

**TANGAZA COLLEGE.**  
**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA.**

**GODFREY MGONJA, C.S.Sp**

**‘IF SOMEONE REJECTS YOU...LEAVE SO THAT  
OTHERS MAY COME AND STAY’. (Cf. MATT 10:11-14).**

**A Theological Reflection on the Need for Some Missionaries  
to Leave for the Good of the Local Church: A Case Study of  
the Catholic Church in Post Independent Algeria.**

Moderator

**Rev. Dr. Fritz Stenger, M.Afr.**

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

**NAIROBI - 2004**

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

Signed:.....

*Mgonja*

Name of  
Student:.....

*Godfrey Mgonja*

Date:.....

*3-01-2005*

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

Signed:.....

*F. Stenger*

Name of  
Supervisor:.....

*Dr. F. Stenger M.A.*

Date:.....

*3 Jan 2005*

## **DEDICATION**

This long essay is dedicated to the Church in Algeria.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I thank God for all the Graces He has given me during my theological studies. All along, He has been with me even in the middle of troubles. He never failed to show me the way to this final end of my four years of studies.

My sincere gratitude goes to my Provincial Superior Rev. Fr. Evarist Shayo, C.S.Sp. and his Provincial Council who gave me once more an opportunity to finish my theological studies at Tangaza College.

May I also thank all the professors in Tangaza College, who in one way or another contributed not only to my academic growth but also to my personal growth in all aspects of life as a student in Tangaza College. I also thank all the students of Tangaza College, who studied with me during my four years of theological studies. My sincere appreciation to all the workers in Tangaza College for their contribution to my life in Tangaza College.

I appreciate and thank Rev. Dr. Fritz Stenger, M. Afr., who accepted to be my supervisor and directed me towards the accomplishment of this long essay. I would like also to thank Fr. Paul Chuwa, C.S.Sp, Fr. Fernando Domingues MCCJ and Webster Chifuwe, C.S.Sp, who willingly accepted to read, correct and critic my long essay.

I owe a lot of thanks to my superiors in Spiritan Theologate in Nairobi, who worked hard day and night to make sure that I study without any problems. I highly appreciate their concern and contribution.

To all who in one way or another have touched my life, I say thank you very much and may God bless you all.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AD	After Christ.
AG	Ad Gentes.
BC	Before Christ
C.S.Sp.	Congregation of the Holy Spirit Under the Protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Cf.	Confer.
Col.	Colossians.
Cor.	Corinthians.
Dr.	Doctor.
Ed.	Edited by/ Editor(s).
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi.
Eph.	Ephesians.
Ezek.	Ezekiel.
F.I.S	Islamic Salvation Front.
F.L.N.	Front de Liberation Nationale.
Fr.	Father.
G.I.A	Groupe Islamique Armé.
Gen.	Genesis.
Is.	Isaiah.
Jn.	John.
LG	Lumen Gentium.
Lk.	Luke.
M.Afr.	Missionaries of Africa.
Mk.	Mark.
Matt.	Matthew.
Rev.	Reverend.
RM	Redemptoris Missio.
Tim.	Timothy.
Vat. II	Council of Vatican Two.
Vol.	Volume.
XthC.	Century.
No.	Number
P.D.V.	Pastores Dabo Vobis

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1. Introduction

When I was reading some books I came across an article, which inspired me to write my essay on the missionaries and the missionary activity of the Church in Algeria.

The article says:

Missionary, go home . . . or stay.

If you are not able to separate the eternal Word of the Gospel from the cultural moulds in which you carried it to these lands and taught it with genuine abnegation: Missionary, go home. If you are not able to identify with the events, anxieties, and aspirations of those peoples prematurely aged by an unequal struggle which seems to have neither termination nor hope: Missionary, go home.

If your allegiance and fidelity to your nation of origin are stronger than loyalty and obedience to Jesus Christ who came "to put down the mighty and lift up the lowly" (Lk.1: 52): Missionary, go home. If you are not able to love and respect as equals those whom once you came to evangelise as "the lost": Missionary, go home.

If you are not able to rejoice at the entry of new peoples and churches upon a new stage of maturity, independence, and responsibility, even at the price of committing errors like those which you and your compatriots committed also in the past: Missionary, go home.

For it is time to go home.

But if you are ready to bear the risks and pains of this hour of birth which our [Algerian] peoples are experiencing, even denying yourself, if you begin to celebrate with them the happiness of sensing that the Gospel is not only proclamation and affirmation of a distant hope but of a hope and liberation which are already transforming history, if you are ready to give more of your time, your values, your life in the service of these peoples who are awaking, then:

STAY' There is much to do: hands and blood are lacking for an undertaking so immense in which Christ is the protagonist and pioneer.<sup>1</sup>

This article would imply that missionaries are sent out to proclaim the Word of God and not to preach the values of their cultures of origin. Missionaries are to insert

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<sup>1</sup>F. PAGURA, "Missionary Go Home..." in G.H. ANDERSON, ed., *Mission Trends.1*, 115.

themselves into the life of the people, identify themselves with the events, anxieties and aspirations of the people. In a place where people are oppressed in any form such as colonialism, poverty, diseases, illiteracy and wars, then missionaries are to take the lead to help the people to come out of such oppression. In many places, we find that missionaries have founded Churches, yet having founded the Churches, they are to let the local people lead their own Churches. They are not to patronise the local Churches as if the local peoples are not able to lead their own Churches after many years of missionaries' existence in a particular place. Hence, this quotation is a reaction to the practices of the missionaries, which are not in line with the Gospel. In this case, it is better that some missionaries leave if they have misunderstood the goal for which they were sent to the people. This quotation however is very hard on missionaries as if they never did anything good to the people. Yet, we find that some missionaries did a lot of good things such as education, healthy care and development. It is not just therefore to override all these and say missionaries go home if you do not do this and that. Having said that, let us see the organisation of this essay.

This essay is organised in five sections. The first section is the general introduction. The second section deals with the history and my experience of Algeria and the Algerian Church. The third section focuses on the theological reflection on the mission of the Church and the process of evangelisation in Algeria. This will centre on the reflection of the Church's understanding of her missionary activity and her relationship with the colonial power during French colonisation in Algeria. The fourth

section deals with pastoral implications and recommendations on how the local Church in Algeria can grow. Then, a general conclusion.

## **2. Motivations of the Study**

In the year 2000-2001, I did my pastoral experience in Algeria. During this time, I discovered a 'general trend' of some Algerians who were not fairly at home with Christianity. Christianity has always been in opposition to Islam in a general way, but the opposition that exists in Algeria between Christianity and Islam is not simply based on religion but on a historical event. Most of the religious men and priests working in Algeria are said to have participated in the war of independence directly or indirectly, though not necessarily as priests. Now they are working in Algeria as agents of Christian evangelisation as priests. To some Algerians, this is seen as another colonisation under the umbrella of Christianity. Above all, some Algerians do not make any distinction between French colonialists and French missionaries. Hence, from these motivations, I would like to attempt to see the possibility of improving the mission of the Church in Algeria.

## **3. The Main Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are to investigate the attitudes, tendencies and crises that are basically rooted in the fact of French colonisation in Algeria, the war of independence and the participation of missionaries in colonisation.<sup>2</sup> Another objective is to study how a missionary copes with rejection during the process of evangelisation. My

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<sup>2</sup> Missionaries here means those who participated in colonialism or in the war of liberation as lay people and now they have become priests or religions at the service of the Gospel. In this case, their identity is confused with that of French colonisers.

hypothesis in this study is that most probably the replacement of missionaries who are associated with colonisation would bring a new era in an Algerian Church.

#### **4. The Significance of the Study**

- To address the fact that the Church needs to address the problem of evangelisation where her agents of evangelisation are directly or indirectly linked or identified with a historical event such as colonialism, that leads to the rejection of the Gospel.
- To see the possibility or importance of replacing such agents of evangelisation.
- To show the nature of a missionary work.<sup>3</sup>
- To point out the fact that the presence of missionaries in a particular place for a long time does not automatically mean success.

#### **5. The Methodology of the Study**

In order to achieve the objectives of my study, we shall use books dealing with historical facts about Algeria, Islam and the Catholic Church in Algeria. This will give us a background experience. We shall also use different documents of the Church-Magisterium, articles, bulletins, newspapers, journals and magazines. We shall also use personal experience. Then, we shall reflect on the mission of the Church and the process of evangelisation.

#### **6. The Scope and Limitations of the Study**

In this study we would like to limit ourselves to what happened in the history of Algeria and the Church. We shall also give some theological reflections on the events

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<sup>3</sup> Missionaries preach and go away and let the local Churches grow on their own. A time comes when one has to learn how to say "Let go. A missionary is not meant to preach for ever to a certain people even if is rejected.

that marked this history especially French colonisation. We shall not give an exhaustive exposition on Islam as one of the problems in the process of evangelisation in Algeria. We shall confine ourselves to the fact that the agents of evangelisation are associated with colonialism. We shall give a short biblical exegesis of Matt 10:11-14 but not on the great commission in Matt 28:16-20. We do not either wish to give an impression that whenever the Gospel is not accepted in other places, missionaries are to leave. Rather, when the rejection of the Gospel is associated with a historical event where missionaries were directly or indirectly involved, then, there is a need to replace them no matter how hard and painful it may be.

## Chapter I

### The History and my Experience of Algeria and the Algerian Church

#### 1. Introduction

All human life is historical. Each one of us can project himself or herself in the future and make memories of the events which marked him or her in the past.<sup>4</sup> Hence, in this chapter, we shall attempt to read the history backward and see what happened to humanity in Algeria. Turning ourselves to the past, we find traces and monuments like people and writings and sculptures, which are our ‘witnesses’. They tell us what happened in the past.<sup>5</sup> In this sense, we try to do what the Bishops of North Africa call ‘Know what happened’<sup>6</sup> in Algeria and in the Church before and after independence.

#### 2. A Short History of Algeria

The official name for Algeria is Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria. The country is situated in the North West Africa.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. P.RAULT, “Quelques Repères Sur L’Histoire de L’Eglise en Algérie”, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P.RAULT, “Quelques Repères Sur L’Histoire de L’Eglise en Algérie”, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. LES EVEQUES DU MAGHREB, *Les Eglises du Maghreb en L’an 2000*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. [www.algeria](http://www.algeria). “Algeria: location, population, religion, people..”.

