

# TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL STUDIES

## DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN KENYA

"THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH"

A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies.

BY

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## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, research and reflection. This long essay has never been submitted to any other College or University by anybody else for academic credit. All information from other sources has been dully acknowledged.

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This journey has been long, tedious but enjoyable. At the end of the journey, I am very happy that my initial idea has become a reality. The Swahili people say *Asante ya punda ni mateke*. I do not want this saying to apply to me and therefore I feel that it is necessary to mention some people who accompanied me throughout this intellectual journey.

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to all those who struggled tirelessly for Multi-party politics in Kenya. To Ken Matiba, Charles Rubia, the late bishop Muge of the Anglican Church of Kenya- Eldoret and all those people who were wounded and killed during the various rallies that preceded the admittance of Multi-party politics in Kenya by the government of president Moi.

*God shower your blessings upon your people of Kenya.*

## **ABBREVIATIONS.**

**AFER:** Africa Ecclessial Review.

**ACK:** Anglican Church of Kenya.

**CUEA:** Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

**L.G:** Lumen Gentium; The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

**I.M:** Inter Mirifica; The Decree on the means of Social Communication.

**e.g. :** Exemplum gratiae; for example, for instance.

**Etc :**et cetera; and other similar things, and the rest, and so on.

**i.e. :** id est, that is.

**Ed(s) :** Edited by, Edition, Editor.

**Cf. :** Refer to.

**KANU:** Kenya African National Union.

**KADU:** Kenya African Democratic Union.

**REV:** Reverend.

**SCCs:** Small Christian Communities.

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The world today has become like a global village. Ideas are spreading like a flash of light from one corner of the world to another. This is probably what the Rev. Timothy Njoya of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa had in mind when he challenged the Kenyan government in 1990 to read the signs of the times and accede to change. According to Njoya, the wind of change had blown all over the world; tyrannical, dictatorial and autocratic institutions were collapsing and democracy was replacing them.<sup>1</sup> That wind of change has reached Africa in general and Kenya in particular but its effects has not yet been realized.

The choice of this topic came out of a deep reflection on the problems afflicting Kenyans today. For example, some people are living in destitute poverty while others are living in luxury; institutions like families are breaking down, hospitals have no medicines.

Looking at the above examples, a pastoral agent feels compelled to tackle seriously and analytically the issue of Democracy. If the culture of Democracy permeated into peoples' lives then life in Kenya would have been better than it is today.

As future minister, there is a need of studying thoroughly and educating and empowering people so that they can know well what their rights and duties are as citizens. The issue at hand is how Kenyans can live together harmoniously whereby each one regards the other as a brother or a sister in Jesus Christ. This is our dream and we hope that it will be realized.

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy Njoya, "A call for change" sermon of Rev. Timothy Njoya in the Weekly Review Magazine ( 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 1990), pp.11-12.

To achieve this goal, I have used secondary sources like books, journals, magazines, newspapers plus my personal experiences as a pastoral agent and a Kenyan citizen.

Kenya's history of liberation can be viewed in two phases i.e. liberation from the colonial masters and liberation from tyrannical leadership of one party rule to multiparty governance. The first chapter aims at tracing historically, how democracy has been lived in Kenya and whether true democracy reigns in Kenya.

The Church that was founded by Christ is an Eschatological community. This implies that it has as its primary role as the proclamation of God's kingdom here on earth and all that entails to it. In order to be successful in her mission, the Church should engage herself seriously with the transformation of society into a good social order where God's kingdom is fully manifested. Authentic transformation is only possible if the Church announces the Good News and denounces the evil that is inherent in the society.

However, if the Church wants her teaching to be a challenge to the society in which she is living, she has to start by radically examining herself so that she can be a model of emulation by the society. The second chapter attempts to discuss the role of the Church in the democratisation process in Kenya plus an analysis on some incidences where the Church has appeared undemocratic in her historical development.

Both the Church and the Political community are institutions that exist for the common good of the human person. The two should operate in a smooth but not in an antagonistic manner. The former should act as an adviser to the latter, in matters of human rights. The Church should stand for the truth and therefore should never affiliate herself to any political party. In the third chapter, we are going to look at the relationship between the Church and the State and the involvement of the Church in politics.

The Greek Philosopher, Socrates commented that unreflected life is not worthy living. If a theologian does theology without having recourse to the life of the people, his or her theology is naïve and according to the thinking of the liberation theologians, genuine theology is the one that arises out of deep compassion and critical reflection on the situation of the poor and the oppressed . In the fourth chapter, we are going to look at how theology can be used as a tool of transformation of the current state of affairs so that genuine democracy can thrive in Kenya.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.0 Democracy in Kenya.

### 1.1 Introduction

In the 19th century most of the African countries (including Kenya) were under the colonial rule. But in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of them attained independence. The colonialist had to relinquish power leaving the blacks to decide their own destiny. This departure of the colonialist and the consequent take over of power by Africans was greeted with joy and enthusiasm.

But looking back from where we came from, many African people (Kenya included) are convinced that democracy is still a dream and are therefore looking forward with hope for the day when it will be realized. In Kenya, the majority of the citizens will concede with me that, Kenya has a long way to go towards the achievement of real democracy. This chapter aims at giving a working definition on democracy and to trace historically whether democracy has only remained a concept or has been realized in Kenya.

### 1.2 The meaning of Democracy

The term “democracy” has its origins in Greek *demos* and *kratein*, which refers to people and governance respectively. It was Abraham Lincoln who refined this idea to mean government of the people by the people and for the people.<sup>2</sup> Etymologically, democracy means rule by the people.<sup>3</sup> Rule could mean the exercise of power, authority and influence in

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<sup>2</sup>Laurenti Magesa and Zablon Nthamburi, Democracy and Reconciliation; A Challenge for African Christianity, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1991), p.196.

<sup>3</sup>Magesa and Nthamburi, Democracy, p.10.

society. From the above definition, we can then argue that democracy is an attitude and a value at the same time. The fundamental value of democracy is to allow the participation of citizens in the governing of their country. Democracy is conceived as an attitude since it is a way of doing things that describe our own self-evaluation and how we are to perceive those whom we are dealing with. As a value, democracy is concerned with what a political system ought to be and not to be. The issue of dignity and human rights are crucial in any discussion on democracy.

### **I.3 The Essence of Democracy**

True democratic practice never thrives in a cultural vacuum. The democratic process should not be a franchise or a monopoly of a few. The democratic process has to permeate people's life. It therefore needs to be taught, learnt and understood as a primary social value. In order for us to appreciate the values of democracy, we not only need to know its definition but also to appreciate it as part and parcel of our culture. In most of the African countries, Kenya included, democracy is frail since we have not properly and sufficiently interpreted it as an organic political value in our social systems.<sup>4</sup> According to John Lucas in his book *Democracy and Participation*, he observes that democracy describes three aspects of the decision making process. John Scott has summarized Lucas as follows:

*A decision is democratically taken if the answer to the question who takes it? is more or less everybody else; in contrast to decision taken only by those best qualified to take them as in a meritocracy. Democracy describes how a decision is reached. A decision is taken democratically if discussion, criticism and compromise reach it. Democracy is the spirit in which a decision is made, namely, being concerned with the interest instead of only a fraction or a party.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup>Magesa and Nthamburi, *Democracy*, p.12.

<sup>5</sup>John Scott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: Marshall Pickering , Happer Collins, 1986), p. 59.

