

TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

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A MISSION FOR EVERY CATHOLIC?

John Paul II Evangelising Teams

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Degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology

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To

My loving mother, Makokha Mareba Namweke, my first evangeliser and my inspiration, especially after the death of my father Jeremiah Walusala Rakama, RIP.

My grandmother Lusia Nechesa Nafoyo,

My Uncle Emmanuel Wamukoya

and

Blessed Sacrament English Choir, Buruburu.

Epigraph

Can the Roman Catholic Church be evangelical? Is Catholicism a religion centred on the gospel? Half a century ago some Catholics, and practically all Evangelicals, would have said no. Protestant churches, it was thought, could be churches of proclamation and evangelization, but the Catholic Church was a church of liturgy and law, centred on tradition, hierarchy, and sacraments. In other words, Protestants were viewed as specializing in the word of God and the gospel; Catholics, in the law of God and the sacraments.

Avery Dulles, S.J.

(John Paul II and The New Evangelization – What Does It Mean?, 1995, 25)

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology. 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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INTRODUCTION

In this work, we have tried to present information concerning *JP II ET*. Note that, when *JP II ET* is used in singular, it means one particular group or *JP II ET* as one national team in Kenya, but when plural is used, it refers to the various groups or all of them. To begin with, we shall give the meaning (definition) of the term *evangelisation*. Infact, this definition is part of the introduction itself. After getting a grasp of the meaning of the term *evangelisation*, we shall proceed to the background of *JP II ET*, which comprises of how it was founded, its aims and the system of leadership. I will also give some of the factors that motivated me to choose this particular group(s) for my research.

The theological foundation of *JP II ET* will take us through the Bible, the teachings of the Church and the Apostolic Pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II to Kenya. In this case, we would like to show how *JP II ET* is actually based on a sound Catholic theology. We will look at the way *JP II ET* is spreading the Gospel as commissioned by Jesus Himself. The social analysis of the situation that led to the formation of *JP II ET* also falls under this chapter. We will see further how the mission of *JP II ET* is a responsibility for every Catholic and all those who follow Christ by believing in his Good News.

After having analysed the situation of *JP II ET*, we well take a look at the their activities from the time of their foundation up to the time of the completion of this research. We will also give our findings in terms of what the members have achieved as well as the problems they have encountered along the way. We have tried to find out whether this successes and failures have their roots from within or from without or both.

Following the strengths and weaknesses of *JP II ET*, we have tried to reflect on the possible way forward. Here, we intent to show *JP II ET* would be renewed and how harmony in terms of membership and activities can be achieved. We have also thought

about a system of self-reliance and necessity of reviewing the literature and the formation as a whole.

Last but not least, we have given some suggestions as to how *JP II ET* could be empowered, so that their mission can bear fruits for the whole Catholic Church as well as to Christianity in general i.e. where possible, especially with the spirit of Ecumenism. We have tried to indicate how *JP II ET* can work with or among the clergy and the magisterium in this important and very challenging area of the Gospel task. We shall see how they have been called as *lay ministers* in the Catholic Church.

We have also emphasised on their scope of evangelising and how they can fulfil their mission without getting into trouble with their Parish Priests and Bishops. We have paid attention to today's challenges in terms evangelisation especially the African context and the importance of inculturation. This research leaves us with what to expect from *JP II ET* as we trace its roots, its growth and its fruits that will be enjoyed by the Church as a whole.

I would also like to indicate that all the biblical quotations cited in this work have been taken from the *RSV Bible*.

What is Evangelisation?

In trying to find an answer to the question above, I realised that evangelisation cannot simply be defined in a single sentence without an explanation. It is only when that has been done, then we can be in a position to avoid a wrong definition of the term while at the same time remaining in its proper context. In this attempt, I picked on the following definitions from the *Catholic Dictionary*:

Evangelion (*eh-vahu-GEHL-ee-ahu*): (Greek: good news) The proclamation of the "good news" at liturgy, or a text of the Gospels.

Evangelist (*ee-VAN-dzhuh-lihst*): (Greek *evangelistos*: one who announces good news)

1. Originally referring to one who proclaimed the Gospel in the Apostolic Age of the Church, it is most commonly used in reference to the four men whose names are associated with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Eph 4:11-12, the office of Evangelist is listed with the Apostles and Prophets for the purpose of “building up the body of Christ.

2. In current Protestant usage especially, any preacher of the Gospel.

Evangelization (*ee-van-dzhuh-lih-ZAY-shun*): (From Greek *evangelion*: good news) All those activities by which every member of the Church proclaims and presents to the world the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. CCC 429, 848-856, 905, 927-933, 1072, 1122, 2044, 2225, 2472.⁴²

In the words of Pope Paul VI, the definition and or explanation of the term evangelisation would be as follows:

Thus it has been possible to define evangelisation in terms of proclaiming Christ to those who do not know him, of preaching, of catechesis, of conferring Baptism and the other Sacraments. Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelisation in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it. It is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelisation unless one tries to keep in view all its essential elements.²

The above explanations of the term evangelisation and its implication in the terms *evangelion* and evangelist, will suffice as we continue reflecting on the other areas of this important topic of research. What is more, the above-cited sources altogether, essentially give us an insight of what evangelisation is all about.

⁴² STRAVINSKAS, P.M.J., ed., *Catholic Dictionary*, Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1993, 2002², 306.

² Pope Paul VI. *Apostolic Exhortation EN*, 17, 1975.

Chapter 1

The Background of *JP II ET*

In the opening chapter of this piece of work on evangelisation, I intent to give an explanation that will unveil the nature of *JP II ET*. This will include among others, its aims and objectives, how it was formed, its membership and the mode of evangelising. I will also point out what motivated me to choose *JP II ET* in particular for my research. This chapter paves the way for the reader, not into an open field as one would expect, but rather it will lead one into the thick of the forest of reflection on evangelisation.

1. Who Are *JP II ET*?

JP II ET draws its members from dedicated Catholic men and women who want to fulfil the “Great Commission” of Jesus Christ to go and spread the Good News everywhere as lay Apostles: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). These lay faithful are taking on their responsibility in such a way as to respond to the Apostolic Exhortations *EN*, *RM* and *EA* as well as Vatican II, *AA* and the statutes of the Code of Canon Law as we shall see in a more detailed way later on.

The Church exists to evangelise. This being the very purpose of the Catholic Church as well as her deepest identity (see *EN* 14), the members of *JP II ET* find it necessary to carry on their mission without hesitation.

JP II ET are a national network of Parish-based evangelising teams. The national co-ordination is done through mutual support, training, formation and spiritual direction. The name *JP II ET* was found suitable in response to the perpetual call for New Evangelisation by Pope John Paul II. In 1993 in Haiti he said, “look to the future with

commitment to a New Evangelisation, one that is new in its fervour, new in its methods and new in its experience.”

During his visits to Kenya, he resounded the same in an even more urgent manner and the members of *JP II ET* took his message very seriously. Therefore, in 1994, some dedicated Catholic laymen approached Fr. Richard J. Quinn, MM, for spiritual advice with an intention of forming *JP II ET*. Those lay people had a vision and an inspiration for their faith and the Church in which they would love to be servants of the Word.