The area of Algeria is 919,595 square miles.<sup>8</sup> It is Africa's second largest country.<sup>9</sup> The official language is Arabic but French is still used. The Berber dialects are still spoken in the southern part of Algeria. English is used in major business and tourist centres.<sup>10</sup> Islam is the dominant religion. Christians are a minority group. The population estimates dating 1998 is 30,081,000, million.<sup>11</sup> This population consists mostly of Berber, Arabs and people of mixed Arabs and Berber ancestry, Europeans mainly French and few Jews. 43% of the people are living in the rural areas. The currency used is called Dinar.<sup>12</sup> Algeria became independent from French control on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1962.<sup>13</sup>

Human beings inhabited the land called Algeria today as early as 800BC. These people were nomadic cattle herders and hunters.<sup>14</sup> With the arrival of the Punic invasion, the Algerians had already organised themselves into kingdoms. The Punic control lasted until 106 BC when the Roman Empire took over North Africa until 622 AD.<sup>15</sup> It was at this time that the Roman Empire and Christianity flourished in North Africa. Christianity as such flourished in North Africa following the edict of Milan signed in 313 AD, which authorised the practice of Christian cult in the Roman Empire. Later we shall see that Christianity flourished in Algeria because of the support the Church received from France, which by then was the colonising power. The Roman

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *The World Book Encyclopaedia. I*, 344.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. [www.algeria](http://www.algeria) Algeria location, population, religion, people.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. [www.algeria](http://www.algeria) Algeria: location, population, religion, people.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. LA DECOUVERTE. "Etat du Monde Annuaire 2000", 115.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. [www.algeria](http://www.algeria) Algeria: location, population, religion, people.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. J. CUOQ, "Algeria" in W. J. MACDONALD, ed., *New Catholic Encyclopaedia. I*, 316.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E. BEAVER, "A Brief History of Algeria", in '[www.algeria](http://www.algeria)'.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. H. PREBENSEN, *Histoire de L'Algérie: Repères Chronologiques*, 2.

Empire and Christianity lasted in Algeria until the 5<sup>th</sup>C AD when there was the Vandals' invasion. Vandals' invasion lasted for a short time.<sup>16</sup> They were removed by the Byzantine army, which was also removed by the Islamic invasion in the 7<sup>th</sup>C AD.<sup>17</sup>

By 8<sup>th</sup>C AD, people had already accepted Islam and formed an Islamic government such as the Rustamid kingdom in Central Algeria, which then became part of the Almoravid and Almohad Berber Empires. These Empires lasted until the 14<sup>th</sup> C. AD.<sup>18</sup> Then, there was the Turkish invasion (Ottoman Empire) which removed the Spanish occupation in 16<sup>th</sup> C. AD. This empire lasted until 1830.<sup>19</sup>

In 1830-1962 we find French occupation of Algeria, which lasted for 132 years. At the dawn of colonisation, Abd El Kader resisted colonisation, yet he was defeated in 1847. Assimilation, education, city planning, economy and industrial system, were all designed by the French. What we call Algeria today, was created by French colonial administration.<sup>20</sup> "The French controlled the entire country but the traditional Muslim population in rural areas remained separated from the modern economic infrastructure of the European community."<sup>21</sup> During French colonisation, we see a huge drop in Algerian native population from around 4 million in 1830 to 2.5 million in 1890. This huge drop was due to tribal clashes, poverty, diseases and many Algerians were killed by the French colonisers following their resistance against French colonial invasion.<sup>22</sup> The French colonialists saw the Muslim population as inferior and underclass. Muslims

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. PREBENSEN, *Histoire de L'Algérie: Repères Chronologiques*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. BEAVER, "A Brief History of Algeria", in [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. E. BEAVER, "A Brief History of Algeria", in [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. H. PREBENSEN, *Histoire de L'Algérie: Repères Chronologiques*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. H. PREBENSEN, *Histoire de L'Algérie: Repères Chronologiques*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> [www.algeria](http://www.algeria)/A short History of Algeria.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. A.CHEURFI, *Dictionnaire Biographique- Memoire Algerienne*, vi.

were not allowed to hold public meetings, carry arms or become French citizens unless they renounced Islam and converted to Christianity.<sup>23</sup> “It was a brutal, racist regime which alienated the vast majority of Algerians”.<sup>24</sup> The fermentation of the anger of Algerian population started after the two world wars and was brewed into a struggle for independence under the leadership of F.L.N. (Front de Liberation Nationale).

The cruelty and brutality of the French colonial forces and Government’s inability to find a political solution turned the world opinion against the French. The French used concentration camps, torture and massive executions of civilians, which isolated France and elicited a comparison with totalitarian regimes and Nazism.<sup>25</sup> Following the oppression, exploitation and denial of equal rights, the indigenous Algerians began their revolt on November 1, 1954 under a small group of nationalists called F.L.N. This group launched a guerrilla war, which eventually led to a cease-fire agreement in March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1962. In July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962 Algeria became independent. The struggle for independence went on for eight years, which left Algeria a shattered country. After independence, the French people born in Algeria and other European settlers were presented with travelling bags and coffins. They chose the travelling bags. That is, there was a massive exodus characterised by precipitation and panic from Algeria to Europe.<sup>26</sup> The way forward in Algeria was socialism. The political party was FLN, which enjoyed military support.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. [www.algeria/algeria/history/islam](http://www.algeria/algeria/history/islam).

<sup>24</sup> [www.algeria/algeria/history/islam](http://www.algeria/algeria/history/islam). (Henceforth, I shall use [www.algeria](http://www.algeria))

<sup>25</sup> [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>26</sup> [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>27</sup> [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

Just like most colonialists in Africa, the French left Algeria with subclass servants, unskilled labourer and peasants. Hence, the running of the country after independence was difficult. In 1963 Ben Bella was elected president. Houari Boumediene who was elected president in 1976 overthrew him in 1965. Yet, the international politics and domestic autocracy led to further shattering of Algeria.<sup>28</sup> In 1979 Chadli Bendjedid was elected president and re-elected in 1984 and 1988. Under one party system and the army, Algeria experienced remarkable growth economically as well as politically in the years 1962-1970.<sup>29</sup> There was a process of nationalisation of the land of settlers and banks, mineral resources, company of petrol, schools and hospitals and even Church buildings. In 1971, There was agrarian revolution and industrial revolution as well as Cultural Revolution.<sup>30</sup> From there on, the economy of the country was more or less in the hands of the minority. Only the privileged class developed.<sup>31</sup> Here we see the rise of military dictatorship, which cooled or pacified the spirits of the Islamists as well as the democrats till the year 1979.<sup>32</sup> When multiparty system was adopted in 1989, the Islamic party called Islamic Salvation Front (F.I.S) was formed. This party was said to have won in the 1990 election.<sup>33</sup> The following quotation explains what happened in this election.

Military and secular elite halted the FIS rise to power by suspending the government and forcing Benjedid to resign. They reestablished government under Mohammed Boudiaff, and in retaliation FIS groups began a massive terrorism campaign. The terrorist activity spread to foreign countries and has isolated Algeria from most of the world community. Boudiaff was assassinated in 1992, and political turmoil plagued the

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<sup>28</sup> [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. M. COLE, *L'Algérie- Espace et société*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Informations utiles pour un séjour en Algérie- rencontre et développement*, 1-12.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *Informations utiles pour un séjour en Algérie- rencontre et développement*, 1-12.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Regards sur le Monde- L'Algérie dans la violence*, 9-12.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Regards sur le Monde- L'Algérie dans la violence*, 1.

government until peace agreements could be reached in 1995. Elections in 1995 showed the FIS once again boycotting and renewing terrorist activities. Reforms enacted on 7 December 1996 concerning the formation of political parties based on language or religion served to escalate violence. Elections were again held in 1999, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected to the Presidency. His regime has enjoyed military support, and in January 2000 forced the dissolution of the FIS. Fighting still occurs, but large-scale warfare has ended for the time being. A new Islamic terrorist group, the "Groupe Islamique Armé"(GIA) has incited violence most recently in January 2001, but it remains to be seen how much of a threat this group poses to the Bouteflika government.<sup>34</sup>

In this quotation we see how military plays essential role in the running of the country. The military can suspend the Government, it can force the president to resign, and re-establish the Government. The consequences of military intervention are massive terrorism campaigns, assassinations and fear in the daily activities of the people. We see that in Algeria the military in the background has power above the Government.

The G.I.A demanded that foreigners leave the country including missionaries.<sup>35</sup> Here we see a change in history. That is, a rise of Islamists, terrorism and successive assassinations targeting civilians, government officials, and missionaries. In 1999 Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected president and his agenda focused initially on restoring security and stability to the country. His plans succeeded greatly, yet, terrorism has not been eliminated completely.<sup>36</sup>

The failure of the socialist government, to a large extent secular, to solve social, economic and political problems, led some Muslims to go back to Islamic tradition, giving birth to fundamentalism (F.I.S) demanding that Algeria become an Islamic

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<sup>34</sup> E. BEAVER, "A Brief History of Algeria", in [www.algeria](http://www.algeria).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. H. PREBENSEN, *Histoire de L'Algérie: Repères Chronologiques*, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. [www.algeria](http://www.algeria). A short History of Algeria.

state.<sup>37</sup> Algeria found itself in terror, which led to more socio-political and economic problems. This further isolated Algeria from the international community.<sup>38</sup>

Today, Algeria is engulfed in a brutal and seemingly unending civil war.<sup>39</sup> Independence seems to be a launching pad to a new age- the era of civil wars based on terrorism. As one writer would say “since nobody colonises us, we colonise ourselves”.<sup>40</sup> This state of affairs started slowly after independence with an authoritative one-party state, which promoted a social and industrial model and enforced an exclusive Muslim Arab national identity.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, the question of national identity is vital. For FLN, national identity was socialism, industrialisation, Islam, Arabic language and embracing Algerian’s Mediterranean cultural diversity while Islamists go along a narrow line connected to the community of the wider Islamic world.<sup>42</sup> Yet, today Algeria claims to be a country, which is Muslim and Arabic. Nevertheless, the successive invasions from Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Turks and the French have modelled her culture and the manner of thinking.<sup>43</sup> Today, we ask whether Algerians are Arabs, Africans, Europeans, Berber, or Algerians? Algerians are part of all of them.

Christianity particularly the Catholic Church is part of this history. She has contributed to the building of the history of Algeria. Hence let us see a short history of the Catholic Church in Algeria.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. [www.algeria/](http://www.algeria/)A short History of Algeria.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. [www.algeria/](http://www.algeria/)A short History of Algeria.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. [www.H-net review](http://www.H-net.org/): Waleed Hazbur on Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. M. LACHERAT, L’Algérie – Nation et Société, 5-20.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. M. LACHERAT, L’Algérie – Nation et Société, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. M. LACHERAT, L’Algérie – Nation et Société, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. C. BELVANDE, L’Algérie, 15.