In the deficiency of the basic freedoms, citizens are almost like slaves. Freed people are distinguished from slaves by the possibility to think for themselves and express their own opinions without compulsion or punishment. Democracy is cherished when an individual citizen is able to enjoy his or her freedom and realize his or her potential without restrictions from any political quarter. On its own, democracy cannot flourish where equality and freedom are not treasured. As a concept, democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people. But as a social system, it is associated with criticism and appreciation of opinions in a pluralistic society. In a democratic state, the ones governed must actively take part in decisions, which affect their lives and not leave it only to a few individuals. If democracy is the rule of the people, then people cannot regard personalized rule as democratic. Personalized rule depends almost entirely on an individual's authority and power, assisted by some few powerful and privileged persons. In this case, there is insufficiency of majority involvement in the decision-making.

#### **1.4 From independence to Multi-party politics**

Kenya became a self-governing entity in 1963 after a bloody conflict with the Britons' seventy years of colonization. At the time, Kenya was a multiparty state with KANU (Kenya African National Union) as the ruling party and KADU (Kenya African Democratic Union) as the main opposition party. One year later into independence however, Kenya became a *de facto* one -party state after KADU dissolved itself and its members coupled with KANU. Even after this change, the constitutional provision for other political parties remained unaltered.

In April 1966, vice president Oginga Odinga discontented by the government formed the Kenya People's Union (KPU) in a radical split from KANU. Three years later, in 1969, KPU

leaders were detained without charges or trial. Although banning KPU brought formal political party competition to an end, Kenya nevertheless remained a *de jure* multiparty state until June 1982 when the Republic's 5th parliament hurriedly enacted a constitutional provision that formally rendered Kenya a one party state.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.5 The Open Single State

Although Kenyatta's Kenya was an undoubtedly authoritarian single party state, political life remained open and its process comparatively free by African standards. The single party state under Kenyatta remained relatively willing to incorporate dissent, responsive of criticism and capable of dealing with local discontent and the rise of new leaders.<sup>7</sup> General elections provided a mechanism by which the regime could incorporate new blood, remain informed of local grievances and legitimise its power. This was demonstrated by the defeat of several senior cabinet ministers in 1969 and 1974.

According to the 1982 constitutional amendment establishing a *de jure* single party state, only members of KANU could serve in parliament. Moi used the ruling party to monitor public sentiments and suppress opposition. Local activists as well as prominent leaders used it to silence their rivals and to secure their expulsion from KANU. After only five years in office the president had become all-powerful. He was raised above the political battle that went around him as rival functions competed to proclaim their loyalty to the regime and to *Nyayo* (the word used to show that he was going to follow the foot-steps of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta). The language of political debate became debased as rival groups denounced one

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<sup>6</sup>David Throup and Charles Hornsby, Multi-Party Politics in Kenya (Nairobi: Eastern Africa Studies, 1988), pp 7-26.

<sup>7</sup>Throup and Hornsby, Multi-Party, p.15

another. Policy differences largely ceased to matter and the only criterion for political survival was to have the president's support.

The cost of political failure became more draconian and the sole test of survival became absolute loyalty to the president. As soon as the local leaders developed their own constituency and became capable of speaking with an independent voice, they were sacked or otherwise humbled and replaced by other less independent persons.<sup>8</sup> With the replacement of Kibaki (who was the vice president of Moi from 1978-1988) with Karanja who was less popular, it was clear that Moi seemed to favour relatively inexperienced individuals whose political position depended on his patronage and who had neither political nor administrative experience, financial wealth nor executive backgrounds.

By the end of 1980s Moi had established complete control over both party and government and through his political and business associates ran an increasingly, partisan, corrupt and feared administration. Through the meetings of the KANU parliamentary group he determined the course and direction of debates in parliament. Opposition existed among radicals and dissidents but there seemed little prospect of change. In 1989, however, the government started to show signs of weakness. The reasons for this were a complex combination of economic difficulties, external pressure, state violence and corruption. As dissidents continued to be silenced one by one, the dissent was transferred into those national institutions e.g. the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), which still retained an independent voice.

On Jan 1990, the Rev. Timothy Njoya, the outspoken Presbyterian cleric who had emerged in the 1980s as one of the Kenyan government's most out-spoken critics, delivered a sermon at St. Andrew's church Nairobi. Reflecting upon the amazing change, which had occurred in Eastern Europe during the previous years culminating in the violent overthrow of the

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<sup>8</sup>Throup and Hornsby, Multi-Party, p.39.

Ceausescu regime in Romania, Njoya speculated upon how long it would be before similar pressures would erupt in Kenya. According to him, the one party system in Africa had completely failed to be democratic and was supposed to be replaced with a multi-party system.<sup>9</sup> Njoya was soon joined by bishop Okullu and veteran dissident Oginga Odinga, Keneth Matiba, Charles Rubia and others who supported the call for the legalization of opposition parties

## **1.6 Multi-party State**

In Kenya many people embraced Multipartism in the belief that the introduction of multiplicity of political parties would be synonymous with the establishment of democracy. The emergence of multi-party politics marked a happy moment for many, including the Church, which saw the democratic system of politics as the long awaited tool to liberate society from oppression and exploitation. However, this was not the case. Many political parties emerged since some feared that if one political party existed, then there was a danger of that party behaving like the ruling party KANU had done i.e. consolidating all the powers to it. Another factor could have been the power struggle, i.e., every one felt that he or she was the only suitable person to save the country from the problems that were facing it. The reason as to why the political parties found themselves in such confusion was / is that the political system encourages a zero sum game: winner takes all and loser loses everything. There is nothing in the system that acknowledges minority rights, or control of power. You win office and you can do anything you want to suppress and destroy your opponents.

The problem with our parties is that they are still operating under conditions created for the survival and sustenance of a one party state. The political parties rushed to the 1992 elections because they wanted power more than they feared it. Their aim was to replace

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<sup>9</sup>Rev. Njoya's, "change", pp. 11-12.

KANU and they forgot to push for the change of repressive and anti-democratic structures. This has made Kenya's political development to remain static since December 1991, when section 2A of the constitution was repealed. The solution to these problems lies with a serious campaign for constitutional reform that instils real checks and balances and diversifies the centres of power. Absolute power must be removed and parliament must be made autonomous and given a bigger role in the running of the country, and the judiciary must be emboldened and be made truly independent.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0 Church and Democracy

### 2.1 Introduction

The Church by her very nature has the task of continuing the work that Christ started here on earth, i.e., announcing the Good News to all people. The Good News is synonymous with God's kingdom that has to start here on earth before it is fully realized in the next life. The Church does her work of proclamation within a certain cultural matrix. She can therefore never run away from the social- political and economic life of the people. The Church has an obligation of seeing to it that democracy is honoured and lived by all. In order to realize this role successfully, the Church has to democratize herself so that whatever she preaches to others can make sense. In this chapter, we intend to give a definition, of the church's mission of here on earth and to look at some instances both historical and present where the Church appeared undemocratic and lastly, I will look at the contribution the Church in general and the Catholic Church in particular has made towards the democratization process in Kenya.

### 2.2 The meaning of the Church

The Church can be defined today as the people of God. It is the body shaped by the life, death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>10</sup> The Church is a fellowship of believers in a spirit of love and faith. Jesus Christ lives in it and is embodied by it, to the extent that it actualizes the sacrificial quality of his life. The Church has its foundation in Christ. We can therefore define the church as an assembly of the faithful called or gathered out of the world; a communion of

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<sup>10</sup>Hanks, D.H, Why are people poor? (New York: Boarder Religions of Faith, 1987), p.275.

those who know to worship and to serve the true God revealed in Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup>

The main chore of the Church is to make visible the signs of God's kingdom; which is the kingdom of love, peace, justice and equality for all. In its activities, it should therefore proclaim and announce God's reign on earth. If the Church has to be ardent to its ministry, it has to be prophetic and reflect Christ who is the rootstock and perfection of God's kingdom on earth. The mission of the church is not to save in the sense of guaranteeing heaven. The Church is a human reality that is contingent to the society in which it lives. According to Ronaldo Munoz,

*the church bears within herself a particular impulse and commission which goes back to her origins on the one hand, and which is designed to transform society on the other hand, thus opening society to a future of greater peace and justice.*<sup>12</sup>

The main chore of the church is to give humankind its profound unity and deepest meaning. Having got the definition of the Church, we now look at two roles of the Church in her attempt to fulfil her earthly mission. In our consideration, we are going to look at the prophetic and the liberating role of the church.

