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TANGAZA COLLEGE

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Faculty of Theology
Department of Mission Studies

DOING MISSION AMONG THE TURKANA TODAY

by

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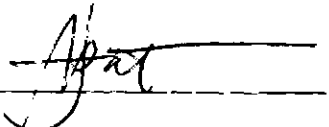
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Joseph Aldrin P. Janito Mccj

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May the Lord of History Bless all of you!

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INTRODUCTION

The conception of this research paper about the Pastoral Turkana came into my mind after going to Turkana District, three years ago, when I was given the possibility of spending my summer holidays in the mission of Katilo under the Comboni Missionaries. One year later I went back to the place to spend my Christmas there and last year I was at Lokori Mission, after being pulled out from Leer, Western Upper Nile, South Sudan due to war.

My interest was stirred up in these people after witnessing significant moments in their daily life, such as death and burial, their reception of sacraments, after visiting various outstations, remote and near; on seeing their untold suffering from injustice and suppression of their God-given rights (Election time) and privileges as citizens of this country, Kenya.

My privilege of listening to the heroic testimonies, as well as failures, of my Comboni confreres (priests, Brothers and Sisters from different institutes) shaped and changed my ideas about this people. From there, I was given a new impetus and interest to write about them.

I recognise my limitations and difficulties in writing this long essay: first my poor knowledge of the language and the culture of the people, which made me totally dependent on the patient collaboration of Frs. Bruno, Aaron, Franco, Bro. Mario and Fr. Joseph (the 2nd Turkana priest ordained in the Diocese after 30 years). Some committed catechists I met in different outstations and students, also helped me.

My limited time to really grasp the actual situation of the Turkana is also a handicap on my side, especially the collection of pertinent data useful for my essay.

The **method of See, Judge, Act** is being employed in this essay and it can be outlined in three aspects:

The first chapter gives a brief presentation of the reality of the Pastoral Turkana. A short Ethnohistory of this tribe serves as a guideline in defining the Turkana yesterday, today and tomorrow, taking into account the beginning of the missionary presence in the District, the various interventions made by the local government, and donor agencies in the wake of the total drought

that devastated the whole district in the 20's and 60's which serves as our framework in understanding the beginning of missionary activity in the desert.

The second chapter deals with the church's missionary activity among the Pastoral Turkana. The presentation consists of the Vision-Mission of the early missionary presence. Their methodologies and approaches have been revisited. Also, the type of relationship between proclamation and human promotion has been discussed and its implications in today's world vis-à-vis the Church's universal and local documents that have a significant bearing on it.

The third chapter presents practical suggestions to a new way of doing mission among the 21st Century Turkana, accompanying these nomads as they enter the New World order bringing with them their treasured values, convictions and way of life. The Church has the responsibility to safeguard these lived values of the people that define their past, guide their present and continually influence the future. Also, the Church stands as the 'voice of the voiceless'; combating the evils that beset the present Turkana in the socio-political, economic and religious dimensions. This initiative would consist of immediate actions: Inculturation of the Gospel, Liturgy, sacraments etc., establishment of Justice and Peace Commissions in all parishes of the Diocese, renewed catechism, continuous building of Small Christian Communities, emancipation of women (i.e. *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*).

Finally, there is need to accompany and to promote the very unique vocation of the nomads - the intrinsic value of their life, the inner motivations that bind and unite them as one people, the deep richness of their cultural and social systems and the fact that they are part and parcel of the pilgrim and redeemed Church. Endowed with their own particular and indispensable character, they are called to play a role in the bigger and wider Church

CHAPTER ONE BASIC ELEMENTS OF TURKANA ETHNOGRAPHY

1.1 WHO ARE THE TURKANA?

In this chapter I will present the different beliefs, assumptions, opinions held by people of the past who met the Turkanas. It will help us to know more deeply who are the Turkana and arrive at a sound, balanced judgment.

Through the course of Turkana history so many "outsiders" came in contact with its people and land and with a mixture of encounters, these were what they have seen, heard and touched. In 1888, Von Hohnel remarked, "*The Turkana are a fine race, and on the whole, of amenable disposition*".¹ Wellby has something to say about them as he wrote in 1899: "*On every occasion I found the Turkana quite friendly, anxious to trade with me, and ready to help me in the way of showing me where to find water, and giving me information of the neighbouring country....they brought me plenty of milk in wooden vessels*".² Powell-Cotton on his visit to Western Turkanaland in 1902 mentioned their co-operation: "*My reception by these people had surpassed even most sanguine hopes. I was able to secure a number of photographs, to make a collection of their ornaments, arms etc*".³

Captain Span (c. 1908) during British invasion of Turkanaland saw the Turkana as troublemakers in his area of military concern around Kerio. Also Alexander Bruce, a recent Oxford graduate who became the DC of Turkana in 1912, wrote, "*The Turkana are undoubtedly the lowest type of native in East Africa*".⁴ Military leaders such as White Bey, Harry Rayne and other political officers' regarded the Turkana as "*extremely dirty*", "*conceited and idle*" and "*unbelievably treacherous*". Crampton saw them as the finest fighting men in East Africa, indeed a fine sturdy savage.⁵

¹L. von Hohnel. "*Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefanie: A Narrative of Count Teleki's Exploring and Hunting Expedition in Eastern Equatorial Africa in 1887-1888*". London: Longmans and Green, 1894 p. 223 ff. See Anthony Barrett. "*Sacrifice and Prophecy in Turkana Cosmology*", Nairobi: Kolbes Press, 1998. p. 45.

²M.S. Wellby "*King Menelik's Dominions and Country between Lake Galop (Rudolf) and the Nile Valley*." Geographical Journal Vol. 16, 1900, p. 292-306. Barrett *op. cit.* p. 45.

³C. Powell-Cotton. "*In Unknown Africa*". London: Hurst and Blacken, Ltd. 1904. p. 12. *Ibid.*

⁴Alexander Bruce. "*Position and Influence of Kolliang, Turkana WitchDoctor*." KNA-AR/1053. Nairobi: Archives of Kenya. See Barrett *op. cit.* p. 46.

⁵R.F. White "*Notes on the Turkana Tribe*". Sudan Notes and Records, 1920, pp. 217-222. *Ibid.*

These are the striking remarks given by 'White' people about the Turkana, a mixture of feelings and emotions which sprang out from their prejudices and biases. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile noting of what the 'outsiders' thought of them of which had been carried into the present time.

1.2 TURKANA ETHNOHISTORY and MYTH

1.2.1 THE PEOPLE

"Turkanaland is the wildest and most worthless district in Kenya".⁶

"God gave this land to the Turkana. It is our land, and it is good."⁷

Once upon a time somewhere about the beginning of the 18th Century, the original Turkana nomadic communities, led by a woman called *Nayace*, (a heroine) arrived in this inhospitable area. They began to spread across the hills that today separate modern Kenya and Uganda.⁸ It was believed that *Nayace* provided her people not only with land but also gave them fire, taught them how to cook food, and divided them into territorial sections. Tradition tells that they were the forerunners of the present-day Jie tribe of the Eastern Uganda. Some groups did not apparently like the Uganda highlands and returned Eastwards, pasturing their animals in the valley of the Tarash River, and using caves of the area as shelter in the brief, uncertain rainy season. *"They called themselves Ngiturkana, the men of the caves, and they called their land Eturcan, after the caves in which they lived."*⁹ They belong to the Ateker group of the Eastern Nilotic linguistic family. Other Ateker communities who share commonalities with the Turkana are the Jie, Dodos, Karimojong, Nyangatom, Toposa, Jie, and Iteso.

However, an aggressive, adventurous spirit was the dominant factor. Right through the colonial era the Turkana were assumed to be the aggressors whenever cattle-raiding occurred. Soon the Turkana began to be feared and hated by the surrounding tribes. Their prowess in fighting was

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⁶H. Rayne, *"The Ivory Raiders"*, London: Heineman, 1923, p. 49. See John Lamphear, *"The Scattering Time"*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1992, p. 5.

⁷*Lokuruka*, recorded in John Lamphear, 'Turkana' Field Journal 1976. *Ibid.* . p. 5.

⁸Barrett. *op. cit.* . p. 3

acknowledged. A tradition grew in the area that they were men of extraordinary height. They are tall, graceful people, half-naked dressed in animal skins. They are an autonomous people, warlike and opportunistic.¹⁰

1.3 TOPOGRAPHY and GEOLOGY

The Turkana District occupies Northwest Kenya. It lies in the Rift Valley between the escarpment and the Uganda boundary to the West and Lake Turkana to the East. The elevation is around 2,000 feet much lower than the surrounding countryside which ranges from 6,000 feet to 8,000 feet above sea level. The Population of the Turkana district is estimated to be between 350,000 to 400,000 people.¹¹ The official area of this vast district, the second largest in the republic, which lies on the 36th meridian between 10 degrees 30' and 50 degrees 30' north of the equator, and covers a total of 77,000 sq. km. or 42.4% of the total area of Rift Valley Province.

(N.B. The total area of the District by division is provided in the appendix)

The Turkana dialect is the only language spoken, especially among the circles of old people and until recently had no written text. Professor Woodruff, of London University, who studied three hundred African languages, said that it was one of the most difficult languages he had studied.¹² Young people who have reached primary schooling do speak Kiswahili and English.

Turkana district in Northern Kenya comprises 30,000 square miles of desert and semi-desert where very little grows. It has been described as:

*"a horizonless frying pan of desolation; a sun-dried moonscape of cracked earth harder than iron, grotesque lava heaps rising to the height of ten-storey buildings, vast plains of dehydrated thorn scrub, sightless deserts and scorched black mountains."*¹³

Finding themselves in these harsh environs, the Turkana developed a system of multi-

⁹Lamphear *op. cit.* p. 6.

¹⁰Blaine Harden. *"Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent"*, London: Harper-Collins 1990 p. 182.

¹¹Sultan Somjee. *"Honey and Heifer: A Heritage of Diversity in Reconciliation"*. Singapore: UIC Printing and Packaging Ltd. 1997. p. 57.

¹²Barrett. *op. cit.* p. 16.

¹³Miller Charles. *"The Lunatic Express"*. New York: MacMillan Publications. 1971. p. 471.

resource **nomadism**: while there was always a strong commitment to **pastoralism**,¹⁴ both as a means of subsistence and as an ideological system, the Turkana traditionally augmented their economic life with other viable activities, including gathering of edible insects and wild berries, commerce and raiding.