### 3. A Short History of the Catholic Church in Algeria

Claude Rault starts the history of the Catholic Church in Algeria by saying that we turn ourselves to the past. We look at the Church, which belongs to the world and surrounded by economy, power, religions, politics and daily life of people. This includes conquests and the wars, development, living together, culture, society and religions. Christianity arrives in North Africa probably at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> C.AD. It meets the people living in this area and practising a Cananite type of religion. By then, there was Jewish community from Diaspora. One sees the start and flourishing of Christianity during Roman colonisation of North Africa (46BC -- 622AD).<sup>44</sup>

The Church experienced persecutions under the Roman Empire. As a consequence, there were martyrs and 'Lapsi'.<sup>45</sup> Already from the very beginning we see that the Church is characterised by persecutions. Rault continues to say that another characteristic of this primitive Church in North Africa is a strong unity and collegiality, which was manifested in the regional Councils first being held in 218 and 222 AD. 70 Bishops attended. This is an indication that by the second century there were about 70 Christian communities each headed by a Bishop and a sign of lively and fertile Church which will later give birth to people like Pope Victor (181-191) and Emperor Septime Severe (193-211).<sup>46</sup>

In this period, we find great men like Tertullian (160-240) who became a great defender of Christian faith and whose theological thinking provided a foundation in

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> Lapsi were some of the Christians who denounced their faith during persecutions and now they want to come back to the church after the persecutions.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 2.

dogmatic formulations of the first Ecumenical Councils. We also find Cyprian, Bishop and martyr(? -258). Cyprian is known by the discussion on how to re-integrate the 'lapsi' who desired to come back to the Church. Should the 'lapsi' be re-baptized or not? Rome maintained that the Trinitarian baptism was valid while Cyprian wants to verify the faith of the one baptising. The Council Bishops in North Africa approved Cyprian's stand. In a way Cyprian was signalling the Pope Etienne by then, that each Bishop is responsible before God as to what concerns his Pastoral Ministry. Meanwhile the Donatists protested against re-integration of 'lapsi' into the Church. They claimed they should be re-baptised and thus have a pure Church.<sup>47</sup>

Another remarkable person is St. Augustine (354-430) born in Thagaste along the border between present-day Algeria and Tunisia. Apart from other theological contribution to the Church of North Africa and Christian world at large, he confronted Donatism and Arianism. At the same time, the Vandals conquered the Roman Empire. It was the end of the vitality of the Church in North Africa.<sup>48</sup>

By the time of the Islamic conquest in the 7<sup>th</sup> C.AD., North Africa was generally Christianised. The Berber tribes resisted Christianity but there was a real religious tolerance. The economic situation was not good and the Church never escaped being reproached of simony. By this time, the Church was the only religious power, which was capable of opposing the authority of the imperial power of the Byzantine. Islam came as a threat, not as an encounter but a shock. After 50 years North Africa had experienced the Arab conquest and Islam had penetrated the population, which was

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 3.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 3.

Christian. Hence, this was the time of radical religious, cultural and social transformation of Algerian society. Within one century, we see enormous expansion of Islam. Jihad<sup>49</sup> was the driving force behind this expansion. Islam was seen as a sign of purity. Economic growth of Middle East was a blessing to the poverty of the people of North Africa.<sup>50</sup>

At this time the Christians were the Romanised Africans of Berber origin and soldiers of the Byzantine army. The Muslim conquests mainly used Jihad- Holy War calling for conversion. At first, Christians and their leaders took Islam as one of the heresies they knew before (Arianism, Donatism and Monophysism).<sup>51</sup> Islam tried to block the relations between Carthage and Rome. Yet, we find some Pontifical letters affirming the permanent communion of the episcopate between Rome and Africa.<sup>52</sup>

In the 10<sup>th</sup> C. AD, we find a correspondence of Pope Benoit VII attesting the existence of Christian community in Carthage. In the 11<sup>th</sup> Century we find Pope Leo XI lamenting because there were only five Bishops in the whole of Africa. In 1076 one correspondence shows the impossibility of finding three bishops to consecrate a new bishop. In the same year, we find the first sign of religious dialogue when Gregory VII replied to a Muslim Prince who had asked him for a bishop for the Christians of Andalous. Apart from these sources no trace of Christian life in North Africa from 650 although there were probably 5 or 6 bishops in North Africa. Yet, we are told that,

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<sup>49</sup> Jihad is understood as self war for purifying one self, war against socio-political and economic evils, immorality and crimes, and lastly a war against physical enemy.

The war against physical enemy is done only when all the diplomatic measures have failed completely. If then, Jihad was used for the expansion of Islam it was wrong.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 4.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 4.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 5.

without Bishops and priests Christian communities have survived till 12<sup>th</sup>C.AD. Some Christians co-existed with Islam and others finally joined Islam.<sup>53</sup> We are told that at this time most of the Christians were living anonymously.

One of the experiences, which the Christians in North Africa experienced, is Slavery and captivity. The period preceding the French colonisation, Christians were an easy target of slavery and captivity. Some religious families like The Trinitarians of St. John and The Lazarists of St. Vincent were active in ransoming the Christian captives and slaves. Other communities, which expressed their concern over the Christian fate, were Franciscans (1219) and the Dominicans (1234).<sup>54</sup>

In 14<sup>th</sup> C.AD, during the *Reconquista*<sup>55</sup>, Spain became Catholic and occupied part of Algeria in Oran. Suspicion and tension between Christians and Muslims become intensive. There was no dialogue but each accused the other of proselytism until the French Colonisation in 1830. This event opened a new era in the French Church and the Universal Church. At this epoch the French Church was moving towards secularism. Religious matters were left to the people. This state of affairs was reproduced in the French colonies. Slowly the Church was to a large extent dedicated to the service of Christian community composed of expatriates of all origins. Christianity and Islam were two communities juxtaposed. Yet, there was a sentiment that the Church was like in the good old days of St. Augustine.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 5.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 6.

<sup>55</sup> Reconquista was a fight against Islam by Spain and Portugal.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. C. RALLT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 6.

The relationship between Christianity and Islam was more or less, confrontation or indifference. One reason for this kind of relationship is that the Arabs came to Algeria as a political and religious power, now the French come to colonise the territory followed by Christianity, which could be interpreted by the Arabs as another political and religious power against them. Yet, in 1867 Cardinal Lavignerie is made bishop of Algiers and then, people like Charles de Foucauld become a living witness of the Gospel in the land of Islam. Very rare are the exceptions of Christians who saw the duty of justice when one is a Christian to respect those who do not think like us.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the rare exceptions were Cardinal Duval who was made bishop of Algiers March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1954 during the start of the war of liberation. He said that Christians have the duty to have a behaviour that keeps God's honour. Christians have to start loving.<sup>58</sup> Above all, God makes no difference between human persons.<sup>59</sup>

When General de Gaulle proclaimed independence to Algerians, we [Christians] assisted the exodus of 'Les pieds noirs'. This assistance deprived Algeria all minimum administrative organisation.<sup>60</sup> Almost all took flight to their mother countries, living Algeria independent but without the means to enable her economic take off. The Church lost her members except those who decided to remain and those who fought for the course of liberation in Algeria.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 7.

<sup>58</sup> This could be a prophetic message which reflected colonial situation and which also foresees the future situation after independence

<sup>59</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 7.

<sup>60</sup> 'Les pieds noirs' is a name given to French people who were born in Algeria during French colonisation

<sup>61</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 7.

After independence, the Church became small and works only in the educational sector and hospitals. Schools, which were for the children of the privileged class, are now open to all. Algeria started arabisation by inviting the Arabs to teach Arabic language.

While the Church had humble time after independence, Algeria nationalises private schools and Church property. The Church not only lost her work of education but also her buildings. The Church becomes conscious of living in harmony with the Muslims. Dialogue and encounter became a necessity. The Church's mission is no longer explicit proclamation of the Gospel. Christians who were present at this moment were mostly Priests, religious men and women and other few expatriates. In 1976 the bishops from North Africa published a statement on the mission of the Church in Algeria [The sense of our Encounter]. That is, witnessing Jesus Christ, dialogue, encounter and unity become the direction of our Church today.<sup>62</sup>

One can see that since independence, the Church and her mission have evolved through four stages as Claude Rault puts it. From independence to nationalisation (1962-1976) which is called the time of development. From nationalisation to the revolution of October 1988 which is called the time of dialogue and encounter. From the revolution of Oct. 1988 to Sept.1996 which is called the time of weakness and sowing. From 1996 to our days which is called the time of the seed to be thrown into the soil.<sup>63</sup> In the first period we see Cardinal Duval very active with the idea of justice

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Quelques Repères Sur L'Histoire de L'Eglise en Algérie", 9.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Evolution de la Mission en Algérie ", 2.

and in 1971 in the synod he insisted that a fight for justice is an integral part of Evangelisation.

For the Algerian Church that has four dioceses [Algiers and an Archdiocese, Oran, Constantine and Laghouat] evangelisation is necessary. Yet, a priest who decided to remain in Algeria found himself with almost empty churches. Diocesan schools opened their doors to Algerian children.<sup>64</sup> Most of the buildings belonging to the Church were transformed into schools, public libraries centres for professional formation, cultural centres and centres for women. We see priests and religious involved in structures like industry, teaching, health and professional formation. The mission of the Church now was in the sphere of development of Algeria.

The second period is from nationalisation to the revolution of Oct.1988 that is the time of dialogue and encounter. We find some priests going out of Algeria to work in Morocco and Tunisia. Some decided to remain in Algeria and adapted some activities such as research in history, language, libraries, women activities like sewing, embroidery and weaving. Some started informal teaching of French and English language. The Church lost most of her structures but now found herself available for the 'encounter', for 'listening' and for 'welcoming' the Muslim community. The Church became closer to the Algerian, closer to their life, closer to their worries and closer to their daily living than ever before. It was the time of informal dialogue. Formal dialogue at this time was almost impossible. The Church now collaborated very well with the Protestants and the fruit of this collaboration was an ecumenical dialogue.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Evolution de la Mission en Algérie", 4.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Evolution de la Mission en Algérie", 5-7.

The third period is from revolution of Oct.1988 to Sept.1996 that was the time of weakness and sowing. We find the Church becomes the Church of encounter and presence. In this period we see a new political force from the Mosques, schools and universities namely 'Le Front Islamique du Salut' (F.I.S). In 1990 FIS wins municipal elections and the army cancels the elections.

The FIS wanted to create an Islamic state. This is the time which the Church experienced weakness. Twelve- Croations were assassinated in Dec.1993. In Sept. 1994 one priest and one sister were assassinated. followed by 2 religious women, followed by 4 white Fathers, followed by other two religious women, followed by seven monks of Tibhirine. This was not the time of harvest but the time of sowing. Finally, the Bishop of the Diocese of Oran- Pierre Claverie was assassinated. He was a great man, a man who defended the poor, a man who spoke the truth, a man who fought for justice. Although, he is dead, he still lives among his people in spirit. Some of the priests or religious had to leave the country for they could not resist the 'shock'.<sup>66</sup> Yet, the Bishops of Algeria have always said that the Church will not leave Algeria.<sup>67</sup>

The fourth period is the period from 1996 to our days, which is the time of the seed thrown into the soil. The death of the above persons of the Church has become the summit of the challenge to the Church. Yet, one can say that these events have made the Church in Algeria become the Algerian Church. Today, the Episcopal Conference of the Bishops of North Africa (CERNA) in their document "Les Eglise du Maghreb en L'an

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<sup>66</sup> shock here means the successive assassinations of priests, religions, a bishop and many Algerians. Note that the assassinations were done in a very brutal manner. For example, slaughtering the whole family.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Evolution de la Mission en Algérie ", 7-10.