### **2.3 The Prophetic Role of the Church**

God has chosen the Church to be pre-eminently a prophetic community. A prophet is one who announces and interprets God's mighty deeds in the unfolding of history. As a prophetic community, the Church exists to proclaim 'the wonderful deeds of him who called her out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1Pt. 2:9b). According to Ronaldo Munoz,

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<sup>11</sup>Hanks, *Why are people poor?* p.275

<sup>12</sup>Ronaldo Munoz and Gibllini Rossino, *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America* (MaryKnoll, New York:Orbis Books: 1978), p.153.

*The Church is a community chosen and sent by God to speak out to the people and their leaders to reveal to them the deeper underlying meaning of their situation in history and thus to awaken their sense of responsibility and their hopes.*<sup>13</sup>

The Christian community has an obligation to carry out the mission that ancient prophets carried out in Israel. In Acts 2:17-18, Peter says “ in the Messianic times all the people will be prophesying, proclaiming the salvific deeds of God in the Church and to the outside world”. The prophetic mission can be carried out validly and only from within the heart of the struggle for a more human world. The Church must therefore denounce the idolatry and injustice of the powerful, enkindle the hopes of people and awaken in them a new sense of personal responsibility towards the God of history, thus proclaiming the same message that was proclaimed and lived out by Christ.

## **2.4 The Liberating role of the Church.**

In the Old Testament, the Israelites are liberated from the clutches of oppression at the hands of the Egyptians. They inherited a land of their own where they could live as free people and worship God in their own way. Actual political liberation is obviously the mission of Moses from God; 'I have seen the miserable state' (Ex3:7-10). God uses Moses to execute his plans of liberating his people from oppression whatever the odds. It is only after having liberated them politically that God proposes a pact or mutual bond of friendship with Israel.

During his earthly ministry, Christ proclaimed the Good News of liberation for the poor and oppressed, of the justice and reconciliation that marked the reign of God that was already here and still to come.<sup>14</sup> Jesus' mission did not involve the salvation of the soul only but of the whole person whom he was concerned with. The Church that was founded by Christ

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<sup>13</sup>Munoz and Rozino, Frontiers, p.156.

<sup>14</sup>Munoz and Rosino, Frontiers, p.156.

admonishes her faithful to carry God's unfinished work of creation in the sense of ever labouring to make the world a better place for people to live in. The Church acts authentically when it is at war against evil in all its dimensions both physical and psychic, i.e., in whatever form it may own.

The Church has the task of liberating people from poverty, and educating them so that they can know when their rights are being infringed. The role of the Church as an educator of the people is therefore imperative. Through thorough education of the people, they come to know what authentic democracy entails. Such enlightenment will further assist the people to be conscious of injustice and exploitation when imposed or inflicted upon them. The Church has been in the forefront in fighting for the rights of the people. This she has done through conscientizing the people in respect of their inalienable rights.

When people are informed, they can talk better on their own. Corruption and tribalism have been used in Kenya to tyrannize the ignorant and deprive them of their human rights. Officers in government offices ask for bribes before giving their dutiful services and the majority of people comply. Most people possibly comply because they fear that if they take the matter to court, they will lose or maybe they are ignorant of the free services they are entitled to. This is because the court system is not just in the way it handles cases and hence needs to be challenged. People need to be educated so that they can be well versed with their rights and can therefore act whenever anybody is interfering with them. When people have adequate education, they will take the lead in fighting for justice and for their own human rights. The Church in this way can represent the voices of the majority. This approach will entail involving the people in liberating and freeing themselves from their oppression and exploitation.

## 2.5 The Church as a Model for Democracy

In order for the Church' teaching to be credible, it is necessary for her to democratize her own institutions. By so doing, she will present herself to the State as a model of emulation. But the Church in general cannot take pride in her history as far as the exercise of democracy is concerned. This has been marred by very ugly and embarrassing incidents of: the abuse of basic human rights, denials of freedom of expression and injustice not only in Kenya but throughout the world e.g. the introduction of slave trade in which two Christian nations were greatly involved: Portugal and Spain and all this was done with the sanction of the pope in a series of papal bulls issued from 1443.<sup>15</sup> The following quotation illustrates this fact.

*Prince Henry of Portugal claiming that he was a missionary bent saving the souls of the Africans, took the Africans as 'souls' and sold them as slaves in the Ports of Portugal. He asked absolution for seamen taking part in the voyages, and Pope Eugene IV in 1442, granted the request. By 1452, Pope Nicholas V gave king Alfonso of Spain general powers to enslave 'Pagans' Pagans meant the Africans who did not yet know Christ. So controlling was the power of the Vatican in the conduct of trade into Africa that in 1481, Edward IV of England asked the pope for permission to trade in Africa.<sup>16</sup>*

One of the most fundamental of all human rights that is recognized in the universal *Declaration of Human Rights* is the freedom to hold opinion and to express it in speech or writing. But the Church has been accused of curtailing the freedom of expression in any form of writing with threats of submitting the author to a doctrinal trial held by hierarchical superiors.<sup>17</sup> Those who share different opinions against the Church and the accepted doctrines, short of physical torture, are subjected to the dark night of lonely suffering psychological worry and even physical death.<sup>18</sup> Due to this, Christians are excommunicated from their congregations and thrown out. In order for the Church to express its democratic

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<sup>15</sup> Adam Chepkwony, "Church and Democracy" *AFER* 5 (1994), p. 315.

<sup>16</sup> Conrad Earl, *The invention of the Negro* (New York: Paul S. Erickson Inc, 1963), p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power* (London: SCM Press, 1985), p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Boff, *Charism*, p.37.

spirit, it should cherish and protect by law the rights of its intellectuals to explore all avenues towards truth and to debate the issues among themselves in public.

If the Church, that has championed democracy in some African nations, intends to continue to safeguard this worthy and noble cause, then it must be a nearly perfect model of democratic principles and practice. It must start by democratizing herself so that whatever she says can be credible to others (politicians). The principle of 'do as I say, but not as I do', in these issues should never be employed. As a model, it will be necessary for the Church to educate the people on their rights.

We shall now discuss briefly some of the practices prevalent in various Churches today which seem un-democratic and which can ruin their image as champions of democracy. First, while the Churches advocate that people be unrestricted to elect their own political leaders in a free and democratic manner, on the other hand, it seems to hinder her ordinary members this right. In some places, it has been purported that some Churches deny their members, leaders of their choice and no consultation is made and in regard to this, Boff says:

*Leaders are chosen within the strict confines of those who hold ecclesiastical power; they are imposed on the local communities thrusting to the margins the vast majority of laity who often possess greater professional, intellectual, and even theological qualification. The centralization of decision making inevitably leads to marginalizations; this has an effect on basic rights to information and participation in those decisions that affect the responsibility of both the individual and the community.<sup>19</sup>*

The above quotation mainly refers to the Roman Catholic Church though the Protestants do not escape it completely, e.g., in the Anglican Church of Kenya; only a few executive officers elect the bishop.

But what can the Church do to make sense in what she preaches? In order for the Church to gain credibility in whatever she teaches in reference to democracy, she needs to make clear

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<sup>19</sup>Boff, *Charism*, p.36.

some matters especially on her appointment of leaders. The Churches should feel duty bound to enlighten their members as to why they have adopted a different system from the political voting system that they openly support. For example in the Roman Catholic Church, the lay people have no say or very little, if at all it, when it comes to appointments of leaders. Usually they are appointed from Rome and lay people have always to accept whoever has been appointed by Rome. This method of appointing does not tally at all with the spirit of democracy.