1.1 The Aims and Objectives of JP II ET

The members of *JP II ET* work within the structures of the Church with an intention of making it fully evangelistic. The work of evangelising is done through, in and within the Parishes. This is to say that, the Parish is the basic foundation for the work of *JP II ET*. The members use their “Special Charism” (cf. Eph 4:11) of publicly proclaiming the Good News because evangelisation is the most fundamental of all the ministries and without it, every other ministry is futile as Eugene LaVerdiere avers: “Without prior evangelisation, catechesis falls on deaf ears, prophecy fails to rouse, the liturgy is spiritless, homiletics finds no echo, spiritual direction has no anchor, the lamp of prayer is extinguished, and theology becomes a rational or historical exercise.”³

One of the important tasks of *JP II ET* is to enhance Bible-sharing among Catholic believers as a community through the various Parish Study Groups. Christ’s faithful are to be equipped with the correct biblical knowledge. *JP II ET* aims at teaching the lay Catholics leadership qualities in their Apostolic Mission. This will help them to understand their faith so that they can share it freely, generously and intellectually with all people. Again, it will be another step forward to curb the “exodus” and or defection from the Catholic Church.

³ LAVERDIERE, E., *The NT in the Life of the Church. Evangelisation, Prayer, Catechetics, Homiletics*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1980, 27.

JP II ET are meant to contribute to the Catechising and evangelising of our Catholic Christians on biblical teachings and doctrines. The Catholic Christians are to be prepared to give correct Catholic answers to questions of faith.

They also need to have proper evangelising tools in order to proclaim and to defend the faith everywhere among the Catholics as well as non-Catholics while helping the former to participate fully in the liturgy and life of the Church.

Creating awareness is another objective that *JP II ET* would like to fulfil. In this way our Catholic brothers and sisters will become not only listeners but they will also do what the Word requires of them because: "Today the blessing of Jesus has reached many parts of the world. But not all! There are still millions of people living in places where they have not yet heard of salvation. Satan is trying to keep Christians sitting comfortably inside their church buildings so that the blessings will never reach those places."⁴

1.2 Membership in JP II ET

Membership is open to all (men and women, young and old alike) baptised and confirmed Catholics. However, they must have discernment for their call to be evangelisers. They also need to have a strong and positive desire to practice their faith and to bear witness to Jesus Christ as the Lord of history, the Redeemer and Saviour.

JP II ET does not propose any Church movement or spirituality. Instead, all movements and spiritualities are welcome but whoever joins *JP II ET* from a certain movement or with a particular spirituality should not expect *JP II ET* to follow his or her interests (devotion). In a word, *JP II ET* embrace all without identifying themselves with any particular movement or spirituality (cf. Jn 1:38-39).

⁴ MASWANGANYI, E. - BRITTEN, B., *Arise Boldly With Power. A Call to all Christians Worldwide to Arise and Fulfill Christ's Great Commission*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1999, 111.

1.3 Training and Formation

There are nine Monthly Formation Meetings and two National Workshops in a year. Each evangelising team is encouraged to organise for seminars and or workshops for their members and leaders. The National office has to be informed so that it can provide facilitators.

To be able to spread the Good News effectively, people have to be trained and given the appropriate and modern tools for the mission. This formation and assistance is the trademark of *JP II ET* "HOW YOU DO IT." *JP II ET* takes the following words about the formation of the agents of evangelisation very seriously. "The whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelisation, each according to his or her specific role within the Church ... Consequently I have called for the thorough formation of the lay faithful, a formation which will help them to lead a fully integrated life" (*EA*, 53-54).

1.4 How JP II ET Evangelise

Currently there are various *JP II ET* across the country (Kenya). Some Parishes have become fully evangelistic and they try very much to integrate the work of evangelising with their movements and pastoral programmes. With this effort, the activities, of *JP II ET* are always kept alive. *JP II ET* supports all forms of evangelisation both morally and physically as long as they are within the teachings of the Catholic Faith and for the good of the souls of all the faithful.

There are various methods of evangelising used by *JP II ET*. I will briefly indicate some of them in due course. However, there is still chance for learning and discovering more new and good ways. To begin with, *SCCs* are used since they are the basic foundation of the Church and so they provide a more convenient atmosphere for approach by the agents of evangelisation.

Institutions of learning e.g. schools and colleges are another way of reaching out to the people especially through audio-visual Seminars and workshops.

The members of *JP II ET* visit hospitals, charity homes and prisons so that they may evangelise all people in all places without any form of discrimination or segregation. The Parish-based teams organise and hold crusades through which people are evangelised. Holy Cross Parish-Dandora (Nairobi, Kenya) is the best example when it comes to this system. House to house evangelisation is also encouraged and here, the evangeliser has to keep in mind that he or she should start by evangelising his or her own house because charity begins at home. Places of work may also be used to evangelise for example in the office, factory and company. One to one evangelisation is also important. Market and street-preaching (means that are very characteristic of the evangelical churches) is also encouraged although it still appears unbelievable to some as we learn from the example of Bishop William Houck when he was confronted by one woman when he was still a seminarian and a member of the Catholic Evidence Guild: “You mean you’re Catholic? [...] I don’t believe it! We Catholics don’t do this kind of thing! Protestants do street preaching!”⁵

1.5 The Motivation

When I first joined *JP II ET*, I was moved by how well integrated the teams are in terms of the members among whom are students, working class people, business people, intellectuals and even those who are jobless. I wanted to try and find out what brings unity in these teams that are made up of diverse personalities. I was also interested in knowing how these lay people relate with the clergy when it comes to evangelising. More so, when I learned that ninety five percent of the members of *JP II ET* are lay people, I developed an interest in trying to find out why the clergy and religious have been so reluctant to work with the laity.

⁵ HOUCK, W., “Introduction”, *Pope John Paul II and the New Evangelization. How You Can Bring the Good News to Others*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995, 17, (17-21).

I wanted to find out whether there was any mutual support from the Church ministers to these lay evangelisers.

When I encountered such a group of dedicated lay evangelisers, I realised that there was a lot that the rest of the Catholic community as well as the non-Catholics can learn from them for the future of our Catholic faith and Christianity at large. Therefore, I thought about how this can be possibly and positively done while ensuring a sound working-relationship between the clergy and the religious on the one hand, and “Christ’s Faithful” on the other. All these factors prompted me to embark on this research work with an intention of trying to unveil *JP II ET* as a reality of our present day Catholic evangelisation. To understand *JP II ET* further, it is now proper to turn our attention to the basis of their foundation.

Chapter 2

The Theological Foundation of *JP II ET*

The purpose of this chapter is to try and show how the foundation of *JP II ET* is solidly grounded in the theology of the Catholic Church. This is a journey that begins in the Sacred Scriptures where we find the “Great Commission.” Another step will be raised from the words of Pope John Paul II (in particular) during his visits to Kenya, after which I will also pay attention to the general sphere of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Then, there will be an attempt to show how this theological basis is a response to the needs of the Catholic faithful.

2. The Bible

The passage that we find in the gospel of Mark about the “Great Commission” seems to be the best compared to its parallels in the other Synoptics and what appears in the gospel of John. Therefore, much emphasis will be on the gospel of Mark although the other Synoptics will also be considered as well as John. Other biblical texts will also be quoted to support this same idea.

2.1 *The Synoptics*

“Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of God.”⁶ These words are not just like anything else that we may hear and let it pass like the blowing wind. We have to read the Bible and to seek God’s inspiration in order to understand it so that in the end we may do according to the Word.