2000” have defined the mission of the Church of North Africa as the Church of Encounter and Sacramental Church.<sup>68</sup>

While the above events were taking place, there were other events, which have marked the country and the Church of North Africa: - de-colonisation, the council of Vat II 1962 -1965, the fall of socialist countries and the rise of globalisation.<sup>69</sup> To all these situations, the bishops said ‘we pray to the Holy Spirit, the author of all apostolic initiatives to give us step by step an evangelic zeal and courage to invent that which will demand the newness of situations.’<sup>70</sup>

This is how the Church in North Africa particularly in Algeria has evolved down the ages to our days. This history tells us The Church in Algeria has constantly struggled to proclaim the Gospel despite her human weaknesses. Collaboration with colonial power, how the missionaries understood the theology of mission and lack of sufficient insertion into the life of the people are some of the weaknesses of the Church in Algeria before independence and Vat.II.

#### **4. Islam: The Dominant Religion after Independence**

One of the Muslim’s responses to the challenge of colonialism was rejection.<sup>71</sup> Before the French colonisation, Islam had already permeated Algeria. During French colonisation Algerians realised that most of the colonialists were French and Christians.

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. C. RALLT, “Evolution de la Mission en Algérie ”, 11-14.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. LES EVEQUES DU MAGHREB, *Les Eglises du Maghreb en L’an 2000*, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. CERNA, “Réflexions Sur Les Situation Nouvelles” in LES  
EVEQUES DU MAGHREB, *Les Eglises du Maghreb en L’an 2000*, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. J. L. ESPOSITO. *The Islamic Threat:- Myth or Reality*, 52.

Thus, the war of independence was between 'French Christian colonisers and Algerian Muslims'. This would mean that if French colonisers were Christians and so brutally treated Algerians during colonisation and during the war of independence, Christianity was to be rejected<sup>72</sup> with the colonisers who were Christians.<sup>73</sup>

What Algerians are left with is Islam, which they had before the coming of the French. Islam then becomes a dominant religion that gives the Algerians a sense of their life. Algerians, though not all, wish to embrace Jesus brought by missionaries during colonial times. Some Algerians do not believe in the Jesus betrayed in their land by some Christian colonisers and some missionaries. The apparent inability of the Church to reproach colonial practices makes the Algerians reject Christianity and the agents of evangelisation. Hence, at the dawn of Independence, most of the Algerians continued<sup>74</sup> with Islam as their religion. They declare that Algeria is our country, Arabic is our language and Islam is our religion as Cheikh Ben Badis puts it.<sup>75</sup> About 99% of the population in Algeria today is Muslim.

## 5. My Personal Experiences in Algeria

In the year 2000, I went to Algeria in a Diocese called Oran where I did my pastoral experience. I saw Mosques, which were formally churches.

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<sup>72</sup> Rejection here did not make any distinction between, missionaries and colonialists. This may be due to the fact the missionaries were associated with colonial powers.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. L. ESPOSITO, *The Islamic Threat:- Myth or Reality*, 52.

<sup>74</sup> The continued Islam, could be a reaction similar to the reaction of most newly independent African states which rejected capitalism and embraced socialism. This may not mean that Islam will fail just as socialism has proved failure to the large extent in most African Countries.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. J. MODOT. *Algérie- Les Guides Bleus*, 27.

Schools, which were formally owned by the Church. Public libraries, which were formally Cathedraïls or churches: military barracks which were formally French military barracks: houses of missionaries guarded by soldiers; military convoy escorting bishops wherever they go; I met some missionary priests and diocesan priests who did their military service in Algeria; many military check points along the main roads; in the news paper I read that such number of people were assassinated; I also read about the process of reconciliation between the Algerians and the French because of the war of independence; Sunday celebration is done on Friday in solidarity with Muslims. In places where priests or nuns live, I usually see libraries and centres where Algerian women are learning how to do sewing and embroidering. There are also centres for elderly people.

Sometimes, missionaries living in Algeria organise seminars, conferences or prayer groups. One of the great and interesting meetings I attended was Inter Diocesan Sacerdotal Session, which is normally held after four years. This kind of meeting was held in 2000 and nearly all the Christians, priests, religious men and women attended. In this meeting, the four Dioceses discuss about the life and the mission of the Church in Algeria. new ways for the future, the evangelical presence of the Church in Algeria. In this meeting each diocese gives a short report of the diocese. Then, the rest of the people give their experiences of joy, sadness in relation to local communities and current situation in the country. One of the most important questions in this meeting was - What makes each individual stay in Algeria despite a great sense of insecurity and

violent situation? To this question the majority say that they continue to stay in Algeria because of the Love they have for the people. Some say we cannot leave the people simply because there is violence. Some claim to love to witness Christ through encounter and presence. Some quote Hosea 1: 2 just to say that even if some Algerians have abandoned God, they cannot abandon them. Some say that they want to be with Algerians who suffer the consequences of violence. Some see Algeria as their home after so many years of work in that country.

In this meeting another important discussion was whether the reality of the Church was truly Algerian Church or a European Church present in Algeria? One notices that most of the Missionaries are of European origin- many from France. On one hand it is hard to say that the Church is not Algerian Church from the point of view of the mode of existence of the Church namely encounter and dialogue. On the other hand, it is equally hard to say that the Church is Algerian. from the point of view of the number of the indigenous Algerians who are Christians and are able to stay in Algeria without any threat, which arises from the fact of being Christian. They also discuss the socio-political and economical situation in the country and finally they discuss about the future of the Church.

Another experience is that when I talked to individual persons in the village and even where missionaries live, I saw a great sense of love that local people have for the missionaries. This fact was clearly expressed by many missionaries in the Inter Diocesan Session. At the same time there are some Algerians who express clearly their anger towards French people whether missionaries or not. At the political level I felt

that some political leaders seem to use the Church and missionaries to attain their interests. An allusion is made of the capture and assassination of Tibhirine monks as a refusal of the French Government to release some Islamists captured and detained in France. Whether this is true or not, it is an area to be researched. Some think that the attack on missionaries is a way of obliging the Algerian Government to accept the fundamentalists' demand to make Algeria an Islamic State.

At the level of socio-political, economic and religious level, much is to be desired. With the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and insecurity, the problem is not only from foreigners but also from some Algerians. The struggle between Islamists and the Algerian Government seem to be unending struggle. Yet, civilians pay heavily in this struggle.

## **6. Conclusion**

From the above history and experiences, we see that there is a lot of information, which will help us to reflect on the reality of rejection of the missionaries and on how the Church can deal with such a reality in the process of evangelisation.

## **Chapter II**

### **The Theological Reflection on the Mission of the Church and the Process of Evangelisation in Algeria**

#### **1. Introduction**

This chapter is an attempt to reflect on the different events in the history of Algeria and the mission of the Church. Thus, we shall see the Church's understanding of her mission before and during the Vatican II. We shall also see the relationship between the colonial power and the Church in the process of evangelisation. The relationship between the colonising power and the Church and how the theology of the Church was understood may have affected the process of evangelisation in Algeria.

In this chapter we shall bear in mind the following points, which had great impact on both the Church and the agents of evangelisation. Before Vat.II, the Church was seen as a perfect society. She was some times seen as a civil power. Salvation was only found in the Church- outside the Church, there was no Salvation. The theological trend was- go out and get people in to the Church and save the souls. Other religions did not guarantee salvation. At this time, a human being was understood as body and soul. This dualistic tendency finally led to the understanding that the human body was not

important only the soul was important. One would be led to think that even if the body experienced oppression or enslavement, it did not matter. What was important was the salvation of the soul of the oppressed body. Other considerations are ethnocentrism, freedom of religion and inadequate theology of the mission of the Church.

During Vat. II, we see more explanations on the theology of the mission of the Church. From this time on, the Church is seen as a people of God.<sup>76</sup> There was a positive approach towards other religions.<sup>77</sup> There was a more developed theology of the mission of the Church. Now the question of salvation is looked at differently. Salvation is now possible outside the Church.<sup>78</sup> Hence, the old and new understanding of the mission of the Church became a challenge to the agents of evangelisation in a country like Algeria where Islam is a dominant religion. Meanwhile independence brought not only a kind of rejection of the agents of evangelisation but also the Church has now to think on how to exist in Algeria. This existence is crucial because the Church was seen as collaborator of the French colonial power. In this Chapter we shall try to see what the Bible says about acceptance, rejection and how to deal with rejection in the light of Matt 10: 11-14.

## **2. The Biblical Exegesis of Matt 10: 11-14**

This passage is part of Jesus' Missionary Discourse to the Twelve (Matt 10:1-15). It gives us a light on how to deal with rejection in the missionary work of the

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Vatican II., *Lumen Gentium*, No 9-17. Ed., FLANNERY, A. (Henceforth, I shall use LG.)

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Vatican II., *Nostra Aetate*, No 1-3 ed., FLANNERY, A. (Henceforth, I shall use NA.); LG, 8

<sup>78</sup> Cf. J. DUPLIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 102-104, Cf. LG, 8.

Church. According to Daniel. J. Harrington's interpretation, we find six aspects notably, the mission to Israel (Matt10: 5b-6), the message of the kingdom (Matt10: 7), the task of healing (Matt10: 8), the need for travelling "light"(Matt10: 9-10), how to deal with acceptance and rejection (Matt10: 11-14) and the coming of Judgement (Matt10: 15).<sup>79</sup> For our case, we are only interested in how to deal with acceptance and rejection (Matt10: 11-14).

V.11. "Stay there until you depart". Harrington says that a "Worthy" person receives the message of the kingdom and its apostles. The prohibition about going from house to house was intended to prove the apostles' dedication to the mission rather than to his physical surrounding.<sup>80</sup> Viviano Benedict sees V.11 as an apostolic attitude where missionaries are to depend on the local hospitality, to share the life of the people to whom they are sent.<sup>81</sup> This is missionaries are to insert themselves into the cultures and life of the people in order to evangelise better. Apart from this, Henry Wansbrough indicates in V.11 that only Matthew indicates that the preacher should first seek out someone "worthy" and that the house similarly must be worthy. In a sense, missionaries are to search and discover good values or the seeds of the Word from the cultures of the people and integrate them into Christianity.

He stresses in this way elsewhere that a certain good will is a pre-requisite for receiving the message of Christ (Cf. Matt10: 37-38; 22:8) and that, Israel lacked this good will.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol.I The Gospel of Matthew*, 141.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol.I The Gospel of Matthew*, 140.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", in R. E. BROWN, ed., *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 651.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. H. WANSBROUGH, "St. Matthew" in R.C. FULLER, ed., "New Catholic Commentary", 921.

People cannot receive the Gospel if they are not willing. At the same time one cannot impose the Gospel on people who are not willing to receive it. Leander C. Keck sees V.11 as an indirect prophetic warning to settled Christians to receive wondering missionaries of the Matthean Community. He sees the idea of hospitality as a sacred obligation in the ancient Mediterranean world and in biblical stories (Cf. Gen. 18:1-8; 11:1-11; 24:14-61) and is placed here as an eschatological framework concluding with a solemn prophetic pronouncement of eschatological judgement.<sup>83</sup> Hospitality is a virtue, which every Christian is expected of. Hence, Christians are expected to be hospitable not only to missionaries but also to all people. Yet, the demand for hospitality has been interpreted negatively namely as exploitation and parasitic dependence. Above all, missionaries coming from Europe in most cases did not depend on the local hospitality except the good will to receive the Gospel. Thus, missionaries from Europe became or are providers and benefactors of the local population. Somehow this is going contrary to the Gospel mandate but situation and time may have caused missionaries to do so. Missionaries have very often met the people in poverty, illiteracy, and diseases. These obliged them to ask for help from their own churches to help the people.