The involvement of the lay people in the appointment of leaders and in the decision making of all the various issues pertaining to the Church is very vital. All Church members in the full sense are the Church; they are not mere inhabitants but full citizens of the Church. In the Church despite all the variations of office, all are ultimately equal insofar as they are all believers and as such adult brothers and sisters under one Father and the one Lord Jesus. One would wonder why the Church today does not include the lay people in the appointments of leaders. While looking at the history of the Church, in the early Church, the laity was engaged in ecumenical councils from that of Carthage in the 4<sup>th</sup> century to Trent in 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In the Church it is also better to speak of a democracy (the entire holy people of God) than of the *hierarchy* (a holy caste). This will make the believers to have a sense of belonging whereby they can contribute to the issues pertaining to the Church. In the New Testament worldly honorary titles are strictly shunned in connection with the bearers of offices. Such honorary titles are actually given to the community of believers who are designated as ‘a chosen race’, “a royal priesthood”, “a consecrated nation” (Peter 2:9) and “made a line of a kings and priests to serve our God and to rule the world” (Rev. 5:10).

## 2.6 The Contribution of the Church in the Democratization process

The Church is one of the institutions that have been in the forefront in the call for democracy in Africa. In Kenya for example, it was the Church that initiated the spirit of agitating for changes.<sup>20</sup> These changes were conceived as a second liberation. In August 1989, the late bishop Alexander Muge of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) urged the government to pave way for changes i.e. multi-party politics. The government was very unyielding to change and responded angrily to this call. They even threatened to kill bishop Muge if he continued to call for change. After some few months, bishop Muge died in a tragic road accident in Eldoret on his way from Busia. His death was interpreted as planned by some powerful politicians, in an attempt to silence the Church.

However, the Church never felt threatened by the government stern and cruel reaction to the clamour for changes. Before his death, Muge had asked the government to read the signs of the times being demonstrated in East Germany, Bulgaria and many other Eastern Blocks countries.<sup>21</sup> The government felt threatened by these words of bishop Muge but refused to give in. But at the same time, the Rev. Timothy Njoya of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa had then become very outspoken and accordingly continued with the call for change even after the death of Muge. On January 1990, Njoya delivered a sermon that led people to start agitating for change in a very resolved manner. Lobby groups and other institutions subsequently followed his call for change. Ultimately, the government conceivably after realizing that it could not withstand the pressure for change any longer, reluctantly scrapped section 2A of the constitution hence creating Kenya as a multi-party State. This demand for second liberation is a reality that the Church is proud of when it recalls how it fought for it especially by conscientizing the people.

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<sup>20</sup>Bishop Alexander Muge, "On the way to the future" *The Weekly Review* (August 12<sup>th</sup> 1989), pp.13-16.

<sup>21</sup>Muge, "On the way," *Weekly Review* (1989), p.22.

On March 12, 1994, the Kenya Catholic bishops after realizing how other parties were being undermined issued a pastoral letter entitled *On the Road to Democracy*. In the letter, they argued that Democracy is very consonant with Human Rights.<sup>22</sup> They stressed the need for recognizing other political parties inherent in the country. They stated that if the government failed to consider that seriously, there was a danger of the country plunging into totalitarianism.

Democracy, the bishops argued is 'vulnerable and fragile.'<sup>23</sup> Authentic democracy, the bishops said is possible only in a state ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct concept of the human person. The Catholic Church, through the bishops, has taught that real democracy has to be built on the basis of justice and moral values and has to look to the common good. Many times, the Catholic and Anglican Church of Kenya have been in the forefront demanding a genuine review of the constitution that can fit a multi-party situation. For example the bishops challenged the words of a minister in the office of the president who claimed that government support would only be given to those who voted for KANU (Kenya African National Union).<sup>24</sup> On this issue, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission had this to say:

*If the ruling party cannot serve all people equally, irrespective of their political affiliation, then it is breaking the contract of service and as such it has no business in being in power because ipso facto it loses the moral right to govern.*<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pastoral Letter, *On the Road to Democracy* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1994), p.5.

<sup>23</sup> Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pastoral Letter, *Democracy* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1994), p.4.

<sup>24</sup> Declaration of Kipkalia Kones, *Daily Nation* (20th of Jan, 1994), p.15.

<sup>25</sup>Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pastoral Letter, "On the Road to Democracy" in *The Conscience of Society, The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya 1960-1995*, ed.Rodrigo Mejia (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa 1995),p. 198.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **3.0 Church and Politics**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The Church and the State are two institutions that exist for the good of all people. God created the human beings and entrusted to them the universe to use it for their own good and for his glory. The political community as an earthly institution should strive to this goal, i.e., to serve all people irrespective of age or tribal affiliation.

The Church on the other hand has the task of making God's kingdom manifest here on earth before it is fully realized in the life to come. The fact that the two institutions exist for the service of the human person makes it necessary that the two co-operate so that this goal of serving the human person can be achieved well. This chapter aims at showing the relationship that exists between the Church and politics, Church and State, and to look at the meaning of Justice and Peace and their implication in society.

### **3.2 The relationship between Church and Politics**

There is a distinction but not a separation between the earthly and the heavenly, for the mission of the church. The political community, and the Church are autonomous and independent of each other in their fields. Nevertheless, both are devoted to the personal vocation of the human person though under different titles (GS.76). The Church by reason of her role and competence is not identified with any political community nor bound by ties to any political system. While acknowledging the distinction between the heavenly and the

earthly city, we can never separate the two since both belong to the plan of creation and salvation. Due to this close bond between the heavenly and the earthly kingdoms, the Church can therefore never exonerate herself from earthly responsibilities.<sup>26</sup> The mission of the Church takes place in human history where the Church is constituted and organized as a society in the present world.

By trying to remain aloof, avoiding mixing religion and politics, the Church would ultimately run into the danger of identifying itself with the structure of oppression and evil. This aloofness could encourage Christians to remain silent, and even applaud, while dictators continue to exploit and oppress their citizens. Vatican II puts this matter clearly when it says; “it is a mistake to think that because we have here no everlasting city, but seek the city that is to come, (cf. Heb. 13:14) we are entitled to so shirk our earthly responsibilities according to the vocation of each.”<sup>27</sup>

Politics is one of the most important earthly realities in the life of human societies in which Christians have to be actively present.<sup>28</sup> Political structures are fundamental to the common good of the national community, a common good that embraces all the conditions of social life that enables individuals, families, and institutions to achieve their complete fulfilment. Political structure is closely related to the plan of God in creating human beings to live in society. Politics must be exercised within the limits of the moral order and directed to the common good.<sup>29</sup>

The Church acknowledges that God is actively involved in Socio- Political, Economic and Judicial sectors of society. In order for the Church to be relevant, it must clearly relate God’s existence to all aspects of human existence. Salvation of individuals is not possible apart

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<sup>26</sup>Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church No. 8

<sup>27</sup>Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World No. 43.

<sup>28</sup>Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pre-Election Concern, p.154.

