarnation, committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of people among whom he lived.”⁷³

In summing up, there are three myriads elements of heritage: Historical heritage, cultural heritage and religious heritage. In historical heritage, African history is a story of life, experiences, ideas and activities of migrations, calamities, wars, hunting, food gathering and domestication of animals.

The cultural heritage is a way people live, behave and act; physical and intellectual achievements. Culture is expressed in art, literature, music, dance and drama, style of building and clothing, religion and morals and economic life among others.

⁷² *Communication, culture and community*, Vol. 2, 51

⁷³ AG 10

Religious heritage: Africans have been labeled as incurably religious. This is due to the following characteristics: beliefs, practices, ceremonies, festivals, religious objects, morals, and rituals practitioners or experts that govern even their routine lives.

Therefore, historical, cultural and religious heritage are the “power houses” of action in people. Missionaries need to study them deeply in order to know why the local people behave as they do. Always history has a hand to influence cultures. It maybe that fear was once installed in people as in the case of the Mombasa residents’ experience with the Portuguese resulting mistrusting the missionaries. A missionary should be able to distinguish all these differences in the lives of the local people, such that when he mounts the pulpit or a platform to break the word, people would find the message relevant, applicable and appealing to them and eventually they would identify with it.

3.5 The Missionary Priest of Today

A missionary priest is looked upon as the teacher of the gospel, minister of the sacrament and leader of a given community. It is evident that in every community there are matters of life and death, crisis and conversion. These terms describe people in the state of spiritual crisis, people in doubt and ready to become people of faith.

James W. Fowler, in his book, is typical of people in need of new evangelization unlike that of Portuguese missionaries:

My work, my professional associates, my ambitions, my dreams and absorbing projects feel like fiction...In that moment of unpre-cedented aloneness experienced in my 33years...I looked at my life as one might look at an overcoat hanging at the far side of a room. I seemed to stand completely naked, a soul without body,relationships or roles. A soul alone with what? With whom? Faith is a coat against this nakedness?⁷⁴

⁷⁴ J. FOWLER, *Stages of Faith*, xi

It is for people like Fowler that a missionary priest is chosen, sanctified and then sent in other cultures. It is for the lonely, the alienated, for those who are aware of the needs of their daily lives, that a priest plays a crucial evangelizing role. In other words, priests after some years of ministering should develop the sixth sense and intuitive grasp of the spiritual hunger underlying the cynicism, bitterness and near despair they encounter in many.⁷⁵

New methods and approach of evangelization are needed because of religious and moral variations, varieties and differences, the social and psychological alienation and practical atheism of our time. Thus a priest has to lay down his life for his friends portraying priestly identity and ministry. The priest's authority is rooted in his sincerity and holiness of life, in the credibility of his personal witness and in the depth and genuineness of his pastoral charity.

Gregory the Great once said the pastor must be pure in thought, exemplary in actions, discreet in his silence and useful in his words, close to all in his compassion and above all dedicated to contemplation. He should be a humble ally of all who do good. In justice he should be inflexibly opposed to vice of sinners. He should not neglect interior life through exterior preoccupation nor omit provision of exterior needs through solitude for interior good.⁷⁶

In order to minister to people, the priest must be an expert in humanity, knowing the "heart" of contemporary people, sharing the joys and hopes, fears and sorrows of their everyday lives.⁷⁷ As expert in the science of humanity, priests move in and out of people's lives at key moments. They help mark milestones such as births, communion,

⁷⁵ Emmanuel: Vol. 106, No. 7, 389

⁷⁶ Emmanuel: Vol. 106, No.7, 390

confirmation, graduations anniversaries. They are also involved in mourning losses such as separations, layoffs, divorces, suffering and death.

In order to become sensitized to these needs priests are called to be contemplatives in love with God, authentic witnesses to the gospel. They have two simple but urgent objectives to move minds towards conversion and to move hearts towards sorrow and repentance. Thus, the call to new evangelization is primarily a call to conversion. In baptism, marriages, reconciliations, communion, funerals, all mark moments of conversion.

3.6 How do we effect Evangelization Today?

Unlike the Portuguese missionaries of 16th -17th Century, whose theology and Missiology of “Mission” was outmoded and narrowed in meaning, theologians and Missiologists of today prefer evangelization; the bringing of the Good News as says *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “into all the strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it anew.”⁷⁸ This means making an impact in the structures and values of the society in which the Church is presently acting as the “Conscience of Society.”

The Pope explains how far it can go: “For the Church it is not only the question of preaching the gospel but also determining values, points of interests, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life. This should be viewed in the process in which

⁷⁷ P.T. ROHRBACH, *The Art of Dynamic Preaching*, 125

⁷⁸ EN 18

identity, values and inspiration is acquired, preserved and passed on in a given community.