1.4 THE HOMESTEAD and THE NUCLEAR FAMILY (AWI)

Turkana society is made up of thousands of homesteads. They are autonomous settlements. The inhabitants of a single homestead are members of one nuclear family. *"The nuclear family (awi) is the basic unit in society which defines their socio-economic activities"*.¹⁵ At any rate, there are numerous cultural divisions criss-crossing Turkana society at large, for example, *"the 'hills and plains' settlements, the 26 brands or clans, the grazing units, the generations sets (the 'leopards' and the 'mountains') and the territorial sections. There used to be only 12 territorial sections, but at present there are more."*¹⁶

Compared with other pastoralists of East Africa, such as the Maasai and Samburu, the Turkana live their lives in conspicuously unfavourable surroundings. They struggle for existence in a land where man pits his skills against nature by migrating constantly according to the needs of his stock. Although most families try to maintain a permanent base for their old people, and for animals with calves too young to travel, never a month passes without the stock camps moving in search of new pasture. In the dry season, when grazing and water are scarce, they often move every three days. Unencumbered by the trappings of modern living, donkeys assure the Turkana complete mobility.¹⁷

¹⁴**Pastoralism** refers to an economy based on livestock raising which could be undertaken by sedentary or nomadic groups. **Nomadism**, on the other hand, refers to an extent of spatial movement of the group in question. It is generally acknowledged today that the question of pastoral production is conceptually different from the extent of residential mobility. Scholars such as Salzman have stressed the possibility of multi-resource nomadism, i.e. mobile groups who may combine cultivation, hunting, gathering, sale of labor as well as livestock herding. Pastoralism on its part, involves management of domesticated animals from which food is extracted and it can also be carried out from a fixed location. From this explanation I agree with Salzman's opinion with regard to the Turkana that they rightly belong to one of the nomadic communities developing multi-resource nomadism enabled by the minimal blessings of their environs and the size of their herds. See Victor Azarya. *"Nomads and the State: Political Roots of Marginality"*. African Studies Centre, Holland. 1996. p. 3.

¹⁵K. A. van der Jagt. *"Symbolic Structures in Turkana Religion"*. Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Company. 1989. p. 4.

¹⁶Barrett. *op. cit.* p. 10.

¹⁷Nigel Pavitt. *"Turkana"*. London: The Harvill Press. 1997. p. 40.

(N.B. The Village make-up is provided in the Appendix)

The splitting of the family is a way of life peculiar to nomads and makes the people very self-reliant. Children from an early age are encouraged to act independently. Each must pull his or her weight in a nomadic society. Relations between the wives are apparently very good. In most cases, they all lend a hand with the thorn scrub for stockpens, whose entrances must face East.¹⁸ They also cooperate in the daily chores and often help one another to build their rudimentary homes. Unmarried men and youths always sleep out in the open behind the stockpen for goats. Girls of a marriageable age will have a communal hut behind the cattle and camel pens with an entrance facing discreetly away from the main homestead.

Due to their nomadic existence, the Turkanas' talent and expression are limited to personal clothing, ornamentation and household wares. Both men and women excel in wood and leather work. Gourds are scarce and expensive, and potters rare, because clay pots are impractical, breaking easily on the move. Consequently, trees are vital to their way of life which has led to maintenance of balance between conservation and exploitation.¹⁹

(N.B. The Household Utensils are provided in the appendix)

1.5 "OUTSIDERS" seen as "NGIMOE"

In the past, tribal loyalty was so extreme that the elders strongly objected to 'Outsiders' learning too much about Turkanaland. This reality was best manifested during the colonial times. The coming of the British inaugurated this strong sense of suspicion within the Turkana society. This novel attitude has brought repercussions in the present milieu, affecting groups of 'white people' such as the early missionaries (Protestants & Catholics) as well as Kenyans from down-country. They still have an intolerant suspicion of strangers bordering on unfriendliness, which can be disconcerting. Sometimes, visitors to a homestead are so completely ignored, it almost seems they must be invisible. No civilities are offered or enquiries made as to what they might want.

"Only after a frosty silence might greetings be exchanged. This is probably because

¹⁸ For the Turkanas the East is the place where the Sun rises, where they travel for life, for stock and for food. See Barrett *op. cit.* p. 18.

*strangers do not understand Turkana etiquette. The head of the family will seldom talk to a visitor until all his animals have been penned for the night. Once a newcomer overcomes this initial resistance, he will realise the Turkana are a happy people despite life being a never-ending struggle in a land devoid of luxuries.*¹⁹

There is no room for conspicuous generosity, for there are rarely any surpluses. On the other hand, they are ungrudging to their close friends and relatives, who are made welcome and offered a share of whatever might be available. If there is nothing, they will stay for at least a day without eating. People live by constant sharing and begging which can be irksome to foreigners who dislike being pestered. Whenever visitors go to Turkanaland, people of all ages attempt to relieve them of their possessions.²¹

1.6 PASTORALISM

Despite unreliable rainfall and a dearth of good pasture, *"cattle are coveted by the Turkana and its protection is ultimatum."*²² Though seldom slaughtered for meat, they will routinely provide man's family with milk and blood besides being a useful source of clothing footwear and shelter. No matter how many camels or flocks of sheep and goats a man owns, he will never count himself rich unless he owns cattle. Barrett confirms this saying:

"that Turkana held that all the cattle in this world belongs to them by divine right. In fact, the cow and goat (akine) are central to the political, religious and economic experience of the Turkana people. The cow and the ox feature prominently in their daily life, for milk and meat, blood and oil, heat (dung used to cook) and coolness (skins used to

¹⁹Nigel Pavitt. *op. cit.* p. 42.

²⁰*Ibid.* p. 43.

²¹I had an experience of this 'Turkana game' after spending my summer at Katilo Mission, Lodwar Diocese. Kids will convince you of their seemingly desperate condition saying, "Akoro, akoro brother, akoro." This irritating practice is considered an art and a game. Everyone acts in his own self-interest to cajole and exact whatever takes his fancy, though chewing tobacco will usually be demanded first. If a person is successful, he can build up his wealth. The secret is to know when to acquiesce and when to refuse. Since nothing is given freely in Turkana society, the maxim could well be *"that which you want, you must demand"*. Indeed, there is no word in the Turkana language for "thank you" because a favour must always be repaid, even if it takes a generation or so to do so. The nearest word is "Alakara" which means 'I am glad'.

²²Sultan Somjee. *ap. cit.* p. 57.

cover their huts in the night and for privacy)".²³

In fact, his animals are the essence of his existence, a symbol of his standing in society.

Without them he cannot participate in important tribal ceremonies or join others at dances to sing in praise of his dance ox. Every man from initiation until his death will have an "*Emong*" (dance ox)²⁴ of his own. "*Just as man domesticates animals, so do the animals domesticate man,*"²⁵ says Barrett. It enables the person to enter into marriage, establish a home and eventually join the elders of the village. Truly, his cattle give him the capacity to become more than animal, in a way, to be almost a "spirit", indeed, ancestors are "made" by their generosity with animals. An animal is more than an animal because of its relationship to man; it is almost human. Hence, their mutual identification, in such a way that his herds gives prestige and pride to his wives.

1.7 CEREMONIES and CELEBRATIONS

The nomadic lifestyle of the Turkana has caused people to adopt a less rigid age-grade system than other pastoral communities in East Africa. All important social events require the ritual killing of animals. Chosen cattle have to be killed in the context of rituals in times of marking transition in the lives of the individuals, that is at birth, marriage and death.²⁶

The transition from childhood to manhood is celebrated by a ceremony, called "*Asapan*".²⁷ The transition from childhood to womanhood is simply by marriage. While most pastoralists in the region view circumcision as an extremely important rite of passage, the Turkana look upon the practice with disdain.

Central to every rite of passage by the Turkana is the slaughter of animals and the smearing of the participants with chyme (*ngikujit*), partially digested grass from the stomach of a slaughtered animal. Stockless families cannot partake unless they borrow an animal from others, or raid their enemies' herds. The conduct of the rituals highlights the enormous significance of livestock in their

²³Barrett. *op. cit.* p. 47.

²⁴Pavitt. *op. cit.* p. 119.

²⁵Barrett. *op. cit.* p. 51

²⁶Krijn van der Jagt. "*Symbolic Structures in Turkana Religion*", p. 10.

²⁷Barrett. *op. cit.* p. 69.

society. The use of chyme can be best described as a blessing to protect the person undergoing the rite. Chyme is a substance in transition from one state to another just like the people on whose bodies it is smeared while undergoing the rite. It makes them cool, removing any anxiety they may have about their new status. Although the practice is unusual elsewhere, its application is a tradition among the Ateger-speaking peoples.

1.8 A Short History on Missionary Presence in Turkana

The genesis of what is now the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar may be traced back through the early correspondence between the Prefect Apostolic of Eldoret, Mons. Joseph Houlihan, and Sister Cabrini, a Holy Rosary Sister Doctor based in Ortum.²⁸ Sr. Cabrini was to begin negotiations for the building of a Catholic hospital in Turkana, preferably at Ferguson's Gulf in the Lake area.

While these negotiations continued, a devastating drought overtook the whole area. With the loss of water there was no grazing and water for the animals and inadequate water for the Turkana people themselves. Huge Famine Camps was set up near Lodwar and, in December 1961, 2 priests of the Saint Patricks' Missionary Society (Frs. Joe Murray and Ray Murtagh) went there *"to assist and supervise the distribution of food and general running of a new camp which is being established three miles from Lodwar"*, says G.G. Hill, the DC of Lodwar.²⁹

Three or four months later, these first Catholic Missionaries among the Turkana were joined by a few Medical Missionaries of Mary Sisters (M.M.M.). The pressing needs in the Famine Camps suggested that they should provide medical service there and this they did. Without much ado the Sisters consulted the DC about the need of building a hospital in Kakuma. This dream was received with continuous delays and objections especially from the side of Protestants since the place they had asked for was considered to be A.I.M. territory.

Kakuma Hospital was built through the support of the African Medical Research and Education Foundation (AMREF), popularly known as the "flying doctors". The immense territory under the Diocese of Eldoret was divided and Nakuru was detached from the south and a new

²⁸*Pastoral Plan*. Diocese of Lodwar. October 1997-2002. p. 6.

²⁹James Good. *"Mission to the Turkana"*. (For Private Circulation) Diocese of Lodwar, 1988. p. 15.

Prefecture Apostolic of Turkana was conceived in the North, with its first Prefect, Monsignor John Mahon, a Kiltegan Father.

Fr. Bernhard Ruhnau,³⁰ a German volunteer priest who had worked in Karamoja, Uganda was given a mandate by the Prefecture in 1976 to deal with the Turkana people especially in the area of Oropoi. Fr. Bernhard argued that, if the Turkana wanted to be converted to Christianity they could remain in their way of life, and the missionary had to embrace their way of life, and be a nomad and live like them.

Also, a Carmelite Father of the contemplative order came to Lokitaung, Fr. Robbie MacCabe, a qualified medical Doctor, after serving for some years in Rhodesia. He shared his expertise during of the outbreak of cholera epidemic, accompanied by the great famine of 1979-81. It was 1975 when the Verona Fathers came into Turkana and took over the parish of Katilu staffed by Frs. Bernard Lennon and Antonio Giudici. For both of them the parish of Katilu was not easy to deal with at that time in matters of security (constant threat of Pokot raids) and relationship with other Christian denominations, especially from the pioneering Protestants in that place. Soon afterwards Fr. Luigi Benedetti came to join the group.