⁶ St. Jerome (340-420), Priest and Doctor of the Church.

2.1.1 Evangelisation in Mark 16:15

“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.’” However, it is good to read the whole passage (16:14-18). Looking at the Marcan-language, it becomes more clear to us that the members of *JP II ET* have each and every reason to carry out the work of spreading the Message of Christ.

The work of evangelisation in this case is a responsibility of all those who confess their faith in the Name of Jesus Christ. Although *JP II ET* are Parish-based, their work goes beyond the Parish to “the whole world and to the whole creation.” Evangelisation goes beyond the pulpit to: the SCCs, schools, colleges, hospitals, homes, offices and even market places. In a word Mark focuses on all people everywhere. There is neither geographical demarcation nor a specified type of people. Instead, Mark presents evangelisation in the image of “wide-spread arms” ready to embrace all people, everywhere, just like Christ himself did. It suffices to say that, for Mark, the “Great Commission” presupposes a worldwide missionary dimension.

Eugene LaVerdiere, comments that the Marcan-theme of the “Great Commission” is a mission of the Church: “According to Mark, Jesus commissioned the disciples for their mission ‘to all nations’ from the very beginning of his ministry in Galilee. As such the whole Gospel is directed to the mission of the Church *ad gentes*.”⁷

At this point of departure, evangelisation moves from just being understood, as the Mission of Jesus to the Mission of the *Church and it becomes our Mission today*. Hence, it is indeed a singular duty of *JP II ET* to cultivate a universal missionary spirit by drawing all those who are baptised to an active commitment to the Church’s worldwide mission. The challenge of Mark does not just remain in the early Church but it is for us all as Christians in the Church and all over the world to face and accept all that we encounter for the sake of spreading the Gospel. Therefore, *JP II ET*

⁷ LAVERDIERE, E., *The Mission of the Church According to Mark*, Nairobi: The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 2000, 3.

takes itself to task by preaching the Gospel in every circumstance before the Lord comes in glory.

2.1.2 Evangelisation in Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” See the whole passage (28:16-20). This section of Matthew comes at the end of the Gospel and as Benedict T. Viviano notes:

“This brief ending is so rich that it would be hard to say more or greater things in the same number of words.”⁸ Matthew’s message is centred on discipleship and the Holy Trinity. Likewise, evangelisation should turn those who receive the Good News into Christ’s disciples. Baptism should be understood in the sense that, those who have been evangelised bear an imprint of the gospel message. The Trinity in this case is an image of unity in the work of an evangelisation that is approached in its whole context and not just partially. Benedict T. Viviano makes another interesting comment once again:

The great missionary commission concerns the present. It contains a general command to go forth and make disciples and then two subordinate clauses which explain how this is to be done. all nations: This universal call applies to all peoples including their cultures, and even Jewish people who are not yet disciples ... Father ... Son ... Spirit: This triadic formula may have its OT roots in the apocalyptic triad of God, Son of Man or Elect one, and Angel found in Dan 7, Ezek 1 (cf. Enoch 14).⁹

2.1.3 Evangelisation in Luke 4:43

“But he said to them, ‘I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose.’” However, Luke’s parallelism with Mark’s “Great Commission” is found in Lk 24:47 “ [...] and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations beginning from

⁸ VIVIANO.T.B., “*The Gospel According to Matthew*”, NJBC, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991, 1992², 674.

⁹ See the previous footnote.

Jerusalem.” See the whole section in 24:36-49. In Lk 4:43 we see that Jesus had the Mission to take the message of the Kingdom of God to other cities while in Lk 24:47, preaching should be done in the Name of Christ and to all nations but beginning from Jerusalem. In the same way, the members of *JP II ET* have to evangelise all people, everywhere but beginning in their own parishes and this is precisely why they are Parish-based.

2.2 Evangelisation in John 20:21

“Jesus said to them, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.’” The whole text is 20:19-23. When Jesus had finished wishing his disciples peace, he sent them on a mission. He reminded them that he was fulfilling the will of the Father by sending them as he had been sent. It is in this context that the members of *JP II ET* find it worthwhile to bring peace and justice in the midst of the faithful through evangelisation, after which they also encourage others to take upon themselves the challenge to evangelise.

2.3 Evangelisation in Other Biblical Texts

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you” (Jn 15:16). For the whole passage, see 15:12-17. Basing their mission on this text, the members of *JP II ET* look at themselves as having been chosen by God and appointed as evangelisers forever. Their work is supposed to transform the proclamation of the Word into a fruitful living faith.

All that *JP II ET* do, they do it in the name of God and that is why their success is attributed, not to their own efforts only, but to the power of God in whose name they serve the Church. All this is possible if the work of *JP II ET* is done in love, just as Jesus loved his disciples and commanded them to love one another as well (Jn 15:12).

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father, but by me’” (Jn 14:6). This verse is an answer to those who may ask the question: How can we more seriously respond to the call to evangelise? Deep and sincere faith in what Jesus Christ is saying to us is our way forward.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1: 8). This was the message of Jesus Christ to his apostles before his glorious return to “the right hand of the Father.” Today, the members of *JP II ET* are the apostles and that is why this message becomes so significant to them.

“For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1Cor 9:16). According to Pauline theology, preaching the Good News is a responsibility of all Catholic believers and so *JP II ET*. Hence, the members of *JP II ET* know that by preaching, they live their faith actively.

2.4 The Teachings of the Church

The Church has taught a lot about evangelisation and so it is not easy to accommodate everything here. Therefore, I have selected certain areas of interest from some of the Church Documents namely: The Apostolic Exhortations *Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN)* and *Ecclesia in Africa (EA)*; the Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio (RM)*; Vatican II, *Apostolicam Actuositatem (AA)* and the Code of Canon Law.

2.4.1 Apostolic Exhortation *EN*¹⁰

Building on the work of the Council, Paul VI dedicated his pontificate to the task of evangelisation. His choice of the name Paul signified his intention to take the Apostle of the Gentiles as the model for his papal ministry. In 1967, he renamed the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.¹¹

The message of Pope Paul VI “On Evangelisation in the Modern World” is a masterpiece, not just for *JP II ET* but also for all Christians. The formation and work of *JP II ET* is a response to the Pope’s call for “special commitment to evangelisation.”

Proclamation of the Gospel “is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity (*EN* 1). The mission to evangelise is our daily responsibility in which we need to accompany one another so that “we may all be one” (Jn 17:21.23).

The Church, being the messenger of the Good News has to strive to proclaim the Gospel to all people by putting on a new self and being reconciled with God (cf. *EN* 2). The definitive objective of the Magisterium is “to make the Church of the twentieth century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the twentieth century” (*EN* 2). Just like the Church itself, *JP II ET* have faith in a living Power that draws its strength from Pentecost. Time is changing and so the conditions of life. Therefore, we need to pause and look at our methods of evangelising in order to be able to give the Word to a Catholic of the present day (cf. *EN* 3).

However, all these require human solidarity, love, zeal and joy – elements that are being used by *JP II ET* as tools for their work. The centrality of evangelisation lies in effective power of the Good News on Man’s conscience, transformation of the people and the methods employed (see *EN* 4).

¹⁰ PAUL VI, *Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi"* of His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, St. Peter's Rome: 8 December 1975, English trans. *On Evangelisation in the Modern World*, Nairobi, Kenya: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1975.

