

The Function of Dialogue in the Process of Evangelisation

A pastoral-theological appraisal of the relevance of Dialogue in a Nigerian context based on the experience of Igboland

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VON

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Dedicated to:

My parents

&

The success of efforts to recognise the importance and place of dialogue
in human relations and in witnessing
to the call to witness

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AA | Apostolicam actuositate |
| AAS | Acta Apostolicae Sedis |
| AD | Anno Domini |
| ACTS | Acts of the Apostles |
| AFER | African Ecclesial Review |
| AG | Ad gentes divinitus |
| AMAECA | Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in East Africa |
| AMC | Annual Mission Contribution (Collection) |
| ASS | Acta Saanctae Sedis |
| Art | Article |
| ATR | African Traditional Religion |
| Bd. | Band (German for 'Editon') |
| BCC | Basic Christian Community |
| BSS | Brothers of St. Stephen |
| CA | Centissimus Annus |
| CAN | Christian Association of Nigeria |
| CBCN | Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria |
| CBIU | Catholic Biblical Instructors Union |
| CBM | Catholic Biblical Movement Basic Christian Community |
| CC | Churches or Chapels |
| CCRM | Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement |
| CELAM | Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano |
| Cf. | Confer |
| CHAN | Christian Health Association of Nigeria |
| CIC | Codex Iuris Canonici |
| CIC | College of Immaculate Conception |

| | |
|--------|---|
| CIDJAP | The Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace |
| CIWA | Catholic Institute of West Africa |
| CL | Christifideles laici |
| CMO | Christian Men Organisation |
| ComSoz | Communicatio socialis |
| CP | Communio et progressio |
| CP | Converts (Protestants) |
| CPC | Central Preparatory Commission |
| CSF | Catholic Social Forum |
| CSN | Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria |
| CT | Catechist Teachers |
| CV | Christian Village |
| CWO | Christian Women Organisation |
| CYON | Christian Youth Organisation of Nigeria |
| DDL | Daughters of Divine Love |
| DH | Dignitatis humanae |
| DMMM | Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy |
| DP | Dialogue and Proclamation |
| EA | Ecclesia in Africa |
| ECS | East Central State |
| Ed (s) | Editor (s) (edition) |
| EN | Evangelii nuntiandi |
| ES | Ecclesiam suam |
| Et al. | Et alia (and other co-editors) |
| Etc. | Et cetera |
| ETTC | Elementary Teacher Training College |
| FCT | Federal Capital Territory |
| GE | Gravissimum educationis |

| | |
|------------|--|
| GS | Girls' Schools |
| GS | Gaudium et spes |
| HHCJ | Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus |
| HR | House for Refuge |
| HRC | Holy Rosary College |
| Hrsg (hg.) | Herausgegeben (Edited) Herausgeber (Editor) |
| IBID | Ibidem (the same work or page or place) |
| ID | Idem (the same author) |
| i.e. | (id est) That is |
| IHM | Immaculate Heart of Mary |
| IL | Instrumentum Laboris |
| IM | Inter mirifica |
| IMBISA | Inter-religious Meeting of the Bishops of South Africa |
| JDPC | Justice Development and Peace Commissions/Committees |
| JS | Junior Seminary |
| KSJ | Knights of St. John |
| KSM | Knights of St. Mulumba |
| L | Lineamenta |
| Lk. | The Gospel According to St. Luke |
| LG | Lumen gentium |
| LGA | Local Government Area |
| Ltd. | Limited |
| Msgr. | Monsignor |
| NA | Nostra aetate |
| n.d. | No date |
| NS | Nursery Schools |
| NYSC | National Youth Service Corps |
| OA | Octogesima adveniens |

| | |
|------------|---|
| OP | Order of Preachers |
| OP | Optatem totius |
| OPEC | Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Nations |
| PCID | Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue |
| PCPCU | Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity |
| PDV | Pastores dabo vobis |
| PP | Populorum et progressio |
| PSB | Primary School for Boys |
| PSG | Primary School for Girls |
| QD | Questationes Disputatae |
| Rev. (Fr.) | Reverend (Father) |
| RM | Redemptoris missio |
| RNC | Royal Niger Company |
| SC | Seminary in Construction |
| SCDF | Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith |
| SJ | Society of Jesus |
| SIST | Spiritans International School of Theology |
| SMA | Societe des Missions Africaines (Society of African Mission) |
| SMMM | Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy |
| SPCU | Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity |
| Sr. | Sister |
| St. | Saint |
| T.I.M.E. | Training in Moral and Religious Education |
| Trans. | Translator (translation) |
| TTC | Teachers Training College |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations |
| UR | Unitatis redintegratio |
| US | Ut unum sint |

| | |
|---------|---|
| USA | United States of America |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republic |
| VJTR | Vidajyothi Journal of Theological Studies |
| VLS | Village for Converts |
| Vol (s) | Volume (s) |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |
| ZDK | Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken |
| ZMR | Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religion |
| ZThK | Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche |

0. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Church is mandated by Jesus Christ himself to continue the mission for which he was sent into the world. The mission of Christ, which consists in “bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives, restoring sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free and the proclamation of the Lord’s year of favour”¹, remains the fundamental basis of the missionary and evangelising vocation of the Church. She has a message to proclaim and that message is the proclamation of making the kingdom of God present in the lives of the people. Her evangelising mission derives from the Lord’s mandate: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations ...”² Through the ages the church has responded to this command of the Lord to evangelise, using various methods according to different situations and times.

Dialogue is a *conditio sine qua non* in the Church’s evangelisation. By convoking the Second Vatican Council, Pope John gave special attention to the Church’s self-knowledge, that is the knowledge of her nature and vocation as well as the realisation of the necessity of dialogue in the Church’s pursuit of Church unity and healthy relationships with non-Christian religions and bodies. Besides the emphases on the importance of dialogue in the Church’s execution of her mission and apostolate of building up the people of God, evidence from the human sciences portray the indispensable and invaluable roles of dialogue and communication in a globalised world. The latest experience of September 11th 2001 in America, that is, the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, and how the world came out with one voice to fight a common enemy - terrorism - is an elaborate evidence of the indispensable role of dialogue in improving diplomatic relations among individual nations, irrespective of the racial, national, religious and ideological differences that exist between the different partners. The climax of this concern is the on going fight against terrorism and the ousting of the despotic *Al Qaeda* and *Taliban* regimes in Afghanistan that poses a dangerous threat not only to the people of Afghanistan but also to world peace.

Dialogue for the Church is not simply a means or instrument of evangelisation but an integral part of it. Gone is the time when missionary activity was a matter of Christianising people or implanting the faith or converting somebody at all costs, even if that person did not want to accept the evangeliser’s point of view. Evangelisation is a dialogical process that consists in mutual sharing of ideas between the partners involved on the basis of intersubjectivity and mutual

¹ Cf. Lk. 18-19.

² Cf. Mt. 28:19

respect for the rights and dignity of the partners. Its result is massive, that is mutual understanding and enrichments of each other's points of departure.

The need for dialogue is particularly felt in the Church's evangelising activities in Nigeria, and in Igboland in particular because of the colonial/missionary legacies it inherited in the course of history. The first attempt to introduce the faith in this place failed because of lack of proper methods on the part of the Portuguese missionaries, who later turned to merchants and slave dealers. The legacies of the 18th century missionary enterprise in Nigeria were lack of understanding between the various missionary Churches, the climax of which was proselytism, hatred and antagonism between the Christian Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Missionaries, lack of tolerance and respect towards the natives, and even more so towards traditional religion. This was a transfer of the age-long domestic problems back home between Ireland and England to the mission lands.

0.1 Personal Reasons for the Research

My reasons for deciding to write on the *Function of Dialogue in the Process of Evangelisation* are both personal and theological. The personal reason goes back to my experience during the final year of my training in the seminary. Then, as the senior prefect, my relations with my fellow students and with the seminary authority brought home to me the essence of dialogue in human interaction. It was indeed an 'aha' or 'disclosure' experience to notice the wonderful co-operation I enjoyed with my fellow-seminarians (philosophy and theology students alike), who numbered more than six thousand. The case was the same with regard to the co-operation which I enjoyed with the seminary staff in my effort to ensure healthy relationship between them and the students. These accomplishments were possible thanks to the recognition of the benefits of dialogue in interaction.

It was from this experiential standpoint, and coupled with increasing cases of misunderstanding, lack of sincere dialogue in the pastoral mission of the Church and lack of rapport between Christians of different communions that I considered researching the necessity of cultivating the culture of dialogue in human interpersonal relationship and the need for dialogue in the Church's evangelisation and pastoral ministry.

My special interest in studying the relevance of dialogue is also based on the fact that the faith has yet to be deeply rooted in the lives and cultures of the people, in spite of the efforts so far made to establish it. I identify the major problem as the absence of dialogue. The issues of syncretism, withdrawal from the Church to independent and Pentecostal churches and sects, proselytism

and hostility between the established Churches that affect the practice of the Christian faith in Nigeria, are traceable to the same “monster”. The Church should be more dialogue-minded both in theory and praxis. While she appreciates the courage and sacrifices of the missionaries in extending Christianity to this part of the world, she should be able to look beyond the mistakes of the missionaries.

0.2 Aim of the Research

This work is aimed at contributing to the search for dialogue in the mission of the Church in Nigeria, and especially in Igboland. This is necessary because of the weighing influence of the colonial-missionary era on the practice of the faith in present-day Nigeria. This climate of high-handed administrative structure has adverse influences on both the membership of the Church and on the Church’s evangelising mission. Hence, this work will investigate the origin of the faith, the ways of overcoming problems and the means of meeting the challenges and concerns in these highly sophisticated and technological post-modern times, in which dialogue and communication play primary and inevitable roles.

0.3 Method of the Research

In order that this work achieves its aims and objectives, it will be adopting the three-steps pastoral method of *Voir-Juger-Agir* (see-judge-act),³ the motto of

³ The three steps method, See-Judge-Act, was originally coined by the Belgian Cardinal J. Cardijn as the guiding principle for the Jeunesse Ouvriere Chretienne founded in 1912, but has been acknowledged on the theological and scientific level as an appropriate model and *modus operandi* for practical theology. The depth of this theological approach is expressed distinctly in the following statement. “Das Modell besagt, daß der Weg praktisch-theologischer Reflektion nach folgenden Grundmuster verläuft:

In Hinblick auf die jeweils zu reflektierende bzw. zu konzipierende Praxis

- wird zunächst die Situation mit ihren Gegebenheiten und systematischen Zusammenhängen in Gesellschaft und Kirche kritisch, d.h. mit dem Interesse an der Aufdeckung und Veränderung von Fehlentwicklungen, wahrgenommen und radikal, d.h. möglichst bis auf den Grund der Ursachen und Wirkzusammenhänge gehend, analysiert;
- folgt in einem zweiten Schritt die argumentative Zugrundelegung der im christlichen Glauben, näherhin in Schrift und Tradition enthaltenen Kriterien, um die Situation und Praxis nach dem Maßstab des Evangeliums zu beurteilen;
- gelangt man schließlich von dieser Orientierung aus über die Formulierung von Zielen, die Planung von Handlungsschritten und die Verständigung der Beteiligten über ihre Rollen zu einer neuen, den situativen Erfordernissen und Möglichkeiten wie auch den theologischen Kriterien entsprechenden Praxis bzw. zur Konzeption einer solchen Praxis.“ (H. Haslinger et al., Zu Selbstverständnis und Konzept dieser Praktischen Theologie, in H. Haslinger (Hrsg.) Praktische Theologie: Grundlegungen. Mainz, 1999, 19-36, 30)

the Catholic social and youth movement in France. In line with this method, we shall at first be equipping ourselves with information on the areas of study – Nigeria, and Igboland in particular – as well as information on the situation of the Church in Nigeria and the various methods adopted by the early missionaries in the task of evangelisation.

The second level of the work will comprise a critical evaluation of the situation in the light of human/social scientific researches, as well as in the light of the Christian faith and theology. The third stage will be proposing new pastoral approaches in the mission of the Church in Nigeria, based on the outcome of the evaluation of the situation at hand with human-scientific and theological researches.

0.4 Materials and Sources

The primary materials for this work include the ecclesiastical documents such as the documents of the Second Vatican Council, papal documents and Synodal reports. The secondary materials include historical works on the Church in Nigeria, encyclopaedias and theological works dealing with our subject of study. From the point of view of human and social sciences, the work will be making use of philosophical insights and statistical data.

0.5 Structure

This work is structurally divided into three main parts. The first comprises of four chapters. The first chapter prepares the way for our research by presenting a detailed insight into the historico–geographical, cultural, religious and physical features of Nigeria, and Igboland in particular.

The second chapter partly dwells on the methods of evangelisation so far adopted in Nigeria, beginning with a brief insight into the first attempts by Portuguese merchants and missionaries between the 15th – 18th centuries. Thereafter, it examines the missionary activities of the 19th century and the conditions under which the Christian faith was established in the country.

The third chapter pays attention to the method and process of evangelisation in Igboland. It takes note of the initial problems that confronted the missionaries

The see-judge-act pastoral method has gained wide acceptance in the Church in recent times. Its impact was felt in the Second Vatican Council's construction of the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*), which, following John XXIII's instruction in *Mater et magistra*, charged the Church that it is her obligation to interpret the signs of times in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. GS 4). The influence of this method in other post-conciliar documents and activities of the Church is very impressive and worthy of note.

and the eventual conflicts/proselytism among the different missionaries in their mission.

The fourth chapter occupies itself with the Church in present day Nigeria, that is, the period after the expulsion of the foreigners in Eastern Nigeria. It was an epoch of missionary outburst and fervour in the Nigerian Church because it witnessed a massive growth and increase in the number of local clergy and religious, as well as an increase in the number of ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses in Nigeria. We shall note the contributions of the Church to the development of an independent Nigeria, as well as the initial problems that confronted her in concern to establish an indigenous and self-reliant local Church, especially in Igboland. Such problems included the forceful expulsion of the missionaries and the taking-over by the Federal Government of schools and places of higher learning, which were the Church's major instruments of evangelisation.

Part II with its two chapters is a critical evaluation of the process of evangelisation in Nigeria. The fifth chapter analyses the concept "dialogue" as an essential element of modern society. It highlights the philosophy of dialogue from antiquity antics to modern times and the principles that guarantee intersubjective communicative action. Thereafter, we shall spotlight the transfer of this theory of communicative competence into theology.

Chapter six focuses attention on to Vatican Council II and its commitment to dialogue. It begins by illustrating the factors that prompted John XXIII to convene the Council as well as how he went about it. An examination of the actual conciliar settings, and some major events that took place in the realisation of Pope John's intention, will help to show how dialogical the Council was.

Apart from examining the various conciliar and post-conciliar documents on the understanding of dialogue, as well as efforts made to realise this concern, this chapter will also examine the contributions of the successors of Pope John towards the establishment of a Church that is capable of dialogue.

Chapter seven brings us face to face with the question of evangelisation. To be considered are the history of the concept and the Protestant and Catholic understanding of the term. It will give an account of Vatican Council II's teaching on evangelisation and the development of this concept by Paul VI (*Evangelii nuntiandi*). We also consider the factors that gave rise to Paul VI's concept of evangelisation as the "grace and vocation of the Church", as well as the mission of the Church in the modern world. This will lead us through his biography, family background, and the influences of French theology especially the influences of the priests' workers and Madeleine Delbr el. This chapter will

conclude with a review of the developments in the Church of Latin America and its challenges for the universal Church.

Part three (act) will seek ways of putting our findings into practice by examining the models in Germany, France and Africa with the aim of demonstrating the relationship between dialogue and evangelisation in the praxis of the Church (chapter eight). This study will expose us to the reality of the new pastoral challenges in Germany, to the establishment of a Church that is able to dialogue with herself (*dialogus ad intra*) and with her external partners (*dialogus ad extr*), to the discussion in the French Church on “*Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle*” and the African Synod.

Chapter nine concludes the work by considering the areas in the pastoral life of the Church that will promote the culture of dialogue in her day-to-day praxis.

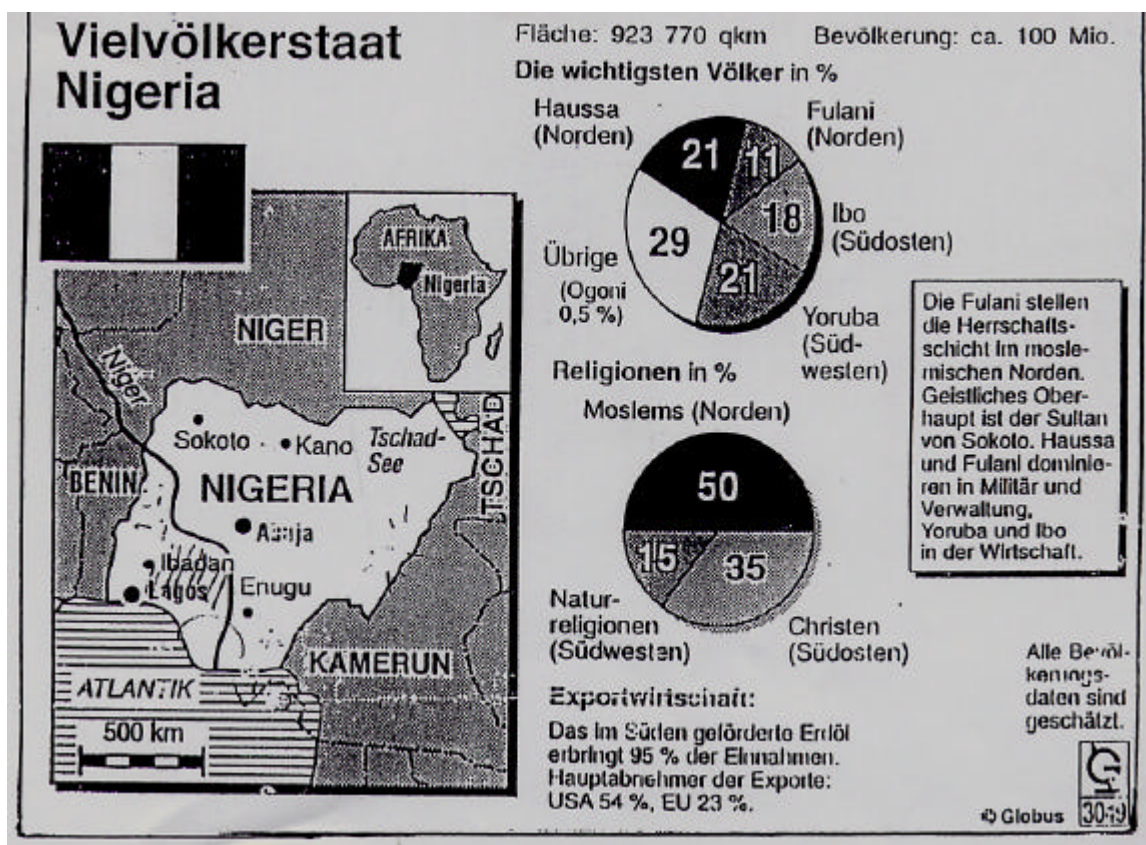
PART ONE: VOIR (SEE)

CHAPTER ONE

1 AN INSIGHT INTO NIGERIA AND THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE CHURCH

This chapter will give us an insight into the geographical and physical features of Nigeria in general, and Igboland in particular. It will also acquaint us with the historical, cultural and political growth of the people.