V.13. **“Peace”**. The greeting mentioned in V.12 was Peace. “Shalom” to this house. The acceptance or rejection of “Shalom” determines whether the householder is worthy and one should stay at this house. Peace is also a greeting of God’s messenger (Is.52: 1).<sup>84</sup> Despite its Semitic high tone, “Peace” in Christian message takes a deeper meaning. It sums up the nature of the new covenant (Cf. Ezek.37: 25-26) and the

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<sup>83</sup> M. E. BORING, “Matthew” in L.E. KECK, ed., “The New Interpreter’s Bible”, 257.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 140.

Messiah is to be the Prince of Peace (Cf. Is9: 6-7; 11:6-9). According to missionary language of the early Church. The Gospel is the Good News of Peace (Cf. Acts 10:36, Eph.6: 15;Lk.2: 14;Jn.16: 33) The peace that they bring is Christ himself (Cf. Eph.2: 14;Col.1: 20: 3:14-15). To the Hebrew mind such blessing of “Peace” is so powerful a force that if rejected, can return to the giver.<sup>85</sup>

Some missionaries, following the greeting of peace they were accepted but then abused the hospitality they were given. As a result, there was a limit on the days to stay in the “Worthy” householder.<sup>86</sup> This was done to distinguish false and true missionaries. People in Palestine and Syria (Matt10: 5b-6) distinguished true and false representative of Jesus’ movement using the following criteria: - they were to say and do what Jesus said and did, they were not to carry a lot of properties, they were not to seek for the best accommodations and they were to leave if they were rejected.<sup>87</sup> Otherwise, they are false missionaries. Despite the above criteria, sometimes there are difficulties in understanding what Jesus really said and did. The situation of the people may oblige the missionaries to come with properties to help the people. Sometimes the rejection of the missionaries is not based on the Gospel but the interests of some individuals and thus missionaries cannot just leave. The situation of the people, time and place may force missionaries to adapt an integrated approach to the proclamation of the Gospel.

V.14. **“Shake dust off the feet”**. When Jews returned from foreign lands, they shook off the dust from their feet as a symbolic rejection of Pagan lands.

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<sup>85</sup> Cf. H. WANSBROUGH, “St. Matthew” in R.C. FULLER, ed., “ New Catholic Commentary”, 921.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 140.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 142.

This symbolic action by missionaries of Jesus' movement is applied here to Jewish cities (Matt 10: 5b-6).<sup>88</sup> Henry Wansbrough points out that by this gesture, the preacher shows that the city or house holder which or who refuses the message of God no longer form part of God's chosen people.<sup>89</sup> Leander E. Keck says that this gesture of shaking off dust is an eschatological symbol as prophets pronouncing the last judgement.<sup>90</sup> Missionaries who leave the territory on account of rejection of the Gospel it may not necessarily mean that the people they leave behind are not part of God's people. There are could be several reasons for rejection of the missionaries and thus the Gospel. How the Gospel is presented could be a problem. If some missionaries do not appreciate the cultural values of the people, they could be rejected. If some missionaries do not love, respect the people, misbehave they could be rejected.

Harrington tells us how missionaries dealt with rejection in Matthean community. One, when you encounter rejection, do not react violently. Two, write those people off (shake off the dust of your feet). Three, leave their fate to the justice of God on the last day.<sup>91</sup> He also suggests that in the third millennium Christianity needs to find a better way both to be faithful to the Gospel mandate and to be sensitive in its efforts in carrying out that mandate.<sup>92</sup> Better methods of evangelisation are to be adapted in order to be faithful to the Gospel, sensitive to the cultures of the people and to avoid rejection.

In the Algerian context, Missionaries may have found a "worthy" house.

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 141.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. H. WANSBROUGH, "St. Matthew" in R.C. FULLER, ed., "New Catholic Commentary", 921.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. M. E. BORING, "Matthew" in L.E. KECK, ed., "The New Interpreter's Bible", 257.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 142-143.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. J.D HARRINGTON, *Sacra Pagina Vol. I The Gospel of Matthew*, 144.

They may have said and done what Jesus said and did. Some might have left the territory following rejection, and may not have reacted violently. Yet, their methods of evangelisation might have been insufficient. May be they were not sensitive enough to the cultures of the people. Vat.II explains clearer the mission of the Church.

### **3. The Mission of the Church before and during Vatican II**

In Matthew 28: 19-20, Jesus sends the Twelve to go and make disciples of all nations... Some scholars think that Jesus himself gave this great commission. Others think that this was the reflection of the early Church for she thought that the Gospel had a novelty that no one is to miss it. Whether this was Jesus' command or early Church's experience the fact remains that the mission of the Church is the continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ. This continuity, in the history of Algeria, can be traced back to the Roman Empire as we saw in chapter one. This mission continued publicly or secretly down the ages. Our central concern here is to see the mission of the Church before and during French colonisation in Algeria.

Before Vatican Two, the way the mission of the Church was understood affected greatly the realisation of her mission. In this period, the Church said to the heretics and the people who defected from the Church that there is no salvation outside the Church.<sup>93</sup> Not only some theologians but also some missionaries misunderstood this affirmation. They thought that the statement 'no salvation outside the Church' was directed to all non-Christian religions. Karl Barth says that if other religions guarantee no salvation, then they are human person's demonic attempt at self-justification while only faith in

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS. *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 27.

Jesus Christ is able to save.<sup>94</sup> . As a result, the mission of the Church was understood as getting people into the Church and thus save them. In this case, Jesus Christ is at work only in the Church (Ecclesio- centricism).<sup>95</sup> If missionaries go out in the field with this misunderstanding, one would expect little respect for other religions. This may lead into tension between missionaries and the people and finally they may be rejected.

Another aspect that affected the mission of the Church before Vat.II was the Greek understanding of a human being as soul and body. The human body was understood as material, evil and therefore unimportant. Human soul was seen as a spiritual entity and thus good. God created human being from soil (Cf. Gen. 2:7) and this would imply the goodness of matter. Man became a living being when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (Cf. Gen.2:8). This implies that the matter cannot act without the spirit or the soul. Hence, there was a misunderstanding of the human materiality as if it were bad or evil. God created everything good. What we do with the created things is where evil comes in. This misunderstanding led to an understanding that since matter is evil and not important, then, in the context of exploitation and dehumanising situations, 'it may be acceptable', we are only interested in the salvation of the soul. This kind of misunderstanding may cause tension and even rejection of the missionaries.

During the colonial invasion and rule, most Europeans were led to understand that their cultures were more superior to other cultures. Consequently, a superior culture went with a superior religion, which was, by then, Christianity. So, other cultural and

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 130.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 185-186.

religious values were ignored. Today most peoples understand that some values of other cultures and religions cannot just be ignored. Cultural and religious superiority complex led to clashes, which might have led to tensions, conflicts and even rejection of missionaries while trying to evangelise the people.

Before Vat.II the Church understood herself as a perfect society. Then, the mission of the Church was understood as build this perfect society. Hence, getting more people into the Church and Christianising many nations would be a sign of building the perfect society. This misunderstanding made people to think that Christianity was out to conquer rather than building the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus Christ. Christianity was seen some how as a colonising power, which establishes the kingdom of the Church. People who saw the Church in this way tended to resist and thus reject the missionaries.

During Vat.II, the Church came up with a new understanding of herself and her mission. She is no longer by primacy a divine institution or perfect society,<sup>96</sup> but the kingdom of Christ,<sup>97</sup> who is the light of humanity.<sup>98</sup> The Church proclaims the Gospel to every creature.<sup>99</sup> She is a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Church preaches the Good News of the coming of the kingdom of God promised over the ages in the scriptures.<sup>100</sup> Eventually, the Church is defined as a cultivated field, tillage of God, building of God, the body of Christ.<sup>101</sup> It

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. J. D. BOSCH, *Transforming Mission- Paradigm shift in Theology of mission*, 369.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. LG, 3.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. LG, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. LG, 1; Cf. Mk.16:15.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. LG, 4; Cf. Mk.1:15 ; Cf. Matt 4:17.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. LG, 6,7; Cf. 1Cor.3:9.

is the visible organisation through which Jesus Christ communicates truth and grace to all men.<sup>102</sup> The Church therefore, is the people of God who are called to perfect holiness.<sup>103</sup> At this time, the Church has a positive approach towards other religions.<sup>104</sup> Other religions are now seen as possible ways of salvation or ordinary way of salvation as some scholars would say.<sup>105</sup>

Some people might think that Vat. II puts in question previous theology of mission. In fact, how the theology was understood and implemented in the field could be questioned. Vat. II tried to clarify the misunderstandings and say clearly what is the mission of the Church and what is expected of the missionaries in the field.

Henceforth, the Church sees herself as divinely sent to all nations to be the sacrament of salvation in obedience to the command of her founder.<sup>106</sup> The Church on earth therefore, by its very nature is missionary and has its origin in the Holy Trinity.<sup>107</sup> The Church continued the universal Plan of God namely to let all men be saved.<sup>108</sup> which is the will of God who wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>109</sup>

To fulfil this mission, the Church is witnessing the Word of God, preaching the Gospel and assembling the people of God and implanting Churches.<sup>110</sup> This is what we

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. LG, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. LG, 9,12.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 102-104.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 153-156.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Vatican II., *Ad Gentes*, No 1, ed., FLANNERY, A.: Cf. Matt 16:15. (Henceforth I shall use AG.)

<sup>107</sup> Cf. AG, 2 ; Cf. LG, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. AG, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. AG. ; Cf. 7,1Tim.2:4-5.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. AG, 11,;3,19,15,16.

call evangelisation as a proper vocation of the Church.<sup>111</sup> This is the fundamental task of the people of God.<sup>112</sup> The centre of this vocation is no longer the Church but building the kingdom of Christ (Christo-centric).<sup>113</sup> That is, the Church and her work of evangelisation are at the service of the Kingdom of Christ.

Some scholars say that, today, the Church as the continuing presence of Christ, has a sense of reality, she knows what she is up against, she knows what she must do here, now, in the circumstances of time and place in which she finds herself.<sup>114</sup> This vocation therefore is proclaiming the divine life to sub-human conditions, development, humanisation,<sup>115</sup> to make the underdeveloped masses aware of their dignity and rights, to open the eyes of the masses to their misery and tell them: "No! The life you are living is not just, something has to be done."<sup>116</sup> It is the task of the Church, our human and Christian duty to help the sons of God to come out of sub-human situation in which they now exist.<sup>117</sup>

The task of evangelisation is not left to Christ as the first evangeliser and ordained ministers but to all Christians depending on their tasks and ministries in the Church.<sup>118</sup> It follows therefore, that wherever the people of God are, they are to evangelise through witness of life, living preaching, liturgy of the Word, Catechetical

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<sup>111</sup> Cf. PALL VI, POPE, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No 14.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. AG, 35 ; Cf. LG, 17.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 185-186.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. H. CAMARA, *The Church and Colonialism: The Betrayal of the Third World*, 18-19

<sup>115</sup> Cf. H. CAMARA, *The Church and Colonialism: The Betrayal of the Third World*, 27.

