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CHALLENGES IN EVANGELIZATION
AMONG THE YOUTH IN EMBU DIOCESE

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*To
Youth of Embu Diocese*

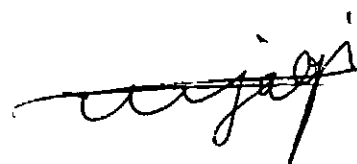
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I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Sacred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



Nthiga Erustus Njagi, SDB

2nd March 2005

This Long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.



Rev. Fr. Sahaya Selvam, SDB

2nd March 2005

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

What is known as Embu Diocese presently was a part of Meru diocese. Embu became a diocese only in 1986 under the leadership of Bishop John Njue.¹ The Salesians of Don Bosco Set foot on what would be later called Embu Diocese in 1980 to be a part of great force in evangelization among the youth started by the Consolata Fathers in 1920s.²

My essay is organized in four areas each of which provide a broad view and insights to possible solutions to challenges in evangelization. In Chapter one I will try to bring out the essential elements in evangelization and their implications. The nature of each of the elements will be explained in relation to evangelization. I will attempt to show how these elements could affect evangelization if they are not accorded their due importance. Lastly I will indicate how these elements lie within the plan of God for humanity.

In Chapter II, I will expound how young people could fail to acquire the essence of evangelization. In this section under review will be youth and the evangelizer, youth and catechesis, and youth and communication. In Chapter III I will investigate how the nature of the evangelizer is a pastoral challenge while Chapter IV will be my recommendations and lastly conclusion.

¹ Cf. The Kenya Catholic Secretariat, *The Kenya Catholic Directory*, 33.

² Cf. L. ODORICO, *Project Africa*, 79.

0.1 Background of the Study

I grew up in Embu Diocese where I did my primary and secondary education. During my encounter with my fellow youth from different parts of the diocese, I was amazed to hear how negative they were to some of their priests. Most of the youth were Catholic Christians but with very little understanding of the main Catholic teachings. Four years later after completing my secondary school, I was assigned to do my apostolate in Don Bosco Technical Secondary for two years. I experienced how the youth were in dilemma, in following Christ due the negative experiences they faced with their spiritual masters.

It is in connection to this that I have been reflecting on how this problem facing the youth could be curbed. It is a question of the evangelizer's character which is a pastoral challenge to the youth.

0.2 Statement of the problem

If at all the name of Jesus is held in esteem by people of all faiths and walks, it was because of his unique character. Christianity is a way of life, rather than a way of thought. To study Christian truths and gain intellectual understanding of them is not sufficient. It only when we live a Christian life that we can understand the full meaning of the Christian message. My immediate impression about the youth in Embu diocese was that they are disrespectful to their catholic ministers and not easy to instruct in matters of faith. This is where you find many youth talking outside the church even when a priest is delivering a sermon. Many youth do not bother to attend Sunday services let alone attending other church's programs. Since my sole interest and purpose was and is to serve the young people, I began to understand why they were behaving in that way. I discovered that the youth needed the

exposure of ministers who attempt to make of their spiritual and ministerial life as a whole. There was no way that one could hope to invite the youth to the spiritual journey when one did not travel that journey. I could now reconcile the behaviour of the youth with my little finding. I concluded that an authentic Christian witness is still the best Christian witness.³ The character of the evangelizer was the cause of the youth tendency. This is a problem and it requires immediate attention.

0.3 Objective of the Study

“Youths’ life experiences be recognized, respected, and built upon and that their needs, insights, and challenges be heard and not just in token,” to quote Ekstrom R. Reynolds (1989).⁴ Young people require concrete experiences of the evangelizer manifested his or her life witnessing values whether in Embu or any other part of the world.

My main objectives in this research study are the following:

1. To show clearly that the character of the Evangelizer is a pastoral challenge to the youth.
2. To bring to the light the views of the youth on the evangelizer.
3. To make the so called the evangelizer aware of the youth reaction to them and the requirements to be a true evangelizer.
4. To challenge myself and other youth ministers to reflect on the essential elements of evangelization and make youth a monument for Christ.

³ Cf. R. EKSTROM J. ROBERTO, *Access Guide to Evangelization*, 46.

⁴ Cf. R. EKSTROM J. ROBERTO, *Access Guide to Evangelization*, 57.

0.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

It is evident that the character of anyone involved in evangelization is not limited to any particular of section of the world. It could be a pastoral challenge which knows no boundary in the sphere of the evangelization. Haring Bernard puts it that sin is a cause and expression of division and tension. Man is divided in the most intimate depth of his own existence⁵. Therefore, the scope of this work is narrowed to the youth only viewed at a particular angle. "Since practice what you preach" is a call to every evangelizer all the world to the youth. I will further narrow down the scope to the catholic youth of Embu diocese in relation to character of the evangelizer as a pastoral challenge. My questionnaire was particularly focused on the youth of Embu Diocese. My work is based to a great extent based on observable facts among the youth and the evangelizers.

⁵ Cf. B. HARING, *Evangelization Today*, 165.