¹¹ DULLES, A., “John Paul II and the New Evangelization - What Does it Mean?”, *Pope John Paul II and the New Evangelization. How You Can Bring the Good News to Others*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995, 27, (25-39).

Following this line of thought, *JP II ET* have found conviction and freedom of the spirit to carry on with their responsibility with all its demands while ensuring that loyalty, humility and courage are treasures to be safeguarded. *EN* is inviting all people to meditate on evangelisation and to follow its truth in the ministry of preaching (cf. *EN 5*). This is exactly what *JP II ET* has been striving for since its inception way back in 1994.

2.4.2 Encyclical Letter *RM*¹²

Walking in the footsteps of Vatican II, Pope John Paul II wrote *RM* in a manner to appreciate what came up in *AG*. I hereby take the section on “The Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples and Other Structures for Missionary Activity” as my point of departure.

In order that the work of evangelisation may be brought to a fruitful living reality, the Pope lays emphasis on the importance of communion (unity) in the Mystical Body (Jn 17:21). See also (*RM 75*). The challenge to the Congregation for missionary activity is “to direct and co-ordinate throughout the world the work of evangelising peoples and of missionary co-operation, with due regard for the competence of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches” (*RM 75*). It is basically because of this understanding that the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples as a centre becomes an urgent need in the Church. However, the Pope still insists that there is need for all believers to work together in building the Church. Bishops, Major Superiors of Orders, Congregations, Institutes and lay people are all called to evangelise. This mutual co-operation should start at the time of formation and study before looking at the actual apostolate (cf. *RM 76*). It is only when all these factors are put into consideration that we can be sure of having a rock-solid foundation for confronting the major issues of our faith.

¹² JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter “*Redemptoris Missio*” of John Paul II, St. Peter's, Rome: 7 December 1990; English trans. *The Mission of the Church*, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1991, 1993³.

The Mission of Christ the Redeemer is entrusted to the whole Church in the unity of the Holy Spirit and it goes back to the biblical foundation and the need for ecumenism.¹³

A more interesting message to the lay faithful and the whole Church is that, “The commitment of the laity to the work of evangelisation is changing ecclesial life. [...] Above all, there is a new awareness that missionary activity is a matter for all Christians, for all dioceses and Parishes, Church institutions and associations” (*RM* 2). The intention of *RM* is to renew the faith and the life of the Christians.

By reflecting on the following words, the members of *JP II ET* have a reason to devote themselves to evangelisation: “No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples” (*RM* 3)

2.4.3 *Vatican II, AA*¹⁴

“[...] Vatican II mentioned the ‘gospel’ 157 times, used the verb ‘evangelise’ eighteen times and the noun ‘evangelise’ thirty-one times. When it spoke of evangelisation, Vatican II generally meant the proclamation of the basic Christian message of salvation through Jesus Christ.”¹⁵ Moving on from these words of A. Dulles, the Apostolate of Evangelisation and Sanctification from chapter two of the decree (*AA*, 6) will be my point of interest. The laity have the apostolate to announce and to communicate the message of Christ to the world by word and deed. The ministry of the word and of the sacraments is a special commitment for the clergy. However, in order for it to be pastorally complete, it has to leave room for “helping on the cause of truth” (3 Jn 8) by the laity.

¹³ Cf. 1 Cor 9:16, Jn 17:21; *RM* 1.

¹⁴ FLANNERY, A., “Apostolicam Actuositatem, 18 Nov. 1965”; English trans. Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People”, *Vatican II*, Bandra, Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1975.

¹⁵ DULLES, A., 26 (25-39).

Lay people are meant to be witnesses of a Christian life and they also have to do their work in a way that can draw others to the faith and to God (Mt 5:16). Nevertheless, just being a witness is not enough.

The true apostle is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word, either to unbelievers to draw them towards the faith, or to the faithful to instruct them, strengthen them, incite them to a more fervent life; for the love of Christ controls us (2 Cor 5:14), and in the hearts of all should the words of the apostles find echo: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel ! (1 Cor 9:16).¹⁶

Hence, the laity have the duty to explain and to defend the Christian principles in fidelity and with an intention to apply them correctly in the midst of the grave errors that may distort the essence of our religion.

2.4.4 Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation EA¹⁷

The message of evangelisation is spread across the whole document. This being the case, it is not easy to mention everything here but rather I will pick on certain areas for the purpose of this particular study. In chapter two, the section that is more striking in the context of this research is about "Formation of the Agents of Evangelisation" (EA 53-54). Chapter three is devoted to "Evangelisation and Inculturation" (EA 55-71). In chapter four, we see how "The Third Millennium" comes with many challenges especially the "Urgency of Evangelisation" and the "Importance of the Family in Evangelisation" (EA 80). Chapter five is about the theme, "You shall be my Witnesses – in Africa" (EA 86-104).

The first section about the "Agents of Evangelisation" enumerates the following: Vital Christian communities, the laity, catechesis, the family, young people, consecrated men and women, future priests, deacons, priests and bishops. Section two deals with the "Structure of Evangelisation" (EA 99-104): Parishes, movements and associations,

¹⁶ See AA, 6.

¹⁷ JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy father John Paul II*, Yaounde, Cameroon, 14 September 1995; English trans. *The Church in Africa*, Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995.

schools, universities and higher institutes, and material means. Chapter six is about “Building the kingdom of God” despite the “Worrisome Problems” and “Communicating the Good News” not only to Africa but also to the ends of the earth. Taking the above message of *EA*, *JP II ET* have been able to try as much as they can to fulfil the requirements of the “Great Commission” as it has been brought to them once again in their own image, that of the “Church in Africa.”

2.4.5 *The Code of Canon Law*¹⁸

The following canons from the code (Book II: The People of God under Title II: The Obligations and Rights of the Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful) are part of the directives to *JP II ET* on what the Church teaches about their mission to spread the Gospel.

Can 229.1 Lay people have the duty and the right to acquire the knowledge of the Christian teaching which is appropriate to each ones capacity and conditions, so that they may be able to live according to this teaching, to proclaim it and if necessary to defend it, and may be capable of playing their part in the exercise of the apostolate.

2 They also have the right to acquire that fuller knowledge of the sacred sciences which is taught in ecclesiastical universities or faculties or in institutes of religious science, attending lectures there and acquiring academic degrees.

3 Likewise, assuming that the provisions concerning the requisite suitability have been observed, they are capable of receiving from the lawful ecclesiastical authority a mandate to teach the sacred sciences.

Can 298.1 In the Church there are associations which are distinct from the institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life.

In these associations, Christ’s faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public

¹⁸ THE CANON LAW SOCIETY, *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Vatican City: Libreria Vaticana, 1983; English trans. *The Code of Canon Law*, Bangalore: Collins, 1983, 1994⁵.

worship or Christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelisation, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit.

2.5 Apostolic Pilgrimage to Kenya of Pope John Paul II¹⁹

In 1980 the Pope was with the “Kenyan Church” from 6-8 May. His address to the people of Kenya carried a message that was both informative and thought provoking. About being witnesses the Pope said: “Today I am in your midst because I want to heed the command which the Lord Jesus Himself gave to St Peter and to the other apostles: that they should be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (191).