<sup>116</sup> H. CAMARA, *The Church and Colonialism: The Betrayal of the Third World*, 45

<sup>117</sup> Cf. H. CAMARA, *The Church and Colonialism: The Betrayal of the Third World*, 118.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. EN, 7,67-72,59.

instructions, Eucharist, mass media, personal contact, sacraments, popular piety, forming local Churches, dialogue, promotion of development and charity to the poor.<sup>119</sup>

The Good News, which the Church is to bring to the people, is Salvation, liberation- liberating humanity from all or everything that oppresses humanity and above all, sin and the evil One.<sup>120</sup> The Church must read the signs of the time and understand the world in which we live namely great uncertainty, hunger, poverty, social and psychological slavery, conflict and bitter divisions.<sup>121</sup>

The explanations given by Vat.II on the mission of the Church and missionaries were to clear the ambiguities and misunderstandings on the Church herself, the mission of the Church and what is expected of missionaries in the field. Following a long history and mentality based on misunderstandings, some people and some missionaries have understood the message of Vat.II while some are still struggling.

Nevertheless, the message of Vat. II gave an impression that some missionaries who evangelised before Vat. II misunderstood both the Church and her mission and therefore they were wrong. Yet, Vat. II tried to help the Church and missionaries to carry out the Gospel mandate in a way that the Gospel could be acceptable to all nations and thus transform the human society from within.

It was hard, however, to see the role of the Church and missionaries in the presence of colonialism. One might even say that the negative approach towards other religions before Vatican Two, ethnocentrism and occupying colonial power have led to

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. EN, 41-48 ; Cf. RM, 42-46, 48,55,58,60.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. EN, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Vatican II., *Gaudium et Spes* No. 4. Ed., FLANNERY, A. ( Henceforth, I shall use GS.)

a strong, bitter and fierce rejection of colonialists and missionaries. It is amazing to see that after 132 years of colonial and Christian presence in Algeria, the Church, the missionaries and the Power of the Gospel have not, to a large extent, taken roots and penetrated into the strata of society and transform it from within.<sup>122</sup> This may be due to the misunderstanding of the mission of the Church, which led to tension, conflict and even rejection. Having seen the mission of the Church before and during Vatican Two, let us now see the relationship between the Church and the colonial power in Algeria.

#### **4. The Church and French Colonial Power in Algeria.**

##### ***4.1 Introduction***

The history of the Church in Algeria has some important aspects namely:- the experience of persecution, the coincidence with colonisation, the flourishing of the Church in the presence of colonial power, the collapsing of the Church in the absence of colonial power and the constant struggle between Christianity and Islam. Keeping these aspects in mind, this section attempts to explore the relationship between the Church and the French colonial power as from the year 1830-1962.

##### ***4.2 The Role of Religion in Colonisation of Algeria***

During French revolution the French Church was moving towards secularism (laïcité) whereby matters concerning religion were left to the people to decide. This spirit was reproduced in the French colonies. Hence, matters concerning religion were left to the Algerian to decide. Missionaries were preoccupied mostly with the Europeans and settlers and French Christians who were in Algeria. This phenomenon was

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<sup>122</sup> Cf. EN, 19.

understood as direct or indirect collaboration with the colonial power. If some missionaries were at the service of Christians from Europe especially French colonisers, then it could be said that Christianity as a religion, supported colonialism. Yet, missionaries did a lot in the sector of education, health, agriculture and development.

Similar cases where religion was seen as supporting colonialism and domination is in India. Walter Fernandes tells us that sometimes religion was used to support domination and at times working in favour of the subaltern groups. He continues to say that the Church is to recognise the sin of colonialism and make amendments.<sup>123</sup> In India, Christians were marked as collaborators of the colonial rulers.<sup>124</sup> In Algeria, Missionaries and those Algerians who renounced their civil status and converted to Christianity and thus French citizenship were seen as French collaborators. There were also some Algerians who joined the French Army and during the struggle for independence, they fought against their fellow Algerians. These were also called supporters of domination and traitors. People like K.M. Panikkar holds that there was a total alliance between the Church and colonial power. Yet, evidence shows that it was not always the case.<sup>125</sup> But the fact remains that Christianity has played a key role in colonialism, although we disagree with the sweeping statement of Panikkar.

Walter Fernandes says that to understand the role played by the Church in colonialism, one has to understand the specificity of European Christianity, West Asian Judaism and Islam, which had the expansionist and ethnocentric mentality. In the feudal

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 84.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 84.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 84.

age. an expansionist state needed a religious legitimisation. With mercantile colonialism 'civilising education' took its place but the thinking remained ethnocentric and continues to be so to our days.<sup>126</sup> France did not need religious legitimisation to colonise Algeria but in one way or another the Church promoted western civilisation through education. This means dominating the civilisation of the Algerian people. Civilisation here could mean the way of life of the Algerians. The Church then was seen as promoting ethnocentrism. The Church, nevertheless, depended on the French colonial power to support missionary activities. This may give us an allusion to the reason why the Church flourished during French Colonisation in Algeria and collapsed after independence. In this situation, it is very hard to see how the Church and her mission stand and say no to colonialism and help the colonised come out from their oppressors. It is logical therefore, that when the colonised struggle for their liberation and attain it, will eventually reject not only colonisers but also their collaborators. In this case, missionaries, Algerian converted to Christianity and 'Les harkis'.<sup>127</sup> In a way, missionaries were caught up in the changes of secularism and 'hospitality' of the colonial power, from which they could not hesitate promoting colonial interests, though they might have not wished to.

#### ***4.3 The Interests of the Church and the Colonial Power***

The interests of the colonising power and missionaries are different. The colonising power was interested in commerce and trade while the missionaries were

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 85.

<sup>127</sup> 'Les Harkis'. These were the Algerians who during the war of independence in Algeria joined French Army to fight against their fellow Algerians.

interested in evangelisation. Yet, the clergy who came to Algeria to evangelise expected the state to support them since they perceived it as the very basis of Conquest.<sup>128</sup> The colonising power, however, would support them in so far as its interests would not be threatened. The support the missionaries received from the colonial power presupposed that missionaries in turn comply with the interests of the colonising power. French missionaries in Algeria expected the colonising power to support them since they viewed colonial enterprise as a civilising mission, preparatory for evangelisation.<sup>129</sup> This mentality reflects the criticism given by Jesus when he said that stupid is the man who builds his house on the sand (Cf. Lk. 6: 48-49). In this sense the evangelising mission of the Church cannot be built on the colonial enterprise as its foundation. That is why as the wind of struggle for independence and the actual independence came, the Church in Algeria fell away. Taking the colonial enterprise as the preparation for evangelisation is indirectly legitimising and supporting colonialism. Helping the Algerians for their liberation would have been a strong preparation for the evangelising mission of the Church.

Unfortunately, the French colonisers found that “the Force of Catholicism was necessary to civilise and assimilate a foreign race.”<sup>130</sup> This is not the mission of the Church and the Church is to be sensitive in receiving help, which is not meant to help the oppressed, and the marginalised.

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, “The Role of Religion in Colonialism” in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 87.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, “The Role of Religion in Colonialism” in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 90.

<sup>130</sup> W. FERNANDES, “The Role of Religion in Colonialism” in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 90-91.

#### ***4.4 The Effects of Colonialism – Church Relationship on the Mission of the Church***

The complexity of the colonial power – Church relationship during colonialism had remarkable effects on the mission of the Church. One would expect a strong resistance in a country like Algeria where Islam was already a dominant religion long before French colonisation. Islam as both religious and socio-political and economic power would view French and Christianity as a counter power. The misunderstandings of the theology of mission in evangelisation brewed a fierce confrontation between the already established Islamic kingdoms and the colonising power, which coincided with evangelisation.

Evangelisation in Algeria during colonisation was marked by freedom of religion (*laïcité*). In a sense it downplayed the work of evangelisation. That is, evangelisation of the Algerians became less important. Let them believe and practise the religion they want. In this situation, the Algerian Muslims would only change their religion if they wanted to become French citizen thereby giving up their civic status which was based on Koran and thus religious in nature...<sup>131</sup>

#### ***4.5 The Internal Logic between Colonisation and Evangelisation***

Despite freedom of religion, Delavignette, sees some difficulties in the relationship between colonising power and the colonised. There is a conflict between races, civilisation and religions.<sup>132</sup> On the spiritual plane colonialism thought to win souls for Christianity. This was a sort of internal logic between evangelisation and colonisation.<sup>133</sup> This internal logic stands as long as the colonised territory is non-

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. R. DELAVIGNETTE, *Christian and Colonialism*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. R. DELAVIGNETTE, *Christian and Colonialism*, 35.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. R. DELAVIGNETTE, *Christian and Colonialism*, 7-38.

Christian. It becomes self-defeat if the colonised territory like Algeria was already a Christian territory. This logic implies an implicit use of violence where resistance to convert to Christianity is encountered. Nevertheless, one cannot win souls for the Church by colonising the people. During Algerian colonisation, and the struggle for independence, what Algerians saw was- people of God (Christians) from France coming to colonise them. Massive killing was the order of the day. Evidences show that the Algerian population was reduced rapidly at the start of French colonisation (Cf. Chapter one.). During the Algerian war of Independence, many Algerians lost their lives. Yet, Delavignette finds out that every Christian has an obligation to apostolate and “as a Christian, he has the right not to participate in colonisation... But cannot refuse to contribute to evangelisation.”<sup>134</sup>

One cannot suppose that everybody in France was a Christian but some of the French Christians gave up their right not to participate in the colonisation of Algeria. The consequence of this is what Algerians have suffered for 132 years of colonisation and continue to suffer even today.

When the colonising people are part of the people of God, it is very hard to see the role of the Church as understood in Vat. II. After the Algerian war of independence, the “people of God” realised that they had abandoned their Christian duty. In 1954 Cardinal Duval reminded Christians to start loving and acting in a way that honours God. He reminded all Christians of their duty to love and respect all human beings.

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<sup>134</sup> R. DELAVIGNETTE, *Christian and Colonialism*, 51.

Within few years the Church in Algeria became a minority group. How is it that Algerian independence reduces the Church into a minority group? What made the “people of God” to flourish during French occupation and not after independence? One may say that many people who made part of the colonising power and the ‘people of God’ left Algeria. They found that they could not get the support of the newly independent Algeria. At this time those Algerians who were converted to Christianity had to abandon it or seek refuge in France or live in anonymity. Those who joined the French Army and fought against their fellow Algerians had hard time and others had to seek refuge in France.