1.1. The Geographical Entity: Nigeria and its Features⁴



Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, according to the 1991 national census. It is located on the west coast of Africa, northward

⁴ GLOBUS Kartendienst GmbH, 50. Jg., 20. November 1995

between the parallels of 2° and 14° north latitude and 2° and 13° east of the Greenwich Meridian. The longest distance between the North and the South in the country is about 1100km while the width ranges from 700 to 1300km.⁵

Located on the west coast of Africa of the north of the Gulf of Guinea with its neighbouring countries the Republic of Benin (to the west), Niger and Chad Republics (to the north), and Cameroon (to the south), Nigeria can be divided into four geographical regions: a dense belt of mangrove forests and swamps which stretch along the coast, often as much as sixty miles wide; the forests of the Eastern and Western parts of the country; and the northern savannah, which lies on the border region of the Sahara, stretches from Sokoto to Lake Chad, and in parts reaches as far as south as Ilorin.⁶

Nigeria is blessed with large rivers and minor rivers, as well as streams which provide the country and its people with rich vegetation and fishing opportunities. Apart from the Coast line in the South, which is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the most important river in Nigeria is the Niger, which has its source in the hills of Futa Jalon. It is about 4170km long, but only 1/3 of this length is within the country. It enters Nigeria from the west and flows south-easterly until it joins the River Benue, almost at the centre of Nigeria. The Benue is the second most important river in Nigeria. It has its source in the northern section of the central hills of the Cameroon Republic, and enters Nigeria from the east. The river flows southward to join the Niger at Lokoja.

The outlets of these rivers and their tributaries are masked by walls of mangrove. Behind this barrier are calm lagoons which extend from the western border of the Niger. They provide valuable means of navigation at the delta where they break into a network of creeks and water-ways. Other important rivers in Nigeria are the Sokoto, Yobe, Hedejia, and Kaduna in the north and the Ogun, Osun; Owena, Osse, Anambra, Imo and Cross River in the south.

1.1.1 The Climatic Conditions

Although Nigeria lies wholly within the tropics, its climate varies from the typical tropical at the coast to sub-tropical further inland. There are two well-marked seasons: the rainy season, lasting from April to October, and the dry season, from November to March. It generally rains more in the South than in the North because of the high degree of humidity.⁷ The absolute maximum

⁵ Cf. Komolafe O., Kommunikationsproblem im Vielvölkerstaat Nigeria: Ein Beitrag zur zukünftigen Entwicklung des Landes auf der Grundlage dörflicher kultureller Identität. Wuppertal 1994, 9.

⁶ Cf. Crowder M., The Story of Nigeria. London: Faber and Faber, 1962, 20.

⁷ Cf. Diezemann E., Nigeria, 12.

temperature of the country in the coast areas of the south is 32°C (89.6°F), although the humidity can be as high as 95%. The climate further north is drier, with temperatures ranging from 12°C (53.6°F) to 36°C (96.8°F). During the rainy season, tropical thunderstorms are a periodic occurrence, especially in the coastal areas. But it is generally a period of cooler temperatures and more agreeable climate.

1.1.2 The Early History of Nigeria and its People

Nigeria, as a nation, is a product of the British colonial government dating from 1914. This does not mean that nothing pre-existed about the territories which make up the present-day Nigeria. As a political entity, Nigeria is a creation of European socio-political ambitions. Thanks to the Berlin Conference of 1884 under Bismarck, the country became a British territory and got its name in 1914 after the amalgamation of the then Northern and Southern Protectorates. However, it would be historically incorrect to assume that the people and tribes of these territories had little or no history before the boundaries were finally negotiated by Britain, France and Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.⁸

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with numbers close to 123,700 million people. It is endowed with vast and abundant natural and human resources. Nigeria is made up of more than 250 ethnic groups. Within these ethnic or language groups, there are different dialects. Members of each group are normally concentrated in one area, but many live now in different parts of the country and speak the language of their host.

Before their encounter with European explorers and merchants in the 15th century, the people of this sub-Saharan territory were a collection of different tribes, a co-existent number of great kingdoms that had well developed governments of their own. “Within its frontiers were the great kingdom of Bornu, with a known history of more than a thousand years: the Fulani Empire which for the hundred years before its conquest by Britain had ruled most of the savannah of Northern Nigeria.”⁹ Worthy of note were the kingdoms of Ife and Benin. “The Yoruba Empire of Oyo, which had once been the most powerful of the states of the Guinea Coast; the city states of the Niger Delta, which had grown in response to European demands for slaves and later palm oil; as well as the loosely organized Ibo peoples of the Eastern region and the small tribes of the plateau.”¹⁰ Though these territories were independent of each other,

⁸ Crowder M., *The Story of Nigeria*, 19.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

there existed some kind of commercial and cultural contacts between the component groups.

1.1.3 The Economic Resources and Political Development of Nigeria

Nigeria is rich in both mineral and natural resources. It is endowed with such mineral/natural resources as petroleum, columbite, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc and natural gas as well as groundnut, wool, millet, cocoa, palm oil, and cashew. Other products include: guinea corn, beans, onions, maize, yams, sweet potatoes and cassava. Northern Nigeria is known for cattle-rearing. With the discovery of crude oil in the riverine territories, petroleum has turned out to be Nigeria's main source of internal and external revenues. In fact, petrol "generates over 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange and over 50 percent of the Federal government's revenue."¹¹ As a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Nigeria has been rated as the fifth largest oil-producing country in the world.

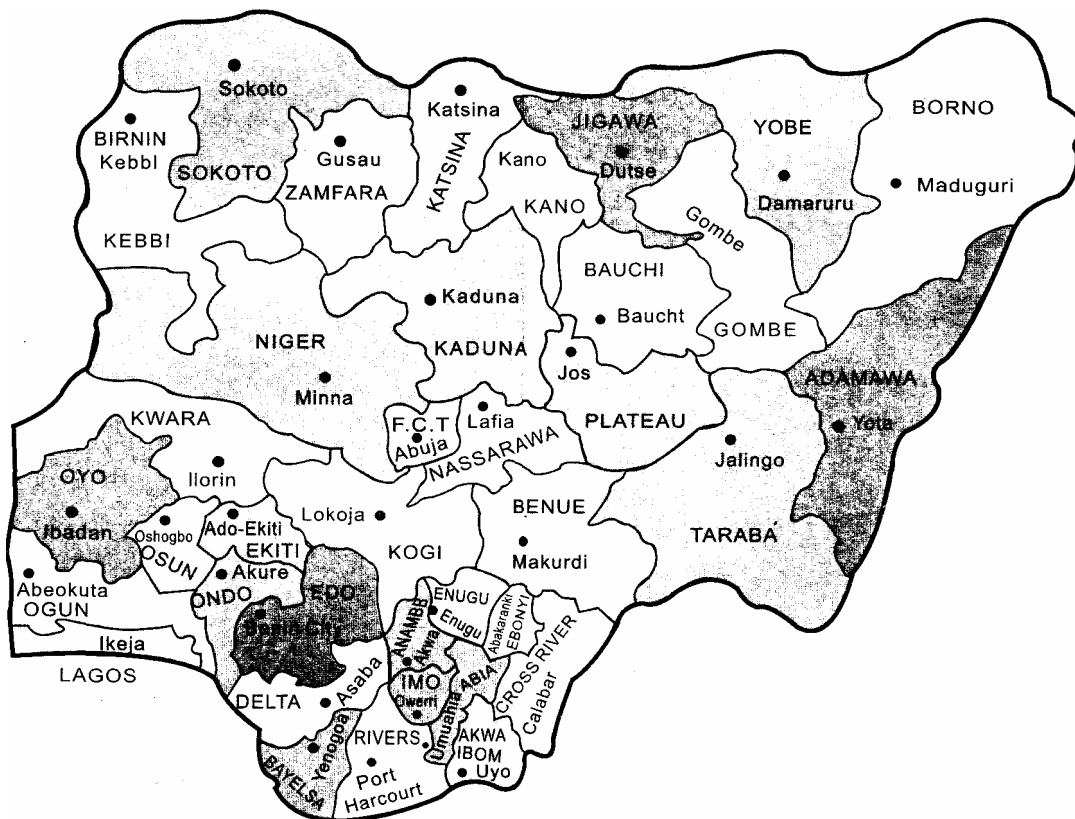
From the political point of view, the successful exploration of the Niger river and its surrounding territories in 1830 paved the way for the formal introduction of the political, commercial and religious (missionary) activities of the British in Nigeria. As a political entity, Nigeria is an amalgamation of many unrelated protectorates. The acquisition of Nigeria took place as follows: "Britain acquired Lagos in 1861 and Yorubaland in 1893. In 1900, the two protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were formed out of the R.N.C and Niger Coast Protectorate territories. In 1906, the protectorate of Southern Nigeria was integrated with the colony and protectorate of Lagos. In 1914, these were amalgamated with the Northern Nigeria protectorate to form the colonial Nigeria"¹² under the leadership of Lord Lugard.

Nigeria attained the status of an independent nation on 1st October, 1960, and was divided into three main administrative regions: the Hausa-Fulani group in the North, the Yoruba in South-western and the Igbo in South-eastern Nigeria. It became a republic in 1963.

¹¹ Saro-Wiwa K., *A Month and a Day. A Detention Diary*. New York: Penguin Books 1995, 162.

¹² Ozigbo Ikenga R.A. *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria 1885-1931. A Study in Colonial Evangelism*. Onitsha: Etukokwu Pub. (NIG) Ltd., 1988,

The Federal Republic of Nigeria: Its States and Capitals



It has, however, not been entirely rosy for the country since her attainment of independent status. No sooner had it gained independence than feelings of animosity, tribalism, nepotism and corruption dominated her entire national social and political life. Consequently, the military felt that the civilians were incompetent in the act of governance. So they planned and executed the first military *coup-d'état* on 15th January, 1966. Hence, the country passed for the first time into the hands of military rulers. Military governors were installed in the four regions of the country including Lagos with Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi (an Igbo) as the first military head of state. The military take-over of government did not help matters. It exposed the country and its inhabitants to greater problems. The coup claimed the lives of some prominent politicians from the North and West, for example, Sir Ahmadu Bello, who was the Sardauna of Sokoto, the then Prime Minister of the Country, Alhaji (Sir) Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Chief Francis Okotiebo in the West. The murder of these northern politicians gave rise to violent riots and the killing of southerners in the North, especially those from the South-East. The result of this killing was

the expulsion of all southerners from the North.¹³ The news of this killing spread to the South and left the people with doubt about the future of the country. On July 29, 1966 there was a second military coup which installed Lt. -Col. Yakubu Gowon as the military ruler of the republic. This coup was followed by the news of further killings of southerners in the North.¹⁴ Indeed, it was exactly the ill-treatment meted out to the Southerners, especially to the Igbo, coupled with feelings of marginalization and the neglect of the Igbo in the distribution of the nation's amenities, that directly gave rise to the attempt of the Easterners, under the leadership of the military administrator, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, to secede from Nigeria.¹⁵

One of the first things Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon did on assumption of office was to divide Nigeria into twelve federal states in order to destabilise the Igbo. The inhuman treatment, massacres, denial and abuses of human rights and equal justice meted out to people of Eastern Nigeria, forced the elders, chiefs and representatives of all the twenty provinces of Eastern Nigeria to mandate the governor Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu to declare, at the earliest practicable date, Eastern Nigeria a free, sovereign and independent state with the name and title of the REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA and to do whatever was appropriate to protect the lives, property and rights of the Easterners.

It was the refusal of the Nigerian government to recognise this secession that gave rise to the only and costliest civil war in the country, which lasted from 1967-1970. This war affected both sides of the warring parties. In fact, it can be said that it was a war "in which the nation's human and natural resources were abused, wasted, vandalized, impoverished and even desecrated. It was [also] a war with its train of arrogance, callousness, corruption, mercenaries, agony, refugees, starvation, kwashiorkor and death."¹⁶ The war came to an end in 1970. With this development the country was faced with the problems of reconciliation, rehabilitation of war victims, and reconstruction. One of the outstanding solutions to these challenges was the propagating of the 'One Nigeria philosophy'. This philosophy was promoted through the establishment of a National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the entire country by decree No.

¹³ Cf. Madiebo A. A., *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War*. Enugu: Fourth Dimensions Pub., 1980, 41.

¹⁴ Nwosu V. A., *The Civil War: A Time of Great Trial*, in: Obi C.A et al., (ed.) *Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*. 357- 392, 358.

¹⁵ Cf. Odey J. O. *Nigeria: Search for Peace and Social Justice. The Relevance of the Philosophy and Theological Foundations of the Nonviolent Resistance of Martin Luther King, Junior*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1997, 26.

¹⁶ Makozi A. O., *Contemporary Trends in the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, in: A. O Makozi /G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Nigeria: Macmillan, 1982, 90.

24 in 1973 under the General Yakubu Gowon military regime.¹⁷ This was a time when the government felt a need to re-establish Nigeria as a united, strong and self-reliant nation after the civil war.

The NYSC has the following goals:

- (a) to help generate in our people commonities and further national cohesion 'through the broadening of awareness, interaction and exposure of the country's youth to various peoples, cultures and parts of the country;
- (b) to instil discipline, patriotism and loyalty in the youth;
- (c) and to direct them share national experiences and encourage labour mobility.¹⁸

Besides the above objectives, the NYSC programme provides Nigerian higher school students the opportunity to serve the nation a year after their graduations from the universities. They are sent to various localities, irrespective of their states of origin, to work for national unity, integration and reconciliation. In this way, it was hoped that the youths would help, later on, as leaders to conduct affairs with greater sensitivity and concern for national interests.¹⁹

In 1995, Nigeria was further divided into nineteen states by Major-General Murtala Mohammed's administration, in order to focus attention on the grievances of some territories which felt neglected during the distribution of national amenities.²⁰ General Ibrahim B. Babangida created new states during his regime. Presently, there are thirty-six administrative states, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. It has to be observed that these divisions have helped very little in the process of ensuring peace in the country. Instead, the arbitrary creation of states paves the way for boundary disputes, wars and rivalry among the different states that had existed together as members of one ethnic group. One of the major obstacles to stability in Nigeria is the incessant intervention of the military in the nation's political affairs. Record has it that out of the forty years of Nigeria's independence the military has ruled the country for twenty five years. With their corrupt and anti-democratic strate-

¹⁷

¹⁸ Nwoye A., A New Programme of Political Education in Nigeria for National Unity and Cohesion, in: Okafor F. U., (ed.) *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub., 1997, 255-283, 269. The programme of NYSC was updated by Decree 51 of 16th June, 1993 with the objective of developing the spirit of selfless service among Nigerian Youths and to establish oneness among Nigerians irrespective of ethnic, cultural and social background.

¹⁹ Nwoye A., A New Programme of Political Education in Nigeria, 269.

²⁰ Komolafe O, *Kommunikationsprobleme in Vielvölkerstaat Nigeria*, 21.

gies, they have despotically ruled the country without the slightest readiness to institute a democratic system. The following statement assesses the attitude of some military rulers in Nigeria. “General Yakubu Gowon, who ruled Nigeria for nine years, was unwilling to step down for a democratic government until he was toppled. Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, the man who led the gang that aborted the Second Republic in December 1983, was in power for almost two years, and yet he had no plan to return Nigeria to democratic rule. After him came a man called Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. If Buhari was a disaster, Babangida was a calamity. He annulled the country’s freest election which was held on June 12, 1993, and won by Chief M. K. O. Abiola. It was the same Babangida that prepared the way for General Abacha²¹ whose regime, like those of his predecessors, was characterised by corruption and notorious governmental inefficiency, as well as a harshly repressive military dictatorship. His repressive rule turned Nigeria into an international pariah. But between the reign of Babangida and Abacha, Chief Ernest Shonekan, a civilian, was handed the scepter of leadership in what Babangida described as ‘stepping aside but not out of politics’.

The death of the dictator General Abacha on June 8, 1998 was not only a sign of relief to the entire nation but prepared the stage for General Abdusalami Abubakar, who, at the outset of his government, promised the nation that he would hand over to a democratically elected government within a space of one year. He inaugurated an electoral commission and charged it with this responsibility. This transition programme culminated with the election of the retired General Olusegun Obasanjo on 27th February 1999 as the incumbent president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The political system presently practised in Nigeria is the three-tier democracy in which the government exists on three levels: the federal or central level, the state level and the local government level. The executive is headed by an elected President who runs the day to day activity of the government and executes the laws passed by the Legislature. The Legislature, charged with law-making, is made up of two bodies: The Upper House or Senate and the Lower House or the House of Representatives. Each of the States of the Federation also has the three arms of government, although its legislative arm is unicameral, (only one law-making chamber). The three arms of government have separate powers granted them by the constitution, which was put in place to regulate their activities. The country’s legal system is based on English common law, Nigerian customs and traditions and Islamic Sharia Law.

²¹ Babarinsa D., *The End of the Beginning*, in: *Tell* (Nigeria’s Independent Weekly Magazine), No. 24, June 14, 1999, 3).

1.1.4 Cultural and Religious Elements in the life of the People

Culture refers to everything that makes a people, race or country what it is. In other words, it is “the sum total of what an individual acquires from his society- those beliefs, customs, artistic norms, food habits, and crafts which came to him not by his own creative activity but as a legacy from the past, conveyed by formal or informal education.”²² Nigeria is a multicultural country. In most cases the cultures differ from one state to another.²³ This can be seen from the diversity of languages that are spoken in the country and the traditions and ways of approaching religion in the various segments of the country. Hence, one can speak of Hausa culture and mentality, Yoruba culture, Igbo culture, Efik culture and so on. Although these cultures are in some sense different from each other, there exists some basic uniformity in all cultural systems. Hence, among the African [Nigerian] peoples, we find in one form or the other theistic beliefs, manistic cults, witchcraft notions, interdictions and supernatural sanctions, magical practices, etc. but the philosophy of each has its own special character in the way in which, among that people, these ideas are related to one another.²⁴

1.1.4.1 Languages

As a multiethnic country Nigeria has many languages. Each ethnic group has its own language and symbols. According to available data, there are about two hundred and fifty languages and several dialects spoken in the country. Although the variety of customs, language and social organisation in Nigeria is bewildering, they can be classified into a number of linguistic groups which give a fairly good index of their wider cultural affiliations.²⁵ The “majority of Nigeria’s inhabitants speak one of the large group of languages defined as the Niger-Congo family. This family is made up of other sub-families, one of the most important of which, as far as Nigeria is concerned is the Kwa sub-family.”²⁶ Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo languages, which are the most prominent languages spoken, belong to this sub-family. The Ijaw people speak a language that bears no immediate relationship to any other language in the Niger-Congo group, but it counts as a member of this family. Besides the languages that belong to the Niger-Congo family, there are others that have different roots. Languages like Ibibio and Efik, spoken by other inhabitants of Eastern Nigeria

²² Luzbetak L., *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, 134.

²³ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria 1885-1931*, 8.

²⁴ Cf. Ikenga-Metuh E., *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religions*. Onitsha: IMICO Pub. 1987, 21.

²⁵ Cf. Crowther M., *The Story of Nigeria*, 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

(Cross River group), are classified in the Cross-River group, which has been designated as the Central Branch. Besides these indigenous languages, English is generally spoken in the entire country as the lingua franca. It is the basic language used for teaching in schools and universities. Communication in rural areas, where the people don't possess a good command of English, is facilitated through the medium of pidgin-English in the South and the Arabic language in Northern Nigeria.

1.1.4.2 Traditions

Tradition here refers to the handing down of information, beliefs, or customs from one generation to another.²⁷ In the Nigerian/African context, tradition cannot be discussed with reference to the people's customs, cultures and religion, because they intertwine each other. Tradition in Nigeria is made up of the following elements: respect for the sacred (animate and inanimate), a sense of ritual and love for music and festivities. Other aspects include hospitality towards each other, strangers and visitors, as well as communal solidarity and respect for life in general. Nigerians are radically traditional, both in their ways of thinking and in their attitudes towards life. They try to preserve and protect their traditional identity from whatever poses threats to its continuation.

1.1.4.3 Education

Discussion on education in Nigeria does not restrict itself to mere formal education but extends to informal systems of formation already embedded in the socio-cultural, political and intellectual formation of people before their contact with the western-formal system of education introduced by European explorers, merchants and missionaries in Nigeria at the end of the 18th century.