Chapter I

The Essence of Evangelization

1.1 Introduction

To bring the human being the goodness of God's loving intention, to make him or her aware of this unique opportunity and commitment to a life accordance with that invitation is precisely the true meaning of evangelization. To evangelize means to proclaim the love of God which comes to us through Christ Jesus, and proclaim it in such a way that the human being, with the grace of God accepts it with his or her own free and firm commitment. It was Jesus Christ who first proclaimed God's saving love in a new and a decisive way. It was he who first challenged us to make a radical change in our lives in response to God's love. The Good news of our salvation through Jesus Christ was understood and proclaimed for the first time in virtue of the Pentecostal grace and experience of the apostles.⁶

⁶ Cf. B. HARING, *Evangelization Today*, 14.

Evangelization is a constituent element in God's plan of salvation; it is decidedly the work of the Holy Spirit. This will be so until the Lord comes again in glory to terminate this work of evangelization. It is the Spirit of truth who gives the Disciples of Christ the right of understanding of the Gospel. Moreover, it is the Holy Spirit who instills in them the apostolic vigor and enables them to substantiate their proclamation with the convincing proofs of God's presence and assistance.⁷

The Holy Spirit formed the primitive Christian community. The first Christians proclaimed the Gospel as members of the community, invited and led their converts to a new life within that community. The whole community recognized the pastoral and doctrinal authority of those whom Christ in a very special way had charged with the proclamation of the Gospel and the care of the community.⁸

In the New Testament two forms of proclaiming the Gospel are evident. The first form is proclamation of God's saving plan to people who did not yet know it. The objective was to lead them to an initial Christian community. This was accomplished by the Sacrament of Baptism. After the formation of the neophyte continued, they had to strengthen themselves in their faith and in the Christian life. In this way the pastoral statement of Christ, as we find that Mathew 28:16-20 distinguishes between pre-baptismal catechesis ("go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptize them") and instruction after baptism ("and teach them to observe all the commandments"). Luke presents the first talk of Peter which prepared the people for and invited them to Baptism (Acts 2:14-39), but immediately after the

⁷ C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 19.

⁸ F. le JOLY, *Evangelization: Theory and Practice*, 8.

baptism of the first Christians Luke underlines the fact that they lived further instructions from the apostles (Acts 2: 42).⁹

Jesus the forerunner of evangelization is its base. Characteristically Jesus way of evangelization is seen in four aspects. The four aspects are service, proclaiming the word, celebration and dignity, which constitute the essence of Evangelization. Without a base reality is distorted, an edifice collapses, or a movement is paralyzed. Evangelization is a dynamic task incarnated first in the life and saving action of Jesus.¹⁰

1.2 Service

It was because Jesus Christ the Son of the Father precisely knew what it meant to evangelize that he proclaimed that he did not come to be served but to serve. Jesus evangelized through service to the community and individual members. In his proclamation of the Good news, God's love was seen in action and in speech. Thus service to any community is an essential element of evangelization.¹¹

Service is a sure way of evangelization because it calls our attention to involve ourselves deeply into the lives of others. Through service we immerse ourselves into the problems of other people and feel with them in their pains. Christ gave himself in selfless service for all humanity. In his public ministry he proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught its implications, he healed the sick, comforted the sad and raised the dead to life. Our endeavor like that of Jesus is to be the one of service. True evangelization lacks credibility if those who do it are only

⁹ Cf. J. A. SCHERER S.B. BEVANS, *New Direction in Mission and Evangelization*, 70.

¹⁰ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 12.

¹¹ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 12.

interested in souls and have no concern about the welfare of the people's bodies, situations and community.¹²

As a matter of fact service can never be divorced from evangelization. Christian life should be lived in a variety of situations. We should not proclaim a mere set of doctrines but a message that touches the very core of human existence. Promoting human progress is a part and parcel of evangelization. It is only in this way that we can make present the nature of Jesus present of freeing people from sin as well as from all its consequences. Evangelization through service is the work of all, bishops, priests, deacons religious, sisters, laity, both men and women, the family, youth workers and those in public service. Mass media in its ability to cross all the boundaries can be effective means of evangelization.¹³

The insistent of the Gospel call to evangelize through service not only to a total communion with god. We are called upon to show our solidarity with our sisters and brothers. There is urgency for us to accompany our witness to the liberating Christ with prophetic protest, against all that enslaves and with deep commitment to the marginalized. Our call is to serve people in all situations, the family, profession, science, technology, culture, politics and mass media. In the same way that Jesus penetrated the hearts of people with his life and teaching, so too we who call ourselves his disciples. We are expected to penetrate all people's culture through the Gospel.¹⁴

According to St Paul, Jesus was the perfect divine model of servitude (2Cor. 4:10). When we devote our life in service of the others, we offer our time, our

¹² Cf. G.H. ANDERSON — T.F. STRANSKY, *Witnessing to the Kingdom*, 8.

¹³ Cf. P. VADAKUMPADAN, *Evangelization Today*, 53.