<sup>29</sup>Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pre-Election Concern, p.154. No.6.

from the salvation of the world. Therefore, the Church must of necessity move from being an institution of crisis management that adds bondages on the casualties of oppression (cf.Lk.10: 25-37) to an institution that equips people to become innovators of social transformation under the divine will. Vatican II, has this to say:

*the political community and public authority are based on human nature, and therefore they need to belong to an order established by God, nevertheless, the choice of the political regime and appointment of rulers are left to the free decision of citizens (cf.Rom.13: 5).<sup>30</sup>*

Through voting, Christians exercise their God given right to put in power the government of their choice. Every citizen ought to be mindful of his or her duty to promote the common good by using his or her vote properly. By speaking of the Church involvement in politics, we do not mean that the Church should engage in party politics. The Church should refrain from party politics, to sponsor a political party, or to make political choices for the laity. Therefore the Church should never accept to be part of any lobby group. This involvement of the Church in politics means: “being concerned about the affairs of the people and trying to find meaning to the most perplexing questions of human existence such as economics, gender equality and others”<sup>31</sup>

In 1977, at AMECEA bishops’ conference held in Langata, Kenyatta had the following to say:

*One of the services you give to others is to help them keep going in the right direction. We have many distractions and can wander off the path. We need constantly to be put back on it again. We may not even know that we are going astray, that we are taking the wrong direction. That is why we need the Church in our midst to tell us when we are making a mistake. The Church is the conscience of society, (and today a society needs a conscience). Do not be afraid to speak. If*

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<sup>30</sup>Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World No. 74.

<sup>31</sup>Ndingi Mwana Nzeki, “Religion and Politics.” Wajibu Vol. 3 (1989), p.10.

*we go wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes.*<sup>32</sup>

Christians can play a distinctive role in enhancing errors of public policy whenever it is necessary and prevent social turmoil. This duty is mandated by the Gospel, which places great emphasis on the social harmony, as implied in the proclamation of Jesus Christ in Luke. 4:18-19 that says:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of Lord's favour.*

In times when the State abuses its authority entrusted it has to be challenged by the Gospel. The Gospel has the power to instruct, judge and guide the State when the latter falls short in its duties. The Church has the duty to continuously call the State to account for its actions and to always make sure that the will of God is exercised among God's people who are the same time citizens of the State.

### **3.3 Church and State**

In most societies, religion is recognized and appreciated as the focal dimension in moulding a moral society.<sup>33</sup> In Kenya for example, every State function starts with prayers, e.g. the opening of every Session of Parliament; the courts of law use the Sacred Scripture for witness. The national Anthem starts like a song beseeching God to pour his blessings out

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<sup>32</sup> Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pastoral Letter, 1977, "Family and Responsible Parenthood" ed Mejia Conscience p.3.

<sup>33</sup> Magesa and Nthamburi, Democracy, p.137.

upon Kenya. The Kenyan Constitution guarantees freedoms of worship and of religious affiliation.

The State is not a society but it is only part of society and exists to serve society. It is very important for the Church to state clearly and explicitly, her mission as far as her relationship to the State is concerned. Both the Church and the State are bound together as they both owe their existence to God. Since the Church cannot exist in a social vacuum, without the State, and since it must be relevant to the people's needs, it follows that the Church and the State co-exist for the common good of all. God created the human person as a social being. This means that the human person forms a community with God and with others. Therefore, the fact of living together in community is a divinely instituted reality and reflects what we shall be in heaven.

It is necessary for both the Church and the State to support one another in the complementary tasks.<sup>34</sup> Many African leaders Kenya included agree that the Church and the State have the task of promoting integral development of each citizen and safeguard people's freedom of worship. For example, Andrian Ddungu of Uganda has this to say:

*Christians who are people that constitute the Church are at the same time the ones who are citizens of the nation. Both the Church and the State as institutions exists diligently, wisely and committedly serve these people. Therefore, the leadership of both the Church and State ought to serve the people holistically without dichotomizing their lives.<sup>35</sup>*

The Church as the custodian of God's word has the mandate of transmitting the right knowledge that will liberate and promote the common good of all, so that God's kingdom can fully reign on earth. The Gospel should instruct, judge, and guide the State in all its activities.

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<sup>34</sup>John Taylor, Christianity and Politics in Africa (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), p.9.

<sup>35</sup>Andrian Ddungu, "Church and State Co-operation to Integral Development" in Church Contribution to Integral Development, eds. Agbasiere and Zabajungu (Eldoret: AMECEA Publications, 1986), p.22.

If the State abuses the authority entrusted to it, the same Gospel should rebuke it. President Moi of Kenya acknowledges the important role that the Church has to play in the affairs of the State in the following words:

*Church leaders and laity should not be afraid to speak out if Society has gone wrong. Local Church leaders and the laity must be the conscience of society in which they live. Institutionalized evils take the form of apartheid, the denials of basic human rights, open liberty and corruption. These must be rooted out.*<sup>36</sup>

The Church wants the State to point towards the kingdom of God and not away from it. According to Moltman, the Church wants God's grace to be reflected in the temporary dealings of the political community.<sup>37</sup> In order for the Church to yield success in her mission, the transformation of all the social institutions into a good social order is very important. This is because since religion is inevitably involved in Social affairs, it cannot escape from political involvement. This argument that religious people should not be involved in politics does not hold water since religious people are also members of their own society, concerned about the welfare of society. The religious people have the moral obligation to help in correcting mistakes that may be made by political leaders.

In May 1971, in Limuru, the then minister of finance and economic planning Mr. Mwai Kibaki had the following to say:

*Modern Church is expected to be out spoken because other groups in society must be cautious. We must have at least some organizations which speak up for the right of the human person regardless of what happens tomorrow ...an active organization which speaks of our problems that we face today. I cannot think of any other organization better placed than a Church to play that role.*<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Daniel Arap Moi, Daily Nation, (20th July 1977),p.5.

<sup>37</sup>Jurgen Moltmann, On Human Dignity: Political Theological and Ethics (London: SCM Press, 1984), p.89.

<sup>38</sup>Mr. Mwai Kibaki speech quoted by Henry Okulu, Church and Politics in East Africa (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1978), p.9.

The Church cannot abdicate its moral responsibilities to the society, for to do so would be disobedience to the Gospel mandate. In dealing with political issues, the Church is called in love to clearly and firmly express its position that may differ from popular expectations. The Church is a universal moral teaching authority and exercises her prophetic office in the interest of human development and salvation. There is no guarantee that this prophetic mission will always be to the liking of the political authority e.g. prophet Jeremiah and John the Baptist preached contrary to the political expectations of their days. The church must demonstrate clearly that it cares deeply about the just political order and the welfare of all the people.

### **3.4 The Biblical Notion of Justice And Peace**

I start this reflection with the words of H. Scherey in his book, *The Biblical Doctrine of Justice and Law* which says “It can be said without exaggeration that the Bible, taken as a whole has one theme: The history of the revelation of God’s righteousness.<sup>39</sup> In the Bible, justice is used in the legal codes to describe ordinances which regulate communal life (Ex. 21:1-23:10) and which prescribe restitution for injury done to persons and property as well as for cultic regulations. Acting justly consists in avoiding violence and fraud and other actions that destroy communal life and in pursuing that which sustains the life of the community.<sup>40</sup>

### **3.5 Justice in the Old Testament**

In the entire Old Testament, Yahweh is proclaimed as just,( Psalm 7:9). In the book of the prophet Hosea, Yahweh’s justice is intrinsic to the covenant relationship ( Hos. 2:19). The

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<sup>39</sup>Scherey Haugey, *The Biblical Doctrine of Justice and Law* (London: SCM Press, 1995), p. 50.

<sup>40</sup>John Haughey, *The Faith that does Justice: Examining the Christian sources for Social Change* (Toronto:Paulist Press, 1997),p.69.

justice of Yahweh is his saving power, his fidelity to his role of the Lord of the covenant. It is also his indictment of sin and his call to return or conversion. Justice represents a victory over evil powers that threaten the destruction of the world. It is manifest both in the historical lives of the people and as an object of their eschatological hope. Yahweh reveals himself as a God who is compassionate to the oppressed and their vindicator.

When Israel is the oppressed one, Yahweh leads them out of slavery; when they inherit the land he again emerges as the protector of the land-less. When Israel forgets his covenant his prophets e.g. Amos comes and tells them that the fidelity to the covenant has to be made manifest in the concern for the poor and the oppressed. The prophets talk with insight into the ways in which people have broken the covenant.