In comparison to the western-formal education, Nigerians impart information or knowledge through various informal means. These means include myth, legends, tales, music, folklore, proverbs, names riddles, prayers, formulae of invocation, blessings or curses.²⁸ In most cases children learn intuitively by observing their parents' routine activities. Mention has to be made of the training imparted for various initiations, especially into adulthood and/or age-grade.

In most parts of Nigeria, especially in south-eastern part of the country (Igbo territory), traditional education was conducted through stories of the clan and its totem tortoise, which are the epitome and symbol of Igbo wisdom. Moonlit compounds served as classrooms. The customs, traditions and exploits of

²⁷ See this definition in Wesber's New Encyclopedic Dictionary. Cologne 1993, 1100.

²⁸ Ikenga-Metuh E., Comparative studies of African Traditional religions. Onitsha: Imico Pub., 1987, 30.

eponymous heroes formed the contents of the instruction. The knowledge communicated through this traditional method gave rise to the traditional cultural recognition achieved through such accomplishments as *di ochi* (the master wine tapper) *di-ike* (the master of strength and therefore the strong and able one) *di-mkpa* (the master of emergency, the one who is never embarrassed by the unexpected) *di mgba* (the master wrestler, the one on whose shoulders rests the responsibility for the honour of the village during the village competitions) etc. Not everybody was considered a *dibinu?* (master of the household) or *ezeji* (king of yams) nor was every youth an *okolobia* or *agb?gh?bia*. One had to merit these qualities. Besides the traditionally merited ‘doctorates’ in our traditional schools, there were equivalents of honorary doctorates awarded at festivals called to celebrate the enhancement of riches. *Ogbu Inyinya* was the horse killer as distinguished from the *Ogbu-efi*, the cattle slayer. There were also the *Ogbuagu*, the killer of the lion who proved by his ability to destroy the wild enemy that terrorised the neighbourhood; the *Ojiri ukwu zobu nchi*, the one who tramples the wild cat to death, etc. The *Ogbumma* is the irascible striker with the knife etc. Igbo education policy, traditionally, promoted achievement and recognised merit.²⁹

Formal education was introduced into Nigeria with the encounter of the inhabitants of Nigeria with European explorers and missionaries along the Nigerian coasts. The various Christian missionaries to Nigeria attached great importance to western education as a means of realising their missionary objectives in their missions. Hence, they initiated the idea of literary education. They built schools and urged parents to allow their wards to be trained in these schools. At the beginning it was difficult for the natives to accept this offer. Hence, they only allowed their stubborn or lazy children, or slaves, to join the missionaries and be trained by them. It is important to observe at this juncture that it was these trained slaves or stubborn children that first benefited from the fruits of western education.

1.1.4.4 Religions

Nigeria has three main religions today: (African) Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. Traditional religion was the only religion known to the people before their contact with Islam and Christianity. Traditional religion is mainly practised in the South-western part of the country, while Islam and Christianity are the predominant religions in the North and the South-eastern Nigeria respectively. Opinion has it that fifty percent of the country’s population are Muslims while Christians and traditional religionists make up the remaining thirty five and fifteen percents of the population respectively.

²⁹ Cf. Obi C. A., Bishop Shanahan: Missionary for Africa, in. AFER x-349; 335.

The presence of these religions in Nigeria has given rise to a series of unhealthy relationships and religious intolerance among their members. The short history of the nation as an independent country is dominated by moments of religious disturbances and wars, especially between Moslems and Christians in the Northern part of the country, in spite of the efforts made to insure peaceful coexistence among the various followers of these religious bodies. A newspaper report in Nigeria once described the unhealthy relationship between Moslems and Christians in the country and its effect in these words: "Christianity and Islam, two dominant religions in today's Nigeria, have historically (and perennially) waged destructive 'holy war', and have continued to polarize millions of human beings. This historic antagonism makes religion such a dangerous flame for Nigerians."³⁰ Co-existence between these religions and African Traditional Religion (ATR) has not been smooth. This unhealthy relationship stemmed from the prejudice of both Islamic and Christian missionaries that Africans have no religion. They never recognised that Traditional Religion was the authentic way the natives worshipped God. Rather, they saw their mission as converting them at all costs from "paganism" to Christianity or to Islam.

1.1.4.4.1. Traditional Religion

The aphorism that Africans are notoriously religious³¹ explains the religious nature of Nigerians before the introduction of Islam and Christianity. Traditional religion exists side by side with other religions in Nigeria. Hence, it is still a living religion. In spite of the fact that there are no scriptures, traditional religion is written in the lives of the community as well as in the hearts and minds of the adherents.³² Religion is enshrined in the customs, traditions, culture, festival, myths, legends, proverbs and saying of the people. Every aspect of people's lives is imperceptibly imbued with it and expresses it in their speech, habits and patterns of thinking and understanding of the events of life around them.³³

Traditional Nigerian society has its belief system and an elaborate religious worship organised around it. However, the beliefs have not been systematised into a

³⁰ The LEADER, Editorial: *Nigeria and Religion*, 33, (1991) 1 as quoted by Nwaigbo F. Church as Communion: An African Christian Perspective. Theology of the Local Church in the Light of the Second Vatican Council. Frankfurt am Main, 1995, 228.

³¹ Mbiti J. S., *African Religion and Philosophy*. Heinemann: London 1970, 1.

³² Cf. Ikenga-Metuh E., *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religion*, 38.

³³ *Ibid.*

body of dogma a pointer to its misunderstanding. It is not infrequently that we hear it glibly stated that Africans have no clear concept of God.³⁴

Some of the beliefs in traditional Nigerian society are like beliefs in other traditional religions of Africa, but some are completely different. In the midst of the myriads of beliefs of a people, certain elements constitute the core of the belief systems. Hence, traditional religion in Nigeria comprises of “the concept of God, man, and the world. These three elements are found in almost every religion and the interplay of each of these elements in practical terms underscores the viability and relevance of such theological make-up. For religious man, the world always presents a supernatural valence, that is, it reveals a modality of the sacred. Every cosmic fragment is transparent, its own mode of existence shows a particular structure of being and hence of the sacred.”³⁵

1.1.4.4.2. Islam in Nigeria: A Brief Historical Review

Islam is believed to have been introduced into Hausaland between 1350 – 1400 but it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that an Islamic presence was firmly established.³⁶ Kano was the first Hausa state to embrace the religion with the arrival of Muslim missionaries from Mali during the reign of Sarki (King) Ali Yagi.³⁷ At that time, the natives of Kano and other Hausas were adherents of traditional religion. However, they had established a central government and social structure. The Muslim missionaries imposed themselves on the Sarki, forcing him to accept Islam and to allow Islamic prayer regulations to be regularly observed in the city as they entered Kano. The acceptance of the religion and the subsequent building of mosques and appointment of Muslim officials, as well as the observance of Muslim prayer rituals, did not make Islam take root in Kano until the reign of the son of the Sarki. At the beginning it spread informally as a set of ideas about God and worship, accommodated within the converts’ monarchical and social customs. It was rather like a fashion associated with the courts and military, mercantile and literate classes. It was during the reign of Rumfa in the second half of the fifteenth century that Islam found foot in Kano with the visit and settlement of Muslim scholars and merchants. Islam was very slow to take root among the Hausa, for often the rulers and their subjects went back to their old pagan ways. It was only in the

³⁴ Cf. Idowu E. B., God, in: D. Kwesi and P. Ellingworth (eds.). *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1969, 17-29, 21.

³⁵ Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and The Profane*. New York: Harper Torch Books 1961, 138

³⁶ Okike B. O., *The Practice of Sharia in Nigeria: a Democratic Secular State*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 2000, 48.

³⁷ Cf. Onwubiko K. B. C., *History of West Africa*. (Book One A.D.1000-1800) Onitsha: African Educational Pub. 1967, 41.

19th century, during the Usman dan Fodio's Jihad³⁸, that Islam became deeply rooted in most of Hausaland.³⁹ Through the Jihad,⁴⁰ Usman dan Fodio tried to win the natives over from the level of personal beliefs to one of communal law. This was an attempt to shake off the remnants of traditional customs and to create a theocratic empire where Islamic laws and practices would prevail.⁴¹

1.1.4.4.3. The Christian Religion

Christianity is one of the famous established religions in Nigeria. Its introduction to Nigeria has two historical stages in the history of the Nation. The first stage refers to the Portuguese's attempts between the 15th and 17th centuries to evangelise the natives of the kingdoms of Benin and Itsekiri in Warri. This attempt failed to achieve its objectives and left nothing in the sands of history to its memory. The second historical stage of establishment of the Christian religion was towards the end of 18th century with the end of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the return of freed-slaves of Yoruba origin to Nigeria. These slaves, as we have noted above, were instrumental to the re-introduction of Christianity in that century after the failure of the first attempts by Portuguese priests. These slaves, who had become Christians in their various countries of servitude, came back to Nigeria and requested the Christian missionaries in Sierra Leone to send them missionaries to attend to their spiritual needs. Since this Chapter of our research deals with the theme of The Method of Evangelisation in Nigeria, we shall briefly make a pause here with the intention of coming back to it later. Meanwhile, let us have a look at the Igbo People and their environment before the encounter with the Christian missionaries in the 19th century.

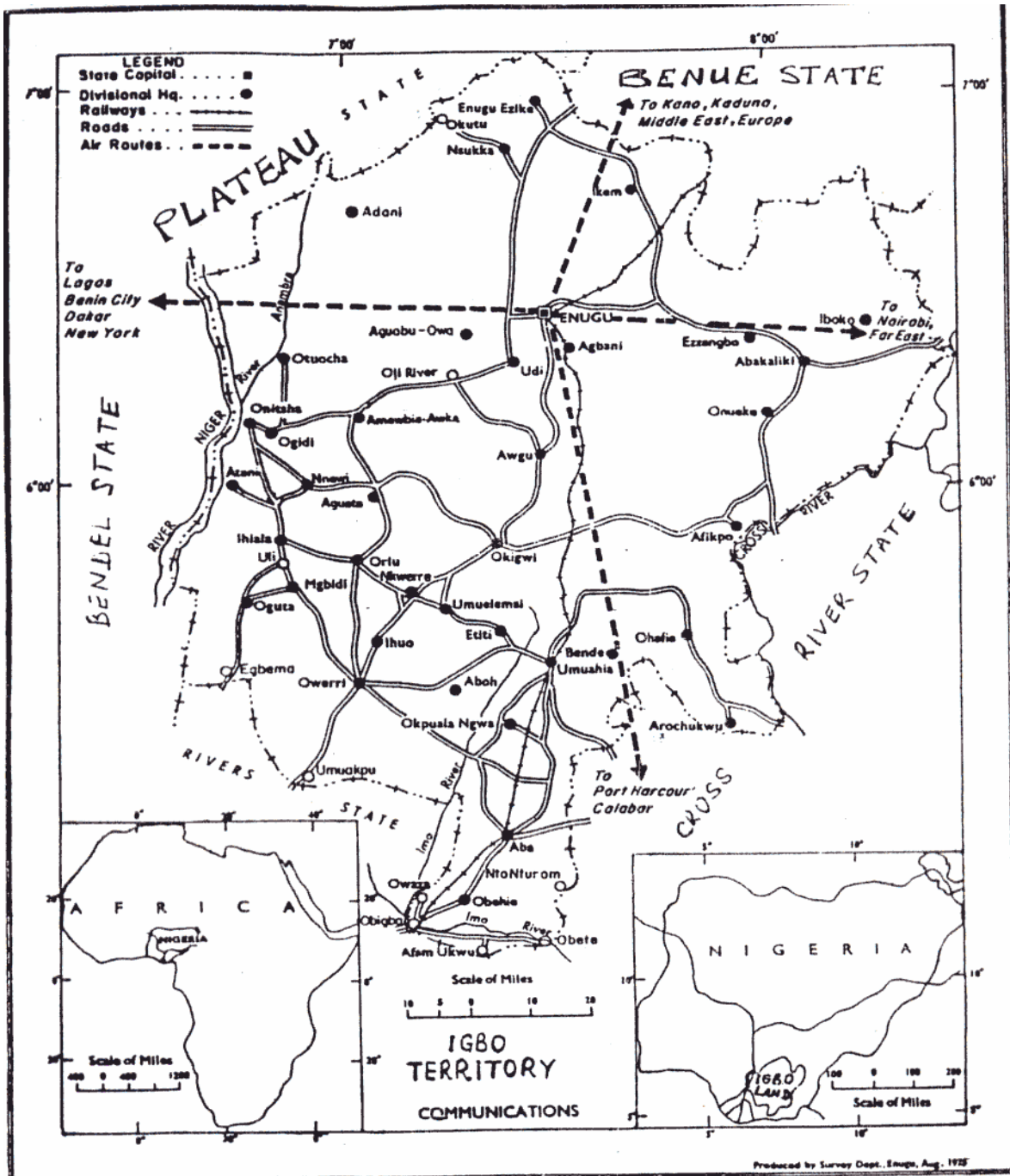
³⁸ Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817) was a member of the learned Torodbe-Fulani clan who identified with the *Quadiriyya*. He gathered a group of Fulani missionaries through whom he declared a jihad (Islamic war) in the sense of a social and religious revolution against the Hausa kings especially those who refused to accept Islam. It was his intention to establish a purer form of Islam in all Hausa states He conquered these states in 1810 with exception of Maguzawa people who because of their attachment to their traditional religion refused conversion to Islam.

³⁹ Cf. Onwubiko K. B. C., History of West Africa, 41.

⁴⁰ „The Arabic word *Jihad* literally means ‘striving’ in the way of Allah. Following the teaching of Muhammed himself, Muslims distinguish two types of jihad: 1) the Greater Jihad, which is the struggle of the ego, the soul against self interest, 2) the Lesser Jihad, for righteousness against tyranny and oppression, which involves military striving to counter violent threats to the Islamic community by non-Muslims.“ Rasmussen L., Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa. The Case of Northern Nigeria and Tanzania Compared. London: British Academic Press 1993, 14.

⁴¹ Cf. Ajayi J. F. A. Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891 The Making of a New Elite. London: Longmanns, Green and Co Ltd. 1965, 1

1.2. The Igbo Territory



1.2.1. Geographical Location of Igboland

The Igbo constitute one of the three most populous ethnic groups (the Hausa-Fulani tribe in the north and the Yorubas of the South West Nigeria) in Nigeria. Geographically viewed, the Igbo territory lies in the South East of Nigeria between the parallels of 6° to 8.5° and half degrees east longitude and 4.5° to 7°

north latitude. It is bounded on the North by the Igala and Tiv, on the South by the Ibibio, Ijaw, and Ogoni, on the West by the Bini and Isoko and on the East by the Ekoi peoples.⁴²

1.2.1. The Term “Igbo”

The term ‘Igbo’ refers to both the aborigines of this territory, their language and their culture. It can be used as a noun or as an adjective depending on the context in which one needs it. Hence, one can speak of Igboland, Igbo people or Igbos, Igbo language, etc.

The term is spelt “*I-g-b-o*”. The anglicised aberration “*I-b-o*” was adopted by foreign missionaries, colonial masters and non-Igbo authors who could not pronounce the double consonants „*gb*“ with ease. Other corrupt forms of the term as used by colonialists and foreign anthropologists include “*Eboe*”, “*Hebos*”, “*Ebus*”. This accounts for the differences of orthography in Igbo literature. I shall be adopting the correct form “*I-g-b-o*” in this work. But for the sake of fidelity to original texts or works, I shall respect the authors’ designation in the various citations where they appear.

1.2.2. Who are the Igbo?

Several traditions have tried to explain the origin of the Igbo People. One of these traditions links the Igbo People culturally to the biblical Jews.⁴³ The similarities which exist between the Igbo and Jewish cultures are proofs of certain relationship between both races. Another hypothesis locates the origin of the Igbo in Egypt. In his study of law and authority of a Nigerian tribe, C. K. Meek observed that the Igbo “appear to have lived an isolated existence ..., no purpose would be served by engaging in speculations about ancient cultural contacts, such as [...] the prevalence of sun worship, of reforms of mummification, and a dual organization points to some distant connection with Ancient Egypt.”⁴⁴

Another theory about the origin of the Igbo race holds that the Igbo must have either lived near, or have had close association with, the Semitic races, but the successive waves of invasion from the North-East of Asia down through Egypt must have driven them into their present geographical location. The effect of

⁴² Cf. Arinze F. A., *Sacrifice in Ibo religion*. Ibadan: University Press 1970, 1.

⁴³ Cf. Uchendu V. C., *Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*. New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston 1965, 3.

⁴⁴ See Quotation in Iloanusi O. A., *Myths of the Creation of Man and Origin of Death in Africa: A Study in Igbo Traditional Culture and Other African Cultures*. Frankfurt am main 1984, 68.

these waves of migration was such that they (the Igbo) were borne onwards until finally they came to settle where they are found today.⁴⁵

Although the aforementioned legends have tried to say something with regard to the origin of the Igbo people, the explanations have been generally rejected in recent times for their lack of historical and scientific evidence. What is rather gaining more acceptance is the theory of both their external and internal origins. It proposes that the Igbo originated from the beginning from within the territory which they now inhabit, with [...] possible movements and migrations due to both internal conflicts and natural disasters.⁴⁶

Elisabeth Isichei made a remarkable contribution to the long-standing argument on the origin of the present inhabitants of Igboland. She contends that the people must have come from the Niger confluence.⁴⁷ Her historical account of the inhabitants of Igboland is very impressive. According to this account, people have been living in Igboland for the last five thousand years, since the dawn of human history. One of the most notable facts of Igbo history is its length and continuity. Igbo began to diverge from other related languages, such as Edo and Yoruba, perhaps four thousand years ago; 4500 years ago, people in Nsukka were making pottery which was similar in style to that still made in the area today. “The first cradles of human habitation in the Igbo area were probably the Cross River and the Anambra Valley-Nsukka escarpment. In each of these areas later Stone-Age sites have been excavated. A rock shelter at Afikpo was first inhabited about five thousand years ago, by people who made rough red pottery and a variety of stone tools – hoes, knives, ponders and so on. Excavations at the University of Nsukka uncovered the pottery, 4500 years old, mentioned above, and Ibagwa, a town in the Nsukka area, has a rock shelter which contains both ancient pottery and tools of stone”.⁴⁸ One thing is clear in all these postulations on Igboland and its inhabitants: the people must have been made up of a mixture of aborigines and people (migrants) from the Northern and Western parts of the country, or beyond.

1.2.3. Igbo Cultural and Political Organisation

From the political point of view, the Igbo is not as organised as other tribes in Nigeria or in West Africa who had an structured monarchy.⁴⁹ This is confirmed

⁴⁵ Cf. Basden G. S., *Niger Ibos*. London 1966, 414.

⁴⁶ Cf. Edeh E., *Towards Igbo metaphysics*. Chicago: Loyola University Press 1985, 14.

⁴⁷ Isichei E., *A History of the Igbo People*, 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ In contrast to other regions in Nigeria which had well-established political structures, for example the ancient Kingdoms of Benin and Itsekiri, the Yoruba Empire of Ife, Kanem-Bornu Empire,

in the famous Igbo adage “*Igbo enwe eze*” (Igbo have no king). Much of the early history of the Igbo people is shrouded in mystery and legend. However, some concrete information about their history and culture in the ninth century A. D. has been acquired from archaeological findings in 1936 at Igbo-Ukwu, a small village near Onitsha.⁵⁰ The bronze⁵¹ figures there are testimony to a highly developed culture in ancient Igbo country.

In line with the idea of *Igbo enwe eze*, it is commonly accepted that the people had no kingdoms or powerful city-states. Until the nineteenth century, they lived in self-governing and “democratic” villages. In spite of this fact, the Igbo political culture is democratic in nature.⁵²

Democracy in the Igbo context should not be understood in the western political sense. This democracy rests on the fact that the people’s lives are governed by the philosophy of ‘*Igwe-bu-ike*’ (unity is strength).⁵³

The Igbo “promote justice as a way of life, *egbe bere ugo bere*; “*ndu miri ndu azu*”; *onye anwuna ma ibe ya efula*. Through “*ijide ugu*” they foster uprightiness of life. “*Ikwuba aka ?t?*” or “*aka idi ?cha*” is upheld among ndi

etc. Igbo, as an ethnic group, had no kingdoms originally. Exception is given here to the people of Onitsha who, under the influence of Bendel, originally had an Igwe’s court for the Obi of Onitsha.