¹⁴ Cf. P. CHAKKALACAL, *Paul Challenge to Christian Today*, 104.

strength and our abilities to God. It is in this aspect that St Paul is a good example to us as one of the disciples of Jesus in his evangelization through service. He was deeply concerned for the socially weak and needy, like Onesimus the slave, the sick Epaphroditus, the poor among the saints in Jerusalem, the poor in Corinth (1 Cor 11:19).¹⁵

1.3 Proclaiming the Word

When God chose to rescue the people of Israel from slavery, first he made himself known through Moses. Moses proclaimed the message of God to the people of Israel. He revealed to them who God was, the God of their ancestors and as the one who would rescue them from slavery, and the one to be invoked by all generations.¹⁶

Moses was an “evangelizer”¹⁷ sent by God to proclaim liberty to the people of God. Thus proclaiming the word of God is an essential element of evangelization. Proclamation of the word is preaching the promises made by God in the new covenant through Jesus Christ. In itself proclamation of the word, is preaching the love that God has for us and our love for him.¹⁸

Our world is full of untold suffering caused by human beings selfish motives. In circumstances such as these we need to proclaim that which is constructive and which help human beings to live a more fulfilled life.¹⁹ Jesus consciousness to his mission was characterized by his proclamation commitment. In these words Jesus ever said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his

¹⁵ Cf. G. KAITHOLI, *Paul Guide to Christian Living*, 148.

¹⁶ Cf. P.M. THOMAS, *The Spirituality of Salesian Assistance*, 30.

Moses was not an evangelizer as such, but I call him an “evangelizer” because of the role he played announcing God’s message that is always a “good news”.

¹⁸ Cf. A. FLANNERY, *Vatican Council II*, 723.

¹⁹ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 14.

work" (John 4:34). The whole of Jesus' earthly life the sole intense and purpose of his mission was to proclaim the rule of God. He revealed the Unfathomable riches of the father's love to humanity. Following the footsteps of Jesus their master, the apostles proclaimed the Good News by bearing witness to him. Nothing deterred them from proclaiming the word.²⁰

Proclamation of the Word by Jesus always brought hope and rejuvenated the lives of the less hopeful. It is this aspect of evangelization which is the proclamation of the word which brings passion in the lives of the people. Passion is to a greater extent enhanced by having an intention of strengthening the network of relationship in a community. Relationship is strengthened by the quality of caring for others which in turns validates the proclamation of the word.²¹

The Church was born as a result of evangelization which Jesus began which was continued by the apostles. Jesus has given the Church one of the essential elements of evangelization to proclaim salvation in him. For the people of God to be shareholders of the promised kingdom need hear the word being proclaimed to them.²² All the people of God throughout the world are called to obligation through the proclamation of the word. To evangelize is therefore biblically speaking to proclaim the Gospel.²³

²⁰ Cf. P. CHAKKAI ACAL, *Paul: A challenge to Christian Today*, 100.

²¹ Cf. R.R. EKSTROM J. ROBERTO, *Access Guide to Youth Ministry: Evangelization*, 82.

²² Cf. P. VEDAKUMPADAN, *Evangelization Today*, 149.

²³ Cf. G.H. ANDERSON T.F. STRANSKY, *Third World Theologies*, 10.

1.4 Celebration

When people live in harmony with each other the aspect of celebration is inevitable. In order to complete the wholeness of life, celebration is an essential factor. Celebration is found in every culture and expressed in different forms. Jesus came to bring happiness and joy to all the human beings. It was in the mind of Jesus that celebration is an important element in people's lives. A bed ridden person has no joy to celebrate. In his ministry Jesus brought liberty to people in order for them to celebrate. The blind he gave sight, the lame he enabled to walk, the sick in mind and body all were liberated to celebrate life. During baptisms, weddings and anniversaries which take place within the Church community settings are real celebrations.²⁴

Celebration is found in music through which St Thomas says some virtues can be taught and developed. In life there could be many problems such as loneliness, sorrow and anxiety. It is in circumstances such as these that evangelization brings means for molding character and elevating the spirit through celebration.²⁵ Celebration helps one approach God, sometimes with contrition and fear, but more often with reverence and love. The good news which is proclaimed through evangelization brings about celebration. If the word which is proclaimed is truly good, the end result is celebration. In every individual's life there are times when celebrations are vitally necessary.²⁶

No celebration which does not express optimism and joy. This aspect is brought about by evangelization through the celebration of Eucharist, the paschal

²⁴ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 16.

²⁵ Cf. B. COLE, *Music & Morals*, 115.

²⁶ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 19.

Mystery. This is for us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke. 24:30; John 6:10-11).²⁷ Evangelization brings about a community which has one and sole objective to imitate the spirit Jesus. When people get evangelized, they begin a new form of life. Celebration is a special time in which we affirm all of life by saying yes to a part of it. Evangelization can never be complete without people coming together as a community to celebrate. Actual evangelization takes place when all people are one, assembled around one table, celebrating the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ.²⁸

To evangelize is to invite people to become involved at the Eucharistic table, to have fellowship and to be a part of celebrating, believing and serving people. Therefore celebration is an essential element of evangelization through which people come closer to God. Celebration is an aspect which cannot be ruled out in evangelization.²⁹

1.5 Dignity

Every human being in whichever capacity requires a certain amount of dignity accorded him or her. Dignity is an essential element of evangelization in which its absence distorts the Good News. Jesus Christ himself received people with dignity proclaiming the Gospel to them with respect.³⁰

The people, who are unjustly treated, persecuted oppressed by internal and external forces should be helped to uplift their dignity. Nobody can experience salvation and redemption unless they are completely free from forces that repress their dignity. In order for anybody to really enjoy the fruits of Jesus' redemptive act,

²⁷ Cf. R. RONZANI, *Understanding the Eucharist*, 12.