The hunger of God’s word will also make us the messengers of truth: “We must begin our witness to truth by cultivating a hunger for the word of God, a desire to receive and take to heart the life-giving message of the gospel in all its fullness ... You can be the messengers of the truth only if you are first of all true listeners to God’s word” (213). Doing this means, sharing in the mission of the Church. The Pope also encourages the family to be a witness in truth and grace to the Gospel. Speaking to the Kenyan Bishops, the Pope had this to say: “We need never be afraid to preach the fullness of His (*Jesus*) message in all its evangelical purity [...] And it is up to us to continue to proclaim the message of salvation in its entirety and purity, with patience, compassion and the conviction that what is impossible with man is possible with God” (242).

¹⁹ DAUGHTERS OF ST. PAUL, *Africa: Apostolic Pilgrimage, John Paul II*, Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1980, (189-251).

2.6 A Response to the Needs of the Catholic Faithful

With the strong wind of “Pentecostal Fundamentalism” blowing all over the world, many Catholics have been swept away into the “saved” groups. Those who defect have the feeling that there is something more “evangelistic” in the “saved” groups as opposed to the Catholic Church. On the other hand, many Catholic scholars and Church leaders have not responded to this “Evangelical Fundamentalist Revolution.”

The “Great Omission” by those entrusted with the care of souls has led to the “Great Defection” of the Catholics. Such is the situation that led Fr. Richard J. Quinn²⁰ into a reflection that gave birth to his book: *Who Are Stealing Our Sheep? The Great Omission, the Great Defection*. Herve Carrier makes an even more interesting comment about the same problem that is haunting our Catholic faith day after day. “Human beings certainly have essential needs to be fed, cared for, and to find shelter, with security, but they also have the vital needs to know, to comprehend the changing world, to be respected for their identity, to be able to affirm themselves and to develop within human culture.”²¹ Those who defect keep on wondering why the Catholic Church does not evangelise and while some of the leaders are not open to discussion, others are simply opposed to it. Can this kind of opposition be kept free from the danger of “intellectual foolishness?.” In the words of Richard J. Quinn, “in short, Catholics are persecuting Catholics.”²²

Another irony is, that, the use of the term evangelisation is found in many Church documents but it remains imprisoned in theory as if its practise is an abomination. It is important to keep in mind that, the Reformation left a historical mark on the Church and presently it comes back with a different face, that of “The Great Defection.” Therefore, it

²⁰ Fr. Richard J. Quinn, MM, is a Maryknoll Missionary Priest. He is the Director of Ukweli Video Productions (Arch-Diocese of Nairobi) and he is also the Spiritual Advisor of *JP II ET*.

²¹ CARRIER, H., *Evangelisation et Developpement des Cultures*, Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1990; English trans. *Evangelising the Culture of Modernity*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, 3-4.

²² QUINN, J.R., *Who Are Stealing Our Sheep? The Great Omission, the Great Defection*, Limuru, Kenya: Kolbe Press, 1997, 6.

is precisely because of this atmosphere in the Church that *JP II ET* responds because: “Evangelisation is the energising centre of all Christian ministry. It provides the dynamism for the ministries of word, worship and service.”²³

But the question still remains: why the defection? “Basically, the sheep are spiritually hungry. They thirst and hunger for more. A ten-minute homily, a Mass good and lively as it may be in many places is not enough spiritually to satisfy our people [...] We must make our people disciples, doers of the Word, not just listeners as most are. Unless this is done, there will be no counter-defection.”²⁴ *JP II ET* has taken itself to task, by trying to give to Catholics what they are missing within their own Church instead of leaving them to go and search for it elsewhere by defecting to the evangelical churches.

²³ HATER, J.R., *News that is Good. Evangelisation for Catholics*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1990, 67.

²⁴ QUINN, J.R., 13-14.

Chapter 3

The Achievements and Problems of *JP II ET*

This chapter will lead us into the discovery of the strengths and the weaknesses of *JP II ET*. In terms of success, I will dwell on the elements of awareness, knowledge and responsibility. The shortcomings are found in the lack of proper tools for the job, reluctance in support, and poor attendance of formation meetings and inactivity that in turn leads to a drop in the number of members.

3. The Successes of *JP II ET*

JP II ET has realised tremendous success in terms of their activities of spreading the Good News since their foundation. *JP II ET* has been able to send some of the members to several places to evangelise e.g. some have been to other East African countries as animators and facilitators; some went to Canada to attend the World Youth Day Conference while others have been to Ghana to attend the International Missionary Congress on Evangelisation. All these members are lay people serving the Church through *JP II ET*.

3.1. *A Treasure of Awareness, Knowledge and Responsibility*

The formation and training of the members of *JP II ET* has brought them face to face with their obligations and rights in the Church. The monthly formation meetings and the two national workshops are a great source of awareness whereby the members are always kept on their toes by being informed of what is happening in the world and around them. In this way they are always ready to face life in the context of their faith as a matter of reality.

The knowledge acquired by the agents of evangelisation is not only useful to them but rather it is to be shared by those whom they encounter in the mission of

spreading the Gospel. The result will be a continuing learning process and a rediscovery of ones own faith in the midst of the other brothers and sisters. Just like the *parable of the mustard seed* (Mt 13:31-32), one agent of evangelisation passes-on the knowledge received through training and formation to the whole community of believers.²⁵ The members of *JP II ET* neither carry out the work of evangelisation because God is longing for it to be done specifically by them, nor do they do it with an expectation to be paid. The sole purpose why they evangelise is that, it is their responsibility.

All these factors put together, have been the driving force for *JP II ET* since its inception up to now. Some people may ask the question: Can something good come from *JP II ET*?²⁶ I would not just assume the position of responding with a yes or no answer. All I can say here is that, wherever *JP II ET* are established in Kenya, something new has been witnessed in the Church.

However, as Aylward Shorter observes, “No movement or period of evangelisation is perfect; nor is it ever fully achieved in a permanent and unalterable fashion. The Gospel of Christ cannot be domesticated. On the contrary, it continues to challenge the Christian community. Moreover, this community itself is subject to profound social and structural changes.”²⁷ I find these words very much applicable to *JP II ET* because in as much as they struggle to succeed, they still have to be reshaped and refashioned in the whole process of their formation and mission.

3.2 The Shortcomings of *JP II ET*

The difficulties that the members of *JP II ET* experience are both from within and from without. This means that some of the weak points are to be found in some of the members themselves while other problems are inflicted on them from outside, as we shall see in a short while.

²⁵ See also 1 Cor 15:3

²⁶ Compare with Jn 1:46.

²⁷ SHORTER, A., *Evangelisation and Cultures*, Park Avenue South, New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 23.

3.2.1 Lack of Facilities and Support

The work of *JP II ET* depends to a large extent on Powerful Public Address Systems, audio-visual Equipment, the right Catholic Literature and above all the training and formation of the agents of evangelisation. Being Parish-based, some of the Parishes (Parish Priests) have supported their own teams so that evangelisation can flourish while others have simply given a deaf-ear or swept the idea under the carpet.

More surprising, when it comes to the national workshops, some members are not able to attend because they cannot meet the travelling expenses in spite of the fact that their accommodation is paid for, through the effort of Fr. Richard J. Quinn. It may be true that some of the Parishes may not be able to meet these expenses to sponsor their own teams in evangelising.