⁵⁰ Cf. Isichei E., *A History of the Igbo People*. London: Macmillan 1976, 10.

⁵¹ Ibid, 12 “The excavations revealed the hitherto unsuspected existence of a brilliant Igbo bronze age. [...] They reflect an astonishing level of technical virtuosity, and a delight in intricate craftsmanship for its own sake. There is one portrayal of the human face, but in general the craftsmen of Igbo-Ukwu specialised in duplicating objects from the natural world, sometimes realistically, sometimes with surrealistic stylisation, and sometimes with a realistic shape but ornate surface decoration”.

⁵² Cf. Anene J. C., *Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906. Theory and Practice of Colonial Protectorate*. Cambridge: University Press 1966, 12.

⁵³ The principle of *Igwe-bu-ike* is an important factor in Igbo socio-political organisation. It implies that power belongs to the people and this power is only realisable when the people are united. The strength of this principle is evident in the organisation of “*nzuko-ndi-Obodo*”. Here every delegate has his seat and has the right to air his view. It is only after consultations and deliberations have been satisfactorily completed that the assembly will take its final decision. Writing on the above principle, Adibe makes the following observations: „According to the Igbo proverb ‘a tree does not make a forest’ [...]. The community owns the individual and the individual owns the community. Thus if a man digs a grave and wants to bury himself alone without assistance, he might succeed partially by covering some parts of his body but his arm must hang above the grave. This means that man must always be community conscious [...] because community is their strength.“ (Adibe G.E.M., *The Crisis of Faith and Morality of the Igbo Christians of Nigeria*. Onitsha: Tabansi Press Ltd, 1992, 15).

Igbo”.⁵⁴ Judging from the democratic way of life and settlement of disputes among the Igbo people, C. Achebe argues vehemently against those who have the opinion that ndi Igbo cannot be democratic:

Onye na-asi na democracy adir? Igbo mma agh?tar? Igbo nke onaghota democracy. Onwe ife di mkpa ka obodo kwue, amaa egugo, umu-nwoke nine onu lugolu n’okwu agarube n’ilo obodo; ekwue okwu afu n’iru ora.⁵⁵

Although political authority was not centralised and power was rarely concentrated in any one individual no one wielded political authority as a full-time occupation. The political culture and proceedings in community gatherings were purely democratic, although authority was weighted in favour of the elders and men of wealth and influence (title holders and members of ekpe, ekpo or ?k?nk?) because it was presumed that, as title holders, such calibre of people will defend the laws and ethics of the society (Omenala). The holders of authority were leaders rather than rulers. What obtained was direct village democracy.⁵⁶

The Igbo political process allowed every adult male to have his say. He could, if he wished, participate actively at all levels of government. The male elders, especially, the various representatives of the families during village assembly (“*Nzuk? ndi Obodo*” or “*?gbako ndi Igbo*”) constitute the board of consultants for the traditional leader “*Eze*” or “*Igwe*”. The people place confidence in the judgement of the traditional leader and his council because they endeavour to deliver just judgement.⁵⁷ Neighbours come together not only for work or recreation, but also to solve disputes. The neighbourhood court play an invaluable role in reconciling disputes, in settling quarrels and in imposing sanctions.⁵⁸ A local chief or headman (onye isi) might be responsible for the final decision taken, but this would only take place after due hearing and consultations with the parties involved. His judgement would have to reflect the opinions voiced in the free discussions which had proceeded it.

Through the extended family system, Igbo people organise themselves in small village compounds or communities with the eldest male members of the fami-

⁵⁴ Ugorji L. I. *The Memoirs of a Shepherd. On Social Problems and Theological Themes of the Day*. Snaap Press Ltd. 2000, 148.

⁵⁵ Achebe C., *Odenigbo 1999: Echi di Ime*. Owerri: Assumpta Press Nigeria 1999, 11-33, 31.

⁵⁶ Cf. Ozigbo I.R.A. *Igbo Catholicism: The Onitsha Connection*, 21-22.

⁵⁷ Cf. Ejiofor L. U., *Dynamism of Igbo Democracy*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd. 1981, 180 - 181.

⁵⁸ Cf. Shorter A., *African Social Justice*. Ibadan: Pastoral Institute Publications, n.d. 12.

lies (*pater familias*)⁵⁹ serving as both the mediators between them and the dead family ancestors as well as the representatives of the families and the kindred, on the village or clan level, during meetings on the external family and kindred levels. Among Igbo people, “the family is considered as fundamental. With their sense of the family and respect for life, “Ndi Igbo” love children and welcome them as gifts from God. For them “ndi [sic] bu isi”, “ndu ka aku” and life is respected from conception till natural death. Thus elderly parents and relations are cherished in the family.”⁶⁰

The basic Igbo political unit was a village group consisting of lineage segments from one ancestor. These localised lineage groups were structurally equal units.⁶¹ This family-village-community structure helps in the organisation of the people’s lives politically, socially and religiously. The running of the villages depends on the elders who represent the families.

Political process, in Igboland, was determined by agreed rules and consensus rather than by legalism and compulsion. The people always suspected personal authority and detested external dictation and tyranny. They met in assembly (Council) to transact the normal business of government (rule-making, rule-application and adjudication).⁶² Every male adult can attend personally, or by representative, at all the levels of government.

Igbo political society is divided into age-grades, which played significant roles in executing development projects in the communities. Each age grade had defined obligations in community service. The age grades were jealous of their reputation and so had means of controlling and disciplining unsatisfactory members.⁶³

⁵⁹ The eldest in every traditional Igbo family played leading role in the daily life of the entire Igbo family. They were fundamentally the representatives and mouthpiece of the ancestors. Their sacred staff of office, called the *ifia*, symbolised the authority of the ancestors and was venerated as the embodiment of the supernatural world and all the spirits of the ancestors. Each elder possessed domestic authority because he was the intermediary between the family and the ancestors, on whose good-will the members of the kindred set great store (cf. Anene J. C., Southern Nigeria in Transition, 13). The elders also played priestly roles in their families. It was their responsibility as the nearest people to the ancestors to offer rituals and the famous „*Ig? - ifia?*“ (pouring of libation) ceremonies on behalf of their families. They prayed for peace, good health, prosperity and life and good harvests on behalf of the entire family. In moments of tribulation they offer sacrifices (*aja*) to appease the ancestors and family gods.

⁶⁰ Ugorji L. I., *Memoirs of a shepherd*, 149.

⁶¹ Cf. Anene J. C., *Southern Nigeria in Transition*, 12.

⁶² Cf. Achebe C., *Echi di Ime*, 31.

⁶³ Isichei E., *A History of the Igbo People*, 22.

1.2.4. Economic Resources of the People

Farming is the chief occupation of the Igbo people. Hence, land serves as their greatest asset. As the people organise their lives in communities, ownership of land is often communal. Although the majority of the people are subsistent farmers, most of their products (for example, palm oil, kernel, yams, cassava/garri, etc.) are often transported from the rural villages to the cities for marketing. Lands are jointly owned by the community and each family especially male members of the community are entitled to have their own portion for cultivation. Apart from the cultivation of food crops, the Igbo is good at the breeding of livestock as well as hunting and fishing. Through these activities they run their families and cater for their needs. It is uncertain when agriculture was first practised among Igbo people, but the introduction of the iron industry and the production of iron tools like knives, hoes, axes etc. revolutionised farming in the region.⁶⁴

1.2.5. Igbo Traditional Religion and Culture

The Igbo, like other ethnic groups of Sub-Saharan Africa, are naturally religious. Their world-view is fundamentally a theocentric one. This is a world that is made up of belief in the supreme God (*Chukwu* or *Chineke*), minor deities, the ancestors, the guardian spirits (*chi*) and a host of other spiritual beings.⁶⁵

Religion has a prominent place in the lives of the people and it can be said that the Igbo people live their lives in an atmosphere that is essentially religious.⁶⁶ This was the original disposition of the people before they came into contact with the missionaries at the end of 19th century. It is wrong to say, in this connection, that Christianity met the people at a religious zero point, as the early missionaries to Igboland presumed. "Religion [so] permeates the social, economic, cultural and political life of the Igbo. It also embodies and symbolises their sense of community. It helps them to interpret their values, dreams, symbols and deep wishes."⁶⁷ The importance of religion in the life of the Igbo can further be appreciated from the fact that there is no department of life into which the Igbo-man/woman does not bring his or her religion.⁶⁸ In the follow-

⁶⁴ Cf. Ozigbo I.R.A. 23. Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria, 24.

⁶⁵ Ezeanya S. N., *The Traditional Igbo Family and the Christian Family*, in: *The Igbo Church and Quest for God*. B. C. Okolo (ed.), Nigeria: Pacific College Press Ltd., 1985, 53-72, 54.

⁶⁶ Cf. Mbiti J. C., *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1970, 1.

⁶⁷ Uka E. M., *Missionaries Go Home? A Sociological Interpretation of an African Response to the Christian Missions*. Frankfurt am Main, 1989, 57.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ezeanya S. N., *The Traditional Igbo Family and the Christian Family*, in: *The Igbo Church and Quest for God*. B. C. Okolo (ed.), Nigeria: Pacific College Press Ltd., 1985, 53-72, 54.

ing passages we shall be studying the various elements that determine Igbo traditional religion.

1.2.5.1. Belief in God

Belief in a supreme God is central to Igbo traditional religion. Although the usage of the word '*Chukwu*' varies amongst them there are fundamentally three names which are often used for God. These names are: *Chukwu*, *Chineke* and *Osebuluwa*. *Chukwu* and *Chineke* are made up of two component words: *Chukwu* (*Chi - Ukwu*) meaning the Great God; *Chineke* (*Chi - Na - Eke*) meaning the Spirit who creates. *Osebuluwa* on the other hand, means 'Lord' who upholds the world.⁶⁹ These names explain the various attributes of God in Igbo traditional religion. He is called *Chineke* in his creative role. The people call him *Chukwu* (the great or high god) to distinguish him from other minor gods. His is called *Chukwu Abiama* as the creator of everything, while as the pillar that supports the heaven he is called *Agalaba ji igwe*. The sky is regarded as his place of residence and people invoke his name as *Chi-di-n'elu* - God who lives above.⁷⁰ The Igbo people worship God most often through other divinities, who are his ministers and intermediaries between him and his people.

1.2.5.2. Divinities in Igbo traditional Religion

Besides belief in the supreme God, the Igbo people believe in minor divinities and deities which serve as intermediaries between God and the people. These divinities are regarded as direct messengers of the Supreme God. Hence, they are not of equal ranking with Him.

The Igbo differentiate between high and minor deities. The major deities⁷¹ include those whose influence extends over an entire clan and beyond. "[They] are regarded as the direct messengers of the Supreme God. They have a direct link as they are of the heavens or come from there. They include *Amadi ?ha*, (the god of thunder), *Anyanwu* (the sun god), *Igwe* (the sky god)."⁷² The minor deities are personifications of things that happen in people's daily lives. Their scope of influence is limited to the village and family. Examples include the *Agwu*, *Ala* (the earth goddess), *Ahuaj?ku* (yam goddess) and a host of other minor deities. The relationship between the deities and Chi is that they are all spirits (*Mmu?*). But the basic difference is that while Chi is very per-

⁶⁹ Iloanusi O. A., *Myths of the Creation of Man and the Origin of Death in Africa*, 79.

⁷⁰ Uchendu V. C., *The Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria*, 95.

⁷¹ Cf. Ikenga-Metuh E., *Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions*. Onitsha: IMICO Pub. 1987, 65.

⁷² Njoku R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 4.

sonal to every individual, the deities are more at the service of the community in general. In this way the deities range from a family deity to town deity and even regional deity. They can, however, be approached by individuals on several occasions.⁷³

In addition to the numerous beings that influence the lives and activities of the Igbo there is the belief that individual human beings have their personal (chi). This is a type of guardian spirit responsible for the fortune and misfortune of that person. For the Igbo, the personal chi guards a man from birth to the grave. When things are in one's favour, he is addressed as "*Onye chi ?ma*" but when the reverse is the case, he even joins others to call himself "*Onye chi ?j?*". When a man is threatened, he instinctively exclaims "*chim ekwela*" (My personal God, Don't allow this happen).⁷⁴

1.2.5.3. Belief in Ancestors: The Living-Dead⁷⁵

As invisible objects of Igbo religion, the ancestors occupy a prominent position in the religious life of the community as a link between the living and God. For the Igbo, human life does not terminate with the death of an individual. Death is only the bridge that links physical life to the non-physical life, otherwise known as *Ala mmu?* (the spirits' world). By ancestors, the Igbo people refer to the dead members of their families. They are believed to be perfect human beings, garlanded with achievements and courageous deeds, in whom full self-actualisation is balanced with heroic social service. That is why they are given such names as Masters, Titans, Patriarchs, the Fathers (*Nna anyi*), the Ancients (*Ndi Ichie*), Venerables (*Ndi bu Nze*), and Immortals.⁷⁶

Ancestors have special status in Igbo tradition because they are believed to have led their lives in accordance with the moral laws and standards of the society.⁷⁷ By conducting their lives properly they have attained the highest goal in life. This goal is their admittance into the abode of forbears in the spirit world from where they intercede for their relations still in the world. From their position in the spirit world, the ancestors act as representatives of their families. The ancestors take much pleasure in the affairs of their descendants. They are regarded rather as projections onto the supernatural sphere of the parental rela-

⁷³ Cf. Okorie C. P. A., Priesthood in Igbo Traditional Religion: Its Significance for the Christian Priesthood in Igboland. St. Ottilien 1998, 124.

⁷⁴ Njoku. R. A., The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria, 8.

⁷⁵ Cf. Ikenga-Metuh E., Comparative Studies of African traditional Religions, 66.

⁷⁶ Cf. Okorie C. P. A., Priesthood in Igbo Traditional religion, 129.

⁷⁷ Ikenga-Metuh E., Comparative Studies of African Traditional Religions. Onitsha: IMICO Pub. 1987, 147

tionship. This position accords them more divine power, through which they can intercede for their children before God.⁷⁸

Not every dead person qualifies to be venerated as an ancestor in Igboland. One must possess the qualities expected of him/her by the society. These qualities include Old-age, Offspring, Good moral life, Male children, Befitting funeral rite as well as Good death in some cases. Dying is, therefore, not only the prerequisite for attainment of the status of an ancestor in Igboland.⁷⁹

It is a common belief among the Igbo that wicked people, as well as those who lead worthless and fruitless lives before their death, are not counted as worthy members of the family. Another group of people that do not join the ancestor-group are those who die what the Igbo call *?nwu-?j?* (evil death). Such are people who committed suicide, who died from small-pox or leprosy, those killed by thunder (*amadi-?ha*) etc.⁸⁰ They are not accorded any funeral rites at their death; rather, they are thrown into the evil forests (*aj?-?hia*). It is this calibre of people that are believed to be responsible for the evils in human society. They torment members of their families as evil spirits until their souls are appeased through the performance of some sacrifices of atonement.

1.2.5.4. Belief in Magical Forces, Charms, Amulets and Medicine

Belief in the potency and force of magic, charms, amulets and medicine is one of the practical aspects of African/Igbo traditional religion.⁸¹ They believe that there are mystical forces that influence their lives. Hence the idea that “the universe is not static or ‘dead’: it is a dynamic, ‘living’ and powerful universe.”⁸² These forces derived their being and sustenance from God and have direct influence on human beings. Some human beings (*ndi dibia*) are bestowed with the powerful knowledge of how to tap, manipulate and use some of these forces.

The magical forces, charms, amulets and medicines can be used for two purposes: positively - for curative, protective, productive and preventive purposes; or negatively, - to cause ill-health, misfortune or simply to make people’s lives uncomfortable.⁸³ Through these forces, traditional doctors (*dibia*)

⁷⁸ Iloanusi O. A., *Myths of the Creation of Man and the Origin of Death in Africa*, 99.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

⁸⁰ Adibe G. E. M., *The Crisis of Faith and Morality of the Igbo Christians of Nigeria*. Onitsha: Tabansi Press 1992, 36.

⁸¹ Onwubiko O. A., *African Thought, Religion & Culture*. Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd. 1991, 62.

⁸² Mbiti J. S., *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Educational Books 1969, 203.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

and herbalists take care of people's problems. They also use such forces to control or counteract the obnoxious and implacable spirits or the evil machinations of witches, magicians and sorcerers who use their extra-ordinary powers to inflict harm on people and on society.

CHAPTER TWO

2. METHODS OF EVANGELISATION IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN NIGERIA

My aim in this Chapter is not to repeat the entire history of Christianity and Evangelisation in Nigeria, because these areas have been extensively examined by many Church historians. Since my subject is to examine the various methods adopted by the Christian missionaries in the process of the Evangelisation of Nigeria in general, and Igboland in particular, I shall be reviewing the missionary methods of missionary activities in the 15th-17th and 19th centuries in Nigeria respectively.

2.1. Introduction

The early history of Christianity in Nigeria could be divided into two major periods: the period of the Portuguese missionary activities (1480-1621) and that of the French/Irish missionaries in the 19th century. Since nothing was left of the missionary activities within this early period, we shall briefly restrict ourselves to the missionary work in the kingdoms of Benin and Itsekiri. Hereafter, I shall be dwelling more on missionary activities in the 19th century, with particular attention being paid to the missionary styles of the Anglican Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S.) and the Roman Catholic Missionaries (R.C.M). This will enable us to evaluate the various strides that the Christian faith has made in the course of its journey in Nigeria. Our attention shall specifically focus on the history of the Catholic Church. This cannot be treated in isolation. Hence, while discussing the history of Christianity in the entire country Nigeria and in Igboland in particular, our attention shall be focused mainly on the Church Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Mission respectively. Through the insights available from statistical data, the research shall help us appreciate, analyse and at the same time critically evaluate the impact of the Catholic missionary activities in Igboland.

2.1.1. The Portuguese Mission in Benin and Itsekiri (1480 - 1807)

Several attempts were made between 1480 and 1807 to establish the Christian religion in Nigeria. Prominent among these attempts were the activities of Portuguese explorers and missionaries in tropical Africa. The Portuguese kings had the double interest of championing the process of Christianity as well as controlling commercial affairs in the territories in which they found themselves. These interests were stimulated by the special privilege of “Patronage” or “Padroado” granted to Portugal and Spain by the Holy See to explore the regions of Africa, Asia and Brazil and to convert the natives to Christianity. First of all, one must remember that the Reformation did not affect Spain and Portugal in the way it affected northern Europe. Moreover, Spain and Portugal were seafarers, explorers, and colonizers were second to no nation. “The extension of the Cross with the Crown seemed quite natural to the Spaniards and Portuguese - in fact, it seemed providential. The Pope divided the lands that had been discovered, and those that would be discovered in the future, between these two countries. Portugal assumed responsibility for Africa, Asia, and Brazil; Spain, for Central and South America and the Philippine Islands.”⁸⁴ The

⁸⁴ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books 1988, 92. Portugal and Spain enjoyed this special favour from Rome because of their Catholicity during this period and their ability to resist the infiltration of the Reformation during this period. Hence, granting the right of patronage to be in charge of all

Portugueses and Spanish missions were organised within a structure termed the *padroado*, created in a series of papal bulls and briefs between 1452 and 1514 and dividing the new world between Portugal and Spain, as a reward for their loyalty to the Holy See. Through these bulls, Portugal and Spain acquired extra-ordinary authority and influence over the countries they were to evangelise.⁸⁵ It bestowed on them the “crown power of appointment of all beneficiaries in its overseas possessions, in return for financial support.”⁸⁶

Armed with the aforementioned papal authority, “the kings of Portugal, namely Alphonso, John II, Manuel and John III, launched their pioneering missionary and commercial enterprise in the kingdoms of Benin and Warri in Nigeria.”⁸⁷ The first convoy of Portuguese explorers and priests arrived at Benin in 1472 with the purpose of evangelising and trading. The priests in this convoy were not missionaries but mostly diocesan priests without special missionary zeal or charism, or special training in missionary work.⁸⁸ It is coincidental that the granting of the Bull of Demarcation tallied with the time when the kingdom of Benin was experiencing tribal wars and aggressions from their neighbouring territories. This made the king of Benin request from the king of Portugal the possibility of establishing a political alliance with his kingdom. Although the Portuguese were aware of the existence of Benin from around 1472, it was not until 1486 that the Portuguese made their first contacts with this kingdom. The then King of Benin, Uzulua, opened up negotiations with the Portuguese with the intention of forming a Benin-Portuguese alliance. Uzulua was anxious to forge an alliance with the Portuguese mainly (if not solely) for the purpose of trading in weapons, and sent an ambassador to Portugal to this end. The Oba [king] also requested that Christian missionaries be sent to his kingdom, thus creating the impression in Portugal that he was seriously interested in establishing the Christian faith in Benin.⁸⁹

Fortified with their right of “Patronage” coupled with the eagerness of the king of Benin, the Portuguese merchants and priests arrived at Benin to trade and to evangelise. The presence of the Portuguese merchants and the ‘missionaries’ gave a face-lift to the kingdom of Benin. On the commercial realm, much trade

missionary and economic activities in these countries was a kind of recognition and reward for their loyalty to the Holy See.