²⁸ Cf. F. DESIANO – K. BOYACK, *Creating the Evangelizing Parish*, 90.

²⁹ Cf. F. DESIANO – K. BOYACK, *Creating the Evangelizing Parish*, 103.

³⁰ Cf. C. DODD, *Called to Mission*, 16.

one has to first experience in ones life the dignity and freedom which come with that redemption and salvation.³¹

Evangelization seeks out the oppressed of the humankind. Since the mandate of the Church is to evangelize, it cannot live distant from those who have been lowered by repressive forces. It is in atmosphere such as this, that evangelization promote peoples dignity. Evangelization comes to the poor to generate the power to affirm their human dignity, liberation and hope. To the oppressor it comes as a judgment, challenge and a call for repentance. Evangelization awakens the insensitive to awareness of responsibility.³²

As followers of Jesus who identified himself with least of his brethren, we need also to give witness to man's dignity. We to need to bear witness to the fact that human dignity cannot be destroyed in whatever the situation.³³ To upholding the human dignity is a sure way of imitating Jesus Christ who lived among men the individual, even the solitary. The dignity of the human beings goes beyond material possession. The role of evangelization is to seek out the victims of injustices, and restore to them the lost dignity. This is carrying out the mission God whose manifestation we see in Jesus, the perfect model of evangelization.³⁴

In matters of evangelization, the evangelizer has always in mind his prospective audience, by experiencing their feelings and entering their minds. He strives to discover what they need and foresee their response. In this approach there is no danger of hindering the human dignity. The message of salvation is the same in

³¹ Cf. A. BELLAGAMBA, *Mission and Ministry in the Global Church*, 53.

³² Cf. G.H. ANDERSON, *Witnessing to the Kingdom*, 8.

³³ Cf. J.A. SCHERER - S.B. BEVANS, *New Directions in Evangelization I*, 126.

³⁴ Cf. P. CHAKKALACAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 99.

every nation and to all people and at all times. The message is Jesus Christ, his person and his teaching. It is this principle that the evangelizer should not overlook. The Lord Jesus Christ is the first thing which the evangelizer has to bear in mind, love and work for.³⁵

It is these elements of evangelization that the youth should be made to acquire for the proper propagation of faith of the Church. In the chapter which follows I indicate how the elements of evangelization are essential to the youth. Therefore it is the duty of all the evangelizers to at the fore front to instill the elements of evangelization to the youth.

³⁵ Cf. F. le JOLY, *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 168.

Chapter II

Youth and the Essence of Evangelization

2.1 Youth and the Evangelizer

After having outlined the essence of Evangelization, I would like to bring forward some factors which hinder youth from acquiring elements of evangelization. An evangelizer plays a very important role in enabling the young people acquire essential elements of evangelization.

During my interview with most of the young people from Embu diocese conducted in sixteen parishes, most of them looked upon the priest, nun and the catechist as the custodian of evangelization. Young people feel that the evangelizers are not at the service of the people at all. In any case there cannot fail to a few dedicated evangelizers at the service of the youth. A good number of the youth during my research expressed their opinion that their main challenges lay on the evangelizers. The general opinion was that most of the evangelizers in the diocese were not at the service of the young people.

All evangelizers are called to serve all the people of God in a total dedication irrespective of their age. In respect to this Sr. Pauline Chakkalacal, gives St Paul as an ideal example in the call to evangelize through service:

Paul is very particular in presenting his ministry as service; he is the servant of the Gospel, not its master. Servants have to give an account of their service, so people “should regard us servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God”.³⁶ And stewards are expected to be worthy of their trust. Neglect of duty on the part of the stewards deserves punishment.

The main question here is, in which ways do evangelizers fail to impart such important elements of evangelization such as service? The answer to this question lies in answers given by the youth during my research. To begin with the most important factor lies within the lifestyle of the clergy and religious behaviour which make it difficult for them to accept the teaching of the Church. The youth feel that clergy do not serve the interest of the youth but that of their own.

While interviewing some young people from one particular parish, in response they said that there were several priests who owned big coffee farms. In some cases some had very lavish buildings. The youth keep on questioning whether with all these possessions the priest would ever have the time to serve the young people. The story was the same in almost every other parish where the priests had several income generating projects. As I listened to the youth and after my own experience I wondered if these issues were being addressed by the diocese of Embu.