At the beginning of 1984, Bros. Mike Foley and Bob Dailey, the first community of Xaverian Brothers, came to Lodwar to give a hand in the field of teaching. In fact their arrival was preceded by the two Irish volunteers, Liz Higgins and Mary Carroll, who set up the nucleus of schools that paved the way for the coming of the teaching Brothers. Earlier on, two Irish Ursuline Sisters also came to Turkana to offer their service in the field of teaching. They were Srs. Mary McHugh and Enda Moran. It was 1977. In 1987, the Notre Dame Sisters came to join the Katilu Fathers and Brothers, the only parish in the diocese with a full parish team.³¹

Today, these humble beginnings of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ into the sun-

³⁰It was rather a radical move for Fr. Bernhard but nevertheless he attempted to do so. In fact he underwent a painful experience of entirely depending on his camels in his long safaris rather than to the admonition of his friends that Japanese animals called Toyotas, Daihatsus, Suzukis, or possibly the good old four-legged British species known as the Land Rover, are in the long run less painful to the human anatomy than his beloved camels. See James Good. *op. cit.* p. 100.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 101.

baked home of the Turkana people have tremendously grown and expanded. Today the Diocese of Lodwar can boast of its permanent seat of the bishopric, 28 priests, 44 Sisters, 5 Lay missionaries, and more than 100 Turkana catechists serving in 44 parishes and missions.³²

1.9 INTERVENTION of STATE and NGO'S

1.9.1 MARGINALITY, INCORPORATION and TURKANA

By looking at manifestations of participation and incorporation or disengagement and retreat, analysts have tried to ascertain how State actions affect various sectors of society and how these sectors respond to State actions. Looking at the case of the Turkana, it was clear right from the start, and even their culture confirms this, that foreign intervention (local and white people) were seen as a threat to their unity, way of life and security. That is why they always described 'outside' people as 'ngimoe' (enemy or foreigners). This suspicious attitude was brought about by their bitter experience with their colonial invaders: the British³³ and the ever proud down-country Kenyans.

When State action seems restrictive or oppressive, rather than rewarding, certain groups may attempt to organise their life beyond, or at the margin of the State's influence, i.e. They may try to keep their distance or disengage themselves from the State as what most of the Turkana did.³⁴

So there was a feeling of suspicion on both sides and this blame-game was still recurring in the present. The opposite occurs when the State is perceived as an attractive source of rewards and various groups attempt to be included in its network and share in its riches i.e. be incorporated in it.

³² These diocesan personnel^α have, over the 36 years, broadened their original mandate to include the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the advancement of human promotion and development including the establishment of both primary and secondary education facilities, the provision of medical and health care, and the introduction of development projects and programmes intended to improve the general quality of life for the Turkana people. Fishing cooperatives, irrigation schemes, drinking water facilities, and mat and basket making have all been introduced on the initiative of the Diocese. Today, for example, there are more than 36,000 students attending the 148 primary schools, 8 secondary, one Polytechnic and the Homecraft Centre in the Diocese. See Pastoral Plan of Diocese of Lodwar. p. 6.

³³ Turkana's response to the Colonial rule of the British Imperialism has cost them 5,000 human casualties or about 14% of their population and the loss of many hundreds of thousands of livestock. Scores of people have perished from disease and starvation as a direct consequence of military operations, together with those killed in the attacks of their Northern neighbours, which were another direct legacy of colonial expeditions. See John Lamphear. "The Scattering Time". p. 3.

³⁴ With the imposition of the Kenyan Government of civil authorities deliberately replacing their traditional roles and functions of "Emuron" (diviners), the elders, the warriors and the war leaders, have all been diminished, if not totally replaced in Turkana society, by the National and Local Kenya Government Administration

However, even when a certain group wishes closer association with the State, it may still conduct many of its activities beyond the State sphere, on its margin, because the State itself is not always able or willing to accommodate all those wishing to partake in its resources. This attitude has been constantly manifested towards the many pastoralist groups in Kenya. The fact that the influencing factor these groups are manifesting at the national level do not make much 'noise', only when cattle raiding occurs, does the government make the effort to intervene and then in a very slow manner.³⁵

State actions may push certain groups to the margins of society by restricting those groups' culturally accepted opportunities for advancement, damaging their sources of livelihood and self-respect or disadvantaging them vis-à-vis rival groups. This has been the practice of the present Moi Administration - by fuelling the flames of hatred and instigating anger between Pokots and Turkana usually mastermind by the bankrupt politicians. The resulting marginality may be a voluntary response by the affected group, an attempt to escape the State's detrimental effect, but it may also be forced on those groups against their wishes. Under certain circumstances, marginality may result in a greater dependence of the affected group on external agents, whether the State, its affiliated agencies, or international organisations (NGO's) and various religious aid institutions. In this area, the Catholic Church and the Protestants have contributed much in helping the Turkana help themselves.³⁶ Multiple projects were devised in alleviating the poor life situation of these nomads.

1.9.2 Contributions of various Religious Aid groups

The largest and strongest Non-Governmental Organisation is the Diocese of Lodwar (Catholic Church). It can well be said that the opening up of Turkana Districts in the country is due to the efforts of the Catholic Church, which has sunk numerous boreholes in the District, built many primary schools and secondary schools, including Lodwar High School, which has since

³⁵Victor Azarya. *op. cit.* p. 16.

³⁶In the advent of the 60's different church organizations and International groups came to the rescue of the dying Nomads affected by famine. To name some few of them like MISEREOR (Germany), NORAD (Norway), GORTA (Ireland), UNICEF, RED CROSS, DVS (Danish Volunteer Service), CRS (Catholic Relief Service), APC (American Peace Corps), VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), APSO (Agency for Personal Service Overseas), and British Voluntary Service and many other individual interventions. See James Good. *op. cit.* p. 25.

been handed over to the Government. It has put up many medical facilities which include the Kakuma Hospital, it runs one of the most successful mobile clinics, and sponsors the child based health care (CBHC) programme.³⁷ Other agencies include World Vision who mainly provide funds for paying school fees of the Turkana children who come from poor families.

The Salvation Army runs a number of nursery schools and one secondary school at Lokitaung. Similarly, the African Inland Church (AIM) has sponsored a number of schools and dispensaries as well as paying school fees for needy children. It also runs a dispensary at Lokori although with some problems, such as shortage of medical staff and medicine.³⁸ OXFAM is based in Kakuma, and deals with livestock activities. It provides medicine to livestock owners and arranges for some seminars on the care and treatment of animals and the use of vaccines. An encouraging sign of spontaneous development has been reported from the Turkana camps by Richard Hogg, who was instrumental in launching the Oxfam restocking project. He believes that over the years 'Turkana have become used to famine relief food and have come to treat it as just another economic resource to be exploited. Acquiring food relief is just one more economic activity. An effect of famine relief is, therefore, to enlarge economic horizons by providing for further economic diversification. One of the main benefits of relief food has been that it has enabled herd owners to maintain their livestock herds.'³⁹

1.10 TOURISM AND DROUGHT

"The Maasai, the Tuareg, the Samburu and the Turkana . . . attract curiosity for being different. Often they become, themselves, exhibits in the tourism industry, as ethnographic objects and parts of national reserves".⁴⁰

Some pastoralists learned to turn their marginality into profit, being photographed for a fee, opening their kraal to tourist visits, performing folk dances or blood-drawing from cattle. Some

³⁷ Bishop John Mahon started this borehole project one of his felt needs in the Diocese. Almost a hundred boreholes were dug for the local people and to his missionaries as well. See Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Lodwar p. 6.

³⁸ "Unreached Peoples of Kenya Project: Turkana Report". Daystar University Communications: Nairobi 1982, p. 20.

³⁹ Harden. *op. cit.* p. 200.

were employed in the tourism service business as hotel and campsight workers, park attendants, scouts in nature treks, sellers of souvenirs, etc. However, because of the highly centralised nature of the tourism industry, as most services are prepaid outside the visit area, the local population received only a small share of the revenues it generated.

In 1983, due to recurrent droughts and animal diseases the 80,000 Turkana were forced to form a cluster of groups in settlements adjoining relief camps and mission stations. Such concentration of people and the livestock quickly outstripped the environment's ability to sustain them. It led to further land degradation, wide desertification and hence to a continuing decline in those group's resource base. Another side-effect of loss of livestock was an increase in raids and counter-raids of pastoralist groups against each other, trying to compensate for their losses. This in turn, further exacerbated the already existing lawlessness and lack of government control.⁴¹

It is obvious that the Kenya Government was trying to make the Turkana submit to a sedentary way of life, which of course did not appeal at all to these people. The same situation is to be discovered behind the seemingly redemptive arrival of the Norad⁴² in Turkana land: to convince these people that a sedentary way of life is the safest way to survive in a semi-arid land.

*"Everything they did was to make the Turkana sedentary. They did not know enough to try to keep the people out in the pastoral system,"*⁴³ said Peggy Fry, an American anthropologist who lived with the Turkana for two years.

1.11 PRESENCE of OTHER CHURCHES (Ecumenism? or Confrontational?)

"The first break-through came with the establishment in 1956 of a permanent mission station in South Turkana by the Africa Inland Church (AIC), an interdenominational Protestant group. It was Dr. Dick Anderson who established a church in Lokori. Later,

⁴¹ Terrence MacCabe. *"African Pastoralists Systems: An Integrated Approach"*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner. 1994, p. 69.

⁴² Also, there is a lesson to be learnt from the frozen fish fiasco project of Norad which I think is applicable to the so-called North countries, who are the prime donors to the countries of the south. As the failed fish project suggests: for the foreign do-gooders who have to explain their ineptitude to the folks back home and for helpless Africans who have no choice but to be done good to. For sure, foreign aid does not bring a lasting solution but rather complicates a tiny speck of problem to a gigantic mountain. This reality did not fare well in Turkana District where, in the late 70's and early 80's the district became a fine theatre for a foreign aid farce. Ibid. p. 197.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 198.

he was joined by a Kenyan pastor and together they provided medical assistance to the affected Turkana and started preaching the gospel".⁴⁴

The hospital project proposed by the Catholics in Turkanaland was in no way friendly to the pioneering Protestants due to the fact that the land eyed by the Catholics belonged to their territory, allocated to them by the Colonial authorities. A clear example of this was the objection raised by the A.I.C. towards the hospital project planned by the Catholics, which was barred on the grounds that it was on the fringe of AIC territory.

The existing atmosphere that divides the Christian missionaries contribute to the slow foundation of Christianity in the desert. The activities were rather exclusive so that both served the interest of the different parties. There was no mutual trust among them nor would one or the other give in to dialogue for a collective and common force. Perhaps this division has contributed to the few converts among Turkana. Exaltation of one's own methodology and discounting the other parties' activities and held beliefs was the main course in Sunday homilies. Protestants and Catholics and other denominations must learn from the past experiences if Christ is to be rooted in the ordinary lives of the Turkana.

It was only in the recent past that this dividing reality was foreseen. Sharing a common vision and project can convince a villager that Christ is not a divided reality but one. Christianity in its diversity of expression and worship, Promoting unity and trust among Christian brothers and sisters can be an effective instrument in evangelization and human promotion. Ecumenism must be fostered among Christians and greater respect has to be observed among each other. There are many areas where Protestants, Catholics and other denominations unite their force, such as the launching of the book entitled "*Honey and Heifer: Grasses, Milk and Water: A Heritage of Diversity in Reconciliation*". This book contains the unified force of individuals and groups belonging to Protestants (Mennonites), Muslims, Catholics and African Traditional Religions. All these groups combined their forces in discovering the beauty, strength, depth, sacredness and uniqueness of

various Pastoralists of Kenya in the area of peace process and conflict resolution. Through the initiative of the Mennonite Central Committee, together with assistance from The National Museums of Kenya led by Dr. Sultan Somjee, this project was materialised. With the help of other individuals and groups this book was published - a manifestation that people of goodwill can unify their energies and resources in helping other people recognize and claim their God-given rights and dignity.

From the above explanation, I suppose that the reader gets a clearer grip about the remote past and the present situation of the Turkana. The 'see phase' will facilitate us to better read the future perspective that awaits the Turkana. In the next chapter I will discuss the various Church documents, both universal and local vis-à-vis the 'young ' church in Turkana concerning its growth, needs, development and direction - where is the church in Turkana heading to? We shall see how the early missionaries carried out their missionary witnessing and activities that left a particular mark in their psychology as well as in their cultural system.