⁸⁵ Falk P., *The Growth of the Church in Africa*. Michigan: Zondarvan Pub. House 1979, 75.

⁸⁶ Isichei E., *A History of Christianity in Africa. From Antiquity to the Present*. London: Africa World Press Inc. 1995, 54.

⁸⁷ Okafor G. M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*. Altenberg 1992, 71; See also Imokhai C. A., *The Evolution of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, in: Makozi A. O., et al., (ed.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Macmillan, Nigeria 1982, 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Cf. Clarke P.B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 20.

– activity developed to the benefit of the countries. For their part, the missionaries did not do much to evangelise the people. The King allowed them access to the palace, to baptise one of his sons and erect a church in his court. He had a monopoly of all trade with the Portuguese and no one could transact any business with them without his permission.⁹⁰ However, the missionaries could not go beyond the palace in their religious activities because of the conflict in the palace between the king and his cabinet and the *Uwangue*, who were opposed to the priests and to their religion.⁹¹

The missionaries could not advanced with their activities, owing to the frustration which they experienced in Benin. The next option left open to them was to shift their attention to trade, a choice that cost them their reputation in the territory. They established a trading post at Benin's Gwato to supervise and oversee their dealings in Benin. Trade between the two countries (Portugal and Benin) began in pepper, and later extended to ivory and slaves.⁹²

The greatest weakness of the Christian enterprise in Benin and environs at that period was its close association with the slave trade. There was a basic contradiction between converting the people and purchasing them as slaves.⁹³ The funny aspect of the situation was that these commercial exploits were recognised and directly authorised by Rome, probably as a result of the patronage.⁹⁴ One of such documents that gave full backing to slave trade reads: "In the name of our apostolic authority, we grant to you the full and entire faculty of invading, conquering, expelling and reigning over the kingdoms [...] of the Saracens, of pagans, and of infidels, wherever they may be found; of reducing their inhabitants to perpetual slavery; of appropriating to yourself those kingdoms and all their possessions for your own use and that of your successors."⁹⁵

Portugal took the above injunction seriously and quickly abandoned missionary activity for commerce, which culminated in the enslavement of the natives.⁹⁶ It made them turn the control of their Missions into 'a jealously guarded royal prerogative'. This presented enormous difficulties in later centu-

⁹⁰ Onwubiko K.B.C. History of West Africa Book One A. D. 1000 -1800. Onitsha: Africana Educational Pub. (Nig.) 1967, 96.

⁹¹ See Sanneh L. West African Christianity: The Religious Impact. London: C. Hurst & Company 1983, 47.

⁹² Clarke P.B., West Africa and Christianity. Kent: Edward Arnold 1986, 20.

⁹³ Isichei E., A History of Christianity in Africa, 71.

⁹⁴ Cf. Schineller P., A Handbook on Inculturation. New York: Paulist Press 1990, 34.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Cf. Langhorst P., Kirche und Entwicklungsproblematik von der Hilfe zur Zusammenarbeit. Paderborn. München. Wien. Zürich 1996. 56.

ries when the Portuguese doggedly resisted the attempts of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, founded in 1622, to send missionaries to these territories. The endless quarrels between Rome and Portugal led to the division of mission lands into two categories: the *padroada* and the Propaganda Fide.⁹⁷ Consequently, Propaganda Fide⁹⁸ got involved in the missionary and evangelical activities in Africa. It was in order to prevent a repetition of this missionary and pastoral mistake that Propaganda Fide promulgated its missionary guidelines *ad dexteros* on 10th November, 1659, to the missionaries in Africa and Indochina. Recognising people's culture and way of life as important factors in missionary activities, a section of the document puts it categorically that missionaries should "put no obstacle in their way, unless these are obviously opposed to religion and good morals. For what is more absurd than to bring France or Spain or Italy or any part of Europe into China? It is not these that you should bring but the faith which does not spurn or reject any people's rite and customs, unless they are depraved, but on the contrary try to keep them. Admire and praise what deserves to be respected"⁹⁹ *Ad dexteros* was a call for another missionary attitude to mission which is different from that of the first missionaries whose attempts to establish the Christian faith did not succeed. It urges them to draw closer to the natives, appreciate them and to identify with them and their culture and way of life.

2.1.2. Reasons for the Failure: A Brief Review

A lot of reasons account for the failure of the initial attempts at evangelising the Kingdoms of Benin and Itsekiri¹⁰⁰ during the 15th and 17th centuries. The po-

⁹⁷ Cf. Omenka I N., *The School in the Service of Evangelization; The Catholic Educational Impact in Eastern Nigeria 1886-1950*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1989, 1.

⁹⁸ Cf. Bühlmann R., *Von der Kirche träumen. Ein Stück Apostelgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*. Graz . Wien . Köln 1986, 87. The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith [Propaganda Fide] (now Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) is one of the departments of the Pope's administrative Secretariat called curia Romana. Founded in 1622, the congregation is about the largest and one of the most powerful Departments of the Curia. It was charged with the responsibility of reuniting separated Christians and to co-ordinate and direct works of evangelisation in the newly found world.

⁹⁹ Collections of Documents of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. Vol. I, No. 135, p. 45. As quoted by F. Arinze *Church in Dialogue: Walking With The Other Believers*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1990, 54.

¹⁰⁰ The Itsekiri kingdom of Warri was a tiny state in the mangrove swamp of western Niger Delta. The history of Christianity in this territory goes back to the 1570s with the arrival of Augustinian monks from São Thomé. They did not convert the king but his heir, who became Sebastian, an ardent supporter of Catholicism. The Warri mission was faced with numerous problems such as lack of priests and mission aid, poor living conditions and health problems. The mission did not survive the test of time in spite of the intervention of two Capucins who supported themselves

litical assumptions of Portugal and its commercial interests contributed immensely to the failure of the missionaries to establish the Christian faith in the areas assigned to them.

Politically viewed, the Portuguese exerted much power in their areas of jurisdiction. The “right of Patronage” conferred such absolute power on its kings that the Portuguese missionaries, who were under the directives of the kings, could not be controlled by any other agency, even when their activities were questioned.¹⁰¹ The king of Portugal, in his capacity as governor and administrator of the order of Christ, was patron in his colonial empire, and the king of Spain (in his capacity as king of Castile) in his own. Their respective colonial representatives, the viceroys and governors, acted as Vice-Patrons, enforcing the royal will in ecclesiastical affairs. No Papal bull or document emanating from Rome was regarded as valid in the two Iberian colonial empires until it had been endorsed and registered in the respective royal chanceries, either in Lisbon or in Madrid. The two Crowns controlled all the missionary and ecclesiastical personnel to and from their respective Indies.¹⁰²

Portuguese economic and political interests played significant roles in the decline of their missionary activities in these Kingdoms. Their interest in trade, which culminated in their involvement in the Trans Atlantic slave trade made them de-emphasize their religious objectives. Describing the Portuguese activities as *Handelskolonisation* (trade colonisation), In the words of Peter Langhorst:

Sie nahmen Regionen für die Krone in Besitz, streben aber nicht die totale politische Unterwerfung an, sondern geben sich mit der Errichtung von küstennahem Handelsstützpunkt zufrieden. Von hier aus leiten sie Expeditionen ins Landesinnere, um im Tauschhandel die lukrativen Sklaven. Gewürze und Gold zu erlangen, doch eben-

with trade. To solve the problem of lack of priests, Sebastian dispatched his eldest son (Domingos) to Portugal to prepare for the priesthood so that he would be of assistance on his return. Domingos did not return a priest contrary to his fathers expectations. In spite of this setback, Sebastian did not give up hope. ‘Worn out with extreme old age’ he instructed his people in Christian doctrine, and organised processions.

¹⁰¹ The privilege also accorded the kings of Portugal the power of taking decisions for Rome in ecclesiastical matters. In effect the king became the head of the Church in all these lands and only missionaries approved by the kings from among Portugal’s population of one million people could be welcomed to this vast new world (cf. Kenny J., *The Catholic Church in Tropical Africa 1445 - 1850*. Ibadan: University Press 1983, 2.)

¹⁰² Cf. Boxer C. R., *The Problem of the Native Clergy in the Portuguese and Spanish Empire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, in: G. J. Cuming (ed.) *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of Faith* vol. 6, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1970, 94.

falls, um ihrem von Papst und Königen erhaltenen Missionsauftrag gerecht zu werden.¹⁰³

The failure of the missionaries to respect the culture and tradition of the natives and their unwillingness to engage in inculturation of the Church, played a prominent role in the failure of the missionaries to convert the people to Christianity.¹⁰⁴

A number of internal factors added momentum to the breakdown of missionary activities in this period. These range from the people's militant activities against the foreigners who imposed themselves, their ways of life and their civilisation on the natives, to the disagreement between the *Oba* of Benin and the missionaries. Although the *Oba* showed some kindness to the missionaries when they approached him with the intention of introducing the Christian religion in the Kingdom, this friendly relationship turned to something else when the missionaries criticised him publicly and forbade to perform burial rites, state ceremonies and initiation rites. But he was responsible, and obliged according to native laws and customs, to officiate as the *Oba* of the people.¹⁰⁵

2.2. 19th Century Missionary Experiences

After the breakdown of the early attempts by the Portuguese to Christianise the kingdoms of Benin and Itsekiri in the 15th - 17th centuries, efforts at bringing the Christian faith into these territories and environments were not given up. The intervention of Propaganda Fide gave impetus to another missionary epoch in Nigeria in the 19th century. This century can also be described as that of missionary explosion in Nigeria in the sense that the period brought about the blossoming of the missionary interests of various missionary churches. Nigeria also witnessed a lot of political transformation, ranging from its colonial experiences to its political independence and other socio-political transformations. It is pertinent to underline here that the initiative to evangelise Nigerians did not originate from the missionaries but from the natives themselves. This is one of the reasons for the survival of this missionary enterprise in the country until the present times.

2.2.1. The Church of Nigeria Missionary Society

The Church Missionary Society was formed in 1799 as the principle missionary society of the Church of England. The Church's choice of Sierra Leone as

¹⁰³ Langhorst P., Kirche und Entwicklungsproblematik von der Hilfe zur Zusammenarbeit. Paderborn. München, Wien. Zürich 1996, 56.

¹⁰⁴ Nwaigbo F. Church as Communion: An African Christian Perspective, 223.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

its first missionary field was influenced by the concern to find a settlement for the freed slaves in Britain and North America after the abolition of the slave trade in the 18th century. “In 1787 a convoy of ships with 351 black and sixty white people left England for Sierra Leone”.¹⁰⁶

The initial problems encountered by the first settlers were enormous. They acquired a 20 mile square piece of land at Freetown from the Chief of Temne, King Tom¹⁰⁷, and set about the erection of dwelling places. The terrain was poor and the appalling conditions in which they lived, coupled with the heavy rains that began soon after their arrival, made their situation intolerable.¹⁰⁸ In spite of these difficulties, the missionaries did not relent in their endeavours to settle these freed slaves. They were able to make Freetown a home and from there extended their mission to other sub-Saharan regions.

2.2.1.1. Ex-Slaves: Primary Factor in the Establishment of the CMS Mission in Nigeria

With the end of the slave trade, the slaves were settled in Sierra Leone. It was from this place that some of them came to Lagos. They recognised the port as the place where they had been shipped away by the slave dealers. They disembarked and went inland to Abeokuta, their home town. Soon afterwards other liberated Yoruba in Sierra Leone migrated home. Within three years it was estimated that more than five hundred liberated slaves had returned home to Abeokuta.

The immigrants had become converted to Christianity in Sierra Leone, and on their return to Abeokuta they missed very much the spiritual care they had enjoyed in their former abode. The missionary bodies in Sierra Leone also became concerned about the spiritual welfare of their members who had migrated to Nigeria. Consequently, Henry Townsend, a Church Missionary Society missionary in Sierra Leone, “was appointed to survey the situation in Yorubaland.”¹⁰⁹ These freed slaves later played a significant role in the missionary activities of the C.M.S. in Nigeria in general and in Igboland. Thanks to the “three self” missionary strategy of the C.M.S. the Church authority in

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Clarke P, B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 32.

¹⁰⁷ Agbeti Kofi J. *West African Church History. Christian Missions and Church Foundations: 1482-1919*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1986,19.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Agbeti J. K., *West African Church History*, 34; Onwubiko, K. B. C., *History of West Africa*. (Bk., 2), Onitsha: African University Press 1973, 204

London approved the formation of the first missionaries to Nigeria from these freed slaves.

It has to be recalled that the period under study corresponds to the era of exploration of the Niger by the British government. The presence of the missionaries was of assistance to the Niger explorers in their quest to penetrate and civilise the natives. In fact, the missionaries were directly involved in the exploration of the Niger. They had the dual purpose of promoting legitimate trade between Africans and Europeans and converting Africans to their own religion.¹¹⁰

2.2.1.2. The “Three Self” Method

The CMS Mission in Nigeria was modelled on the “three self” principles of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating Church. This strategy was originally postulated by the society’s Secretary-General and renowned strategist, Henry Venn.¹¹¹ Through this strategy, Venn underscored the aim of missions in Africa in general as the creation of a strong middle class, members of which would become leaders in society: in Church, commerce and politics. These people, he said, would form ‘an intelligent and influential class of society and become the founders of a kingdom which shall render incalculable benefits to Africa and hold a position among the states in Europe’.¹¹² With this view in mind, Henry Venn pointed out that the new Christian communities should be prepared from the beginning for self-reliance, self-government and self-sufficiency in all departments. His emphasis on the indigenisation of the Church as a guarantee for a stable and successful missionary enterprise is evident in the following statement: “Regarding the ultimate object of a Mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical result, to be the settlement of a Native Church under Native Pastors upon a self supporting system, it should be borne in mind that the progress of a Mission mainly depends upon the training up and the location of Native Pastors; and that, as it has been happily expressed the ‘ethanasia of Mission’ takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well trained Native congregations under Native Pastors, is able to resign all Pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendency over the pastors themselves, till it insensibly ceases; and so the mission passes into a settled

¹¹⁰ Crowder M., *The Story of Nigeria*. London: Faber and Faber 1962, 129.

¹¹¹ Henry Venn (1796-1873) was the Chief Secretary of the Church Mission Society of London. As Secretary, he played a significant role in the C.M.S.’s missionary activities in the 19th century. He stressed the missionary nature of the Church and pleaded for a Church in Nigeria independent of European domination and control.

¹¹² Cf. Sanneh L., *West African Christianity*, 156.

Christian community. Then the missionary agency should be transferred to the regions beyond.”¹¹³

The emphasis here is on the need and importance of “Native Pastors” in mission territories. With such man power, the Church will “depend for its future on African personnel utilising local languages and incorporating traditional religious elements in its worship and devotion.”¹¹⁴ This proposal was accepted whole and entire by the leaders of the society in London, who immediately sent Henry Townsend, a Yoruba ex-slave at the close of 1842 to go and conduct a feasibility study of Yorubaland, to find out the conditions of the returned slaves who invited them. For the Yoruba CMS Christians, the visit of Henry Townsend was a gracious one. They were happy with the intention of the Church to establish the new mission and entrust its running to the care of native pastors.

Following Henry Townsend’s favourable report to the local committee of the Church, the first batch of missionaries under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther,¹¹⁵ an ex-slave of Yoruba origin, was dispatched to Nigeria in 1841. He was accompanied by Henry Townsend, a German missionary, C. S. Collmann, two indigenous catechists and an interpreter.

Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his companions left for Abeokuta in 1844. As a Nigerian, he did not find it difficult to adjust to the environment. With the exception of Rev. Collmann, the other missionaries had good knowledge of the native language, culture and way of life. For an efficient and effective missionary work, Rev Samuel A. Crowther translated the Bible and some songs into Yoruba. The natives were introduced to Christianity through these materials. Hence, there was no language barrier between them and the missionaries. The missionaries opened a station at Badagry and built schools in the territory to train the natives in Christian teachings. From the point of view of establishing a

¹¹³ Quotation in Agbeti J. K., *West African Church History: Christian Mission and Church Foundations: 1482-1919*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1986, 28.

¹¹⁴ Sanneh L., *West African Christianity*, 158.

¹¹⁵ Samuel Ajayi Crowther was born in about 1806 in a Yoruba town called Osogun. He was for a time a domestic slave in Abeokuta, deterred from escaping by his fear of the shrines that lined the road home. He was later sold as a slave bound for Brazil but eventually freed by a naval squadron, and resettled in Sierra Leone. He became the first student at Fourah Bay College in 1822, and later taught there, catapulted to fame when he took part in the Niger expedition and published his journal. He was ordained in London in 1843 – Sierra Leone’s first Anglican priest – and returned to Yorubaland as a missionary. He became head of the newly founded all-African Niger Mission in 1857, and was ordained bishop in 1864, ‘the symbol of a race on trial’.

financially independent mission, an experimental farm and a steel corn mill were built to stimulate legitimate trade.¹¹⁶

2.2.2. The Roman Catholic Missionary Enterprise (1883 -)

The Roman Catholic mission began to take steps towards re-establishing itself on a permanent basis in Nigeria in the 1860s after the failure of the first attempt by the Portuguese.¹¹⁷ Similar to the initiative taken by CMS's freed slaves, who requested missionary attention from their headquarters, the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in this second dimension became possible through the initiative of Nigerian ex-slaves who had embraced the faith in lands of slavery. As these ex-slaves, "Pa Antonio and several thousand Portuguese-speaking returnees (*saros*)"¹¹⁸, arrived at their homes, some of them of Yoruba origin formed a Catholic prayer community in Lagos in the 1860s where they assembled on regular basis for prayers and other devotions under the leadership of a fellow ex-slave, Pa Anthonio, who acted as a catechist among them. The first contact between the members of this community and the Catholic missionaries was on 17th February, 1862, when Fr. Borghero, of the Society of African Mission (S.M.A)¹¹⁹, visited Lagos and other neighbouring towns from San Thome.

The first encounter between Father Borghero and the group was very spectacular. To ascertain his credibility and authenticity as a Catholic priest the catechist, Pa Antonio, requested him to recite the rosary (at the end of which he was to be accepted to the community). Father Borghero did this before he was accepted into the community.¹²⁰ The ex-slaves were so pleased with this visit, that they wished that Father Borghero should stay with them. He accepted this request and took up the responsibility of caring for the community until 1868, "when it was decided in Lyon to establish a permanent base in La-

¹¹⁶ Crowder M., *The Story of Nigeria*. London: Faber and Faber 1962:128.