In Psalm 82:2-4, it says: “No more mockery; be fair to the wretched and the destitute; rescue the weak and the needy, save them from the clutches of the wicked”. The liberation by Yahweh of the people of Israel granted by Yahweh becomes a requirement that justice be exercised not only among the people of Israel themselves but also in respect to foreigners living within the territory of Israel: “you must not oppress the strangers, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex. 22:20) In the Old Testament God reveals himself to us as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from the human person faith in him and justice towards ones neighbour.

### **3.6 Justice in the New Testament**

In Isaiah 7,23:23,52, God’s kingdom is announced with its character, i.e., “will be the reign of Justice and the liberation of the oppressed”. The mission of the future Messiah will be to proclaim justice and free the oppressed (cf. Is 61:1-2). His justice will not be other than the justice of God of which his reign consists. The announcement of the kingdom of God

cannot be other than the good tidings for the poor and the afflicted. Jesus receives from God the mission of bringing the good news to the poor, of proclaiming liberty to the captives and of making justice triumph (cf. Lk4: 18-19).

Entry or exclusion from the kingdom announced by Jesus depends on ones attitude towards the poor and the oppressed who are the same referred to in Is. 58:1-2 as the victims of human injustice, and for whom God wishes to manifest his justice. Justice attains its inner fullness only in love. Since every person is a truly visible image of the invisible God and a brother or sister of Christ, the Christian finds in every person God himself and God's absolute demand on justice.

### **3.7 The Role of Justice and Peace Commission**

The major role of the Church is the promotion of justice and peace among the poorest of the poor. The Church upholds that all human beings are equal in dignity despite their different social status. According to the document of Vatican II *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the mission of the Church in society is said to be mainly religious and not specifically a political, economic or social role. However, the Council stressed that in order for the Church to work in society and to help that society, it must be actively involved in the political, economic and social order. The commitment of the church to the promotion of good social order is a mandate from her founder, Jesus Christ. This is well expounded by the words of St. Paul in Gal: 3:28 which says "the Lord Jesus Christ is the saviour of all humankind and that in him all human beings form one family: there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female"

In their pastoral letter of January 1988, the Catholic bishops of Kenya formulated the main objectives of the National Commission for Justice and Peace as: *Proclamation and Justice*.<sup>41</sup> The Justice and Peace Commission should sensitize, inform and educate both individuals and communities towards a stronger sense of Justice and peace. The commission should be bold enough to denounce evil and injustices.

*The Mission of preaching the Gospel dictates at the present time that we should dedicate ourselves to the liberation of people even in their present existence in this World. For unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the World, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with people our times.*<sup>42</sup>

The Justice and Peace Commission call for the active participation of Christians in running the public affairs of society, including the civil service. The participation in political activities for the common good should be the responsibility of all and not only the concern of the professional politicians. Church leaders should not be excluded totally from participation in legitimate political action.

The commitment of the Church to the promotion of Justice and Peace is not a commitment to a catholic project but the Church's way of life. It is a commitment of love that follows upon a conversion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Actually, active involvement in the proclamation of Justice and Peace as integral to evangelization, does not only requires to preach the word but also to witness it. Authentic preaching of the Gospel involves action for justice. Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Bishops Conference of Kenya, Pastoral Letter Jan. 1988 No. 10 and 11.

<sup>42</sup>Synod of Bishops "Justice in the World" in *Renewing the Earth*, eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (New York: Image Books, 1977), p.398.

<sup>43</sup>Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World", p.391.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4.0 From Orthodoxy to Ortho-Praxis

### 4.1 Introduction

In order for theology to be meaningful to the people concerned, it has to address people in their concrete situations of their lives. Any theology that remains abstract is naive and meaningless to the people. Any relevant theology should always spring from the reflection on people's lives so that they can find meaning in their lives. It is the task of a theologian therefore to be in union with the reality of people's life for the cause of transformation of society into a better place for living. In this chapter, we are going to look at how a theologian can adequately address people, both the governors and the governed so that true democracy can thrive in Kenya. In order to do so successfully, we have to contemplate a theology based on action which according to the terminology of Liberation Theologians is known as "Ortho-praxis".

### 4.2 Ortho-praxis

Ortho-praxis comes from the Greek words *orthē* 'right' or 'correct' and *praxis* 'deed' 'action' or practice. While "Orthodoxy" is concerned with correct belief, "Ortho-praxis" is directed to correct action. Gustavo Gutierrez, in his book *A Theology of Liberation* differentiates between *Orthodoxy* and *Ortho-praxis* as: Orthodoxy is a proclamation of and reflection on statements considered to be true and Ortho-praxis is the intention to recognize the work and importance of concrete behaviour of deeds of action in Christian life.<sup>44</sup> Gutierrez argues that for any theology to be relevant it has to be translated into pastoral and

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<sup>44</sup>Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, ( Maryknoll , Orbis Books, 1973), p.6.

social practice, i.e., it has to be functional. According to him, academic theology, is generated by a word based on static conception of truth and committed to a standard of right thinking or Orthodoxy. Liberation theology is generated by a method committed to a dynamic conception of right acting or Ortho-praxis.

### 4.3 Employing Lonergan's method

The Church understands herself as an instrument in God's hand at the service of society and cultures, in order to be completely transformed into God's kingdom. It is with this in mind, that we try to look at what methodology the Church can employ in order to be prosperous in her mission. The type of practical theology that we are going to employ is that of Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan's book, *Method in Theology*, suggests a way of doing theology, using a certain method that he calls *Method of operations*. According to him, a theologian should not applause her/himself by just uttering doctrines without being conscious of what he /she is doing. Intellectual consciousness is very profound in all his writings. In our research what's very important in Lonergan's terminology is "*Method*." According to him method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.<sup>45</sup>

According to Lonergan, a theologian should always incarnate him/herself in the locality and then from there find ways of attending to the problems prevalent in that locality. He argues that it is very bad for a theologian to impose a certain methodology on people when solving any pastoral problem. The methodology that he proposes does not start with the Bible and the teaching of the Church as if everything else could be deduced from these sources. The method is rather inductive, submitting real life situations to the light of divine revelation

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<sup>45</sup>Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), p.4.

as a light for our path. Lonergan therefore proposes what he calls “method of operations.”<sup>46</sup>

There are operations concerned with sense perception, the operations concerned with understanding the data our senses have perceived the operations concerned with reflecting on our understanding and passing judgement on its truth or falsity and finally the operations of deciding on the course or causes of action to be taken as a consequence of our judgements. It is these four basic operations that we are going to analyse as a basic tool of helping a theologian to address adequately the notion of democracy. The four basic operations are being implemented as follows:

- (1) **Be attentive:** This implies being concerned about the people whom you are working with. It calls the theologian to be conscious of what is happening in his or her own milieu. It entails thorough observation and collection of data. Attentiveness demands active participation in the situation in which one is working. Without the data, there would be nothing to be questioned and understood. Yet what is sought by inquiring is never just another datum but the idea or form, the intelligible unity or relatedness that organizes data into intelligible wholeness.<sup>47</sup> It is being at home with the people; not like a tourist but with great interest and a lot of concern.
- (2) **Be intelligent:** After gathering the data, there comes a further operation of inquiry into the data. We try to grasp why data are related the way they are e.g. poor governance and the people. Here questions for understanding start emerging for example; why are people living like this? What is the cause of their state of life? What is democracy and who is its protagonist? Such and many more are questions for understanding and they spring from the data that had been collected. Understanding results from an intelligibility which is immanent in the data by posing and answering the question “why” or “how” We come to understand, to

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<sup>46</sup>Lonergan, Method, p.4.

<sup>47</sup>Lonergan, Method, p. 10.

work out what we have understood, to start formulating concepts on what we have understood, and we can start working out the expression and implication of our understanding.