CHAPTER II THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AMONG THE PASTORAL TURKANA

2.1 What type/kind of Vision-Mission did the Missionaries have?

The record shows that mission has been part of the history of the Turkana people for the past quarter of a century. Catholic mission to the desert is now thirty years old since the arrival of the first two Kiltegan Fathers in 1961, known as St. Patricks' Missionary Society, by the names of Frs. Joe Murray and Ray Murtagh. Due to the total drought that struck the District, these two missionaries were sent by the authority of the Catholic Prefecture Apostolic (later Diocese) of Eldoret, under Mons. Joseph Houlihan, with their main duties specified by the then District Commissioner, G.G. Hill as: *"To assist and supervise the distribution of food and general running of a new Camp which is being established 3 miles from Lodwar"*.⁴⁵

The advent of a missionary presence in the Turkana District took place in an atmosphere marked by the great need of food caused by famine. Eventually, the urgent need of the local people was food for survival both for themselves and for their dying herds. The initial image we gave was that we were part of the bigger Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's), Governments and other donor-agencies that provided food for the dying Turkana. That period was dubbed as the 'Famine Camp Era'. The immense work done by the early missionaries for the impoverished and starving Turkanas was priceless.⁴⁶

Seeing this situation, Monsignor Houlihan did not have a second thought about pressing for the construction of a hospital, dispensaries, clinics and primary schools for the dying Turkanas now in numerous Famine Camps. Thus, the pattern of Evangelization placed much emphasis on human promotion: saving the physical dimension of the person. That is liberating him/her from

⁴⁵James Good. *op. cit.* p. 15.

⁴⁶ It is worth of notice how two inspectors of the Christian Churches of Kenya (CCK) Messrs. Barnett and Charles who were sent to evaluate the camps at Ferguson's Gulf and Lodwar camp. Their comments are worth quoting: *"... the surrounding areas appear to be about as arid and unproductive as any I saw in Turkana. There were few trees... unsuitable for house construction... Frs. Brennan and Murray are housed in a tent in a small "boma" (enclosure)... made partly from doum palm... They are expecting the arrival of two nursing sisters... The great numbers involved (starving people) mean that the Fathers have great distances to cover in order to aspect the camp... In conclusion, Mr. Charles and I were deeply impressed by the wonderful service which is being give by the Catholic Fathers at Lodwar. Ibid p. 16.*

physical illness, sicknesses, hunger.

The image of Jesus 'feeding the multitude' was the main course of the day. For a good number of years Turkana had ingrained in their minds that Missionaries are their source of cheap survival. That is why living close to the mission means life. Almost free access to medicines, *posho*, transport, employment, etc. All the while the missionaries have thought that now, a long time ago since the drought ended, Famine camps should have been scrapped out and let the pastoralist let go back to their own locations and homesteads. But it was not the case. Instead the local people built their 'homes' around the camps and settled there because they knew that donor agencies headed by the Catholic missions would offer them substantial material support. *"When they had finished eating, they were all satisfied. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'this is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world. When Jesus realised that they were about to come and take him by force to make him King, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself (cf. Mark 6: 34-46 Standard Edition).* After realising that the donor agencies and the Catholic Missions will forever feed the starving and destitute Turkana, they thank *Akuj* (God) for bringing these 'Wazungus' to their land because they know they can obtain something free of charge! It was too late for Jesus to realise the consequences of his action and compassion, and so too the missionaries. Bro. Mario Vermie,⁴⁷ a Comboni Brother who spent all his life among the pastoral Karimojong of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya shared with me his bitter experience. Now he is in Rome, giving a final touch to his Karimojong Dictionary

⁴⁷"You know Aldrin, in my opinion all these villages around the mission of Katilo must be burned down. You see these Bomas around here, they were put up temporarily for the purpose of famine camps. Now that the drought has passed these people should go back to their settlement of origin. But now they don't want to go back because these people are spoiled, we missionaries spoiled them by giving them things we thought as a Christian act. But no! This is not the way! We are teaching the people to be beggars. They don't work anymore. We cannot even convince them to dig in the nearby irrigation scheme constructed by the Norwegians. They just sit outside the gates and doors of the mission and wait for the Father to come out with his hands full of biscuits, old clothes, boxes of sweets and medicines to the so called dying Turkanas".

2.2 Their Initial Methodologies/Approaches

It is understandable that the first pastoral approach of the missionaries was aimed at this psychologically and socially difficult group of *maskinis*. Missions had been established at centres of these resettled communities.⁴⁸ The picked group of the first Christian communities and schools had been members of this famine camp population. The major group of still nomadic herdsmen had been left out of the plan. After settling the main problem of the camps, consideration was given as to how to approach the 'left-out' Turkanas. Meanwhile, studies of the Turkana language and local custom became a priority. Turkana translations of biblical, liturgical and catechetical texts started. A hymn book based on Turkana musical tradition was published. The first attempt to approach this nomadic group was to extend the already existing educational and health service facilities, by establishing a number of small centres with a nursery school, dispensary and shop. The dispensary was understood by the nomads as the real answer to their felt-needs. The need for education, however, is not understood and the fact that children of nomads have to board in schools fixed in one place does not make this need easier to understand, for boarding means every time the loss of herding personnel and makes new problems for the family.

Any way, schools are an important place for the catechists to inform and instruct the kids who are shopping in these centres about the message of Christ. A second attempt to answer the needs of the Turkanas is to establish a veterinary service to control and prevent animal diseases and to up-grade their livestock. This attempt was understood and welcomed.

Since the Diocese of Lodwar is dealing with the nomadic situation that is going to continue for the foreseeable future, its immediate concern is not so much the viability of the nomadic-lifestyle but the formation of small mobile christian communities, that is communities formed from groups of nomadic families.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ In writing this second chapter I have been helped by the paper of Walter Vidori entitled "*Apostolate to the Nomads in East Africa*". Kampala: Uganda, January 1982. To this paper I owe some of the ideas expressed in this chapter of my essay.

⁴⁹ It is worthy of note the report presented by the Diocese of Lodwar at the workshop on the Apostolate to the Nomads. The situation report says, 'that in order to make this new approach meaningful and relevant in the life of the Turkana, and if we want to set up a local church among these nomads we have to be aware, about their social

2.3 The Relationship between Proclamation (Evangelization) and Human Promotion

The Religious and Social Dimension of Evangelization

Fruitful evangelization⁵⁰ brings about an inner transformation in the people, making them a new creatures. It is a call to conversion through the Gospel or the power of the word. The Boff Brothers, Leonardo and Clodvis, campaigned for a total liberation - *liberation from* hunger, death, violence and at the same time *liberation to* the ability or the power of the poor, that is "to move out from their inhuman situation" in pursuit of their integral development and realization as human beings.⁵¹

The best classic treatment of the subject of development of peoples and nations today is by Pope Paul VI in his *Populorum Progressio*. This papal document throws light on the social yearnings of the African peoples today. As in the case of Turkana, evangelization means hospitals, dispensaries, mobile clinics, high-protein food, irrigations, schemes, boreholes, schools, multi-purpose buildings that serves as chapels, social gatherings etc. At the end of the day, the local people were confused as to whether all these interventions are good for them. But who can say that the interventions made by the missionaries are in some extent destructive, or really redemptive?

The opening homily of Bishop John Mahon can help on this issue enlighten us.

"In Turkana, we are a young and a poor church as well. We depend a lot on donors but we must look to the future. We have to put a new shape on the church - a radically new shape - to meet the needs of the people who thirst for the Gospel". The time has come to establish in

structure and of the fact that, later on there will be much less contact with priests and sacramental life. These two important considerations should guide and orientate our work of Evangelization and our task of forming small mobile Christian communities. Therefore, we should approach communities (*manyatta* family, homestead) and enable their elders to take over Christian spiritual leadership of these Christian communities. We should re-evaluate a non-eucharistic Liturgy, Sacramentals, catechesis, and prayer meetings will play a pivotal role in the conduct of Christian nomadic life'. See *"The Report on Workshop on the Apostolate to the Nomads in Eastern Africa"*. held at Karen College, Nairobi: Kenya. 29 Jan. to 3 Feb., 1979.

⁵⁰ In the terminology of Vat. II *Evangelization* is the communication of the Good News; proclaiming Christ to the World. It is the essential mission of Christ who says of Himself, 'I must preach the Good News of the kingdom of God. . . for I was sent for this purpose. Evangelization should be in word, but above all, in deed. It implies a generation of peoples and their cultures in a fundamental way through the power of the Gospel or as Pope Paul VI said: "Affecting and as it were upsetting . . . mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of information and the models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation. See Pope Paul VI, *Apostolic Exhortation, "Evangelii Nuntiandi"*, 1976 No. 19

⁵¹ Leonardo and Clodvis Boff, *"Introduction to Liberation Theology"*, tr. Paul Burns, New York: Orbis Books,

Turkana a pastoral/catechetical centre where the training for different ministries can be undertaken. We need new structures, new processes, new contexts and new people to recall ourselves to the primary purpose of our presence here - to preach the Gospel! From now onwards all energies must be concentrated on direct evangelization - to preach to the people the good news of salvation in Christ! This does not mean completely withdrawing from very deep involvement in development of the Turkana people, but it does not mean explicit proclamation of the Gospel message takes priority over all else and the catechists are a cornerstone in the work".⁵²

2.4 WHAT THE CHURCH DOCUMENTS (Universal and Local) SAY ABOUT IT.

2.4.1 MAXIMUM ILLUD, (c. 1919)

In his encyclical letter, *Maximum Illud*, Pope Benedict XV strongly emphasised the distinction between the Church's Mission and Colonialism. During that time there was a huge number of missionaries coming from countries identified as colonisers. Missionaries brought with them their religion tainted by the blood of their colonising countries. Suspicion, hatred and resistance were the immediate reaction of the colonised countries. The Pope said that **Mission and Colonisation** were both distinct from each other and do not work side by side. Religious activities and political are not twin realities. This century-old tension reached the soils of Turkana when the missionaries set foot in the 60's onwards.

The year 1919 was the apex of Imperialism. Benedict underlined the importance of universal brotherhood and putting an end to the aims of war. Once and for all he took a prophetic stance against the evils of war and to all the heads of State. Not only did he made an outright condemnation against countries that enforce war, but specially gave a strong warning to all missionaries who are engaged in missionary enterprise not to be influenced by their countries of origin. Material help was permitted coming from one's country of origin as well as detachment from one's country of origin in matters of politics in lieu of working into one's country of adoption. "*We*

³rd Printing, 1989. p. 4.

⁵² Bishop John Mahon's Opening Homily delivered on the occasion of Pastoral Meeting of the Diocese, May 19,

are not ambassadors of our country but of Christ" (1Cor. 5).

2.4.2 FIDEI DONUM (c. 1957)

The tradition of sending missionaries to foreign lands had been exclusively allocated to missionary congregations. Pope Pius XII made a novel step in the Church by sending Diocesan Priests to the missions "*Ad Tempus*". He prompted all the Bishops to employ some of their priests in other dioceses of the world who were lacking personnel especially to places considered as mission situations. For the very first time, the continent of Africa was brought into the limelight. The Pope made an appeal to all the missionaries heading to **Africa** to marshal all the missionaries heading to Africa. The Pope was keen to see the signs of the times for Africa. He spearheaded the 'ripe' moment of interest in Africa a '*KAIROS*' had just begun. Hence, Pope Pius XII approved the missionary involvement of Diocesan Priests. Today, a number of *Fidei Donum* priests works in the diocese.