¹¹⁷ Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 69.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ The Society of the African Mission (SMA) was founded in 1856 by Bishop Melchior de Marion Bresilac in Lyons in France to take care of missionary work in Africa. From the fact that the SMA was founded in Lyons, the members have often been called Lyon Fathers. With the failure of the Portuguese activities in Benin and Itsekiri, Propaganda Fide requested the society to oversee the task of Evangelization in the Kingdoms. Following this request, Father Borghero (SMA) was charged with the task of establishing the Catholic mission in Lagos in 1868 with the community of returnee slaves. (Cf. Imokhai C. A., *The Evolution of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, in: A. O. Makozi / G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.) *The History of Catholic Church in Nigeria*. North Yorkshire: Pindar Press Limited 1982, 2).

¹²⁰ Cf. Okafor G, M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 75.

gos.”¹²¹ Following this approval, the SMA opened its first mission house in Broad Street and decided to spread the Catholic faith by means of the schools system.

The first resident priest in Lagos, Father Bouche, arrived in Lagos in 1868. “In the same year, Lagos was established as the Headquarters under Reverend Borghero, the Pro-Vicar Apostolate.”¹²² They acquired a piece of land in Broad Street in Lagos where they began the construction of the first mission station in 1878. Having got a base at Lagos, the missionaries were able to penetrate Lagos and the neighbouring towns. From 1877, when the SMA recorded their first confirmation in Lagos, the work of the mission began to develop.

The construction of the Holy Cross Cathedral began in 1878 and was completed after three years, in 1891. In the same year the mission was raised to a diocesan status with Msgr. Chausse as bishop. The size and influence of the Catholic community there was increased by the emancipation of the slaves in Brazil in 1888. They also played a very important role in the development of music, song, dance and cultural life in general in Lagos. From Lagos the missionaries penetrated the hinterlands of Western Nigeria. The mission work extended to Abeokuta in 1889 under Fr. Hooley and to Ibadan in 1895 where the society’s first seminary in Africa, SS Peter and Paul Seminary, was opened later in 1905.¹²³ In 1911 the mission was extended to North-eastern Nigeria: Isselu-Uku, Igbuzo, Ogwashi-Uku and Onitsha-Olona in the Igbo territory, extending to Shendam, and from here the faith found its way to Northern Nigeria.¹²⁴

The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, which turned Southern and Northern Nigeria into a political unit under the British government, enabled the missionaries to establish the Catholic faith in Northern Nigeria, beginning with Kano, where the first mission in Northern Nigeria was opened in 1919.

2.2.2.1. The SMA Methods of Evangelisation in Lagos

The Society of African Missions adopted different methods in their attempts to establish the Roman Catholic faith in Lagos and its environs. Prominent

¹²¹ Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 69.

¹²² Njoku R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 26.

¹²³ Kofi Agbeti J. *West African Church History*, 99.

¹²⁴ Onutu J. J., *Milestones in the Growth of the Catholic Church in Northern Nigeria*, in A. O Makozi/G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Nigeria: Macmillan 1982, 58.

among these methods were the school apostolate and agriculture/animal husbandry.

2.2.2.2 The School Apostolate

With the establishment of the first mission house, the missionaries were faced with how to go about their activities in the new territory. It was extremely difficult for them to make a start, since they could speak neither English –which was and remains the official language in Nigeria – nor the native language Yoruba. This language handicap forced them to design a missionary programme that was based on the building of schools and the training of young boys and girls, first of all in a common basis (French) of communication (English) and in various trades and crafts.¹²⁵ By 1890 the Catholic mission in Lagos had eight schools attended by over 600 students.¹²⁶

To assist the fathers in their school and medical apostolate, a group of nuns of the Franciscan Sisters of the Propagation of Faith in Lyons were invited to the missions. The presence of the sisters and their activities gave a firm foundation to Roman Catholic education work in Lagos. They built schools and domestic centres for the training of the natives. The establishment of the Saints Peter and Paul Seminary in 1905 boosted their urge not only to promote the course of the Gospel in Lagos and its environs but also to train of indigenous clergy who would continue the work of Evangelisation in these areas later.

2.2.2.2. Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

In addition to the schools project, the missionaries showed interest in farming as a means of Evangelisation. After the establishment of the Lagos' residential station in 1875 and some schools in Lagos, the missionaries planned to establish an agricultural project in Topo.¹²⁷ The farm programme enhanced missionary activities and agriculture in Nigeria. It was a practical demonstration of the Roman Catholic evangelising policy in Nigeria. The mission was determined 'not to give a literary education that would produce clerks who would be unable to earn their livelihood unless they sought employment from the Government or from commercial firms'.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Okafor G. M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 75.

¹²⁶ Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 69.

¹²⁷ Topo was the first foundation in the Vicariate outside Lagos. It is located about mid-way between Lagos and Porto Novo. Topo created an atmosphere of happiness and industry which had its effect throughout the neighbourhood. The place provided housing, employment and education opportunities to the inmates.

¹²⁸ Cf. Agbeti J. K., *West African Church History*, 98.

Through the agricultural programme cash products were produced in large quantities. It also encouraged the rearing of domestic animals like cattle, goats, fowls etc. The progress is recorded by the missionaries, during the first decade of their missionary work, in the following analysis: "hundreds of acres had been cleared, ten thousand or more coconuts had been planted, there was a herd of sixty cattle and great plantations of cassava; fifty-four traditional religious worshipper families worked on the land, and eighteen children, orphans or people redeemed from slavery were in the care of the priests."¹²⁹ In addition to the effort put into crop production, the farm project provided opportunities for the academic formation and evangelisation of the children of the inmates. The farm project ensured a type of education that was not merely literary but combined with practical work. The usual school subjects were taught together with practical agriculture. As a means of evangelisation and progress in human development, the Topo farm settlement contributed in no small measure to the improvement of the standard of life of the inmates settled in the farm, as well as that of the natives in this territory. The native families were offered residence at Topo farm. The following report by Father Bel, the superior of the Topo mission in 1888, gives a clear insight into the activities of the mission. "We admit on the mission families who wish to put themselves under the rules we have imposed. They cultivated the land for their own profit except for a little rent paid in kind. Their children must be baptized and brought up in the Catholic Faith. When they grow up, we see to their progress. For this reason we give them in advance a plot of land to cultivate, and when they have been sufficiently instructed to be able to live without the supervision of the mission, they get married."¹³⁰

The contributions of Topo to evangelisation cannot be overemphasised. As many families tried to identify with the mission, the missionaries tried to use the opportunity of the farm settlements and the advantages it offered the natives to make the place a Christian state whose morals and standard of life would be exemplary to other villages around. They insisted on the observance of the provisions of the Catholic faith and doctrines as a condition for admission or gaining employment in the farm territory.

¹²⁹ Oduyoye M., *The Planting of Christianity in Yorubaland*. Ibadan: Day Star Press 1969, 63.

¹³⁰ See Quotation in: Ajayi J. F. A., *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1884-1891*, 115.

CHAPTER THREE

3. EVANGELISATION IN IGBOLAND

The Church Missionary Society (CMS.) and the Roman Catholic Missionaries (RCM), were the first Christian denominations to arrive in South-eastern Nigeria for the purpose of evangelisation.¹³¹ The CMS missionaries made the first move by dispatching Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his companion from Lagos to Onitsha in 1854. The Catholic missionaries arrived in 1885 thirty three years later than the CMS missionaries.

3.1. The CMS Methods

Like in Western Nigeria, the Church Missionary Society was the first Christian group to set foot in Eastern Nigeria. Following the missionary plan of “Native Pastorate”, the Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was charged in 1854 with the task of exploring the Niger region. He was accompanied in this expedition by Rev. John Christopher Tailor - an ex-slave of Igbo parentage.¹³² Contrary to the above cited position, some authors make reference to “two missionaries, J. F. Schön, a German, and [...] Simon Jonas, a liberated slave from Sierra Leone of Igbo parentage who acted as interpreter”¹³³ as those who with Rev. Crow-

¹³¹ Other Christian groups responded positively to the challenge of bringing the Gospel to Nigeria. J. F. A Ajayi’s *Christian Mission in Nigeria* enumerated the following groups of missionaries within this time: “In the period 1841-91 there were five principal missionary societies working in Nigeria: the Anglican Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), many of whose missionaries at this time were Germans; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, a committee of the English Methodist Conference; the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland; the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States and the Catholic Society of African Missions (the Societe des Missions Africaines, S.M.A) of France”, (p. xii - xiii).

¹³² Nwosu V. A., *The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province* in; C. A. Obi (ed.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Lagos: Macmillan Nig. Pub. Ltd. 1982, 39.

¹³³ Okafor G. M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*. Altenberg 1992, 77 described the calibre of people that launched the C.M.S. mission in Nigeria. According to him: The C.M.S. chief missionary in the Niger was Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an African slave re-captive of Yoruba origin, converted and trained in Freetown in Sierra Leone. His assertion: They were all Africans, a few of them first generation Christians from Sierra Leone who by trade were artisans, cobblers, farmers, court messengers, bricklayers, carpenters, shingle makers or stewards. More agents were second or later generation Christians. Generally, most of the first agents volunteered for mission worked purely with the hope of carrying the Gospel to their places of origin in the Niger (Nigeria). One of the early recruits, indeed, declared: ‘when I heard that the Gospel is being carried just to their places of birth I resigned my office as Government messenger and voluntarily offered myself to the Niger ... in the teaching of my brethren the unsearchable

ther founded the CMS mission in Igboland. Irrespective of the confusion as regards who really accompanied Ajayi Crowther during the Igbo mission, the issue that attracts our attention in this mission is that the CMS were committed to their idea of Native Pastorate and attached great importance to it all through. This principle helped them in no small measure in reaching the natives although it was given up in later days due to some internal and racial misunderstanding among the missionaries.¹³⁴

3.1.1. Education as a Means of Evangelisation

After the establishment of a base at Onitsha, Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his companions got into the education apostolate because it offered them a better opportunity of taking their evangelising programme to the grass-roots. The school apostolate was Crowther's chief means of evangelisation. He introduced the mission into many places by "getting rulers and the elders interested in the idea of having a school of their own, and usually it was to the school that he asked their senior missionary at each station to give his chief attention."¹³⁵

It was easier for Bishop Samuel A. Crowther to reach out to the hearts of the Igbo people who at that time never heard anything about the Christian faith through the school programme. He understood that the school was in one sense going to be the nucleus of Christianity and the missionaries' instrument of apostolate. On the other hand, it was to open the way to material and economic prosperity to the natives. In 1868 Crowther urged F. Smart, the School master at Bonny, to "lay a solid foundation for the spread of Christianity ... I regard these children as sprouts, if carefully attended and nurtured up in the good and right way, they will prove a great blessing to this country'."¹³⁶

Education was for Bishop Crowther the best way of guaranteeing a better future. He was very definite about its usefulness in evangelisation before he ever embarked on his mission. He demonstrated this fact by coming to Igboland with printed copies of an Igbo Catechism and Hausa Primers written by him. The C.M.S. Niger Mission had made significant advances in its work on education by 1880. They produced a good deal of reading materials on portions of the New Testament in the Isuama dialect to facilitate evangelisation. They

riches of Jesus Christ (Cf. G. O. M., Tasié, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1978, 83ff).

¹³⁴ Cf. Sanneh L., *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*. London: C. Hurst & Company 1983, 170.

¹³⁵ Ajayi J. F. A., *Christian Mission in Nigeria*, 218.

¹³⁶ Quoted by Tasié G. O. M., *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta 1864-1918*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1978, 34.

went to the extent of importing other school materials and books from England. Their first printing press was erected at Bonny and Lokoja in the 1880's. It was decided in 1886 that all primary education should be given in the vernacular.¹³⁷

3.1.2. Evangelisation through Culture

In his tenure as the leader of the CMS mission in Igboland, Bishop S. A. Crowther emphasised the importance of the people's culture in the evangelisation of the natives. Although his major task as a missionary was to bring the natives the Christian faith, he did not go about this by condemning or de-emphasising the people's traditional religion. Instead, he sought means of maintaining cordial relationships with the natives. In an instruction to his clergy on respecting the people's traditional-cultural systems, Bishop S. A. Crowther buttressed his sense of respect towards the natives' way of life (so long as they did not contradict the basic tenets of the Christian faith) and the possibility of using them as a means of conveying the Christian message. In a discussion with his clergy in 1869 he declared his position on the issue of nationalism. According to him:

Christianity has come into the world to abolish and supersede all false religions, to direct mankind to the only way of obtaining peace and reconciliation with their offended God. [...] But it should be borne in mind that Christianity does not undertake to destroy national assimilation; where there are any degrading and superstitious defects, it corrects them; where they are connected with politics, such corrections should be introduced with due caution and with all meekness of wisdom, that there may be good and perfect understanding between us and the powers, that while we render unto all their dues, we may regard it our bounden duty to stand firm in rendering to God the things that are God's.

Their native Mutual Aid Clubs should not be despised, but where there is any with superstitious connections, it should be corrected and improved after a Christian model. Amusements are acknowledged on all hands to tend to relieve the mind and sharpen the intellect. If any such is not immoral or indecent, tending to corrupt the mind but merely an innocent play for amusement, it should not be checked because of its being native and of a heathen origin. Of these kinds of amusements are fables, story-telling, proverbs and songs which may be regarded as stories of their national education in which they exercise their power of

¹³⁷ Cf. Ozigbo Ikenga R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 81.

thinking: such will be improved upon and enriched from foreign stocks as civilization advances. Their religious terms and ceremonies should be carefully observed; the wrong use made of such terms goes to depreciate their real value, but renders them more valid when we adopt them in expressing Scriptural terms in their right senses and places from which they have been misapplied for want of better knowledge.¹³⁸

Bishop Crowther demonstrated his conviction on the importance of culture in evangelisation in practical terms. He made consistent efforts to integrate the natives in their cultural set up.

3.1.3. Obstacles to the “Three Self” Missionary Principle

The „three self“ missionary principle of the CMS in Nigeria was successful to a certain extent. It succeeded to the extent that the Mission implemented the recommendations of Henry Venn by entrusting the care of the mission in Nigeria to native missionaries. With Bishop Crowther as leader of the mission, the missionaries were able to penetrate the natives and evangelise them. However, the implementation of this principle did not outlive Bishop Crowther’s tenure of office as the Superintendent of the CMS mission in Eastern Nigeria. As the mission began to expand into other parts of the country, there was need for the posting of more missionaries to help those already working in the territory. The missionaries sent to assist the Niger mission were European who were opposed to the idea of ‘Native Pastorate’. Thus, being sent to the Missions was an opportunity for them to realise their plans. They criticised and attacked Bishop Crowther and undermined his leadership to the extent that a panel was set up to try and condemn him.¹³⁹ Until that point in time, the Nigeria Mission was under the care of native pastors, as was agreed upon. Rev. Henry Townsend was not pleased with the programme and began planning ways of blackmailing Crowther and his activities in the Eastern mission.¹⁴⁰ The problem attained its highest level when the Reverend J. A. Robinson, a European missionary, became the secretary of the mission. This was a nice opportunity for the ambitious new European missionaries to bring their dream to fruition. They “began to probe and question Crowther’s capacity for leadership and the moral integrity and suitability of some of his assistants.”¹⁴¹ Bishop Crowther was later subjected to ‘trial’ and was condemned. This ‘trial’ was seen in many CMS quarters as having been motivated by racial intentions. The criticism and trial of Bishop Crowther had its consequences on the future of the

¹³⁸ See Quotation in Ajayi J.F.A., *Christian Mission in Nigeria*, 224.

¹³⁹ Cf. Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 66-67.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Sanneh L., *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, 170.

¹⁴¹ Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 67.

CMS mission in Nigeria. It gave rise to more internal conflicts and ultimately to the retirement of Bishop Crowther, who saw the whole affair as a manipulated racial discrimination. With his death in December 1891, there began a long period of foreign leadership of the course of the mission contrary to the initial intention of 'Native Pastorate'.

3.2. Catholic Mission in Igboland and their Evangelising Methods

The origin of Roman Catholicism in Igboland and in the entire Eastern Nigeria can be traced back to the year 1885. This was thirty years after the arrival of Bishop S. A. Crowther at Onitsha and his establishment of the CMS Anglican Mission in Onitsha and its surrounding territories. The Anglican Communion had been established at Onitsha and its environs. In fact, since the arrival of the first CMS missionaries in the area [...] led by Rev (later) Bishop Samuel Ajai Crowther and Rev John Christopher Taylor, the CMS had made considerable inroads in the spread of the Anglican Church in the areas. Besides Onitsha town, they had formal occupation of the following towns: Asaba 1874, Alonso 1877, Abo 1883 and Obosi 1883. They had made converts and built schools for boys and girls. Except for the occasional friction with the local people and the chiefs, and with the agents of the European trading company, the CMS missionaries enjoyed the advantage of the priority, unchallenged by other missionaries.¹⁴² A first and unsuccessful attempt was made from Lagos in 1883 when the missionaries of the Society of African Missions (SMA) despatched two of their priests to survey the areas surrounding the River Niger.¹⁴³ This attempt was a follow-up of the recommendation by the French merchants residing at Onitsha who requested the missionaries of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (C.S.Sp.) and the S.M.A. to come and establish the Catholic faith in the eastern part of Nigeria. In response to this invitation, the S.M.A. directed Father Jean-Baptiste Chausse, its local superior in Lagos, to visit Niger and to report on the prospects for a mission there.

¹⁴² Nwosu V. A., *The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province*, in *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. Lagos: Macmillan Nig. Pub. Ltd. 1982, 38-54, here 39.

¹⁴³ In 1883 Father Theodore Holley, J. B. Chausse undertook an expedition of the eastern and western regions of the country. The two missionaries sailed to Akassa; went up the Niger as far as Rabba; visited Bida and returned overland through Yorubaland to Lagos. Their report was very encouraging but they could not take up the responsibility of establishing the Catholic faith at these places because the areas never belonged to the areas of French jurisdiction. However, the S.M.A. had in 1882 submitted a request to Propaganda Fide for a new Vicariate at 'the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers'. This request was not granted till 1884 with the creation of the Vicariate of Lower Niger, (cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria 1885-1931*. 39.

3.2.1. The Methods Adopted by the French missionaries (1885-1900)

The Catholic faith as such began to take root in Igboland with the arrival of Father Joseph E. Lutz C.S.Sp.¹⁴⁴ and his team of three workers on the shore of the River Niger. “It was in 1885 that the first efforts were made to bring the faith to Southern Nigeria. Prior to that, reports had seeped into Propaganda in Rome concerning populous tribes which inhabited [...] the banks of the mighty River Niger and knew no “God” [or nothing about Christianity]. These reports received clarification through the initiative and enthusiasm of a young Holy Ghost missionary named Fr. Leon Lejune [sic] who halted near the main mouth of the Niger tribes. Thus a new mission was founded. It became known in Ireland as the Mission (or Prefecture) of [...] Southern Nigeria, and in France as ‘*Le bas Niger*’. The missionary sent to open up this new area to the Gospel was Father Lutz C.S.S.P. and two Rev. Brothers, John and Hermas. All were young men in their prime, deliberately picked for a hazardous and dangerous enterprise.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Fr. Joseph Lutz (1853-1895) was born at Duendorf near Hagaunau, France. He was of pious but well-to-do parents. Through the influence of his uncle, who was also a priest, he entered the seminary of Strasbourg but later joined the C. S. Sp. On 23rd December, 1876, Joseph Lutz was ordained priest and was sent out to Sierra Leone the following year (August 1877) as a missionary. After 4 years as chaplain to the civilian hospital in Freetown he returned to France in 1881. In May, 1882, he returned to Sierra Leone but was posted to Boffia (Rio Pongos) as its Superior. In February, 1885, he was forced back to France to attend to his crushed finger. On 23rd July, 1885 (aged 32), he was appointed to head the new C. S. Sp. mission on the Lower Niger. He laboured for 8 years before returning to France for a rest. He was back in Onitsha in November 1893 but was again forced home in August 1894 by sickness. He died in France on 17th December 1895.