As we read in the *Lumen Gentium*, “it is quite clear that evangelization signifies preaching of the gospel through word and testimony of life to those who do

³⁶ Cf. P. CHAKKALICAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 79.

not know Christ or need to be instructed in the faith".³⁷ From my findings it was evident that clergy were not giving a good testimony to the youth with their lives. The youth express bitterness as they tell of their experiences of some priests. In one particular interview one youth questioned me on how one could be moved to faith by a priest who has a number of dairy cattle on which he generates money by selling their produce. As a matter of fact, this is a major challenge for the youth to come to terms with, calling to mind service as an essential element of evangelization.

On several occasions youth quote the Bible verses to indicate how some priests were serving themselves instead of God. The youth claim that some priest serve money in the place of the youth.

In addition there were some cases where youth contacts in school managed by religious have made negative impressions giving grudges and to some extent turning away from the church. It is as a result of negative experiences that the youth face that fail to grasp the truthfulness of evangelization. Evangelization takes place in the human beings, in their concrete human live experiences.³⁸ If the whole picture of evangelization is distorted in the hands of the so called evangelizers, the young people cannot be drawn to Christ. In some cases youth encounter priests who celebrate mass while they are drunk. It is in some cases such as these that the youth tend to be materialistic in their outlook and very little scope for spiritual growth and questioning.³⁹

The youth are upbeat with modern developments and leave no puzzles unsolved in their minds. If youth are not given satisfactory answers to their

³⁷ Cf. D. VADAKU MPADAN, *Evangelization Today*, 12.

³⁸ Cf. F. DESIANO - K. BOYYACK, *Creating the Evagelizing Parish*, 40.

³⁹ Cf. D.S. AMALOTPAVADASS, *Joyful Response to the Challenges of Faith-Formation of Youth*, 45.

questioning, they look for possible solutions on their own. Some catechists in some parishes fail to give satisfactory answers the youth during the catechism classes especially when they question what it means to be a priest or a nun. There are some cases where old people serve as the catechist and are not appreciated by the youth because of generation gap. The youth claim that the catechists do not share their own experiences. Priests give little attention to the youth because they (youth) have no money to offer them.

There are some cases where some priests who are said to have fathered some children. This distorts the image of the priests according to the youth opinions.

There are priests involved in sexual scandals. To cover up this menace, they are changed from the parishes where they are known and taken for further studies abroad. Youth point out some cases of nuns who get pregnant by priests. When a nun gets pregnant she is asked to leave her congregation while the priest continues with his ministry. Youth fail to reconcile situations such as these which result from those evangelizing them. There is a common feeling among the youth that the priests, nuns and the catechists are not playing their role of service in bringing the gospel message to them.

To live our Christian faith is to witness it in our daily lives. If we live our faith, we are called as well to share that faith with others. As a matter of fact witness is essential, for if we try to share faith without living it people will take us for hypocrites.⁴⁰

There exists a certain amount of hypocrisy among the priests who preach what they do not practice. Instead of proclaiming the word of God, some priests

⁴⁰ Cf. F. DESIANO — K. BOYYACK, *Creating the Evangelizing Parish*, 45.

preach about the offertory. In every church's gathering some priests always address the issues of money. There is common feature in most of the parishes in Embu diocese that most of the priests preach about how people should contribute more money in support of the church.

Evangelization introduces Jesus as the Lord who reveals the Father to the youth and shares his Spirit with us. This can only be done through the proclamation of the Word. This however is not the case that the youth experience. Proclamation and witness go hand in hand. St Paul condemned proclamation of the Word without the coherence of life. The apostle Paul conceived his apostolate as a witnessing service.⁴¹ Youth do not acquire some essential elements such as the proclamation of the word, when those responsible fail in their task.

2.2 Youth and Catechesis

I have cited some factors which hinder youth from acquiring some essential elements of evangelization from the perspective of the evangelizer. In this section I will dwell on the catechesis in relation to the youth. During my research, it became evident that the youth had no further instruction after the receiving the sacrament of confirmation. There is a need for a constant instruction in order to lay a sure foundation. For example, if one puts up a building no matter how strong the foundation might have been, it is bound to collapse if no attention is given to it. A building requires regular inspection like repainting and replacement of one part or another. The youth also requires the same follow up as the building. Without catechesis youth fail to acquire the essential elements of evangelization.

⁴¹ Cf. P. CHAKKALACAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 102.

Catechesis is aimed at those people who are already converted, to instruct them more profoundly in the mysteries of revelation and to make their faith more enlightened and fervent.⁴² Most of the youth have received the sacrament of Christian initiation, but have very little understanding of them. Most of the catechism learnt by the youth was just mere memory work with no expulsion of the material covered.

Youth are not given enough instruction on matters of liturgy. Some youth claim that certain changes in the liturgy are enforced without due explanation. Consequently youth do not appreciate the changes especially when no catechesis is given regarding them. Communication of church matters is very poor which always creates misunderstanding. There is a failure in catechesis to enable youth build a deeper relationship with God. The doctrinal and dogmatic teachings do not help the youth feel close God.⁴³ The main problem contributing to this is that there is no catechesis given to them to understand fully the church's teachings. There is hardly any follow up of the youth in matters of catechetical instruction. During my interview, majority of the youth had no further instructions after their first communion. Parent play a very minor role in making youth know more of what was learnt during catechism classes.