2.4.3 PRINCEPS PASTORUM (c.1959)

Pope John XXIII has basically two main points to drive at in his encyclical letter, namely, the acceleration of the local ministers and keeping a 'low profile' for the old missionaries. He pointed out the wisdom of independence, which must be promoted within **local churches**. He said that the speed of carrying out evangelisation was insufficient, hence the acceleration of the localisation of the leadership among the **local clergy** must be promoted.⁵³

The second reason is reviving the commitment of the Church in promoting **the role of the laity** in all spheres of life. The Pope was wise enough to challenge the laity on their role, especially in the field of politics. Politics can also be a ministry, all spheres of life have room to exercise our Christian values and principles. There must be no dichotomy between our civil life and church life. They must compensate each other and build a single unity that gives each space to manifest itself.

1997, Lodwar. See Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Lodwar. p. 1.

⁵³ Encyclical Letter. Pope John XXIII 1959, Nos. 8., 10.

2.4.4 GAUDIUM ET SPES (c. 1965)

What interests us most in this document is the utilisation of the word "Culture". The importance of culture on human life, development and evangelisation was enshrined in the 2nd Part, Chapter II of the document. The Church has finally recognised the link between the Gospel and culture.

"The Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebrations in the life of the diversified community of the faithful."⁵⁴

This document opens the avenue for the **urgency of Inculturation** demanded especially for missionaries abroad. The blending of faith and the local culture was recognised in this document⁵⁵. Outstanding missionaries of the past like Mateo de Ricci of China, de Nobili of India and Paez of Ethiopia exemplified a true, honest and sincere living of the Gospel by inserting themselves in the very life of the people where they lived and died.

2.4.5 AD GENTES (c. 1965)

This important document stressed the essential missionary nature of the Church and outlines a present-day charter for her mission through sensitive adaptation imperative for new missionary situations. The **rise of the Basic Christian Communities (BCC's)** as a necessary phenomenon in the church could be attributed to this document. The founding of local churches paved the way in conceiving BCC's as the primary locus where the spirit of the Trinity may be shared and lived. Originally, Mission was hatched in God's mind and it belongs to him. So much so that He desired salvation to be experienced, not by a few but by all people of good will who lived according to his divine will.⁵⁶ Thus, His concern is for the whole Church, but especially for 'those parts of the

⁵⁴Paul VI *Gaudium et Spes*. 1965.No. 58.

⁵⁵ Also, the words of John Paul II, when setting up the Political Council for Culture in 1982 confirm this by saying that "A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out. Christianity must be African for Africans to be fully and authentically rooted in it".

John Paul II, "L'Osservatore Romano" (June 28, 1982), p.. 7-8. See Chukwudum Okolo. *op. cit.* p. 48.

⁵⁶John Paul XXIII *Ad Gentes* No. 38, *Lumen Gentium* No. 23;

world where His living Word has not been proclaimed or heard'.

2.4.6 POPULORUM PROGRESSIO (c. 1967)

Mission, therefore has to do with the **liberation of body and soul**.⁵⁷ It has to free the person from the clutches of evil that besets him or her. What appears to be the main concern of Pope Paul VI in this document is people's integral needs. According to him, people's development should not be one-sided, restricted to their material needs or the ability merely to have more, because they yearn for deeper and more complete values which he outlines as:

*"Freedom from misery, the greater assurance of finding subsistence, health; increased share of responsibility without oppression of any kind and insecurity from situations that do violence to their dignity as men, better education, in brief, to seek to do or know more and have more in order to be more".*⁵⁸

2.4.7 SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON JUSTICE IN THE WORLD (c. 1971)

The Bishops discovered the urgency and weight of Jesus' word vis-à-vis present times "*seek first the Kingdom of God and His Justice*" (Matt. 6:33) They summoned all Christians to regard the work as of great importance in a world marked by antagonism, a widening gap between rich and poor, destruction of life caused by nuclear disaster, economic oppression and dependence that stifles the already marginalized people, isolation of minorities, political and moral decay of many societies, continuous destruction of nature and environment (pollution, damaging of ozone layer) etc.⁵⁹

Through social analysis, the Bishops released how much work we have to face in restoring the original image of the creation. Hence, the mission of the church is to call us back to God and turn

⁵⁷ Liberation and Development are two sides of the same coin in the process of humanizing people and cultures. The former is always a liberation from hunger, death, oppression and obstacles to full human development and self-realization and liberation to the ability or the power of the poor, as the Boff brothers, Leonardo and Clodvis put it "to move out of their inhuman situation" in pursuit of their 'Integral Development' as Pope Paul VI phrased it. See Leonardo and Clodvis Boff., *"Introduction to Liberation Theology"*, tr. Paul Burns (New York: Orbis Books, 3rd Printing, 1989), p. 4.

⁵⁸ Pope Paul VI. *On the Development of Peoples "Populorum Progressio"*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1967), No. 9. See Chukwudum Okolo. *"The African Synod: Hope for the Continent's Liberation"*. AMECEA Gaba Publications Spearhead Nos. 130-131, pp. 90-91.

⁵⁹ 1971 Synods of Bishops, *"Justice and Peace in the World"*. No. 36. in, *"The Gospel of Peace and Justice, The Social Catholic Teaching since Pope John"*. presented by Joseph Gremillion Maryknoll, New York: Orbis

away from our sins to the love of the Father.

"The Church has to take a stance to exercise its duties and obligations in proclaiming social Justice and to strongly denounce instances of injustices, when the fundamental rights of man and woman and their very salvation demand it."⁶⁰

For this very reason the Bishops obliged the Church to bear witness on behalf of justice by various modes of action for justice. Educating for justice was seen as inevitable and must take root from the very nucleus of the society, the family.⁶¹ Also, the Bishops campaigned for concerted efforts both at local and international level in curbing the evils of injustices that enslave the person and the society at large. All peoples must become the principal architects of their own socio-economic and political advancement that favours and safeguards people's dignity as God's creatures.

2.4.8 EVANGELII NUNTIANDI (c. 1975)

Pope Paul VI put a strong emphasis on **Evangelisation and Culture**. His document does not explicitly talk about the need of inculturation. Instead, a large section speaks about cultures as subjects to be evangelised. There are two numbers, (19 & 20) which are considered as novelty in the mind of the Church. The Pope has seen the ongoing clash between the Gospel and the tenets and dogmas upheld by most of the cultures. The encounter between these two realities produces tension and upsets existing norms of cultures. The traditional values and the style of living clash with Christian values proposed in the Gospel. Such an encounter gives birth to a new understanding, new consciousness and permits growth between the people and the Church. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the *"power of the Gospel infuses new vitality, new life to all strata of humanity. It brings transformation and promotes and ensure the growth and well-being of peoples and cultures"*.⁶²

Books, 7th printing. 1984. p. 525.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, No. 71.

⁶¹*Ibid.* Nos. 39, 54.

⁶²Pope Paul VI *"Evangelii Nuntiandi"*. No. 19

2.4.9 SLAVORUM APOSTOLI (c. 1985)

John Paul II lengthily discusses the **urgency of Inculturation** especially of the **Gospel in Mission situations**. The full acceptance of the local language of the people signifies the desire of the missionary to know the people deeply and thus facilitate his missionary work. One of the great achievements of two great missionaries, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, was the translation of the Word of God into the local language of the Slavs.

*"For the purposes of evangelisation, . . . they undertook the difficult task of translating the texts of the Sacred Scriptures, which they knew in Greek, into the language of the Slave population . . ."*⁶³

John Paul II enforced this missionary approach as one of the major elements in the process of Inculturation. The localisation of the word of God helps the people to have an access of God's Word in their mother tongue.

*"They realised that an essential condition of the success of their missionary activity was to transpose correctly Biblical notions and Greek theological concepts into a very different context of thought and historical experience."*⁶⁴

2.4.10 CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI (c. 1988)

This apostolic exhortation of John Paul II considers the invaluable contribution of the lay's unique vocation towards the growth of the Church, both universal and local. John Paul II acknowledges and enforced the statement once declared by Pius XII regarding the **Lay faithful** who 'find themselves on the front lines of the Church's life; for them, the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of the belonging to the Church, but of being in the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the Bishops in communion with him. These are the Church . . .'

⁶³John Paul II "Slavorum Apostoli". No. 10.

⁶⁴Ibid. No. 11.

⁶⁵John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation, "Christifideles Laici"*, Africa: St. Paul Publications, 1988. No. 9. See Pius XII, "Discourse to the New Cardinals, 20 February 1946: AAS 38 (1946), No. 149.

Through their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, the lay faithful are given the ability and responsibility to accept the gospel in faith and to proclaim it in word and deed, without hesitating to courageously identify and denounce evil. Also, the **lay faithful have their part to fulfill in the formation of the Ecclesial communities**, not only through an active and responsible participation in the life of the community, in other words, through a testimony that only they can give, but also through a missionary zeal and activity towards the many people who still do not believe and who no longer live the faith received at Baptism.⁶⁶

2.4.11 REDEMPTORIS MISSIO (c. 1990)

This document has been considered as the present *magna carta* of the Church's universal mission. John Paul II asserts the two basic truths that ensure the continuity of Christ's church namely, that "*Faith is strengthened when it is given to others*" and that the urgency of missionary evangelisation is part and parcel of "*the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world.*"⁶⁷ Indeed, the missionary enterprise of the Church belongs to its innate nature, which guarantees the very life of the church. Jesus, through his incarnation, reveals his missionary attitude par excellence.

In this document the role of the Holy Spirit as the sole protagonist of the mission was given importance for "*His action is pre-eminent in the mission ad gentes, as can clearly be seen in the early church: in the conversion of Cornelius (cf. Acts 10), in the decisions made about emerging problems (cf. Acts 15) and in the choice of regions and peoples to be evangelised.*"⁶⁸

(cf. Acts 16:6 ff.)

What is interesting in this document is the greater need of missionary spirituality. **The holiness of the missionary** has something to do with the carrying out of the missionary activity of the church. Often times, missionaries fall into the trap of activism and set aside the importance of contemplation. "*For the mission is difficult and complex, and demands the courage and light of the*

⁶⁶ John Paul II *op cit.* No. 34.

⁶⁷ John Paul II "*Redemptoris Missio*", 1990. No. 2

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* No. 21.

Spirit".⁶⁹ The missionary has to bear in mind that the Spirit is the principal agent of the mission. The gift of Hope and confidence can serve as a daily impetus for the daily struggle of missionaries.⁷⁰ That's why there is a daily reflection of always sorting out the will of the Spirit.

2.4.12 ECCLESIA IN AFRICA (c. 1995)

John Paul II exults the **Church in Africa** by reviving its prophetic role in a continent marked by the scourge of war, tribal animosity, social and political strife etc. Behind all this destruction the Pope encouraged Africans to be steadfast in their witnessing to Christ Jesus. The time has come for the Africans to be missionaries near and far as the Church journeys towards the year 2000.