¹⁴⁵ Ekechi F. K., *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914*, London 1972, 2; See quotations in part also in Ozigbo Ikenga R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 40.

It must be noted that some authors have attempted to give distorted information with regard to the coming of the Catholic Church in this part of the Niger. Bishop L. Nwaezeapu is a good example of such authors who traced the origin of Catholicism in Igboland to a rather later date than when it was actually established. Out of fascination for Shanahan’s achievements, L. Nwaezeapu observed: „While the SMA worked in North and West Nigeria, the C.S.Sp. subsequently arrived, led by Bishop Joseph Shanahan (1871-1943) who settled with his team on the eastern bank of the River Niger now known as Eastern Nigeria.“(Nwaezeapu L., *The Nigerian Church and the Challenge of the Secularisation of Education*. Roma, 1986, 20-21). The error in the above statement is that Nwaezeapu’s view did not recognise that it was Fr, Lutz and not Shanahan who began Catholicism in Onitsha. As we shall observe in the course of this historical study, many years passed and many other missionaries who piloted the course of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria before it came to the turn of Fr, Shanahan to be in charge of the Onitsha Mission.

Fr. J. E. Lutz and his team arrived at Onitsha on December 5, 1885. As late comers in the territory, it was difficult for them to settle. They were faced with various problems such as the suspicion of the CMS. missionaries, the threat of the Royal Niger Company, a British Company in-charge of the administration of the Onitsha territory and the lukewarm tendencies of the natives, who saw the presence of the missionaries as an intrusion and a threat to their system of life. Far from being discouraged by these problems, Fr. J. E. Lutz and his men evolved means of overcoming their initial problems and of establishing the Catholic mission at Onitsha, Igboland.¹⁴⁶

Paying courtesy to the Obi (king) of Onitsha was the first step undertaken by Fr. J. E. Lutz and his missionaries. With this visit they wanted to formally declare their intention to the king and request his permission to establish the Catholic mission in the territory. The meeting between the missionaries and the king of Onitsha was favourable to the missionaries. Father J. Lutz described the encounter as follows:

‘... His majesty appeared before us wearing [a] gold crown on his head, he shook hands with us in most cordial welcome and made us sit down by his side.

... All the chiefs were convoked. The King’s brother, the King’s eldest son, the first class and second class chiefs and many notables of the place were assembled.

... Now seated in the assembly, we related the object of our visit: it was to get permission to set up a mission. The King showed himself very well disposed towards us and our request to be allowed to settle in his domain. He assured us that he would, as far as it [lay] in his power, satisfy our needs and soon gave two of his children to us to be trained ...’¹⁴⁷

Having received the Catholic missionaries and assured them of his support and that of his followers, the king gave them a piece of land bordering on the Niger River and the NKISI stream, about two miles away from the inhabited town of Onitsha. On arrival at the site, the missionaries noticed that the piece of land was already allotted to the CMS.¹⁴⁸ To avoid a situation of strife the king then

¹⁴⁶ Onitsha at that period was the centre of commerce in eastern Nigeria. Its nearness to the River Niger, the only means of communication in the area and a source of palatable water, was very decisive for the missionaries in picking it as their first settlement.

¹⁴⁷ Cited by Obi C. A., *Background to the Planting of Roman Catholicism in Lower Niger*, 17.

¹⁴⁸ It seems that the king of Onitsha referred Fr. Lutz to Bishop Crowther of the C.M.S. mission because the natives were becoming increasingly disgusted with their activities, especially the alli-

instructed Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther to allow Fr. J. E. Lutz to share the land with his group. The CMS bishop complied with the king's instruction and gave over some twenty hectares of land to Fr. J. E. Lutz and his companions for the purpose of building their mission station. This is the site where the present Holy Trinity Cathedral Onitsha is situated.¹⁴⁹

The acquisition of this piece of land and the consequent establishment of a dwelling place marked the birth of the Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria. Considering the fact that the Obi of Onitsha may have welcomed the missionaries and merchants to his territory because of the economic and political advantages which he would gain from their presence,¹⁵⁰ the missionaries pledged their loyalty to him and promised to help in developing the territory and in establishing the western system of education as they went about their missionary activities.

3.2.1.1. The Slave Pastoral

After the acquisition of land and the building of the first mission station, the missionaries busied themselves with the difficult task of converting the natives from their traditional religion to Catholicism. The difficulty was due to the fact that the natives had had regrettable experiences with the Royal Niger Company and were sceptical of the presence of the missionaries and of the purpose of their mission. This scepticism was a great obstacle for the natives in identifying with the Catholic missionaries. Since it was not possible to get the natives on their side, Fr. J. E. Lutz and his companions turned their attention to slaves, outcasts, widows, orphans, twins, and the destitute who had no option but to become Christians because the missionaries promised them recognition and a prosperous future. "The "slave-method" was the celebrated missionary strategy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It involved the practice of freeing slaves by purchase and confining them in quasi Christian ghettos, where they were systematically instructed in the truths of the Christian faith."¹⁵¹ The ex-slave apostolate flourished well during Fr. L. E. Lutz's period of leadership. "[It] took a sizeable share of the time and resources of the mission during the first four years (1886-1889). [...] Boys and girls ranging from 2 to 35 years were redeemed. The greater number of these was females. They were

ance between them and the merchants of the Royal Niger Company. Hence, the admission of the Catholic missionaries was in protest against Bishop S. A. Crowther and his support of the Company. The king's admission of missionaries in Onitsha was not unconnected with the state of hostilities between Onitsha and its neighbouring towns at that period. Hence, he used the missionaries to sue for peace and order with his neighbours.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Isichei E., *The Ibo People and the Europeans*. London: Faber and Faber 1973, 101.

¹⁵¹ Omenka N. I. *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 34.

all paid for with bags of salt, rolls of tobacco, pieces of cloth (cotton goods), or bottles of gun-powder, which the missionaries bought from the Royal Niger Company's trading factor in Obosi."¹⁵²

Although the re-buying of slaves from the dealers and converting them to Christianity flourished during the reign of Father J. Lutz, it had its side-effect for the future of the mission. In fact their presence debarred free citizens from associating with the faith, since the people's culture forbade any type of relationship with slaves and outcasts. Knowing well the consequences of their programme for the mission - since no citizen would like to identify with them - the missionaries were very suspicious and critical of the future of the mission in Igboland. They asked: "What is the future of a mission with such a foundation of ours."¹⁵³ This doubt notwithstanding, Fr. J. Lutz and his companions never gave up hope. Their anti-slave programme enjoyed the recognition and financial support of Rome, which at that period was faced with the problems of slave trade in Africa.

3.2.1.2. Christian Village Apostolate

The need for the establishment of Christian villages¹⁵⁴ in the mission territories was occasioned by the challenges of the ex-slave programme in Igboland. As the missionaries freed slaves from the merchants, there was the need to look for a place of settlement for them, since as sold slaves or outcasts (those that had committed one abominable offence or another against the gods), they were not allowed to return to their original villages. Artificial mission villages (Christian villages) were established for the rehabilitation of these slaves and outcasts. In these villages, the "mission fed, clothed and housed the redeemed slaves. The male members lived in separate houses from the females. They followed a rule of life laid down by the mission. The boys and girls of school age were housed separately in the orphanage-cum-boarding house. The youths

¹⁵² Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*. 67. During this period (the later part of 19th century) as the anti-slavery campaign was gaining much recognition in many territories, Onitsha remained uninfluenced by the movement. But the missionaries' commitment to stopping this inhuman practice was hailed by the Church authority in Rome who "issued an anti-slavery encyclical on the 20th November, 1890, and followed it up with a statutory "Epiphany fund" in 1891, for the anti-slavery work of the Catholic missionaries in Africa. The Prefecture of the Lower Niger continued to get annual grants from the "slavery" fund till the 1930's."

¹⁵³ Quotation by Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers 1885-1905*, in: C. A. Obi (ed.) *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*. Africana-Fep Pub. Ltd. 27-105, 34.

¹⁵⁴ The introduction of Christian villages in Igboland had its root in the missionary styles of the Jesuit priests in Paraguay who made mass conversions of Indians and rehabilitated them in little theocratic states ruled absolutely by the fathers.

were taught trades or agriculture and were paired up or given away in marriage, when they attained economic maturity (if males). Once married, they built themselves houses in the village and thereafter looked after themselves.”¹⁵⁵

It is worthwhile comparing the Christian village at Onitsha with the one in Aguleri. The difference between the two villages is that in contrast to the Onitsha Christian village, the one in Aguleri was established for noble citizens who after conversion, decided to live in the mission village. “The Christian village system helped the growth of the Church at Onitsha. By 1900, there were as many as three: Onitsha, Aguleri and Nsugbe.”¹⁵⁶ Through the Christian village the missionaries intended to set a standard for other villages. Life in the Christian villages was modelled on Christian value systems and morality. The inmates lived a very strict regulated life with definite hours of prayer, play and work. The missionaries considered it a most favourable circumstance where the Catholic doctrine could be imparted to the catechumens away from the neutralising influences of non-Christian neighbours, Protestants and some merchants/civil servants who, they said, lived in total disregard of all moral laws. It was a community where the freed slaves practised a kind of quasi-monastic spirituality.¹⁵⁷ The inmates of the Christian villages constituted the first converts to the Catholic faith. These first converts tried their best to accept the challenge of the new religion, although the programme was largely criticised by those who felt that they could not conform to the rigid and foreign life-style imposed on them by the missionaries.

In spite of the lofty expectations of the missionaries with regard to the benefits of the Christian village, experience shows that it had its loopholes. It did not take long after the establishment of the system before it was noticed that the “Christian village experiment was beginning to be seen as burdensome by the natives and the missionaries. It later began to be used as a “city of refuge” by certain criminals and revolutionists who, having violated the laws of traditional religion, would run into the Christian village for shelter and protection.¹⁵⁸ “The identification of the Christian village with slaves and outcasts and refugee criminals simply caused a lot of stir and disaffection among the free born (the diala) and alienated them from ‘the white man’s religion’”.¹⁵⁹ It made Christian-

¹⁵⁵ Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria 1885-1931*, 68.

¹⁵⁶ Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers, 1885-1905*, in: C. A. Obi (ed.) *A Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*. Africana-Fep Pub. Ltd. 27-105, 36.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Achebe C., *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann Educational Books 1986, 123. The incident under reference is Okonkwo’s disgust over the intuition of Christian religion in Umuofia.

ity look like a religion fit only for social outcasts, and by implication, as inferior to the Igbo traditional religion. Igbo custom at that time could not accommodate the fact of slaves or social outcasts as the “pillar” of a religion to which they should belong.¹⁶⁰

3.2.1.3. Health Centres and Schools

Fr. J. E. Lutz C.S.Sp. and his companions were able to endear themselves to the natives through their caritative and education programmes. They did everything in their power to improve the poor health condition of the people by building hospitals, dispensaries, health centres and homes for orphans. The health programme was of immense contribution to evangelisation in Igboland. The programme so fascinated the natives and even the converts of the CMS denomination that they rushed to the missionaries in large numbers to be treated and to listen to their Gospel message. For the natives who attributed sickness to punishment from the gods, the ability of the missionaries to cure their ailments was unbelievable.¹⁶¹ “Father Lutz used European medicine to win the interest of the parents, including Protestants whose children he treated daily. Many parents, including Protestants, allowed their children to be baptised after receiving medical treatment.”¹⁶² In a report to his Superiors Fr. J. E. Lutz gave a personal evaluation of the benefits of the health care programme in the service of evangelisation and recounted how the natives were won over through the medical attentions rendered to them. Fr. J. E. Lutz made the following observation with regard to the benefits of their medical pastoral approach. “Our Great influence comes from the care which we extend to the sick who come to us from several miles around. The good Lord had also permitted us to give salvation to some of the desperate cases. Besides, the people say

He regretted that the Church came and led many astray. Not only the low-born and the outcasts, but sometimes worthy people like Ogbuefi Ugonna, had joined it.

¹⁶⁰ Ekechi F. K., *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857- 1914*. London 1972, 89.

¹⁶¹ Before the introduction of scientific medical systems of health care, the indigenous practice of medicine was largely elementary and magical. Igbo people believed (and still believe) that sicknesses are caused by evil spirits, angry ancestral spirits and evil men (witches and wizards). Because of this belief, the people mix the practice of herbalism and occultism in their attempts to understand or to control sicknesses. Herbalists, diviners, and occultists are the group of people responsible for interpreting these sicknesses and prescribing a sort of sacrifice to be made to the gods or a type of concoction to be taken by the sick person in order to be healed from such sicknesses (cf. Ozigbo I. R. A. *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 59).

Thanks to medicine, we have been able to baptise a large number of children and many converts have been won. We will do our best to keep up this work. The most beautiful of all is the care of the sick.” (cf. *Bulletin General XVII*, 430 as quoted by Ozigbo I. R. A. *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 63).

¹⁶² Njoku R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 31

that we have the power to cure any disease, and that if sometimes we fail, it is because we are unwilling to heal. Thanks to medicine, we have been able to baptise a large number of children and many converts have been won. We will do our best to keep up this work. The most beautiful of all is the care of the sick.¹⁶³ Similarly, he remarked in a report to his Superior in Paris in February 1888, how the natives were coming in large number to be treated and be baptized.

In addition to the contribution of the medical programme towards the improvement of the condition of life of the natives and the promotion of the cause of Catholic evangelisation in Igboland, the missionaries made a significant impact in Igboland through their literacy programme. In the Christian villages schools and trade centres were built in order to educate the youth in the western education system or train them in one trade or another. Nursery schools and primary schools were established to enhance this literacy programme.

This method of winning converts has been openly criticised by many an author and scholar in Igboland. F. K. Ekechi, for example, sees it as geared to “pre-dispose the Igbo to almost blind acceptance” of the propaganda of the missionaries.¹⁶⁴ He recounts further that the missionaries went as far as emphasizing conversion to Christianity and readiness to be baptised as a important conditions for the treatment of sick children who approach them for medical attention. They held firmly to these demands as “a powerful means of evangelisation and conversion”. For A. S. O. Okwu, this method of missionary enterprise is mere “philanthropism”, a means of “obtaining labour and even soldiers for the missionaries and their supporters”.¹⁶⁵

To reduce the entire missionary effort, and especially the commitment to works of charity as an integral aspect of evangelisation, to mere philanthropism is unfair to the missionary enterprise in Igboland. This shows the impact of modern economic reasoning and it subjects the missionaries’ good intentions, and even the Church and her pastoral programme, to secular scrutiny and utilitarianism.¹⁶⁶ Works of charity remain an integral part of missionary evangelisation and part of the Church’s life and mission. But, to emphasize conversion

¹⁶³ APS, Bulletin General, Vol. XVII, 430, as quoted by Ozigbo I. R. A., Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria, 61.

¹⁶⁴ Ekechi F. K., Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914: London 1971, 74-75.

¹⁶⁵ Okwu A.S.O., The Weak Foundation of Missionary Evangelisation in Pre-colonial Africa: The Case of the Igbo of Southern Nigeria, in: *Missiology*, 8, no.1, 31-47, 34.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Nwosu C. U., *Evangelisation in Igboland: Evangelii Nuntiandi Applied to a Nigerian Ecclesiastical Province*. Munich – Kinshasa 1992, 248.

to the Catholic Church as a condition for medical treatment, if that really happened remains an unfortunate and miscalculated missionary strategy in the history of mission and evangelisation in the Church.

3.2.1.4. Obstacles to Fr. Lutz's Missionary Activities

Missionary activity at this early stage was not without untold problems for the missionaries. As foreigners, who were exposing themselves to tropical situations for the first time, they had to cope with the unfriendly weather as well as other problems like poor sanitary conditions. Other problems included antagonisms from their Protestant rivals, as well as the threat of the Royal Niger Company. We shall be paying closer attention to the difficulties posed by the Protestant Church and the RNC.

3.2.1.4.1. Unhealthy Relationship with the Protestants

As late-comers in Eastern Nigeria, the Catholic Missionaries met with a lot of problems from the CMS missionaries who had arrived in Eastern Nigeria before them. On their arrival (thirty years before the Catholics), the CMS missionaries had appropriated the territory as their exclusive missionary sphere.¹⁶⁷ Hence, the coming of Father J. Lutz and his companions to this territory sparked off some worries among the CMS missionaries. Having known the Catholic strategies, the Protestants felt uncomfortable and feared that the Catholic missionaries would pose a threat to them in their churches and schools. This fear was also felt by Bishop Samuel A. Crowther, who, in spite of his initial generous and friendly gestures to Father Lutz, remained suspicious of the Catholics. He expresses his anxiety clearly when he observed that they would experience disturbance in the schools should alluring temporal advantages be held out by their competitors to the people to induce adherence.¹⁶⁸ As a matter of fact, the Catholic missionaries did prove a threat to the pro-

¹⁶⁷ The methods used by various missions to carve out their spheres of influence in Eastern Nigeria were similar to those used by British political officials. At first the missionaries scrambled for spheres of influence; then, at a series of delimitation conferences which began in 1904 and ended in 1932, they partitioned Eastern Nigeria into five denomination districts. Like the partition of Africa, the partition of Eastern Nigeria into mission spheres of influence (known as districts) was peacefully carried out - by the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), the Niger Delta Pastorate (also Anglicans), the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Qua Iboe mission. But the French Holy Ghost Fathers, who were Roman Catholics and the Lutheran Church of North America refused to recognise the mission boundaries and established Churches and schools in any town or village in which they were welcomed (cf. Udo E. A., *The Missionary Scramble for Sphere of Influence in South-Eastern Nigeria 1900-52*; in: Kalu O. U., (ed.) *The History of Christianity in West Afrika*. London/New York: Longman Group Ltd. 1980, 159-186, here 160).

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Njoku R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 29.

gress of the CMS. The statement by the Rev. Archdeacon Johnson reveals the extent the CMS missionaries were disturbed. He opined: "I am rather uneasy with regards [sic] to the prospect of our work when I think of the proceedings of these Roman Catholics. Our school at Onitsha is half ruined because the children are enticed away by promises of clothing and certainty of being fed gratis."¹⁶⁹ No sooner had they settled than they began winning converts through their rehabilitation programmes and medical programmes. The Catholic missionaries really resorted to proselytising the CMS converts because of the internal problems within their mission. Fr. J. Lutz and his missionaries took advantage of this situation and increased their members. Bishop S. A. Crowther and his companions, on their part, did not take the situation lying down. They resorted to proselytism too. A report of the C. S. Sp. indicates that a CMS minister approached Fr. J. Lutz and requested him not to welcome any CMS converts, should they ask to be admitted to the Catholic Church. The Bulletin General (March 1890) remarked that Fr. J. Lutz promised not to proselytise the CMS converts indiscreetly. He, however, insisted that he could not turn away people who sought admission into the Church. As Fr. Lutz insisted on his practices, there ensued untold quarrels and un-Christian propaganda from both camps.

As the above problem continued, the missionaries (of both Churches) resorted to destructive campaigns, intolerance and calumny against each other. They accused each other of resorting to seduction, bribery and mean politicking in order to win and retain converts and influence. Extreme un-Christian propaganda was mounted to discredit each mission. The Catholic missionaries threw their earlier discretion to the winds and went all out to exploit the difficult situation in which the CMS found itself at the time.¹⁷⁰ The following childhood experience of a Nigerian Holy Ghost priest portrays the extent of the division and hatred initiated by the hostility between Catholic and Protestant missions. "For all practical purposes the first article of our creed was: 'Thou shalt hate "paganism" and all that is connected with it, with thy whole heart, with thy whole mind, with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength'. The second was like the first, 'Thou shalt regard "Protestants" as thy enemy'.¹⁷¹ Similarly, an elder from Edem Nsukka recalls that the Catholic missionaries told them that the CMS attended a church made by man while the CMS missionaries told them that the Catholics worshipped neither the supreme God nor the native gods, but medals.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 92.