#### ***4.6 New Methods Adapted for Evangelisation in Algeria.***

During Vatican Council two the reflections gave an allusion to the failure of the previous missionary activity of the Church in a country like Algeria. Witness of life and dialogue became some of the methods for evangelisation in North Africa. One of the reasons for these methods was the presence of Islam as a dominant religion.

Most probably, these methods were the ways on how to deal with rejection. The rejection of the missionaries might have prompted the fall of Christianity in Algeria among other reasons. Historians say that colonialism planted the seeds of its own destruction through education. Could it be that the Church in Algeria planted the seeds of her own destruction through a complex and apparently dubious relationship with the colonial power. Having seen the relationship between the Church and the colonial power in Algeria, let us see the life of the Church after Algerian independence up to today.

## 5. The Life of the Church after Algerian Independence

After independence, the Church had a new start. The way forward was the implementation of the deliberations of the Council Fathers. Encounter, witness of life and dialogue were the methods available to sustain the Church in Algeria. The Church started working hand in hand with Algerians to build the nation. Many missionaries, who remained, worked in schools, industries, hospitals and other social works. There was a dialogue, which followed four concentric circles namely:- dialogue with humanity and the universe, dialogue with other faiths, dialogue with other Christians and dialogue within the Church herself.<sup>135</sup> Differently put, dialogue is to be unconditional regard to other human beings, dialogue is to see the power of Christ working among other people not only in Christianity, that the power of Christ is revealed differently to other denominations and that one is to appreciate a fellow Christians.

In this sense, the dialogue is geared to promoting evangelisation, promotion of human life, promotion of the attitude of tolerance, accommodation, respect and openness and finally promotion of social-political and economic development. Walter Fernandes says that the Church in such situation like in Algeria is to recognise the past alliance, respond to the accusations of the elite class and be open to the aspirations of the subalterns. The Church is to recognise that her past alliance with the colonial power provided an opportunity to the subalterns to search for their liberation. The Church is to recognise the dehumanising consequence and damage of colonial power that continues

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. J. DUPUIS, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, 209.

even today.<sup>136</sup> The Church is to recognise colonialism as sin that has destroyed people, cultures and economies. Once that has been done, the Church may now join the people in demanding compensation for what the colonisers robbed from them. What has been robbed has to be restored to them, better trade terms must be established and the Church must also make amendments of the past.<sup>137</sup>

The life of the Church now is in difficulty with the emergence of Islamism.<sup>138</sup> Islamic extremism associated with political parties like G.I.A and F.I.S, which would like to make Algeria an Islamic state guided by 'Sharia' Law. Islamic extremism does not tolerate other religions. These political parties, which are associated with fundamentalism, do not desire to see foreigners in Algeria. This worries the Church in Algeria because most of her members are foreigners. This anti-foreigners attitude is deeply rooted in Islamic extremism. Despite all these, the Bishops of Maghreb have declared that the Church will never leave Algeria.<sup>139</sup> This may not mean that the agents of evangelisation associated with colonialism are not to leave and allow other missionaries to take their place.

One of the interesting things is that, some of the local Muslim communities, who live around the places where missionaries live, appreciate the presence of the missionaries. This appreciation, gives them courage to continue staying in Algeria. Guided by the theology of mission after Vatican Two, many missionaries continue to stay in Algeria out of love they have for the people. They wish to share the suffering

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 98.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. W. FERNANDES, "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" in *Vidyajyoti*. 23.2, 98-99.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. LES EVEQUES DU MAGHREB, *Les Eglises du Maghreb En L'An 2000*, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. C. RAULT, "Evolution de la Mission en Algérie", 10.

and joy of the Algerians. Many missionaries would have left the country following terrible assassinations of both civilians and missionaries as I have mentioned in chapter one but out of love and giving witness to Christ, they decided to remain in Algeria. Some of the missionaries were terribly shocked and disturbed by these assassinations so much so that they had to leave the country. The witness given by the Church in Algeria, though as a minority group, is remarkable. Yet, for the sake of the growth of the local Church, something is still to be done.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Bishops from North Africa declared that the Church would not leave Algeria despite violence prevailing in Algeria. Yet, rethinking the past and reconciling the Church with Algerian society is vital. This demands some necessary measures, as we shall see in the next chapter.

## Chapter III

### Pastoral Implications and recommendations

#### 4.1 Introduction

In Chapter two we have seen how Matt 10: 11-14 deals with the question of rejection of the missionaries. That is, leaving the territory and leaving everything to God's Judgement. We have also seen how the Church understood her mission before Vat. II and after Vat. II. Above all, we looked at the relationship between the Church and the French Colonial power in Algeria and how the Vat.II pointed out methods to be used in witnessing Christ in countries like Algeria, which is Muslim dominated. Yet, the basic question remains: Should the missionaries in Algeria, particularly French or European missionaries leave or remain in Algeria?

In this chapter we shall try to see some pastoral implications of our previous reflection and suggest what could be done in Algeria to improve the process of evangelisation. In his Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI says

“...the Holy Spirit is the principle agent of evangelisation: it is he who impels each individual to proclaim the Gospel, and it is he who in the depths of consciences causes the Word of salvation to be accepted and understood. But it can equally be said that he

is the goal of evangelisation: he alone stirs up the new creation, the new humanity of which evangelisation is to be the result....<sup>140</sup>

If the Word of salvation and the 'missionaries' are not accepted in Algeria, then the Holy Spirit may be saying something to the missionaries of the Algerian Church. Our concern in this chapter, therefore is what the Holy Spirit is telling the Algerian Church.

Both Popes Paul VI and John Paul II speak of Evangelisation in our time. John Paul II says, "the Spirit blows where he will (Cf. Jn 3:8)... and leads us to broaden our vision in order to ponder his activities in every time and place."<sup>141</sup> May be the Holy Spirit is saying to the missionaries 'you have done your part... go'. It is time to leave this country, it is time to let others water the seed, it is time to let others reconcile you with the Algerian people and it is the time to let the Holy Spirit blow where he wills according to time and place. It is time to let God say " I will give you [my people] shepherds after my own heart"(Cf. Jer 3: 15).<sup>142</sup>

Hence, the people of God in Algeria have no reason to fear when some missionaries apparently linked with colonisation are to go elsewhere to evangelise. The Holy Spirit is at work in all humanity and God promises the whole humanity shepherds.

Let us now see the pastoral implications of our previous reflections in chapter two and see some pastoral recommendations.

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<sup>140</sup> EN, 75: Cf. AG, 4.

<sup>141</sup> JOHN PAUL II, POPE, *Redemptoris Missio* No 29. (Henceforth I shall use RM)

<sup>142</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, No 1.

## 4. 2 Pastoral implications

From our reflections in chapter two, we have seen that the misunderstandings of the theology of mission Church before Vat. II had an impact on the process of evangelisation. Likewise, the collaboration of the missionaries with French colonial power had great impact not only in the process of evangelisation but also resulted into rejection right after Algerian independence. Now, the misunderstandings of the theology of the mission of the Church before Vat. II and the rejection of missionaries in Algeria bring to our attention various pastoral implications in the process of evangelisation.

### 4. 2.1 Time to Leave for other Possible Mission Places

In Matthew 10:11-14, Daniel J. Harrington interprets Matthew on how Matthean community dealt with rejection. That is, if missionaries are rejected on the account of the Word of God, they should not react violently, they should write off the people and leave their fate to God's judgement on the last day.<sup>143</sup> The three interpretations point to a pastoral implication namely to leave the territory for other possible mission places. Hence, one can foresee the possibility of some missionaries in Algeria associated with colonialism and thus rejected leaving Algeria for other possible mission places.

What French missionaries brought to Algeria namely the Word of God was good but they are rejected on an account of their association with the French colonial power. Most probably some of these missionaries did not say and do what Jesus commanded them to say and do (Cf. Matt 10:7; 10:8; 8:1-9,38). Hence, may be faithfulness to the

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<sup>143</sup> See footnote 94 pp 30.

Gospel mandate was apparently lacking to some missionaries and may be they were not sensitive enough to the methods of carrying the mandate<sup>144</sup>. That is, they were not sensitive enough on “how to evangelise”.<sup>145</sup> They did not clearly show a “living witness”.<sup>146</sup> They did not promote effectively “inter-religious dialogue”.<sup>147</sup> They did not see themselves as really people sent “to the poor”.<sup>148</sup> All these might have prompted rejection and thus the need to leave the country. After independence many missionaries left Algeria and very few remained. Thus, the process of leaving is not yet completed. It is important that it will be completed sooner or later.

#### 4.2.2 Time to Welcome other Missionaries

In his article ‘Missionaries go Home... Or Stay’, Frederico Pagura says that missionaries should go home if their allegiance and fidelity to their nation of origin is stronger than loyalty and obedience to Jesus<sup>149</sup>. Their departure would mean a vacancy and therefore a need to welcome other missionaries to Algeria. Pope John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa*, says that the Church in Africa is to be missionary to itself and then to other continents.<sup>150</sup> Above all the Church in Africa is to foster an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby Islands.<sup>151</sup> This would imply sharing of resources like sending missionaries to places like Algeria. Missionaries from Africa or elsewhere who are not associated with

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<sup>144</sup> See footnote 95 pp 31

<sup>145</sup> EN, 40.

<sup>146</sup> EN, 41; Cf. RM. 42.

<sup>147</sup> RM 55.

<sup>148</sup> RM 60.

<sup>149</sup> See footnote 1 pp 2

<sup>150</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL, POPE, *Ecclesia in Africa*. 130

<sup>151</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, POPE, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 131.

colonialism can be sent to Algeria and thus bring a new impetus in the process of evangelisation. This will encourage the spirit of internationality. That is, missionaries from different part of the world living and working together. This will lessen the possibility of identifying French missionaries as represent French Government under the umbrella of Christianity as some of the Algerians think so. The process of welcoming other missionaries to Algeria has started, but more efforts are needed in this regard. If these missionaries from Africa and elsewhere in the world are accepted in Algeria, then the Church in Algeria will enter into a new era of growth.

#### **4.2.3 Dialogue as a Pre-requisite for Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution**

Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation – *Ecclesia in Africa*, says “The challenge of dialogue is fundamentally the challenge of transforming relationships between individuals, nations, and peoples in religious, political, economic, social and cultural life”.<sup>152</sup> He also says, “ Despite the modern civilisation of the ‘global world’ in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone”.<sup>153</sup> This would mean that the relationship between the missionaries in Algeria and the Algerian people is to be transformed through dialogue.

Through dialogue, reconciliation and conflict resolution can be achieved and thus peace can be restored in the Algerian society. It is true, however, that dialogue, encounter, and living witness are some of the methods used to evangelise in Algeria.

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<sup>152</sup> JOHN PAUL II, POPE, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 79.

<sup>153</sup> JOHN PAUL II, POPE, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 79.

Yet, the kind of dialogue going on in Algeria involves two parties namely Algerians and the missionaries. More parties are needed. In this case, Missionaries who are not associated with colonialism in Algeria, would be the third party, which could be effective in dialoguing with the Algerian people. In a way they will take over the challenge of dialogue and reconciling their predecessors with the Algerian society.