The modern parents do not have much time to spare for the religious teaching and supervision of their children. There are more problems affecting the due to lack of catechesis. Some issues like marriage, the youth only read them from books, films which give attitudes of people to marriage in 'foreign' countries and thus the sacredness of marriage as a sacrament is incomprehensible. Without catechesis youth are influenced by today's civil marriages, divorce, free love and sex

⁴² Cf. D. VADAKUMPADAN, *Evangelization Today*, 12.

⁴³ Cf. D.S. AMALORPAVADAS, *Joyful Response*, 42.

which form the fashion of the day. Few youth are fully instructed on values of various sacraments. When confronted with the issue of confession, youth tend to see human elements in priests and therefore, find it difficult to make frequent this sacrament. If at all a handful of catechesis was given at least some youth would have benefited. The youth have no understanding that penance involves sincere contrition and merely recitation of sins.⁴⁴ Sacraments according to the youth are just mere rituals and just routine affairs. The value of the sacraments has been lost in minds of the youth. This results from the failure to have catechesis, which could have added values to the sacraments.

Some grownup young people affirm that when they had initial catechism classes, very few of them were mature enough to understand all what was taught through memory. The need for catechesis among the youth is a dire need, as they advance in age if at all the elements of evangelization have to be safeguarded. As a matter of fact lack of catechesis in the lives of the youth is a hindrance to acquiring essential elements in evangelization.

2.3 Youth and Communication

Communication can play a very great role in imparting essential elements of evangelization. When talking about communication in this sense I am referring to the role of mass media. The word communication has its origin from a Latin word 'communicare'. This means to make known to another, to share with another, to make other partners. Communication is expressed in a number of ways such as interactions, interchange and dialogue, which one uses to keep in touch with his or

⁴⁴ Cf. P.M. THOMAS, *The Spirituality of Salesian Assistance*, 42.

her fellow human beings. It is in this aspect communication is defined as the art of receiving and transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another.⁴⁵

Like any other essential element required by the human beings, communication is natural just as the same way that one hungers for food and drink. The urge for communication is a primal one, and in our contemporary civilization it is a necessity for survival. It is both an individual and a social need. Our important messages to be effective, must reach many people at one time. In this case to reach out to the youth and communicate to them the essential elements of evangelization we need to use the appropriate tools to attain the intended goal. Generally interpreted mass media refer to the press, cinema, radio, television and internets. These are so termed because they reach heterogeneous masses of population living in a particular country. By their very nature, mass media make it possible for human to communicate with a large mass of people, at one and at the same time and in powerful and effective manner.⁴⁶

Our present world, for better or for worse is mass media oriented. All the world today people learn almost everything through some medium of mass communications, for example through news papers, magazines, books, video, radio, television, cinema and internet. The development of newspapers, radio, television, cinema and the growth of information technology have provided potential benefit to the human race. In this millennium, characterized by mass media or means of social

⁴⁵ Cf. P. CHAKRAI ACAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 112.

⁴⁶ Cf. O.F. COSTAS, *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization*, 149.

communication, catechesis or further deepening of faith cannot do without these means.⁴⁷

When mass media is put at the service of the Gospel, it is capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the word of God is heard, they enable the good news to reach many youth. In this section my main focus is on how mass media has helped youth to in evangelization. With media youth can be easily instructed because of its far reaching effects. In Embu Diocese very little has been done in the field of mass media communication. Very few parishes use microphones let alone having a radio station in the Diocese. There is no media in the diocese which motivate the youth for social change and spiritual development.

In his authoritative study on media M. McLuhan states:

All media are active metaphors in their power to translate into new forms... By means of translating of immediate sense experience into vocal symbols the entire world can be evoked and retrieved at any instant.⁴⁸

If at all Embu Diocese controlled any media it could as well control the minds of the youth and action. The youth in the diocese have an access to secular books and magazines. There is a wide rage of reading filthy literature glorifying crime and sex-abuse. In the same that the cancer eats the body cells gradually, the secular books read by the youth destroy their morality.

There are few magazines and books to nourish the minds of with noble thoughts and build up men and women of integrity, within the diocese circle. Evangelization is essentially a process of communication and this is why the Second

⁴⁷ Cf. E. le JOLY., *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 258.

⁴⁸ Quote in E. le JOLY., *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 257.

Vatican Council exhorts the people of God to use effectively communication media.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ P. CHAKKALACAI, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 112.