We have to keep in mind the long-term planning for projects. However, some of the priests may be having an attitude of not caring at all while others suffer from clericalism. This means that the system of formation of priests especially in pastoral work needs to be revised. Otherwise, as archbishop Peter K. Sarpong of Kumasi archdiocese, Ghana says: "Unless your pastoral approach is founded on what you have found out, you will be answering questions that nobody is asking. As someone has put it, you will be scratching where it is not itching."²⁸

3.2.2 Poor Attendance of Formation Meetings

Whenever there is a monthly formation meeting, it is not always possible to have all the members of *JP II ET* present. Although the leaders have been encouraging all the members to attend all the meetings, the problem still persists. For those who fail to attend the meetings, very few if any, send their apologies. This raises many questions

²⁸ SARPONG, K.P., *Peoples Differ. An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelisation*, Accra-Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002, 18.

that remain unanswered: Why are some of the members not attending formation meetings? If they have genuine reasons to be absent, why is it that they do not send in their apologies? Are they tired, bored or fed up? Some of them have alleged that the same videos are shown time and again for teaching and hence, it becomes boring. What complicates matters is that no one has openly and sincerely brought up these complaints to the leaders. Such things are only heard from a “second-hand source.”

3.2.3 *Decrease in Membership and Inactivity*

At the time of its inception in 1994, there was a “mushrooming” of members in *JP II ET*. However, with time and slowly by slowly, the number of members has been dropping year after year and one by one. This situation has been a great discouragement to Fr. Richard J. Quinn who has termed it “A Worrisome Trend” in the following words:

Since mid-year our members have dropped. We know that the climate for Catholic Evangelisation is not the best. Maybe some have “*kata tamaa*” (lost hope) or been discouraged or just gotten tired. People just disappear and never tell you why. I have spent a lot of time in preparing the formation meetings, faithfully writing the minutes and using my own financial resources. My work, as Spiritual Advisor, is to form you, motivate you and send you out. This is just what Jesus did to his disciples. Let me know if I have failed or that you have found a more vibrant ministry?²⁹

Maybe, the members who just disappear silently are part of the sheep that are being stolen. But no other shepherd can steal the sheep that belong to *JP II ET* because the latter is the good shepherd for an evangelising Catholic. Some of those who leave *JP II ET* are being driven away by the climate of fear in the Catholic Church. The laity fear the Parish Priest while the latter is afraid of his Bishop! Is such an unfounded and unholy fear healthy for the Church of the third millennium? This is why Christine Dodd says that: “Half-certain that the call to discipleship involves us in more than a private relationship with God and yet scared stiff about what others will think of us if we open

²⁹ QUINN, J.R., “A Worrisome Trend”, Report from the Formation Meeting, *JP II ET*, Nairobi, 24.11.2002, (parenthesis mine).

our mouths about our faith. We say we believe that God can do all things and yet deep down we do not wish to run the risk of letting him prove it.”³⁰

Such a situation gives us a hint as to why some of the members are inactive. Fear has been inflicted on them by some of the ministers of *The Church they believe in*. Nevertheless, there are many different ways of evangelising. If one is blocked, there is still another that is open and the members of *JP II ET* have to choose to walk through it. It is those who believe in *JP II ET*, those who will not run away, those who will servily imitate Jesus Christ and his apostles, that will assure *JP II ET*'s survival.

³⁰ DODD, C., *Called to Mission. A Workbook for the Decade of Evangelisation*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 5.

Chapter 4

The Way Forward for JP II ET

4. Towards a Renewed JP II ET

In this chapter, we take a critical observation of *JP II ET* in their totality so that we can be able to identify a strategy that can be used to forge the way forward. Such a strategy must embrace an integrated system of evangelisation for all people and in all situations of life. Avery Dulles sees this strategy in terms of love. He says: "Evangelisation in its completeness should lead to what John Paul II, following Paul VI, frequently calls 'a civilisation of love.'"³¹ In the case of *JP II ET*, such a civilisation should touch on all areas of life, i.e. economy, politics, socio-cultural and religious spheres. This can be achieved through faith, prayer and confidence.

4.1 Harmony in Membership and Activities

The survival of *JP II ET* depends on who its members are, not just in terms of quantity but whether they are really practicing members in their various teams. Therefore, at the time of recruitment, the members should be made aware of their responsibility. They have to know right from the very beginning what is actually required of them. It will be very important for them to be made aware of the essence of commitment. Therefore, although *JP II ET* welcomes people from all walks of life, it is important that there is a kind of methodology to be applied in terms of recruitment for the benefit of the teams and those who will be evangelised by the agents formed through these teams.

When it comes to the age factor, *JP II ET* should try to find a way of reconciling both the young and the old so as to avoid the "crisis" resulting from the generation-gap and the cultural-shifts. For example, looking at the present day effects of Globalisation,

³¹ DULLES, A., 32, (25-39).

it is important to think of other avenues of evangelisation that can be used to capture the attention of the youth, so that they can as well become useful instruments for *JP II ET* and for the Church at large. One of the things that would be considered here is a form of entertainment with a message that is evangelising in nature. This would be very important to the youth who feel much better in a “vibrant” atmosphere and so it will help to reduce their attraction to the evangelical movements that seem to be more lively in their approach.

It is also necessary to pay attention to cross-cultural interaction among the members and those they evangelise. Hence, unity is a basic factor in this case because it will help to avoid ethnicity and its related problems that might lead to an exodus from *JP II ET*.

4.2 Self-Reliance

In Africa, the question of poverty is a matter of reality. Therefore, *JP II ET* must be sensitive to this situation. For example, some of the members of *JP II ET* come from some of the most famous slums on the outskirts of Nairobi city namely; Kibera and Mukuru among others. These people sometimes may not be able to get bus-fare in order to attend the formation meetings. The same problem may occur as well when it comes to travelling to go and attend the yearly workshops. This is particularly crucial when the venue of the workshop is far away from where they live. I do not have any intention to say that *JP II ET* should have a system of giving “handouts” in terms of finance to the people, especially the members. There are some people who join *JP II ET* because they expect to be assisted financially but when this is not forthcoming, they simply leave! However, *JP II ET* must take itself to task by trying to evangelise the people of Africa on how to improve from their poor conditions of life to better ones because, the Gospel message is only Good News if it improves peoples lives in all aspects. People should be made aware of the opportunities and options at their disposal, so that they can make use

of them for their own good and for the sake of those they will evangelise in turn. When this is done, *JP II ET* will be contextualised.

I suggest to *JP II ET* that, may be, they should think of a system of self-reliance. This suggestion should not however, be understood as an attempt to rule out any form of assistance that is possible from the Parish Priest who is often seen as being responsible for feeding his sheep. In spite of all these, the members of *JP II ET* still have to work and keep on hoping to achieve what they are working for, i.e., the Kingdom of God.

The “Way Forward” for *JP II ET* presupposes a sense of “genuine liberation in faith” which means that there must be a strategy for this liberation. When such a liberation is realised, the Gospel and the agents of evangelisation will be set free from the chains of all forms of oppression, whether political, economical, religious or social-cultural.