Therefore, bringing of good news to an African today must be evangelization of both the persons and structures that control day to day life of each individual. This is what it means to evangelize humankind's culture. The dichotomy that tended to take the upper hand in the past between faith and concrete life must be bridged.⁷⁹

The Church reached Africa in the wake of missionary activities, colonization of Africa was at its peak as such it was received with mixed feelings, fear, doubts and anxiety. This is due to the uncontrolled power which triggered stress in the faithful when converting them from what was considered devilish way of life to a new life in Christ.

Hence, mission was seen as preaching the gospel and implanting the church among the people who did not yet believe in Christ. Unfortunately, they could not believe in him of course since they did not know him.⁸⁰ Today witness of life speaks thousands of words when it comes to preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, crucified, died and risen. People feel more challenged with the gospel when they see an ordained minister who lives what he preaches puts it into practice.

This kind of witness has a persuasive force in itself to Africans and their culture. They listen more willingly to witness than to teachers as *Evangelii Nuntiandi* puts it, "If he listens to teachers it is because they are witnesses."⁸¹ The same point of witness is stressed in the African Synod when the Bishops state that evangelization is not a theory but life, a meeting of love, which radically changes our life, today as the beginning of the Church.

⁷⁹ Africa Tomorrow, *Salvation Institute of Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. 1, No.1, 68

⁸⁰ Africa Tomorrow, *Salvation Institute of Philosophy and Theology*, Vol.1, No.1, 65

In African context, thus, Small Christian Communities and the Church as a family would help the Church in Africa be fully Christian and fully African as the Synod of 1994 suggested.⁸² In addition the following rites should speak to African cultures and be opportunities to convert people:

i-Rite of Initiation (Baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, catechumate)

ii-Rite of Healing (Reconciliation, anointing, Christian burial)

iii-Rite of Vocation (Orders, Marriage, Religious profession)

iv-Rite of Mass (Eucharist, Liturgy) and Periodic Rituals (Harvest)

It is here that an honest evaluation has to take place and questions asked like what are the structures and means that have been established in order to facilitate the establishment of the Small Christian Community. Thus, coming from a “Pyramidal Model” of parish in which the priest is the “boss” towards a model of parish closer to the model of a family in which the parish is a communion of communities and the Christians are active collaborators of the parish priest.⁸³

Thus, the final purpose of Evangelization is not simply to baptize and convert people but evangelizing people’s culture and cultures in a deep way, always taking the human person as a point of departure and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God.⁸⁴

⁸¹ EN411

⁸² P. O. GAGAGGAWALA, *Fully Christian... Fully Human*, 147

⁸³ C. MCGARRY, J.T. RUWAICHI, eds., *New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa*, 68

⁸⁴ R. MEJIA, *New Strategies for a New Evangelization in Africa*, 61

3.7 Conclusion

Scratching where it does not itch will always fail the ordained ministers. This is exactly what the Portuguese missionaries of 16th-17th Century did in Mombasa and from our analysis it proved a failure so the good news of the Lord did not germinate. However, our study has proved that only through understanding of African culture should missionaries function fully as God's true prophets.

We, therefore, do not need to rely so much on theological resources from the seminary like class notes and Bible Commentaries. If, ministers, have to create a deeper impression, they have to look at the culture in the broader way. They have to reflect upon human action, events and interpret them theologically. Unfortunately, ministers have no capacity to develop the human and social implications of their pastoral and community relationships.

Recently, a friend of mine, ordained deacon in, 2003, told me, breaking the word of God in the parish set up is not easy. I asked him, "Why?" He responded, "I sometimes feel that when I am in the pulpit I am all alone, that no one is hearing me, and that no one cares that I am not heard. They want me to keep talking for the sake of appearances, but they do not want to hear." Immediately, I heard this complaint, I marked inside my heart how this paper could be of great contribution for missionaries who might have gone in the field without being introduced to communication system of which culture is at the centre of it all.

Nowadays, people are easily losing their own culture due to the powerfulness of today's mass media's communication and advertisements. People out of their respective experiences both traditional and contemporary, influenced by their education and media

bombardment, they bring to Sunday mass consciously and unconsciously problems in the form of questions, hypotheses, affirmations, doubts and fears.⁸⁵ These concerns and challenges are important to the preaching event on Sunday for it challenges the speaker to incarnate the word of Jesus into the lives of the people.

Inquiries show that ordained ministers do not pay attention to people's responses to movies, television programs and other provocative events in the life of the community and its people. They do not ask: What meanings have these events produced in the minds of the people? What is the relationship of these meanings to the gospel? Which meaning need to be challenged, corrected or complemented? The purpose of witnessing is not that the congregation shall hear the minister but that the dialogue between God and humanity be directed and informed through the medium of the culture.