In Algeria, dialogue has started both in the political and religious scenes. From political scene, the French Government and the Algerian Government are trying to reconcile with each other following the damage and torture done during colonialism and the war of liberation.<sup>154</sup> On the religious scene, the implementation of dialogue as one of the methods of evangelisation started after the Vat. II. Yet, it continues in a very slow pace following the memories and hatred that some Algerians have towards French people, collaboration of some missionaries with French colonial power and the brutal war of liberation.

Looking at the above pastoral implications, one gets an impression that the departure of some missionaries associated with the French colonial power, the welcoming of other missionaries who are not associated with colonialism and the need for dialogue as a pre-requisite for reconciliation and conflict resolution, is to take off overnight. Certainly not. The process will be slow, progressive and hopefully coming to a successful end. To facilitate the process of carrying out the above pastoral

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<sup>154</sup> BROLE, B., du Chaumont, "L'Autre Face d'une Action", in *La Croix*, March 6, 2001, 7; See also FOUCHET, A, " Les Archives de L'Algérie Vont s'Entrouvrir", in *La Croix*, March 6, 2001, 7. See also GUY, G., "Un Insupportable Mensonge: Repentance de la France et de L'Algerie" in *La Croix*, December 20, 2000, 27.

implications, let us point out some pastoral recommendations, which could facilitate and improve the mission and the process of evangelisation in Algeria.

#### **4.3 Pastoral recommendations**

To facilitate the growth of the local Church in Algeria and the process of evangelisation, we propose some recommendations. As we give these recommendations we bear in mind the following points. The Algerian people, though not all, have relatively strong hatred against the French people following the fact of colonialism, the brutal war of liberation and some of the missionaries currently working in Algeria were French soldiers or were sent for military field in Algeria during the war of liberation.

The presence of French or European missionaries in Algeria, is apparently interpreted by some Algerians as a continuation of French colonisers under the umbrella of Christianity. Algeria has 99.9 % Muslim population but it has a secular State. Public proclamation of the Gospel is not allowed. There is a rise in Islamic fundamentalism, which does not give room for dialogue with Christianity and demand the departure of foreigners in order to foster or even to force the Government to establish an Islamic state under *Sharia Law*. Some Algerians believe that colonialism is gone, peace is an absolute necessity for good relationship and therefore they appreciate the presence of French missionaries no matter what happened in the past. This appreciation is already a positive complement on the part of missionaries working in Algeria, which cannot be ignored.

#### **4.3.1 Recommendations to the Universal Church**

In his article "The Role of Religion in Colonialism" Walter Fernandes says, "The Church is to recognise the sin of colonialism and make amendments".<sup>155</sup> May be the Church has recognised this in one way or another but we recommend that the Church recognise and apologise on behalf of the missionaries involved in the process of colonisation in Algeria. We also recommend that the Church encourages French or European missionaries who are associated with colonialism to leave the country for other possible mission places. The Church is to encourage the Algerian Church to welcome missionaries from other countries especially African countries.

Above all, the Universal Church, in the sense of the top administrative organ, is to solicit the Algerian Church to stand out and acknowledge that some missionaries participated in the process of colonisation and the war of liberation and apologise for that. She is to be able to stand and say to the Algerian people that the missionaries do not represent former French colonial master, as some would think so. In this way, we think that the process of dialogue as a pre-requisite for reconciliation and conflict resolution would take a new face at religious level.

#### **4.3.2 Recommendations to the Church of Algeria**

In his article, "Dialogue as Conflict Resolution" Michael Amalados says. "Any community with diversity of members and interests will not be entirely without conflict. Conflict indicates that there are tensions in the community and they may be due to experience of discrimination, injustices, and misunderstanding related to unequal or

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. Footnote 126 pp 37.

inadequate distribution or availability of resources, illegitimate division of power or dispute about status in the society”.<sup>156</sup> Dialogue has already started in Algeria at political as well as religious level. Yet, we recommend that something more be done. That is, it is very hard to dialogue when for example missionaries say we are persecuted because of the Word of God and the others say we persecute you because you participated in the process of colonisation and you abandoned us during the war of liberation. We recommend that the Algerian Church especially the missionaries go back to the history and see what went wrong and what is the source of tension or conflict. If any, they should be able to say it publicly to the people they were sent to evangelise and apologise. Dialogue starts when one acknowledges the mistakes and apologises. In this way dialogue could result into reconciliation and peace.

We also recommend that the Algerian Church deliberates on welcoming other missionaries from elsewhere as partners in dialogue and possibly the successors of the mission. This, has started yet more efforts are do be done to facilitate the process. This is in line with the mission of Jesus. He called the twelve, stayed with them, sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and after his departure; the apostles become the successors of Jesus’ mission. If missionaries from other countries especially from Africa are accepted, then dialogue, reconciliation and conflict resolution may be possible.

The acceptance of other missionaries may not be automatic but if they are accepted, then this will imply that the process of evangelisation would also be easier.

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<sup>156</sup> AMALADOS., M., “Dialogue as Conflict Resolution” in Vidyajyoti Vol. 63. No 1 , 22.

In the exegetical part of Matt 10:11-14, missionaries in Matthean community were to leave the city if they are rejected. They should not react violently but leave the people to God's judgement. It would have resulted into conflict, tension or even persecutions if the Matthean missionaries insisted on staying in the city they are rejected no matter how much they may have loved the people. In the same way, we recommend that the Algerian Church encourages missionaries who were involved in the colonial system to leave the country. Leaving here does not mean abrupt leaving as it happened with some missionaries right after Algerian independence. There should be a gradual but progressive leaving and welcoming of other missionaries.

The Algerian Church could also try to organise dialogue which is more open not only to people who are considered to be 'friends of the Church' but also to people who are considered not to be 'friends of the Church'. That is, to allow other people to say what they think of missionaries whether positively or negatively. There will be no growth if you only involve in dialogue people who would rather say only good things about the Church or missionaries. Hence, there could be a specialised committee on dialogue, which could invite different people, experts from secular sciences as well as Church experts to be involved in dialogue. This committee could facilitate dialogue at all levels namely national level, diocesan level and parish level.

#### **4.3.3 Pastoral Recommendations to the Dioceses**

Algeria has four dioceses. Creation of more dioceses with their pastors from other countries could create a different reality. Each Bishop could put more efforts to invite missionaries. Each Bishop could facilitate dialogue at diocesan level especially in

the parishes. Dioceses could organise seminars, conferences, talks and common activities that could be the ideal avenues for dialogue with the Algerians.

#### **4.3.4 Pastoral recommendations to the Algerians**

Some Algerians are very hospitable and people of good will. Such hospitality and good will could be the one which missionaries in Matthean community were asked to search for- "a worthy household"(Cf. Matt 10: 11). Some missionaries got this good will and hospitality. The results are seen by the presence of Algerian Christians living in Algeria though in anonymity. Other Algerian Christians are living in France for security reasons. The reason for these Algerian Christians living in France is that Islam does not accept a Muslim to convert to Christianity. Islam considers conversion to Christianity as apostasy. One risks death if he is converted to Christianity. Hence, there is no freedom of worship. The attitude of some Muslims towards Christianity is relative negative to an extent that dialogue with Christianity becomes difficult. We therefore, recommend that efforts are to be done to foster a positive attitude towards not only Christianity but also towards other religions. This could be done through introducing inter-religious dialogue courses in the educational system. Nevertheless, majority of the Algerians are Muslims and a good number of them would wish to see peace, equal rights, love and respect for everyone. Some of them do not wish to hear anything about French or European missionaries.

Yet, we recommend that Algerians are to take the lead in dialogue, reconciliation and restoration of peace. They are to use their capacity to stand and talk directly to the missionaries if they think that some missionaries were not faithful to their

vocation and mission. This is to be done in mutual understanding and out of love. Algerians are to foster freedom of worship. In this way, there will be a society, which is at peace.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

The above-mentioned pastoral implications and pastoral recommendations could be the possible means or ways to improve the process of evangelisation and thus facilitate the growth of the local Church in Algeria. Finally, we hope that dialogue, reconciliation and the restoration of peace will one-day be a reality in Algeria.

### **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

In this essay we have tried to investigate the attitudes, tendencies and crises which are based on the fact of French colonisation in Algeria, the war of liberation and the role of missionaries during colonialism and war of liberation in Algeria. We have looked at the history of both the Church and Algeria, the relationship between the Church and French colonial power, and the theology of mission that guided the missionaries before Vat. II and what happened after Vat.II.

We also looked at how different scholars interpret Matt. 10:11-14 especially on the issue of how to deal with rejection. We found out that missionaries are to leave if they are rejected on an account of the Gospel. We also found out that in the case of

missionaries in Algeria, who might not have been rejected on an account of the Gospel, but on an account of their collaboration with the French colonial power, may leave the country. Considering that Islam has been present in Algeria long before the coming of French missionaries and the negative attitudes of some Muslims towards Christianity, missionaries might have as well been rejected on an account of the Gospel. We also saw as a fact that when colonialism coincided with evangelisation, people became suspicious of the credibility of the missionaries. This might have necessitated rejection. History tells us how the Church flourished during different colonial occupation and collapsed when the colonial power collapsed or withdrew from the territory. This could also be one of the reasons why the missionaries were rejected or even persecuted afterwards.

Following the rejection of the missionaries, there are some pastoral implications and some pastoral suggestions, which could be an attempt to facilitate the process of evangelisation in Algeria and the growth of the local Church in Algeria. That is, it is important that the Church recognises the mistake of some missionaries who participated in the process of colonisation in Algeria and thereby apologise. We saw the importance of dialogue, which involves missionaries from within Africa at different levels.

We also realised that welcoming of the missionaries from other countries especially from Africa is quite important. This could be an attempt to hand over the mission to other missionaries who are not associated with colonialism. This would facilitate dialogue, reconciliation and the restoration of peace.

The pastoral recommendations we brought forward are also significant. We discovered that the universal Church, the Algerian Church, the Bishops in Algeria and the Algerians are to put more efforts in the process of evangelisation in Algeria. Some of the areas, which should be given attention, are the leaving of missionaries who are associated with colonialism, the welcoming of missionaries who are not associated with colonialism and dialogue in the direction of reconciliation and conflict resolution.

The Church in Algeria has a long way to go in reconciling the present with the past, she has a duty to do this even if it means that some missionaries are to leave the country. To fulfil this duty, she needs a help namely to welcome other missionaries. The Church in Algeria has a duty to look back into her dark past and draw lessons for the future growth. This will be possible if some of the missionaries are able to say ' we have done our part whether good or bad, we are ready to let other try their best'. For further investigations, we ask the following questions.

Is evangelisation in Algeria to be solely by French or European missionaries? Is the system whereby certain countries are to be evangelised by particular European nations still valid or even useful? If missionaries from elsewhere go to Algeria, are they going to be accepted?

No matter what the answers could be, the Church and the missionaries are to be aware that they are entrusted with a duty of leading the people of God to holiness, to God Himself and to eternal salvation.

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