4.3 Literature and Formation

Language is a very important and powerful tool of communication. However, this can only be achieved if that language is well understood. From my own experience, I think that a more appropriate system of communication in terms of language should be considered. I say this because, I have found out that, English is used mostly in many areas of formation and training. Although there has always been an effort to explain some things in Kiswahili, it is not yet good enough to help those who have not received proper formal education. Hence, the leaders together with the members, still have some homework to do in this area for the good of *JP II ET*, because as Bernard Haring puts it: “To be able to formulate and communicate the message of salvation which remains always identical. it is necessary to know human experience in its favourable aspects and also in its dangerous ones.”³²

It is therefore, a challenge to *JP II ET* to see that the book of Fr. Richard J. Quinn - *Who Are Stealing Our Sheep? The Great Omission, The Great Defection* is

³² HARING, B., *Evangelisation Today*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishing, Inc., 1974, 7.

translated into Kiswahili and even into the local languages for the benefit of those who cannot understand English. This has also to apply in the case of intellectual preparation of the agents when it comes to the Bible itself, which is the backbone of evangelisation.

If the factors suggested above would be seriously taken into consideration through the formation of agents in meetings, seminars and workshops, we shall look forward to a *JP II ET* that is characteristic of an “African Renaissance” of the Third Millennium. *JP II ET* needs to have a vision of the “Rebirth of Africa”, in the sphere of religion by contributing towards the correction of the earlier mistakes of evangelisation. For example, the early missionaries saw Africans as a people without any positive social-cultural and religious values that could be accepted into Christianity but in the course of time, this idea has been proved wrong.

The evangelising mission of *JP II ET* should also be focused on both philosophical and theological reflection, especially with an intention to nurture the values of the African peoples. In the past, Africans have been tempted to embrace foreign cultures at the expense of their own customs and practices. Interestingly, this has been done under the umbrella of Christianising Africa. If people have to develop in their way of life, they have to trust themselves and to have confidence. This is what *JP II ET* should help the people of Africa to understand and to strive for it without losing hope until they achieve what they are longing for, which is nothing but true freedom in Christ. Africans have to take the Example of countries like Japan and China among others, who have strongly embraced their own cultures. The progress that other countries have made can also be made here in Africa as long as we Africans live to treasure that vision. The youth of Africa have to be brought up facing this challenge so that they can be able to know and to accept their identity and not simply to identify themselves with foreign cultures. Young people should not be misled to think that foreign cultures are superior to their own culture. In a word, *JP II ET* should be a witness to the marriage of the Gospel with culture without distortion of any of the two. It is only when this will be achieved that we can speak of inculturation.

However, the process of reconciling the Gospel with cultures is not an easy task and therefore, it requires skilled manpower. It is precisely because of this reason that the members of *JP II ET* who are lay people, should be encouraged to pursue studies in Philosophy and Theology, something that has, for a very long time, been seen as a domain for the ordained ministers and religious. This suggestion should not however, be mistaken as a way of simply fighting for “blind-liberalism” but rather as a way of recognition, acceptance and appreciation of gifts and roles to be played by every Catholic believer for the sake of evangelisation (1Cor 12:4-11). What we would like to have as a result of this suggestion is a just, peaceful and united *JP II ET*.

We now move on to explore the possibilities of empowering *JP II ET*, so that they can be able to move forward and to let the light that they have already received to be seen by others as well, in their encounter with the mission of keeping the Word alive for all the days of their life.

Chapter 5

Empowerment of JP II ET

5. Working Together for the Kingdom of God

In this chapter, I would like to strike a balance between the ordained ministers and their lay counterparts who also share in Christ's universal priesthood. I will dwell mostly on collaborative ministry and the place of *JP II ET* in the life of an African-Catholic. The role to be played by each and every party is a requirement for the success of collaborative ministry. This is why J. Hayford says; "in the face of these challenging end-time circumstances, effective evangelism will require personal and congregational discipline, discernment, and devotion."³³

5.1 Collaborative Ministry

Collaborative ministry means recognising God's spirit in others and in ourselves, making space for people, encouraging, stretching, and when necessary, challenging people. It is not a place for envy, jealousy, or power seeking, and such behaviour needs to be nipped in the bud – one of the reasons why on-going spiritual formation is so important! The call to collaborative ministry is a call to conversion, a change from ruling to living as an adult family together.³⁴

However, this presupposes listening and hearing, accepting challenge and correction in a spirit of respect. Such a relationship does not come so easily in a hierarchical structure but it is better to be free in the truth (Jn 8:32) than to be a prisoner in hypocrisy (fear). The dream of collaborative ministry will only be realised when the ordained ministers accept the fact that they are not the only "doyens" in the Church

³³ HAYFORD, W.J. ed., *Answering the Call to Evangelism. Spreading the Good News to Everyone*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995, 145.

³⁴ LANIGAN, P., "Collaborative Ministry in the Parish", *Collaborative Ministry. A New Paradigm for the Third Millennium, Tangaza Occasional Papers*, no. 12, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001, 50, (44-53).

but servants. It is only when they will start looking at the laity as their collaborators in evangelisation and not simply as the *hoi polloi*, that the Church will begin to realize her mission on earth fully.

Richard J. Quinn maintains that, there must be harmony and understanding of each one's role and this is possible.³⁵ This is why, from the pastoral perspective, renewal of the style and methodology of evangelisation requires a widespread collaboration by all Christians. The vigour and efficacy of both the clergy and the laity will be drawn from reverence.

Francesco Pierli and Maria T. Ratti³⁶ give four reasons why collaborative ministry is urgent: Firstly, the deep Christian and human values in those who co-operate will be revealed. Secondly, collaborative ministry should be the gem and trademark in the institutes of ministerial formation in different apostolates. Thirdly, to understand that, more damage and harm is caused by internal squabbles among Church ministers than by outside persecutions. Fourth, to heal the cancer of clericalism, parochialism and individualism.

Collaboration should include that of Priests with each other, pastoral workers and Priests, *PPC* and community members, Bishops and ordained ministers and the lay. Then it goes to the level of parishes and dioceses, and ecumenism. The possibility of this lies in a true Christian community. We should not give up just because most of us do not get quite that far because there is still hope. Collaboration should touch on all areas of parish life: Liturgy; *RCIA*; *SCCs*; Youth, Women and Men groups; Justice and Peace Commissions; Catechetics; Community Development and Co-operative Projects; and Evangelisation.

I agree with Patricia Lanigan when she says that evangelisation is a very essential part of collaborative ministry in the Church. She says:

³⁵ QUINN, J.R., *Who Are Stealing Our Sheep*, 19.

³⁶ PIERLI, F. – RATTI, M.T. ed., "The Urgency of Collaborative Ministry", *Collaborative Ministry. A New Paradigm for the Third Millennium, Tangaza Occasional Papers*, no.12, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2001, (5-7).

There are so many missionary Congregations of men and women, and yet who often does the primary evangelisation? Surely, it is done locally, by lay people, individually and in groups – traders, government officials, teachers, nurses, assigned to work in areas where Jesus is not known, who by their lives, and worship and faith sharing, till the ground for the full-time missionaries? We need to stimulate and support this basic evangelisation process.³⁷

First of all, believe in it and know that it is not a democracy. Then employ encouraging initiatives and transparent procedures. Last but not least, embrace the spirit of conversion and reconciliation.