Realising the diversity of its gifts present among its people and cultures the Synod Fathers consider "*Inculturation as an urgent priority in the life of the particular churches, to ensure the firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa*".⁷¹ Hence, **Inculturation** has been an imperative for missionary undertakings; a litmus test in putting flesh on the richness of the Gospel fully expressed in the local cultural values, symbols of the people. "*It is only by way of integrating Christianity with authentic cultural values, a real insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures*"⁷²

On several occasions, the Synod Fathers renewed their commitment towards the people to be the "*voice of the voiceless*" so that everywhere the human dignity of every individual will be acknowledged, safeguarded and guaranteed its full protection from the attacks of evil.⁷³

The deep concern in **promoting justice and peace**, specially its defence of fundamental human rights, must be of great concern to every Christian.⁷⁴ The establishing of Justice and Peace

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Reilly said that Hope and Confidence remain the foundational pillars of mission spirituality. Mission in the last decades of the present century and in the 21st century can be faced with these two Christian values because it is the Mission of God. In the words of Adorinam Judson, the great Baptist missionary of Burma, "*The future is as bright as the promises of God*". Micheal Collins Reilly S.J. "*Spirituality for Mission*". Maryknoll (New York: Orbis Books), 1978. p. 244.

⁷¹ "*Ecclesia in Africa*", No. 59.

⁷² John Paul II "*Redemptoris Missio*" No. 52; *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ecclesia in Africa* 1995 No. 107.

⁷⁴ I think there are times in the life of the Church when the purity of the witnessing we wish to give demands that our lifestyle be compatible with the Gospel. These are striking and prophetic reminders of our christian calling

Commissions at various level, formation of pastoral agents and the inclusion of Justice and Peace agenda in pastoral programmes are a visible commitment of the Synod Fathers in seriously combating the gains of death and oppression that continuous to prevail in the continent

In the last chapter we shall outline practical suggestions on how to go about in our new ways of doing mission among the 21st Turkana. I took the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Lodwar 1997 to October 2002 as one of my sources. Various steps are conceived, formulated to guide our missionary activities but what is happening in the grassroots level apparently far from the daily realities of the Turkana. What we need is a constant reflection, sorting out the will of the Spirit and have the courage to implement them.

which must be recalled from time to time. It is one thing to make statements and let them lie fallow. It is one thing to proclaim manifestoes where there is little pressing and immediate opportunity for their actualization. The proof of the church's seriousness about and commitment to its challenging documents lies not elsewhere but in each one of us. Our collaboration will reveal how far we are serious and convinced of it. See also Fr. Laurenti Magesa. *"Witnessing Justice"*, in *Many Voices One Church, New People: Articles on the African Synod*: Limuru: Kolbes Press. 1992. p. 32.

CHAPTER THREE THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AMONG THE PASTORAL TURKANA

3.1 CULTURAL TURMOIL

Cultural exchange arises at almost all levels of existence, whether in social, economic or political contacts and exchange. The frequency of these meetings with other groups of people give birth to tremendous cultural exchange. The reception of novelties alien to people can be destructive or constructive. It has been proven that pastoralists' cultures are adaptive and much open, but the reception varies according to the most essential things that really matter to their daily existence resulting in either rejection or adoption through a process coined by Barber as, **Interpretation**.⁷⁵

A vivid example is that the Turkana, after an initial suspicion, have accepted the so-called *Participatory Social Forestry Extension Project* after realising the significance of trees in their area. By early 1990, 136 workshops had been carried out which nearly 7,000 local people attended.⁷⁶ These workshops were meant to elicit the Turkana people's own knowledge of tree management, and to encourage awareness of problems that face the woody resources. The opinion of G. W. Huntingford that "*most pastoral tribes are least resistant to new forms of culture*" must be taken with a pinch of salt, for it doesn't work out fairly in a particular tribe such as Turkana.⁷⁷ Common sense reveals that the reception of change varies; it could be adopted or resisted depending on the gravity of influence that it carries: is it a threat to their already existing norms and practices? or does it promote and safeguard the already existing norms and practices of the people?

The Pastoralists on the north -west side of Kenya such as Turkana, Karimojong and Pokot⁷⁸ had been tremendously interacting among one another. They intermarry, exchange goods etc., which opened an avenue of acculturation in most of these tribes. It is a fact that these tribes share

⁷⁵J.P. Barber. *"Imperial Frontiers"*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968. p. 157-169. See Luis Luzbetak. *"The Church and Cultures"*. MaryKnoll (New York): Orbis Books. 1989. pp. 321-322.

⁷⁶ Edmund Barrow. *"Africa: Local Participation in Tree Management"*. Nairobi, Kenya: Initiative Publishers. 1996. pp.147-148.

⁷⁷ Luis Luzbetak. , *op. cit.* p. 321-322.

⁷⁸ I am grateful to my Comboni confrere Fr. Mariano Tibaldo especially on this part of my essay. The paper is entitled: *"The Challenges to the Survival of Pastoral Peoples: The Case of Pastoral Pokot of North- Western Kenya - Which Perspective for Church Activity?"*, in *African Christian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1. March 1998., Nairobi, Kenya: CUEA Publications, 1988. pp. 42-50.

many similarities, such as language, clothing, way of life etc. Turkana has been a recipient of this acculturation and its people have been influenced by their neighbouring pastoralists.

Not only the Turkana experience cultural change in a local context but this tribe has been exposed continually to Western mentalities and understanding. History reveals that as early the 18th century, when this tribe encountered the curious explorers, followed by their British colonisers and missionaries as well. John Lamphear, in his book entitled, "*The Scattering Time*" recounted Turkana's response to colonial rule marked by bitterness, successive uprisings and eventually submission. The so-called European developments did not impress the local people and why? It is not so easy for a pastoralist Turkana to adopt a sedentary way of life imposed by the colonisers; it is just impossible. For the Turkana, cattle are the very core of their life. Animals define their identity, that which gives meaning and existence. According to Fr. Luis Luzbetak, "*Acculturation is the direct and continuous contact over a long period of time between two societies whereby a weaker adapts itself to a more powerful society*".⁷⁹

The coming of Christianity to Turkanaland, tainted by Western mentalities and inspiration did not fare well in the Turkana psyche. Jesus Christ was seen as the God of the Whites "*ngimoe*".⁸⁰ This resistance has been tested by time and is weakening because of the fast-emerging changes caused by secularisation and rapid urbanisation. In short, the world is becoming more and more a 'global village' where e-mails, *internet*, hi-tech weaponry, mega-computers define the day. Pastoral Turkana is not exempted from this evolution. Their way of life and culture is undergoing a tremendous change that affects all the structures that defines their identity and existence. It is true

⁷⁹Luzbetak *op. cit.* p. 321-322

⁸⁰ In Katilo Mission, manned by the Combonis, the book shows that in the past 20 years few converts were produced, a slower rate of church marriage in comparison to the settled down-country-farmers. It was crystal-clear right from the beginning that Turkanas dislike Western influence. In turn, the existing myth that plies abroad that pastoralist people resisted change has been broadcasted must be taken with a balanced and academic understanding. This myth has evolved over time and people who knew the real story must humbly confess that pastoral people are not that bad at all. One culprit that could add flame to this mistaken myth is that the usual image (depicted in various literatures- magazines, pamphlets, pictures etc. being produced abroad; these were so uninspired in design and content as to attract the interest only of uncritical children and of elderly people who are thinking of heaven and wanted to do some more good deeds before they died. To impress naïve and sentimental people like this, these literatures portrayed, in dozen different ways, the outstretched hands of sick, leprous, deformed or starving beggars. Finally, those who, by putting some coins in the box, made the figure of a black child on the box nod his head, or even went so far as to send silver paper and used stamps to the missions, could have an easy conscience in

that the mega-influence of Western mentalities arrests the attention of Turkana's norms, attitudes, values etc. which thoroughly hamper people's way of thinking and judgement. Who is right now?

More and more individualism curtails the spirit of family, community. R.B. Edgerton warned us that "*it is the pattern of thought which is coming under scrutiny and changing, the deeper level of culture, the cognitive one*".⁸¹ Our mind is being shaped, influenced and moulded with a new set of thinking alien to ours. The Turkana way of life is at risk. One of the remaining 'lifeboats' that can safeguard the traditional values enshrined in the Turkana culture are the schools and the missions established by the white people⁸². No doubt that the schools and the churches (outstations, for that matter) can 'faithfully' guide the local people to a path that protects and respect the local culture of the people.

The loss or the decrease of animals for a pastoralist whose life is defined by an animal-based economy and culture, inaugurates a '*Domino principle*', so much so that when a 'single element', and in this case a fundamental and basic one (the animals), "*in a culture disappears many things associated with it disappear as well*".⁸³

"*Cultures are set of systems whereby the forms, functions, basic assumptions, values and drives are organised into an integrated whole*".⁸⁴ Without doubt the pastoral Turkana is undergoing continuous, pervasive exposure to Western mentalities and behaviour and the saddest picture of a rather forced, imposed and a no-way out image of the mobile Turkana is being introduced in a disintegrating process whereby the various levels of cultural structures and foundations are slowly falling down. The present reality of the Turkana today suggests a rather

the conviction that for a week at least they had prevented want in Africa!, or in Turkana for that matter. See Walbert Buhlmann, "*The Missions on Trial*", MaryKnoll, NewYork: Orbis Books. 1979. pp. 58-59.

⁸¹R.B. Edgerton. "*The Individual in Cultural Adaptation*", Berkely: University of California Press. 1971. pp. 149-156.

⁸²Fritz Raaflaub, Ph. D., President of the Swiss Evangelical Missionary Council said that, "*In the work of the Missions in Africa, school and church went hand in hand like twin sisters as if things had to be that way*". In addition, Kwame Nkumah, the first President of Ghana, was speaking for many when he said, not long after the independence celebrations: 'It is the missionaries who have really brought Africa to life. I and many others are everything we are because of their work and help. At many independence celebrations the importance of the mission-schools in the achieving of independence by the colonies was explicitly pointed out. In fact, the very unpretentious villages schools started a process which could never be arrested - the awakening of Africa! See Walbert Buhlmann. *op. cit.* pp. 82-83.

⁸³Aylward Shorter. "*Towards a Theology of Inculturation*", MaryKnoll, NewYork: Orbis Books. 1988. pp. 35-47.

⁸⁴Luis Luzbetak *op. cit.* p. 298.

discouraging vantage view; the increasing banditry, the crumbling down of family spirit, young girls ply their trade in key towns such as Lodwar, Kakuma (home of 80,00 refugees) and Lokichoggio, where foreigners (mostly Europeans) abound, moral decay and corruption and the like. Thus, Luzbetak's assessment can be prophetic in this regard: "*Disintegration (of a culture) brings uncertainty, confusion, frustration and low morale; behaviour loses its meaning and becomes unpredictable, the values are doubtful and hazy*".⁸⁵ It is in this Turkana's cultural dilemma marked by uncertainty, darkness and 'death' that the Church is called upon to be its guide and lead the Turkana people in the experience of light and life in Jesus enlightened by the Gospel.