⁸⁵ Reuel L. Howe, *Partners in preaching*, 22

GENERAL CONCLUSION

History's Lessons for today and tomorrows Mission will only have an impact if only missionaries know where local people are coming from in order to understand the present and its challenges. In this way missionaries of today would easily implement and improve on some obstacles which obstructed the growth of the Good News during the Portuguese era. This is no other reason why Pope John Paul II, in his address to the Diplomats in Nairobi said, "If we want to understand the situation in Africa, its past and its future, we must start from the truth of the African person, the truth of every African in his or her concrete and historical setting."⁸⁶ This reality of an African is incurably religious, strongly integrated with its culture. Anything which goes outside the culture is a waste of time.

It is in this light that we have tried to formulate a New Evangelization approach in today's mission. However, this approach is not a new fashion which forgets totally the riches and some of the achievement of the past but a renewal of our energies, with a more inculturated approach in which a new understanding of the Church as a family and at the service of the whole humankind is at the centre as the table below summarises:

3.8 Learning from the master, Jesus about the ministry

FUNCTION OF CHRIST	DIMENSION OF EVANGELIZATION	PASTORAL FUNCTION
<i>Prophet</i>	Martyria (Witness to and proclamation of the Gospel)	Spirituality- Proclamation- Catechesis- Theology- Vocation promotion-On going Religious Formation
<i>Priest</i>	Liturgia (Public religious service of the Church)	Sacraments-Christian Initiation-Prayer-Religious Celebrations.
<i>King</i>	Koinonia (Building up of the community at all levels)	Church as a Family- Leadership Ministries- Small Christian Communities-Ecumenism- Interreligious dialogue- Inculturation.
	Diakonia (Service to the human community at all levels.	Justice and peace- Development-Relief- Education-Health-Human Promotion-Social Communications- Administration.

Fig. 2 In our times, pastoral theology inspired by the same threefold function of Christ, has described the fundamental dimensions of evangelization employing four categories expressed by Greek terms that were very familiar to the early Church in the Acts of the apostles.⁸⁷

This table concludes the role of the missionary in the field just as Christ himself had to reveal his total service to the multitude of people. The Sermon on the Mount could be an example of how Christ ministered to the needy. Thus, by our consecration to Christ in our Baptism, we are expected to be Prophets, Priests and Kings in the same image of Christ's prophecy, Priestly and Kingship. Thus, our pastoral functions in our missions

⁸⁶ John Paul II, "Address to Diplomatic Corps," AFER (African Ecclesial Review) No.4 (Vol. xxiii, August 1980),212

⁸⁷C. MCGARRY, J. RUWAICHI, eds., *New Strategies for A New Evangelization in Africa*, 64

should not be one sided with selfish interests as in Portuguese missionaries but be integrated in the strata of humanity as a whole.

The real liturgical problem in African set up is knowing how to celebrate the birth and progress of these African communities. For it is through these communities that faith roots itself strongly, compact with daily experiences of people. They can also be where an indigenous liturgy is created intertwined with traditional rituals.

This is why a person exists as a Christian in a “Church” which despite its catechism and sacraments amounts to more than an empty shell with no real influence on social problems, just like the Christianity of the Portuguese missionaries supplied no answers to the difficulties of daily life.⁸⁸ Thus, the Mombasa faithful had to recline to their usual way of life of following the prone and cons of their traditions of their villages because their lives were not touched by the presenters of the gospel.

The challenge to missionaries today would be to pose questions on how we can re-evaluate the meaning and the significance of the Christian mystery, taking into account African symbolism, in the universe where the African searches for concrete happiness within the shadow of the ancestors who were stripped of their cultures by the Portuguese. How can we celebrate the presence of the risen Christ in the land of symbolic forces.⁸⁹

Are we ready then to enter any given culture and be able to see their hopes, fears, good values and be able to challenge anything which does not bring the glory of God? Are we competent enough to help people identify with Christ who shed his blood for the salvation of the whole humankind?

⁸⁸ J.M. ELA, *My Faith as an African*, 33

⁸⁹ J.M. ELA, *My Faith as an African*, 34

I pray that this contribution would be of help to those preparing to be in the field to equip themselves with the tools which are proposed in this paper. The value of this essay is that the ordained minister would know whether he is off track or not just by the way he handles the local culture of a given place in the mission field. Authentic witness to the gospel by following the right way of inculturation would be like the experience of St. Peter's fishing experience with Jesus, when St. Peter hurled a lot of fish after Jesus commanded him to go back and throw the nets into the lake again after his own effort proved a failure.⁹⁰ Missionaries must therefore listen and read the "theological book" of creation (world) which is culture, because it through culture one lives, feels, moves and have his being as in the book of Acts chapter seventeen.

⁹⁰ Lk 5: 1-11

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	African Bible
1Cor.	First letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians
ed.	editors
Fr.	Father
Sr.	Sister
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Mk	Mark
Matt	Matthew
GS	Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> .
EN	Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation on the evangelization of the Men of our time <i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
AE	Apostolic Exhortation
LG	Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church <i>Lumen Gentium</i> .
RM	John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate <i>Redemptoris Missio</i>

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