(3) **Be reasonable:** At this level we start reflecting, marshal the evidence, pass judgement on the truth or falsify, certainty or probability of a statement.<sup>48</sup> Theologically, we can say that this is the theological reflection that follows in the light of the Church' teachings and so forth. It does not mean passing judgement on people but on understanding with all that is interconnected with their situation. For example if a particular party denies essential services to people claiming that they never voted for (the party that is in power), the government should be challenged on the basis of the violations of human rights which are God-given. By being reasonable (passing a judgement, declaring our stand) it implies that the collected data had been sufficiently analysed and all the relevant questions have been asked such that before a judgement is passed, no pertinent question has not been answered. This level is a stage of a discovery of what God has to say to the poor people and the problem at hand. From here, we are now equipped not just as analysts but also as God's messenger to carry out the action for liberation.

(4) **Be Responsible:** This is the level at which we are concerned with deliberations, decide and carry out decisions. The idea is the response called for by the individual and communities. Having attended to the problems and tried to understand the situation, we now come to action. This is because any situation in which a theologian finds him or herself calls for action. This is the purpose of theology i.e. studying the various human situations in view of action. It brings to their situation a new response. This response is different in that people now act in a more informed way than they were before the research was carried out. Here, we

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<sup>48</sup>Lonergan, Method, p. 365

respond by carrying out concrete solutions together with the people. We always try to make the voice of the people heard by involving them seriously.

Lonergan's method as we noted is cumulative and leads to progressive results. This means the decision that we have made today is not definitive. This decision will work as our data of experience tomorrow in case we are addressing the same issue. Therefore, his method is continuous, and any future research is dependent on the previous judgements. It is with this point in mind that we now look at how we can employ this method to create a democratic Kenya where every one values, treasures and adhere to democratic ideals.

#### **4.4 Option for the poor**

The word "poor" has varied meanings depending on ones perspectives. Generally speaking, the poor are the dominated, the ignorant (those who do not know their rights) and the oppressed. The word *poor* can be extended to cover all the oppressed, all those who are dependent upon the mercy of others. In our consideration, by the term "poor" we are referring to those people who have very little clue or none at all of what is happening in the society in which they live. It is these who are our concern and we are trying to ponder on how we (as the ministers of the Church) can help them to realize true liberation.

In Matthew.23: 23 Jesus rebukes the Pharisees because of their strict observance of the law while neglecting the essentials. *"You have neglected the weightier of the law -justice, mercy, good faith."* According to Jesus, the Pharisees were hypocritical in that they never practiced what they preached. Jesus had great interest and a lot of concern for the marginalized and it was to them that the kingdom of God belonged(cf.Matt.9: 13). The gospel is realistic not idealistic in that it does not bring new teaching; but a new reality. That is why what is most important for Jesus is his concern for the poor, the sick, the possessed

and the forsaken, not his quarrel with the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.<sup>49</sup> If the Church whose primary mission is to announce the kingdom of God wants to gain credibility, then preference for the poor is very fundamental.

In this paper, by the term poor, we do not primarily mean the economically poor but those who are not aware of their rights and duties as citizens. Christian should feel duty bound to be part of these people who are not yet informed. In other words, the Church has to show solidarity with those whose rights are usually tampered with and probably are not aware of it. By so doing, the Church will be imitating Christ her founder whose immediate concern was the poor. Being in solidarity with the poor, it means being involved in the struggle for human rights. In our exploration on democracy, we noted that respect for human values is a vital constituent for democracy. This implies that one of the tasks of the Church is to battle for the rights of people.

The Church is summoned to transform people's misery into happiness, despair into hope, uncertainties into certainties. To announce the kingdom preached by Jesus is not possible without proclaiming at the same time its fundamental request for a just society. The 1971 Synod of Bishops had this to say on this:

*Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the World fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*<sup>50</sup>

From the above statement, we note that justice is a permanent and constitutive dimension in the field of evangelization. There is a need for the Church to create a new society where justice and peace prosper. Anyone who proclaims the gospel to the poor belongs to the poor,

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<sup>49</sup>Moltmann, *The way of Jesus Christ* (London: scm press, 1990), p.90.

<sup>50</sup>Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World" eds. Cecil McGhary, Rodrigo Mejia and Valerian Shirima in *A Light On Our Path: A Pastoral Contribution to the Synod for Africa* (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1992), p.89.

and becomes poor himself, in communion with them. We can show our concern for the poor by participating actively in their daily lives and especially by engaging ourselves in the struggle for liberation and with them structuring a new society in which justice and peace prevail. The poor should also become agents of the poor by being open to those who want to join them in the struggle for liberation

## 4.5 Conscientization

Conscientization is a dynamic action of awakening and organisation of the popular sectors that are capable of pressing public officials who are often impotent in their social projects without popular support.<sup>51</sup> Through conscientization the conscience of Christians are educated in view of inspiring and stimulating them. It is a commitment in respect of time. There is no conscientization without historical commitment so that conscientization is also a historical awareness. It is a critical insertion into history. It means that humans take on a role as subjects making the world. The Church as a liberator of the oppressed has an obligation to teach people whom they are and what their rights are. As citizens they need to know their responsibilities in society (the country). Citizens need thorough education on their rights and what it means to be a citizen.

On the chapter on democracy, we noted that genuine democracy entails human rights and values. Failure to safeguard these values leads to violation of democracy. We also noted that democracy could never thrive in a cultural vacuum. If it is true that democracy has to be rooted in people's lives, then people have to be admonished to live the democratic ideals or to take them as a value, which should be honoured and safeguarded. For example, a parent who dictates matters in a family is not democratic and should hence be challenged. Any

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<sup>51</sup>Gustavo, Liberation, pp.114-116.

citizen who is denied services in a certain office simply because he or she did not vote for the party that is in power (governing the country) is being denied his or her democratic rights as a citizen.

Citizens should be made aware that democracy is consonant with human rights and decision making of his or her own country. Conscientization calls for the empowerment of the people so that they can dare and act to overcome tyrannical governments. It is only by conscientizing the citizens that they can be able to discern without being lured whom to vote into parliament during the general elections. By meticulous education, citizens will know who will be able to confront the governments when it starts to interfere with their rights. For example, although Kenya is a multi-party state, some citizens do not know any other party apart from KANU (Kenya African National Union). The majority of the citizens have been made to believe that KANU is synonymous with the government. It is only when the Church actively takes the task of constantly educating the citizens on their rights, that genuine democracy can reign in Kenya. The Church as the custodian of human rights has as its primary responsibility to conscientize people on their rights so that God's kingdom can be manifested here on earth.

## **4.6 Engagement**

Engagement is being involved actively and analytically in a given situation in view of creating and moulding it into one's vision and goal. When we are actively and critically involved in a certain situation, we are able to detect the defects in a given situation and bring changes. The pastoral agent is invited to live the situation from within as much as possible. It is a critical insertion into history in order to create it and mould it. Existentialist philosophers argue that we are the makers of our own lives through choices and commitment. By being

actively involved in the affairs of the society in which we are living, we determine the course that history is going to take. In case things are not as we would like them to be, we have the potentiality of changing them and by so doing, we mould and create history. If one is really committed to change things for the better, then there is a need for action and not just empty words.

While solidarity with the poor psychologically connotes being in the shoes of those who are suffering, engagement demands involvement i.e. not only just to feel with them but acting with them. Engagement demands a thorough analysis of the causes of exploitation, and poverty. For example, after realizing that people's rights are being infringed, there is a need to look at what could be done. One can engage the people by involving them in various activities that are aimed at bringing changes in the society. For example, seminars and workshops should be organized at all levels of life and then the people themselves should later be able to conduct these seminars by themselves possibly in their local languages. At times situations can be very depressing and wanting such that people might be called to express their dissent in public on some issues. This could be achieved through peaceful demonstrations with placards written usually to condemn the evils that are prevalent in the society. By so doing, they will be challenging the government while at the same time arousing the awareness of other people who might not be aware of the ills the government is doing to them.