3.2 INSECURITY and TRADE in WEAPONS

The traffic in automatic weapons, coupled with the erosion of traditional authority systems or inadequate Government support for peace initiatives and conflict resolutions, has made it difficult for the pastoralist to use some of their best pastures. Turkana is a good example of this, where in 1979/80 they were estimated to have lost 90% of their cattle, 80% of smallstock and 40% of the camels.⁸⁶ Other examples abound throughout the north. The colonial government had clan and ethnic groups inhabiting particular areas in each district. Though this did not stop pastoralists migrating across the clan borders and even international borders, at least consultation with traditional owners of the land was carried out before most movements took place. The fact that the government allows people to move with their livestock anywhere had, in a situation of decreasing natural resources, resulted in ethnic conflicts. The Turkana felt that the government is not protecting their land rights, so they gained arms to do so themselves. With the acquisition of arms, insecurity and raiding increased tremendously especially among their neighbouring tribe: the Pokot in the west and Karomojong in the east. Mobility is not only restricted within the District borders but across borders. Civil unrest in neighbouring countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia spills over into Kenya and is a source of cheap automatic weapons. Insecurity, banditry and cattle raiding serve as an opportunity for the Christians to come out from their fear, stand up

⁸⁵*Ibid.* p. 322.

⁸⁶John Markakis. "*Conflict and the Decline of Pastoralism in the Horns of Africa*". London: Macmillan Press, 1993.

and speak out against the evils that beset Turkana and to remind the local and national authorities to maintain peace and order in the District, rather than be the source of conflict, mistrust and fear.

Also the Turkana people must be encouraged not to take the law into their own hands especially in retaliating on their age-old enemies: the Pokots, in moments of cattle raiding and banditry.

3.3 WAYS and MEANS OF INCULTURATING the GOSPEL

Redemptoris Missio #52 underlines the urgency of the Church's commitment in the process of inculturation as she untiringly continues to carry out her missionary activity to all nations. Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission.⁸⁷

The Synod of the African Bishops also enforced this statement saying, inculturation is "*a priority and urgent matter*" and "*commits the churches in Africa to this far and long term task*".⁸⁸

In the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Lodwar, this issue was highly considered: to speed up the promotion of the inculturation of the Gospel among the people of Lodwar Diocese.

***** The Inculturation of the Liturgy (Celebration, language, symbolic things, prayers etc.)** among the Turkana people was the most felt need. Research groups were established to study various aspects of the local culture. Translation experts, both local and expatriates were consulted to work hand in hand. This initiative is already in full swing.

***** Also, the updating of the Turkana hymnbook and catechetical material for both young and old.** Initiatives such as these are a sign that the Diocese of Lodwar is serious in its task, that of firmly rooting the Gospel into the lives of the Turkana. By doing so, inculturation attains its purpose, by making Jesus more appealing and alive in their present situation, hence, receiving life and having it in full (cf. Jn. 10:10).

In addition, inculturation refers to the missiological process in which the Gospel is rooted in

p. 82.

⁸⁷ John Paul II *Redemptoris Missio*. St. Paul Publications, Nairobi, 1990. No. 52.

a particular culture and the latter is transformed by its introduction to Christianity. Christianity and culture are thus mutually enriched.⁸⁹ Inculturation ushers in two modes of process: rooting the Gospel into a culture and introduces that culture to Christianity. Implanting Christianity into Turkana culture is to initiate two events:

First, is to undo those elements in the Turkana culture that point towards the human development of the Turkana, as well as introducing the Turkana and their transformed culture of Christianity, for example by including the local people in reshaping the Liturgy among the various agents of inculturation. The introduction of the Gospel into the lives of the local Turkana presupposes our identification in sharing their joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, their successes and failures, and even their language. It means infusing the daily realities of a Turkana person with Christian values. For it is only when the Gospel is truly received by the people like yeast in dough that enters into, purifies and transforms his/her culture and way of life.

3.4 ENHANCING SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (SCC's)

The emergence of SCC's in the Church originated from the grassroots level. In Eastern Africa, the establishment of SCC's was enforced by the Church's hierarchy after the four year study from 1972-1976. There was a strong felt need of a systematic formulation of SCC's as the key pastoral priority in subsequent years in the AMECEA Region.⁹⁰ The Church discovered SCC's as primary locus in being the most local incarnations of the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church, while at the same time being self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting. This need is being enforced by the AMECEA Bishops that SCC's are a pastoral and mission options for the churches, especially the local ones in AMECEA Region.

Today, numerous SCC's abound in the Diocese and Bishop Mahon calls for a renewed commitment by all pastoral agents in strengthening and re-activating SCC's at all parish level by providing training sessions and seminars in what constitutes a SCC. The Diocese felt the need of

⁸⁸John Paul II *"African Synod"*. St. Paul Publications, Nairobi, 1995

⁸⁹U.E Umoren. *"Inculturation and Inculturation: The Gospel of Liberation and the Culture of Africa"*, in SEDOS, Vol. 29, No. 3, March 1997. p. 90

⁹⁰Kiwanuka Denis Lote, *"Small Christian Communities"*, Nairobi : AMECEA Documentation Service, No. 429, 1st

making available the Scriptures to SCC's in various languages and forming committed, zealous lay leaders in various SCC's.

In Turkana where pastoral agents are in smaller number, SCC's thus play a very significant role. Along with lay people as parish coordinators or catechists, SCC's becomes the place where much of the pastoral work and religious instruction is carried out. Particular lay ministries in the SCC's are, prayer-leaders, religious formation leaders, marriage counsellors, AIDS counsellors and youth animators. Turkana people are mobile people. The model of SCC's suits their nomadic life and this model must continue its function as the people move in bands with their herds and few belongings.

SCC's challenge the prevailing attitude of the missionary as the sufficient, all-knowing and the lone-ranger type, who knows everything and does everything.⁹¹ In Turkana where remote places unreachable by cars, SCC lay leaders or catechists play a very important role in keeping the spirit of the domestic church alive. Each member of the SCC's are responsible for all the members' welfare: for example, accompaniment of the Catechumens in their community during the stages of the RCIA, visiting the sick and the dying and providing human support for bereaved families and the ones affected by raiding. SCC's is not only prayer groups, where they can together share their faith-experience, but also should be a place where educated and non-educated members finds their place. Also, to encourage men to actively participate in SCC activities. By doing so, the whole members will together and continue to flourish in different ways.⁹²

John Paul II in his recent encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio*, calls these SCC's "*a force for*

December, 1994.

⁹¹Buhlmann said, "But there had to be a reaction against this particular kind of missionary activity. This reaction brings home the message- self-awareness of the local people/ local priests. Until then the missionaries had been the loudspeakers. They dealt with and resolved our problems - for us, without us, and, often, against us. We were the Church of silence. But at last we found the courage to discover ourselves, to ask about our identity, to put ourselves forward in the Church as partners who were to be taken seriously. After such a long period of humiliation Africa has become a personality with a normally developed self-awareness instead of continuing to endure for ever the superiority complex of white men (missionaries) and to suffer from its own inferiority complex". See Buhlmann, *op. cit.* pp. 48-49.

⁹²Yves Congar said, 'It cannot be questioned that in the early Church consciousness of inter-part relations was very strong. The feeling of unity, of the homogeneity of the whole Church, was exceedingly active, and many historians have rightly underlined the fact that local communities were recognised as actualizations of a single Church whose existence preceded and included them. See Yves Congar O.P. "*Lay People in the Church*", trans. by Donald Attwater, London-Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965. p. 329.

evangelization" and *"good centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach "*. He states 'These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization and a solid point for a new society based on the civilization of love' . . . these communities become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the Gospel and source of new ministries. At the same time, by being imbued with Christ's love, they also show how divisions, tribalism and racism can be overcome. . . . They are a true expression of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion. . . . They are thus cause for great hope in the life of the church.⁹³

A faith matured in charity must be firmly grounded amongst all SCC's as the Church advances into the third millennium characterised by economic, political, social and cultural changes.⁹⁴ Formation, as an essential requirement for all who are involved in the evangelising mission of the Diocese, must be updated in accordance with the existing novelties in the present world. Recapturing back the right *'physiognomy'* of the Church can eventually save the proper image of the church in the world.

3.5 Fostering a renewed Catechesis of the people in Lodwar Diocese.

The Diocese felt a strong need of renewing and making the content of catechesis more simple, rich and understandable to the language of a local Turkana. Catechesis is the chief means by which the Church fulfils Christ's command of making disciples of all nations and teaching them to observe all that he had taught them (cf., Mt. 28:19-20, p. 16). It is only through catechesis that a local Turkana becomes a person committed in faith and charity in Jesus. The Church reminds us that,

"Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her

☪ John Paul II, *"Redemptoris Missio"*, No. 51. Simon P. Johnson composed a beautiful poem entitled *"I Dream of a Church"* which runs like this. I dream of a Church where love and people are more important than stone and steeple. I dream of a Church with an open door where no one is privileged except the poor. I dream of a Church where young and old will be inspired to change their world. I dream of a Church that will make my dreams come true. See Jose Luis Cortes, *"That's my Boy"*, London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1984. pp. 99-100.

⁹⁴Ibid. No. 20 states: *"The Church, then, serves the Kingdom by establishing communities and founding new particular Churches, and by guiding them to mature faith and charity in openness towards others,*

geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on Catechesis".⁹⁵

"Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fulness of Christian life".⁹⁶

For this reason Bishop Mahon calls for a renewed commitment in giving catechism to both young and old Turkana, educated and non-educated, the settled and mobile. Also, the Bishop considers the importance of forming committed and zealous catechists in the Diocese. One of the big steps taken was the establishment of a Catechetical Centre in the Diocese. Second, the promotion of catechists is one of the major task of all parishes in the Diocese by providing them training and ongoing formation, uplifting their economic status by providing meagre allowances such as fare, bicycles and upkeep. This need invites men and women, young and old Turkana, to share their time, talent and treasure in offering their service to their respective parishes. All SCC's must be responsible for choosing those people who are worthy and living a sacramental life, are indigenous and matured in charity. By doing so, Christ's mission is assured of continuity and the whole community matures in this aspect. Not only the pastoral agents feel responsible for the spiritual growth of the Christian community, but it must be the concern of all the baptised, *"the whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his/her specific role within the Church".⁹⁷*

3.6 ERODING TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

Legal systems enforced by the government administration, security forces and education systems are divorced from customary institutions and create new authority figures. Where elders or respected traditional leaders had the mandate to settle disputes, regulate the use of natural resources,

in service to individuals and society, and in understanding and esteem for human institutions".

⁹⁵John Paul II *Apostolic Exhortation, "Catechesi Tredendae"*, 1979. No. 13.

⁹⁶*"The Catechism of the Catholic Church"*, Africa: Paulines Publication, 1992. p. 30. See John Paul II *op. cit.* No. 18

⁹⁷John Paul II *"Ecclesiae in Africa"*, No. 53.

and provide a moral guide for all things pertaining to the lives of the community, they now may be helpless spectators in the face of the State authority.

Our formulated catechism must provide solutions to the fast declining Turkana values and family spirit that are in constant threat by the values priced by secularism and fast urbanization. Our catechism must preserve and respect traditional values, customs and accepted ethical attitudes and behaviour proper to the Turkana culture

3.7 Acceleration of Local Vocations

Numerous church documents have campaigned for the promotion of local clergy. It is a sad situation in the Diocese of Lodwar regarding the reception and consideration of this task. If I am not mistaken, there is only a handful of Turkana priests and Sisters since the mission in Turkana was established in the early 70's. Also, foreign missionaries at present run the Diocese, parishes and other institutions. Trust, openness and the willingness to collaborate with the local people are essential if we want the local church to flourish at its own pace and maturity.