In his speech at the *International Missionary Congress on Evangelisation*, Bishop Anthony Gbuji from Nigeria said: “When will the Church leaders allow and encourage the laity to spread the Gospel? When will they act instead of just relying on their empty words?”³⁸ The Bishop narrated his painful experience with his fellow clergy who are against his idea of starting a College of Evangelisation. But he still has the vision to start a Catholic University where the lay will be trained as theologians who can also carry the torch of the true Catholic faith and not just to keep on thinking that only the clergy are meant to preach. At the same time the clergy are challenged not to underrate the lay simply because the latter are not trained theologians. Otherwise, the former will risk falling into the danger of an “intellectual approach” as Charles Imokhai states: “The source of the Bible is Divine revelation which can only be appreciated by Faith and Love. Intellectual approach by its emphasis on facts to be learned correctly ends mostly in knowledge of facts.”³⁹

Unless the Bishops recognise evangelisation by the lay, the Church will continue to loose people to the Pentecostal-Evangelical churches with their shallow theology. When people defect, Bishops should not just remain quiet. Priests should not close

³⁷ LANIGAN, P., *Tangaza Occasional Papers*, no.12, 52.

³⁸ Bishop Anthony Gbuji was addressing the “International Missionary Congress on Evangelisation”, in Ghana. 14-20 October 2002.

³⁹ IMOKHAI, C., “The Challenges Posed by the New Evangelisation in Africa”, *The Bible in the New Evangelisation in Africa. Acts of the First Panafrican Biblical Apostolate Seminar*, Karen – Nairobi, Kenya, 17-25th January 1990, 72 (71-72).

doors to the agents of evangelisation and yet they (Priests) do not evangelise lest Christ judge them for they do not forbid the laity but rather they forbid Christ himself.

5.2 JP II ET in the African Context

What is the place of *JP II ET* in the eyes of an African-Christian? Is inculturation in evangelisation an urgent need in Africa? Commenting on the need for inculturation, Archbishop Peter K. Sarpong of Kumasi (Ghana) says:

After you have got a grip of the situation, you can then think of the message to bring to bear on it. In other words, it is only when you have decided on the content of your situation that you can try either to remedy it or fortify it with the message. Is it a message of love, repentance, belief in God, reliance on God, justice, unity, peace or mercy that would suit this situation best.⁴⁶

There are many good things in the way of life of the African people but unless these values (the principles that sustain life) are nurtured, they will simply be lost, forgotten, abandoned or discarded. Africa holds a very important place in the life of the Church. There is hope for vocations to ministerial priesthood, religious life and married life. These vocations are beneficial, not only to the African Church, but also to the whole Church in the world.

Apart from the good things in Africa, there have been many problems that tend to discourage some people by weakening their faith. Many countries in Africa have been torn apart by war. The sad thing about this is that, some of the wars are instigated by outsiders for their own selfish gain. The Rwanda genocide; the rebels in Burundi, Congo, Uganda, and Ivory Coast; the crisis in Somalia; the Muslims and the Christians in Sudan; the once daily gun-fire in Liberia and the ruthless amputation in Sierra Leone; Corruption in Nigeria and Kenya. There is persistent hunger and famine, diseases, especially the AIDS scourge. Generally, bad governance is the mother of all these problems. There have been cases of devil (cult) worship e.g. the Kanungu Massacre in

⁴⁶ SARPONG, P.K., *Peoples Differ. An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelisation*, Legon, Accra-Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002, 18.

Uganda. Scandals by the clergy and religious have hit-hard on the faith of the people. What should an evangeliser do in such a situation? Jesse N.K. Mugambi may be having a better suggestion for us when he says:

One question that needs to be answered as we get involved in dealing with crises is whether we are eliminating causes, or softening the symptoms. The softening of symptoms deepens the crisis by entrenching the causes. Too often in Africa, Christian churches have tended to concentrate on First Aid Relief Work, without dealing with the causes that produce destitution. It is Christian responsibility to deal primarily with the symptoms of the various crises which Africa is in. Only by eliminating the causes will Africa live beyond the crises of survival.⁴¹

This is the real situation in Africa. We need to accept it before we decide on how to evangelise. We know very well where we have come from but it may not be so easy for us to say where we are heading.

What is more, we still have to preach the Gospel no matter what situation we find ourselves in. If evangelisation is done properly, people will change. They will live according to the Gospel and the continent of Africa will be “a dwelling place” for the Church that evangelises. Herve Carrier inspires us even more. He says: “Evangelisers know, out of experience, that faith can really change the mind, conscience, and heart of human beings, bringing about new ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving in persons and in the whole society.”⁴²

Days are gone for the African people to expect evangelisers from the West only. Time has now come for ordained ministers, religious and lay people to evangelise their own brothers and sisters first and then to go to the other parts of the world as missionaries too. By doing this, the will of Christ will be fulfilled (Lk 24:47).

⁴¹ MUGAMBI, J.N.K., *The Biblical Basis for Evangelisation. Theological Reflections Based on an African Experience*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1989, 57.

⁴² CARRIER, H., *Evangelisation et Developpement des Cultures*, Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1990; English trans. *Evangelising the Cultures of Modernity*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, 71.

CONCLUSION

The work of *JP II ET* is a challenge to Catholic Bishops, Priests and the laity to notice what is happening around us and in our faith. If we just sit and watch, then our conscience is dead. We must treasure our faith because it is a rich heritage from Christ. The problem with evangelisation is not in the teachings of the Church themselves but in their implementation. This means that we need a good system of civic education in the Church. The essence of evangelisation is to lead the Christian faithful to maturity and responsibility. Let the culture of fear be laid down to a peaceful rest because by itself, fear is a sign of lack of faith (Mt 14:26.31). When we hear and see things happen, we have to try and understand why they happen. After seminary formation, some Priests do not seem to be very well prepared for the work of preaching the Gospel while others think it is enough just to say Mass without getting involved in other works of evangelisation. May be this is why many of them have not made any attempt to attend the evangelising (formation) meetings and workshops of *JP II ET* even after having been invited time and again. Pope John Paul II (the most pastoral Pope) himself has decided to go out and evangelise. Are we not supposed to do the same just like *JP II ET* is doing? Christ went teaching and preaching in the villages and everywhere else (cf. Sermon on the Mount). Are we not meant to imitate him, not by will but because he commanded us to do so? Those who are in the Church know Christ already. Our duty is to go out and evangelise those who do not know Christ so that they may know him and eventually help them to come to his Church. Christ must be lifted up (Jn 3:14) so that he may draw us all to himself (Jn 12:32). The purpose of *JP II ET* is not to modernise Christianity but rather to evangelise the modern world. Popes, Bishops, Priests, Religious and Lay people will come and go but evangelisation will be there forever and ever (cf. Mk 13:31).

Arise and evangelise now!

APPENDIX 1: ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
<i>AG</i>	<i>Ad Gentes Divinitus</i>
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
Can	Canon
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
cf.	confer; compare
CMM	Congregation of Mariannahill Missionaries
<i>EA</i>	<i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> ; for example
<i>EN</i>	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
i.e.	<i>id est</i> - that is
<i>JP II ET</i>	<i>John Paul II Evangelising Teams</i>
MM	Maryknoll Missionary
NJBC	New Jerome Biblical Commentary
NT	New Testament
OT Old	Testament
PPC	Parish Pastoral Council
RCIA	Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults
<i>RM</i>	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SCCs	Small Christian Communities
St.	Saint
trans.	translation
Vatican II	Second Vatican Ecumenical Council

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