The Church is challenged to get actively involved in the fight against the violation of human rights and she needs to adopt means and strategies of addressing issues that would enhance authentic democracy. As we said earlier, democracy is a value that has to permeate in people's culture, i.e., it needs to be part and parcel of people's lives. In this regard therefore, it is vital that people be taught what democracy means and be challenged to practice it in all areas of life, e.g., in work, families and other fields.

Engagement has also to do with empowerment and active participation of the people. Unless everyone participates in the struggle against human rights abuse, genuine democracy can never be achieved. The Church has a task therefore of not only teaching the people on the value of democracy, but also to invite people to action. This action should be geared along the lines of self-criticism before criticising others.

#### 4.7 Democratizing the Media

This brief reflection starts with the words of St. Paul's letter to the Romans which says:

❖ *And how are they to believe in him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes from by the preaching of Christ (Rom. 10: 14-17).*

Every human being is entitled to the right to information on the subjects that concern human beings, either as individuals or as members of society according to each person's circumstances. In the documents of Vatican II, *Inter Mirifica*, the following was stated in regard to communication: "If news or facts and happenings are communicated publicly, and without delay, every individual will have permanent access to sufficient information and thus will be enabled to contribute effectively to the common good."<sup>52</sup>

Unless the media are free to dispatch information to the citizens, then authentic democracy will at no time be realised. In order for democracy to be fully achieved, the creation of free societies where different beliefs, views and opinions can be expressed everywhere without impediment or hindrance is very fundamental. The government should insure that all citizens without exception enjoy the fundamental liberties in general and

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<sup>52</sup>Vatican II, Inter Mirifica No. 11

religious liberty in particular. The Kenyan government should disintegrate the monopoly of the State over the media by encouraging and sustaining private initiatives in the media.

Recently, we note that the Kenyan government has tried to hamper the freedom of the media. For example, most of the private radios and televisions only operate in some parts of the country. The vast majority of the citizens have access only to the KANU (Kenya African National Union) controlled radio KBC (Kenya Broad Casting Co-operation). This has in fact crippled the way to authentic democracy in Kenya. For example during the 1997 campaigns, those citizens living in the rural areas never had access to the views of members of other political parties apart from KANU and whenever the views of other political parties could be presented, it was in a very negative way. Most of the citizens were made to believe that KANU is the only good party and the rest were presented as being poisonous to the peace of the country.

There should be freedom of the mass media in Kenya and the government should tolerate other radios and television stations to operate all over the country without any unfair restrictions being imposed on them. Freedom of press should be honoured and esteemed by the government and the government should never feel threatened by the emergence of other radios, television and or any other form of literature. Several times, journalist have been harassed or maliciously aligned in court because of exposing the truth e.g. Pius Nyamora, the editor of the *Society Magazine* was harassed in numerous ways in 1990 by the government.

The existence of freedom of the mass media is not synonymous with democracy since it is very possible to have numerous radios, televisions and all other forms of literature but without dispatching the correct information to the people. There is a need to create a culture of transparency and truth in the mass media so that people can always receive correct information. The mass media should learn to be frank and never to fall into the temptation of

favouring a particular party. Malice and bias in the dispatching of information should be avoided completely.

#### **4.8 Recommendations**

Having done a research on *The Role of the Church in the Democratization process in Kenya*, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations based on the Essay.

The Church in Kenya has spoken through pastoral letters, verbal denunciations providing guidelines that are reliable, dependable and authoritative. This spirit should be kept going.

In all the formation institutions of the Church for clergy and religious; the social teachings of the Church should form part of the curriculum of studies.

There is lack of adequate knowledge of democracy and what it entails. This problem needs deeper study and evaluation for a proper contextual adaptation of the teachings of the Church.

Documents on the Social teachings of the Church are not available in the local languages for the rural population. Local theologians could be challenged to translate them into simple language for the faithful.

In most cases, knowledge of justice is not sufficiently enough to the priest. In this regard therefore, it is necessary that priests and all other pastoral agents to attend refresher courses on matters of democracy and Justice.

The Small Christian Communities should be used as the place of learning about Catholic Social Teachings especially on issues of human rights.

The Church should feel duty bound to send messages to our civil leaders inviting them to promote justice, peace and reconciliation and making clear the position of the Catholic Church in the present situation as well as the perspective of its mission for the years to come.

The Church should prepare some questionnaires and send them to the Small Christian Communities e.g.

- (a) Am I seen as a conscientious person i.e. someone who is seen to stand for what is right and just?
- (b) How aware am I of the grief and anxieties of the people I live with?
- (c) The way the elections of the Parish are conducted, does it reflect the spirit of democracy?

A spirit of dialogue between the Church and the State should be fostered so that the two institutions can work harmoniously and for the good of all. Antagonism between the two institutions should be avoided by all means.

The Church and the State are two distinct institutions that exist for the service of the human person. Therefore, each should be aware of its responsibility.

The State should be made aware of the role of the Church in the society so that those politicians who usually complain that the Church is interfering with politics should stop.

The State should allow the freedom of the media so that people can air their views without fear of being harassed by the government. Consequently, licences should be granted to those who would like to start radio and television stations without any unfair restrictions being imposed.

There are some politicians who have a tendency of giving threats of eviction to those who do not vote for them. This is contrary to the spirit of democracy and such people should face a legal action immediately they utter such words.

Coalition of tribes in order to put a person of those tribes in power should totally be discouraged.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

In 1992, the Kenyan Catholic Bishop's wrote a pastoral letter entitled *On the Road to Democracy*. The title of this letter tells us a lot about Democracy in the sense that democracy is something that we are ever yearning for and actually the worst mistake that any society can make is to claim that it has attained absolute democracy. This paper has shown us that democracy is a sensitive value and everyone and especially any leader would not like to be termed un-democratic.

The Church too is another institution that claims to be democratic yet some of her members complain bitterly about the treatment they have received from the Church's authorities especially when they seemed to express an independent mind contrary to the held teaching of the Church. Our exploration has shown us that the Church cannot stand on a tower and blow the trumpet as far as the practice of democracy is concerned. History has it that the Church in her development has experienced cases of terrible abuse of human rights e.g. during the colonial era the Church was greatly associated with the colonialists and actually, the colonialists first came as missionaries who later colonized Kenya. However, despite these historical and present shortcomings, the Church by her nature has the mandate of portraying and campaigning for authentic democracy.

Every Christian has a mandate to practice justice as an expression of God's love. In his theology, Gustavo Gutierrez says that to love God is to do justice and hence all are called to practice justice in all arenas of their lives. In this paper, Justice has been seen more of a vocation that all of us are called by God to live than a project. If people cultivate the spirit of justice and peace in their lives, Kenya would take a new political dimension whereby each person cares for the interest of the other and sees the other as a brother or sister rather than an object of exploitation towards one's personal ends.

When theology remains abstract, then it has very little impact on the people and hence it is useless. One of the main tasks of a theologian is to make theology relevant to the lives of the people and this can only be achieved by making it concrete to the daily problems of the people. If theology does not address the problems of the people, then it is useless in that people never come to know what God is telling them in their particular historical situation. The involvement of a theologian with the life of the people has been given a very primary priority in this paper. Through insertion, one is able to reflect with the people concerned on what God is telling them at that particular moment.

Finally, we can say that the way to democracy is long and tedious but this does not mean that it cannot be achieved and therefore, all of us are called upon to try and reach that goal. This goal can be achieved through inculcating democratic values into people's lives. It is only when democracy becomes part and parcel of people's lives that genuine democracy can thrive in Kenya. We look towards the future with hope that one day, Kenya will be democratic.

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