Chapter III

The Nature of the Evangelizer as a Pastoral Challenge

3.1 Evangelizer and Evangelization

In the atmosphere of challenges in evangelization, what is impact of the evangelizer? To a great extent it can be said that the success of the evangelization among the youth is dependent on the evangelizer. In this context when talking about the evangelizer I am referring to the priest and those who have anything to do with evangelization in the diocese. It is the role of the evangelizer to take to heights the work of evangelization. If the evangelizer does the contrary to what is expected to be done, the work of evangelization is hampered. To be an apostle means to bear Christ's witness. An evangelizer is chosen not for his or her personal glory, but for the service of the Lord his people.⁵⁰

It becomes a pastoral challenge when the evangelizer fails in bringing Christians to the full knowledge of Jesus Christ. Like the apostle Paul, an

⁵⁰ L. SANNEH, *Translating the Message. The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 167.

evangelizer is called to become 'all things to all' (1Cor.9:22) irrespective of social, cultural or age difference.⁵¹ It is when the evangelizer does the opposites of this result is having Christians with fragmented faith. The evangelizer should be restless in seeking out those who are deprived of the knowledge of Christ. He or she should know that has the obligation to God to make the best use of the resources put at their disposal for the spreading of the Kingdom of Christ.⁵²

The degree of grace and the virtue of the evangelizer is the determinant of the standard of the Christian community, who always follow their leaders on the road of perfection. The evangelizer should use the talents given to him or her for within a reasonable limit. Everyone is talented in a particular ability or another. It is usually not rare to find some evangelizers who have allowed much of the God-given talents to remain underdeveloped. It becomes a challenge when an evangelizer fails to discover the strong points in what people might appreciate in them.⁵³

As God's appointed shepherds of the flock the evangelizers are the first on whom devolves the duty of evangelization. Their mission is to be extended to the whole of humankind. For church-building priests are essential factors. Priests should be reserved as far as possible for their specific functions, those that they can alone fulfill in the church. When the priest slacks and loses spiritual energy, he cannot kindle the fire of zeal among his followers, gradually their spirit cools down.⁵⁴

Therefore the evangelization requires the evangelizers who are totally dedicated to it and with a sole purpose of bringing the Kingdom of God to the

⁵¹ P. CHAKKALACAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 59.

⁵² D.S. AMALORPAVAVADASS, *Evangelization of the Modern World*, 95.

⁵³ J. WALSH, *Evangelization and Justice*, 61.

⁵⁴ E. le JOLY, *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 107.

people. The evangelizers are called to be responsible for reshaping with boldness and wisdom the lives of the youth towards full Christian maturity. There is a need to have a complete fidelity to the content of evangelization. This is what 'Evangelii Nutiandi' invites the pastors to be. They are called upon to be effective desirable for communicating the Gospel message to all the people.⁵⁵

3.2 The Spirit of the Evangelizer

During my research most of mine respondents affirmed that they had been dismayed by the spirit of the priests towards them. The priests do not have time for the youth. This becomes a pastoral challenge when the pastors neglect their duty towards the youth who in a way the backbone of the church. While evangelizing it has to be born in mind that if people equate the evangelizers to anybody else, their message will follow into deaf ears. Sometimes one careless movement and outburst of temper or one hypocritical undermines the message and destroy the spirit of evangelization. It is the moral, ethical and spiritual life dimension of the evangelizers that make ones message credible and persuasive.⁵⁶

Availability is a good spirit which should be inculcated by evangelizers among the youth. If one has given his life to be at the service of God, he or she should do so whole heartedly. Young people express concern of some priests who are only found in the church compound only when they are celebrating Mass. When the priests fail to be at the service of the youth, they shut the doorway to evangelization. Our world and our church need youth, but if they are not given

⁵⁵ E. le JOLY, *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 167.

⁵⁶ D.J. HESSELGRAVE, *Communicating Christ-Cross Culturally*, 286.

proper attention they will remain at the periphery of our world and our church. There is a need for the evangelizers to communicate fidelity and discipline to the youth.⁵⁷

There is a need for the evangelizers to have a motivation to go to the youth where they are living their lives. Young people require evangelizers who have the spirit of listening. The spirit of the evangelizer should be that of valuing the youth whether they have a contribution to make to the church or not. The evangelizer needs to have the spirit which the apostles of Jesus had, they followed his command. They made disciples of all the nations and taught people to observe the command given by Christ.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ D.S. AMALORPAVADASS, *Evangelization of the Modern World*, 108.

⁵⁸ R. EKSTROM · J. ROBERTO, *Access Guide to Evangelization*, 76.

Chapter IV

Recommendations

Youth are people engaged in adventure of discovery regarding the problems, the values and the situations of their lives and those of others around them. The evangelizer should be anxious to equip the youth with knowledge they need to grow as Christians. An effort should be made by the diocese to train youth ministers capable of administering to the needs of the youth. The catechists should belong to the same social group, and be persons of sound judgment and good mixers.

There is a need to establish youth press; publications meant for the youth, magazines, novels and film, radio broadcasts, television programs for the youth. The evangelizers should change their characters in areas contradicting their moral values and their status. Most of the evangelizers need to be aware of their limitations, and feel the need to transcend them and yearn for the infinite. The priests should have a concern for the youth because the future transformation of the society depends on them. Youth should be appreciated and encouraged by the church to play an active role.

Among the clergy and the nuns, there are those who are materialistic which makes youth doubt their status as the people of God. The people of this kind should

make up their minds on whether they are in the right place or not and quit honourable place given to them. Most of the youth look at the priest and nuns and as the divine models of perfection failure to which their image of God is deformed. Therefore priests and nuns should live up to the commitment which they have promised to God. It is the role of the evangelizer to uphold the dignity in their lives which is compatible with the message of evangelization.