3.8 CULTURAL BONDAGE (Emancipation of Women)

Since time immemorial, Turkana culture is a culture dominated by the Patriarchal spirit. For this reason, the Turkana world revolves around the figure of man, as the sole reference of everything. Thus, women have a minimal influence in the Turkana society. This cultural captivity that call for liberating force of the Gospel is situated in the general context of the culture of Turkana women. There are various forms of human degradation that defines cultural captivity such as the physical and psychological violence directed against women, the socially induced feminine low self-image, political, economic and even religious intolerance and exploitation, deprivation of educational opportunities, the perpetuating of laws and customs that not only discriminate against women but also mutilate or completely eliminate their common right to avail themselves of the opportunities of the modern world, all these are calculated attempts at blacking out women, rendering them almost invisible.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ U.E. Umoren. "Enculturation and Inculturation ". . . . *op. cit.* p. 98

The participation of women in the AMECEA Church⁹⁹ today is of humble service despite the fact that most Church-goers are women and children. In all the outstations I have visited in our Turkana mission, I noticed that women and children are the ones occupying all the benches. Mostly women avail themselves in taking the readings, singing in the choir, cleaning the church, arranging and decorating the altar. Strangely enough, I have never seen any single woman catechist - all are men

The "*Instrumentum Laboris*" of the 7th Synod of Bishops of 1987 - whose theme was "The vocation of the Laity in the Church and in the Modern World" - acknowledges the fact that the participation of women in the life and mission of the church is often more vast than that of the men. Other areas of active participation of women is to be seen in the Small Christian Communities.

Although women are spiritually equal to men, they are socially and culturally restricted, stifled by the dominion of men. Turkana women must be educated about their God-given rights. Religious Sisters present in the Diocese are doing something about this issue. The establishment of '*Maendeleo ya Wanawake*', that is Development of Women' helps and supports women by helping themselves. Homecraft Centre was established for this purpose. The Diocese through the collaboration of the Sisters gives education for women and girls, to encourage many new women groups in different parishes and to establish Catholic Women's Association that would deal issues that concerns them. In fact, the Diocese is encouraging women to avail themselves in the running of the Diocese aside from the Religious Sisters working in the Diocese such as Justice and Peace Commissions, Health Services, Education etc .

3.8 PROMOTION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

One important aspect in carrying out anew the missionary activity among Turkana people is the acceleration of the promotion of Justice and Peace in Lodwar Diocese.

The Synod of Bishops gathered in Rome in 1971 discovered this radical invitation of Jesus and in response released a firm statement saying, "*that action on behalf of Justice and the*

⁹⁹ I owe my gratitude to my colleague Romano Dada for the ideas expressed in this chapter. His Long Essay entitled, "*Women in AMECEA Local Churches: Challenges and Hopes*", Nairobi, Kenya, 1998. pp. 12-13. 37-38.

transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel".¹⁰⁰

Also the Synod of Africa Bishops (1994) enforced this declaration by maintaining that the proclamation of Justice and Peace is an integral part of evangelization.¹⁰¹

The promotion of Justice and Peace in Lodwar Diocese has become urgent, as the Church realises the fast decline in ethical standards and the deterioration of social conditions such as, frequent insecurity, abuse of public authority and property, raiding etc. Education in fundamental rights and obligations, according to the Church's teaching, must take root in the hearts and minds of local Turkana. This can be done by holding civil education, workshops related to the promotion of Justice and Peace in all parishes, establishing Justice and Peace Commissions in all parishes, newsletters containing Justice and Peace related news in the Diocese, acting as 'watchdogs' in the socio-political and economic life of the District, but at the same time avoiding being confrontational with the government yet always firm in its stance for the Gospel-truths and values.

The contribution of Fr. Gabriel, a Kiltegan Father, in collaboration with the local people in this field is worthy of notice. His dedication, courage and honest intervention in the light of the Gospel in defending the rights of the oppressed Turkanas made his life 'unbearable'. He received death threats from Moi's Administration for being 'noisy' in the District. I was able to witness the abuses of power by local authorities in the District after attending a prayer rally in honour of a young Turkana who was mysteriously killed by the police. Multiple injustices has been occurring in the District but the Catholic Church has been firm and courageous in its stance of being the 'voice of the voiceless'. Its Justice and Peace Commission has been the most active and honest commission in the country.

¹⁰⁰ "Justice and Peace in the World", No. 6.

¹⁰¹ John Paul II "Ecclesiae in Africa", No. 106

GENERAL CONCLUSION

At present, it has been an accepted fact that all pastoral societies including the Pastoral Turkana are under siege. They are at a crossroad marked by a necessity of renewal, of change that identifies them as pastoralist. The world is becoming a 'global village' and undergoing the pains of change is deemed necessary as the world advances to the third millennium. Patterns of thoughts, way of doing and thinking are brought into the limelight. We are living in a period marked by the clashes of norms, held beliefs, and tenets that produce tension within us. In all this turmoil one thing is sure, God is present in our history and is part of its new beginning. At this juncture the Church is called upon to assume its prophetic stance, define its present realities, renew its methodologies and have the courage to implement them.

No longer are there so-called 'experts and adepts' in this missionary undertaking. The exclusivity of domain that the clergy have been enjoying for the past years is waning as the new consciousness emerges among the local people - that is to assume and take their role as part and parcel in the building of their own local churches. This awareness serves as a new impetus for the local people to be the main animators of their salvation.

We have to bear in mind that for a long period of time, pastoralists did not receive much attention from the wider church, in comparison to the settled communities. They had been living on the margins of our Church. Now this reality is never considered a gospel-truth anymore. After discovering all this newly emerging consciousness, we missionaries are called to renew our missionary commitment among the pastoral Turkana. Our journey side by side with this people entails a greater witness of our lives in their midst. RM No. 42 states that:

"The witness of Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission marked by a simpler lifestyle and the use of corresponding means, avoiding being trapped through the attitude of a protagonist, but being there in a humble yet courageous way, knowing that God leads history, living closer to the people and more in solidarity with them, to be more

*patient and respectful to the rhythm of the people, adopting simpler structures and, most important of all, being signs of communion*¹⁰²

bringing unity to the Diocese marked by division (families, communities and society at large). We cannot evangelise with divided ideas and intentions. Our communities must be a sign of communion where we live as brothers and sisters sharing forgiveness and reconciliation, mutual welcoming and the healing of God's love.

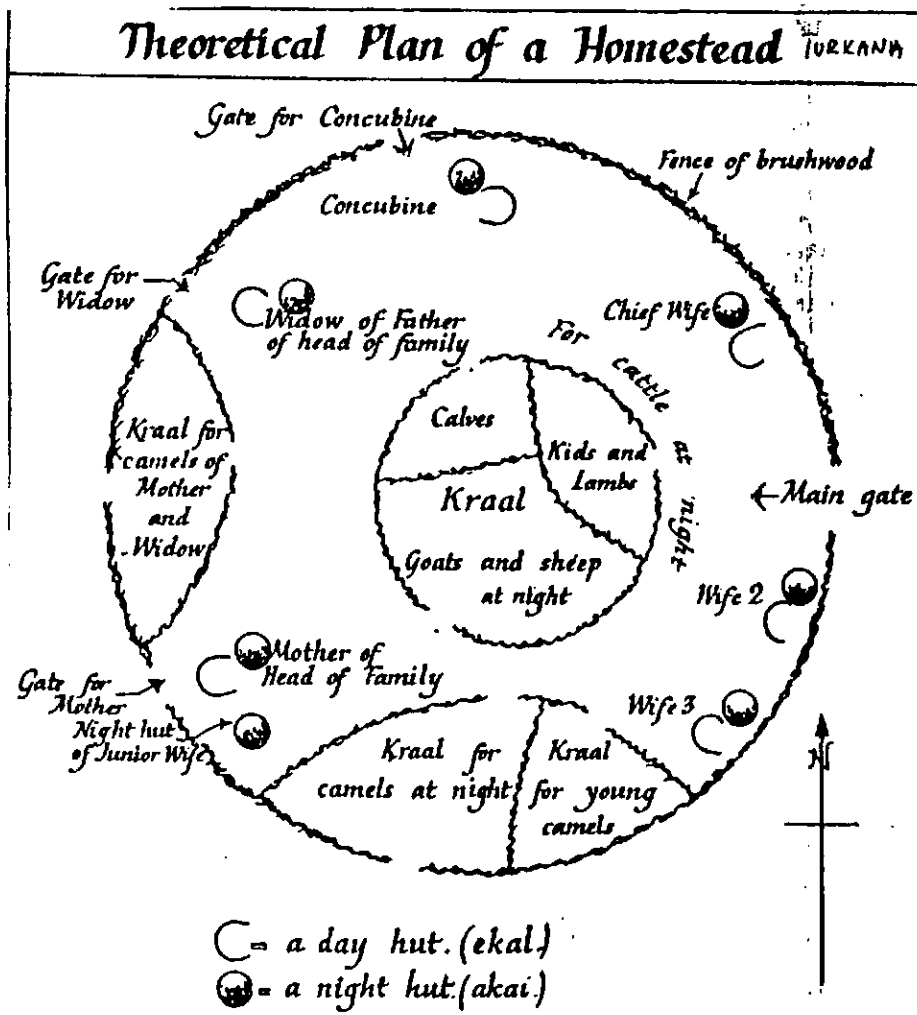
¹⁰²*"Fraternal Life in Community"*, 1994. Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. No. 60. See also XV General Chapter, "*Chapter Acts 1997*", Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus.

APPENDIX 1

Area of the District by division

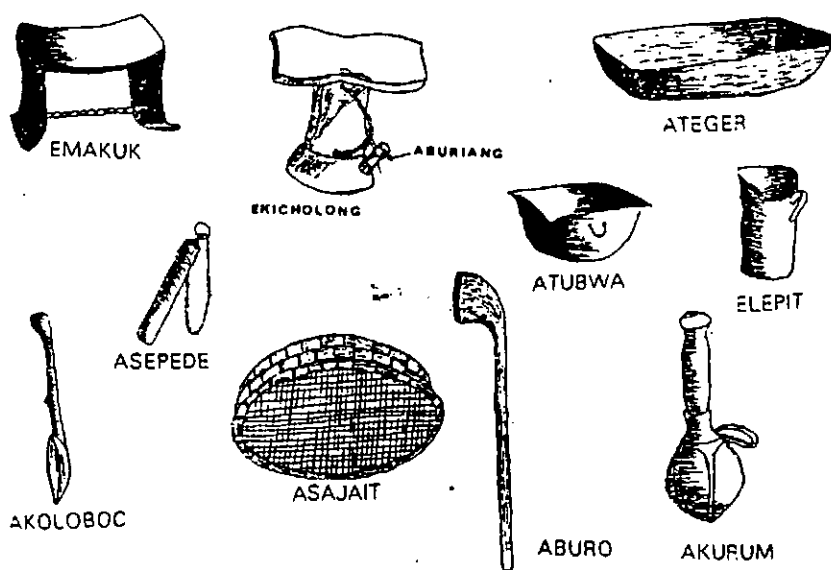
Division	sq. Km	Division	sq. Km.
Central	20,693	Lokitaung	8, 271
Turkwell	5,267	Kakuma	10, 944
Katilu	4,904	Kibish	5, 127
Lokori	12,668	Lokichoggio	<u>9, 126</u>
		Total	77, 000 sq. km.

Source: District Survey Office, Turkana Report ¹⁰³



APPENDIX III Household Utensils of Turkana

Diagram 1 An example, from Turkana, Kenya, of household utensils made from wood



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