In every parish and outstation there should be a good library which will help the youth to deepen their knowledge of Christ, of church and of the kingdom. The materials in the library should contain the message which of God's love and compassion. In addition to this, the evangelizers should make their duty to proclaim the liberating and saving love of Christ to the youth through the electronic means of communication available.

In using the media, there should be an avoidance of using cheap entertainment which degrades the human values. Use of this type of media can disorient the youth from their main goal, to know Christ better. The strength and the limitations of should be taken into consideration before application. The media should be aimed at achieving Church's evangelistic, preserving the authenticity of the gospel message and pastoral goals.⁵⁹ Popular music is also an added tool when it comes to evangelizing youth. The evangelizer should recognize in music a potential tool to be applied in evangelizing the youth. Just as one of the Doctors of the Church in the 1700's declared St Isidore of Seville, that there can never be a perfect

⁵⁹ J. McDONNELL F. TRAMPIETS, *Communicating faith in a Technological Age*, 161.

discipline without music, so music is needed in perfecting evangelization among the youth.⁶⁰

The Embu diocese should train personnel for the media apostolate which is a sure way of reaching out to the youth. It should also establish a catholic press to be the mouth-piece for the powerless and voiceless youth. In presence of the media erring evangelizer could be exposed of their evils and help the helpless. Mass media could be the herald of Gospel message to the youth for example by writing topical articles for the secular press and preparing religious broadcast.

As matter of fact it should be born in mind that, we cannot communicate the Good News unless we ourselves know it and accepted it first. Like St Paul, we are to allow the spirit to bring about harmony in life of contemplation and action.⁶¹

⁶⁰ B. COLE, *Music and Morals*, 62.

⁶¹ P. CHAKKALACAL, *A Challenge to Christians Today*, 110.

CONCLUSION

A priest is considered as intermediary between God and people. He should spare his time and use it for the good of the flock of Christ. Much is expected from a priest especially that he controls his passions. Lack of good and committed priests limits the work of evangelization. Usually it is the priest who sets the standard of spiritual life the community entrusted to him.⁶²

In my long essay I have presented how youth find themselves at the crossroads with the behavioral patterns of some priests. Embu Diocese is still a young, but there is a dire need for the formation of the priests especially in youth ministry. The holiness and apostolic efficiency of the priests depends much on the training they have received in seminaries and houses of religious formation. The conduct of some priests in Embu diocese, pose a pastoral challenge to the faithful especially to the youth. This challenge should be meditated upon and that the priests live according to their calling.⁶³

What appears in the circle of evangelizers is that most of them have no sufficient training in the field of youth management. Thus they take no interest in

⁶² F. LE JOLY, *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 107.

⁶³ F. LE JOLY, *Evangelization. Theory and Practice*, 103.

some of the major issues affecting the lives of youth. In my research I have very much dwelt on the role of evangelizer from the perspective of pastoral concern. It is in this perspective that I have tried to shed light on how some priests fail to bring youth to terms with Gospel values.

I have emphasized how it is necessary to instill the essential elements of evangelization among the youth. Proclamation as an essential element of evangelization should always be accompanied by one's life values. In order for one to convey a meaningful message, his or her action should form the background.

Youth are very much in touch with the mass media and modern technology. The Church should strive to use the media in order to reach out to the youth. In this millennium characterized by the mass media, for effective proclamation of the word and further deepening of faith we cannot do without these means. Mass media imparts an air of reality and actuality to the facts.⁶⁴

To conclude to work of evangelization require not only proclamation by the word of the mouth but also our lives as witnessing values. It is that we need to know that can never be faith with action. As a matter of fact actions speak louder than words. Through our good examples we can evangelize near and far and make all the youths of the world a monument for Christ.

⁶⁴ A. FLANNERY, *Vatican Council II*, 595.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE YOUTH ON CHALLENGES IN EVANGELIZATION AMONG THE YOUTH IN EMBU DIOCESE

Please, respond to the following as genuinely as you can.

The name of my parish is

I am years old.

Say whether you have received any of this sacrament or both. Tick where applicable.

(a) Baptism and confirmation

(b) Baptism only

For how long did you have your catechism class?

.....

When do you find it difficult to go to church?

.....

.....

.....

Do you see any need of going to church on Sundays?

.....

.....

Which factors would you single out as most important causing a growing crisis of faith among the youth in your parish?

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Do you have any problem regarding the understanding of the sacraments (especially the sacrament of Eucharist and penance)?

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.....

Why do some youth feel dissatisfied with church programs?

.....

.....

.....

How do the youth of your parish regard some priests?

.....

.....

.....

How would you describe your attitude and other youth towards god and church?

.....

.....

.....

.....

How do you get information on matters of the church?

.....

.....

.....

Does your parish have any magazine for the youth? (yes/no)

Is there any catholic radio station in your diocese? (yes/no)

Do you have any video program in your parish? (yes/no)

How the priest is supposed to be?

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