¹⁷¹ See quotation in Isichei E., *A History of the Igbo People*. London: Macmillan 1976, 170.

¹⁷² Ibid.

The CMS mission also shared the above attitude towards other missionaries especially towards the Catholics. It was really in order to avoid interference that the 'Boundary Agreement' was made. However, as it affected the Catholics, they did not mince words in describing Catholics *inter alia*, as 'a masterpiece of Satan', 'the ancient Roman paganism rebaptised', 'a religion that panders to the weakness of humanity to the neglect of true Christian life'.¹⁷³ The above unhealthy relationship between the two missions was transferred to their followers. It affected the social segments that held the people together. "Family units, clans, villages and towns were divided along lines of religious affinities, thus sowing the seed of discord among the people, although each proclaimed himself/herself a member of the new religion (Christianity)."¹⁷⁴ Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist of Igbo origin, presents the effect of Christianity on the people's system in a picturesque statement by Okonkwo: "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."¹⁷⁵

3.2.1.4.2. Difficulties with the Royal Niger Company

The Catholic missionaries were also confronted with difficulties with the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.), a British commercial company placed in control of all commercial activities of the British government at and around Onitsha. It has to be noted that Fr. J. E. Lutz and his co-workers were of French origin, hence the initial tension between them and the R.N.C. which was suspicious of their presence in their commercial zone. To make sure that their interests at Onitsha were not placed under threat by the presence of the missionaries, the General Agent of the Royal Niger Company, Mr Sargent, asked for clarifications of their mission. At the end of their discussion Fr. J. Lutz had to "sign a document to the effect that he would make no commercial treaty whatsoever in the Niger."¹⁷⁶ It was after this declaration of intention that the missionaries were allowed to operate in Onitsha. However, the unhealthy relationship persisted in spite of this initial agreement. Evidence exists that Fr. J. Lutz was not prudent in his dealings. "In spite of the [...] vindictive measures of the R.N.C. it must be admitted that Father J. Lutz and his colleagues were not always as prudent and as wary as they ought to have been. For instance, given their French background and its implications for them in Lower Niger, they should not have

¹⁷³ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 90.

¹⁷⁴ Okafor G. M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 93.

¹⁷⁵ Achebe C., *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann Ltd. 1977, 124-125.

¹⁷⁶ cf. Nwosu V. A., *The Growth of the Catholic Church in Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province*, 38.

involved themselves in the manner they did in the colonial clashes, commercial rivalries and diplomatic manoeuvres between the French and the British.”¹⁷⁷

3.2.1.4.3 Statistics of Fr. Joseph Lutz’s Missionary apostolate in Igbo-land¹⁷⁸

| Year | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1891 | 1892 | 1893 | 1894 | 1895 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Catholics | 180 | 240 | 378 | 446 | 529 | 670 | 762 | 775 |
| Protestants | 1500 | | 800 | 1500 | 1500 | 1700 | 2500 | 1700 |
| Pagans (non-Christians) | 500000 | 100000 00 | 100000 00 | 800000 00 | 800000 00 | 500000 00 | 500000 00 | 80000 000 |
| Conversions | 180 | 60 | 78 | 68 | 33 | 63 | 104 | 87 |
| Priests | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Brothers | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Sisters | | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Catechists | 2 | | | | 2 | | 2 | |
| Church buildings | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Schools (Mixed) | 1 | | | | | | 3 | |
| Children (Pupils) | 75 | | | | | | | |
| Boys’ School | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 2 |
| Girls’ School | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| Dispensary | | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Teachers | | | | | 2 | | | |
| Hospital | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |

¹⁷⁷ Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers, 1885-1905*, 58.

¹⁷⁸ See Statistics in Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers*, 56.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Nursery | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Workshop | | | | | | 2 | 8 | 3 |
| House of Refuge | | | | | | | 1 | |

3.2.2. School Apostolate under Fr. L. A. Lejeune C.S.Sp. and Bishop J. Shanahan C.S.Sp.

Education has always been a veritable means of passing on information. It played a significant role both in the process of evangelisation in the vicariate of Lower Niger, and also in the development of human resources in the territory. We shall now consider these contributions, beginning with Fr. L. A. Lejeune.

3.2.2.1. Father Leon A. Lejeune 1900-1905¹⁷⁹

Fr. L. A. Lejeune (C.S.Sp.) took over the leadership of the Onitsha Prefecture in 1900. In spite of all prejudices against the deplorable situation of things in the Prefecture, he was resolute in directing the course of the mission in Igboland. It will be appropriate to recall here that before the arrival of Lejeune at Onitsha the place was designated in Paris as the “white man’s grave”, or the most hopeless mission in the whole continent of Africa, because of the high mortality rate of the missionaries, coupled with bad living conditions at Onitsha which retarded progress.¹⁸⁰

At the beginning, Father L. A. Lejeune did not rush into action immediately but rather took time to study the Prefecture and the nature of the problems facing it. To facilitate this experiment he convened the missionaries in the region to a plenary meeting to “discuss the distressing state of the Prefecture, and the

¹⁷⁹ Fr. Leone Alexander Lejeune was born on 24th March 1860 at Tournai-sur-Dives (Orne) of working-class parents. He was already a deacon when he joined the Holy Ghost Order (C. S. sp.). A year after his ordination to the priesthood (1884) he was posted to Gabon as a missionary. Later he was sent to Lambarene station where he became the leader of the station. On 12th August he was requested to return to France for re-posting. In July 1900, he was appointed Prefect of Lower Niger Mission. He took up his appointment on 4th September and directed the course of the mission. With his thoughtfulness, dedication and courage, Fr. Lejeune was able to re-model the reputation of the Church in Igboland. Contrary to the missionary approach of his predecessor, Fr. J. Lutz C. S. Sp., he believed that the Church in Igboland could only survive the test of times if it was founded on the nobles and the free born citizens of Igboland. He died in September, 1905 at the age 45.

¹⁸⁰ Jordan J., Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria. Dublin 1976, 17-18.

measures to adopt for the better progress of the mission."¹⁸¹ In addition to the information he gathered through the meeting with his workers, Fr. L. A. Lejeune undertook a tour of all the mission stations in the Prefecture and acquainted himself with first-hand information on the condition of things there. No wonder he was able to narrate in a general report to his superiors in Paris the actual problems confronting the missionary enterprise in the Prefecture of Onitsha. A section of this report reads: "The charge on me is a heavy one. All the houses have to be rebuilt at Onitsha, Aguleri, Osamiri and Nsugbe; all the chapels, too, including the children's home and the leper settlements. The works have to be continued and new ones begun. But there are only five priests, all tired and sick. The three brothers are young and inexperienced. The two nuns are absolutely confined to bed; each takes her turn every other week, often both are down together. What sorrows! What difficulties."¹⁸²

As observed earlier, Father Lejeune was not discouraged from tackling the problems in the Prefecture; rather he went about drafting a programme of action which aimed at alleviating the problems. He pointed out four factors responsible for the lack of adequate progress in the mission during the leadership of his predecessor, viz:

- The high costs charged by the Royal Niger Company.
- The lack of a resident Prefect for many years.
- The over concentration of the mission resources on charities.
- The high death toll on missionary lives as the result of poor housing.¹⁸³

3.2.2.2. Lejeune's "Revolution"

The term 'revolution' has been applied to the radical measures which Father Lejeune took to improve the deplorable situation in the Prefecture. In the first place, he condemned outright the pastoral strategies of his predecessor. Fr. Lutz' administration emphasised "a method of evangelization which directed attention not to the entire population, but only to a particular group of persons - redeemed slaves, orphans, outcasts, and condemned criminals. Going through the list of candidates for baptism in 1902, he discovered that there were 500 of these rejects of the society in Onitsha alone."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Ozigbo I. R. A., *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 119.

¹⁸² Quoted by Ozigbo Ikenga R.A., *Ibid.*, 121

¹⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 94

¹⁸⁴ Omenka N. I., *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 46. In the Igbo traditional society and religion, outcasts and/or the „Osus“ are not respected. They are people sacrificed to gods

The follow-up to this criticism was his decision not to continue the apostolate of re-buying slaves and establishing more Christian villages. Father Lejeune reassured his missionaries and promised them better working conditions. He believed that there must be good living houses and efficient catechist-teachers in order to have good results from their evangelical labours.¹⁸⁵ In fact, he came to the conclusion that “the main causes of the deaths and ill-health in the Prefecture were the depressing housing conditions, and the scanty personal care of the missionaries.”¹⁸⁶ As a lasting solution, Fr. Lejeune did everything in his power to improve the standard of the missions. He replaced the mud houses of the missionaries with bricks, the raffia roofs with zinc sheets. Regarding policy for the future, he argued for four measures:

- a steady diminution of the programmes on charity and Christian villages.
- the adoption of the school as a missionary strategy.
- more direct evangelisation
- more expansion and opening of new stations.¹⁸⁷

Father Lejeune communicated his reforms to his superiors in France in a report to them on January 23, 1901 after having made up his mind on how to pursue the task of evangelisation in the Onitsha Prefecture. In this report he stated his preparedness to discontinue the former strategies. He stated categorically: “I have refused to accept in the Mission any more motherless babies, and I forbid the acceptance of the same in my absence; already we have a large number on our hands whom we feed with powdered milk. I have decided that the 22 old women who are taking refuge in the Mission should do some bit of work as a kind of little compensation for their upkeep by the Mission. It is a pity, a great pity indeed, it wounds my heart to see the lepers, the lame,

and nobody is allowed to identify in any way with them. See also C. Achebe *Things Fall Apart*. London/Ibadan/Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1986, 111. In this masterpiece C. Achebe underlines the characteristics of an Osu. “The Osu” he writes “was a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart - a taboo for ever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the freeborn. He was in fact an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An *osu* could not attend an assembly of the freeborn, and they in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died he was buried by his kin in the evil forest.”

¹⁸⁵ Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers*, 64.

¹⁸⁶ Ozigbo I.R.A *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 120.

¹⁸⁷ APS, *Bulletin General*, vol. XXIII, 491-502 as quoted by Ozigbo I. R. A., *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 95.

and the offscorings of the society bending over shovels or carrying head-pans, under the scorching heat of the sun ... but what else can we do? I have asked all our boarders and the 110 non-boarders to do some bit of manual labour regularly, and this has already yielded good results, in fact they have persevered in doing this in spite of the solicitations of non-Catholic missionaries who give them gifts of rice, fish, cloths et cetera with the promise that they would not be subjected to any form of manual labour or inconvenience, if they were to leave us and join them."¹⁸⁸

It is clear from this statement that Father Lejeune did not send away the re-bought ex-slaves and other inmates of the Christian village. However, he decided that he would not build any other village. The success of his programme against the continuation of the ex-slave apostolate showed itself when he began converting hard-line slave merchants and influential chiefs to the Catholic faith.¹⁸⁹

The conversion of the above chiefs and slave dealers was a positive signal to Fr. J. Lejeune that his reform was not going to be a failure. A great achievement was the conversion of Okolo Okosi, who was later elected king of Onitsha. Such achievements boosted the morale of Father Lejeune and attracted more converts to the church. The conversion of noble and influential citizens to faith gave a new impulse to the course of evangelisation in Igboland. Since the presence of the missionaries became a sign of recognition and hope for development, there arose an atmosphere of competition among the natives, especially among village chiefs and leaders as to who would be visited next by the missionaries. Fr. J. Lejeune made use of this atmosphere in evangelising the places he could visit and in laying down conditions under which they would be visited.¹⁹⁰

Lejeune's revolution was unexpected for the members of the Christian village. It was very difficult for them to adjust to the reforms of Lejeune after they had enjoyed everything free-of-cost during the tenure of Father J. Lutz. But now

¹⁸⁸ Quotation in: Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers, 1885-1905*, 64.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 76. „Among the biggest scoop for Father Lejeune and his missionary team was the conversion of chiefs Alfred, Charles, Daniel, Benedict and Augustine of Ndimbi (probably Nembe). These people were the greatest slave-owners in the area and were assured it was not necessary to free their slaves but simply christianise them, thus constituting them into a type of Christian village.“

¹⁹⁰ The incident that took place after the conversion of King Fatu of Nsugbe was a an important occasion for evangelisation of the entire village. As a sign of commitment the people resolved to send all their children to school, to make all the people attend Mass and catechetical instruction and to build two main roads to link up the Mission with the town.

they had to pay a tithe and do manual labour in appreciation for the attention and service which they received and as a kind of contribution for promoting locally the course of evangelisation. The introduction of the Annual Mission Contribution (AMC), which is still prevalent in South-eastern Nigeria till this day, owes its origin to Father Lejeune's reforms. The AMC was a fixed annual contribution from every baptised adult, member, catechumens, and children. Every member of the church was obliged to pay this tax as a form of encouraging missionary activities and as an appreciation of the efforts of the missionaries.¹⁹¹ Although the converts were not pleased with the introduction of this collection, the missionaries insisted on it because it possessed the potentiality of evolving a self-reliant local church.

3.2.2.3. Fr. Lejeune's Education Concept

Fr. Lejeune recognised in his missionary activities in Igboland the place of education both in the missionary life of the church and in the development of a human person. In proposing the school programme he believed that the Gospel would reach every nook and cranny of Igbo society. Moreover, it would enhance the training of the youth who would in turn help in converting their parents. He wrote in 1903: The Schools [...] are for us an excellent means of propaganda. It is the youth that we educate, and the youth are the future.¹⁹² Fr. Lejeune expressed himself similarly in another report to his superiors on May 28, 1901:

‘Les Ecoles, celles des garçons surtout, sont un de nos moyens d’évangélisation,’ Later in the year he wrote: ‘Il faut des écoles, c’est le plus sûr moyen d’évangélisation.’ [...] Une méthode d’évangélisation, employée ici, et qui fait merveille, échouerait entièrement ailleurs. Ici, ce sont les écoles qui fournissent tous les succès¹⁹³

Lejeune's school programme met with opposition both from his colleagues and from the natives. His radical educational ambitions, his uncompromising disregard of the hitherto accepted missionary methods, and his highhandedness in putting through his revolutionary ideas, raised fears in many circles.¹⁹⁴ Nicholas I. Omenka gives us an insight into the misunderstanding that arose between Father Lejeune and his confrères with regard to education policy. “Both the Society of African Missions in Western Nigeria and the Holy

¹⁹¹ cf. Ikenga R. A. Ozigbo, *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 159.

¹⁹² CSE: 192/B/III, „Lejeune to Superior General,“ Onitsha, 25 February, 1901.

¹⁹³ See Quotation in Omenka N. I. *School in the Service of Evangelization*, 47.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria were French missionary societies. The majority of the members of these two societies were French and Alsations of Germany origin. These had come to West Africa when the territorial struggle between France and Britain was still largely unresolved. But a search for English-speaking missionaries became inevitable. Although he was a Frenchman, Father Lejeune made no bones of his preference for Irish missionaries with good academic qualifications. His main contention was that the education which the other Fathers had received in France and Germany, and the language handicap which they brought along with them to an English colony, were factors which were not conducive to the educational contest going on there. This policy irritated the sensitive patriotism of the French and German missionaries, who had come to the Mission immediately after their ordinations and had had no formal training as school masters. They understandably saw Lejeune's educational policy as a threat to their missionary careers, for the consequences of the radical move towards education would be either to be superseded by the Irish or reduced to second-class missionaries in a Mission they had built up with so much suffering and sacrifice."¹⁹⁵

In spite of such opposition, Father Lejeune kept on with his reform programme and education policy and persuaded his confrères and other missionaries to join force in carrying out the education policy. He criticised the policy of re-buying slaves and its implications for the missions, for the natives traditionally don't wish to have anything in common with slaves or slave dealers. He believed firmly that the "readiness to buy slaves [...] encouraged the dealers to ensure a regular flow of the goods. [...] My opinion and the opinion of our Superior General and many African bishops is that slavery shall never be abolished by buying slaves, but by evangelization properly so called".¹⁹⁶

It is in the place of the buying of slaves that Fr. Lejuene proposed his western education policy to replace the buying of slaves. He confessed that "education in Africa is the surest means of converting the people. It has even become the only way: (*elle devient meme le seul moyen*) without the schools, we are nowhere."¹⁹⁷

Father Lejeune's administration embarked on building schools to demonstrate further his seriousness with the school project. In addition, he instructed his co-workers to establish training places in their stations. Father Lejeune's interest in education was to develop a strategy that would help the spread the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 48-49.

¹⁹⁶ CSE: 191/B/III, „Lejeune to Cardinal Ledochowski. As quoted by Omenka N. I., Ibid., 47.

¹⁹⁷ APS, B192/A/A, Lejeune to Directors of the Propaganda of the Faith“. Calabar, 20th October, 1904. Quotation in Omenka N. I., Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria, 182.

Catholic faith in Eastern Nigeria. It is rather unfortunate to note that this fact is not often well presented in the writings of some historians and authors who give the credit to his successor.

Fr. Lejeune's tenure as leader of the Catholic missions in Igboland represents an irrepressible and very important epoch in the annals of Roman Catholicism in Igboland and in the whole of Southern Nigeria. His achievements speak for themselves. In fact, he rescued the Prefecture from the hopeless situation in which it found itself before his assumption of office. It was as recognition of the achievement of his programme and the increase in the number of converts that the Church in Igboland was elevated to the status of Prefecture. His reforms and ingenuity put the Igbo church on the ecclesiastical map. In his tribute to his initiatives, Fr. (later Bishop) Shanahan, his successor, qualified him as "the only missionary in Africa who was capable of achieving the impossible."¹⁹⁸ Fr. Lejeune was a seasoned missionary and did not overlook the role of culture in the evangelisation of peoples. He demonstrated his love for local cultures by introducing the teaching of Igbo language in the schools. As an enhancement, an Igbo grammar as well as a dictionary were published. It was very easy for the pupils to learn more about the faith through these publications.¹⁹⁹ The production of these books on Christian doctrine was of help to the work of evangelisation in Igboland. Fr. Lejeune attached so much importance to them that he mandated that they be thoroughly studied and taught in all Catholic schools under his jurisdiction.²⁰⁰

Before concluding the study on Fr. J. Lejeune's contribution to education, it is necessary to remark that he did not limit his school programme to the primary or elementary stages of formation. He established trade-centres and teacher-training colleges. Thus, he turned the schools in Calabar and Onitsha Wharfs into recruiting centres for the teachers who would one day staff the Catholic schools which were mushrooming in the Prefecture. The area concerning priestly formation was not left out by Father Lejeune. He initiated the plan of establishing a seminary in the Prefecture. To appreciate Lejeune's achieve-

¹⁹⁸ Quoted by J. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria, 20.

¹⁹⁹ Ozigbo I.R.A. Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria, 145. „Under Fr. Lejeune, the first attempts to compose and edit an Igbo catechism were made. Fr. Ganot published his *Grammaire Ibo* and his *English-Ibo-French Dictionary* in 1900 and 1904 respectively. He also published his *Katikisimi Ibo* in 1901. This was essentially an Ibo summary of the *catéchisme de la foi catholique* which Msgr. Le Roy had published in 1898 as an exemplary specimen for local catechisms in C.S.Sp missions. It would appear that Fr. Lejeune was not satisfied with this summary catechism. He wanted a catechism that was pungent enough to match the Protestant assaults then currently being mounted on the Niger. With the help of Fr. Vogler and the catechists the famous *Katechisma nk'okwukwe nzuko katolik n'asusu Igbo* appeared in January, 1904

²⁰⁰ Ozigbo I. R. A., *Ibid.* 279.

ments in Igboland better it will be useful to scan through the following statistical data

3.2.2.4. Statistics of Mission Growth in South-eastern Nigeria Mission under Fr. Lejeune²⁰¹

| Year | 1900 | 1901 | 1902 | 1903 | 1904 |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| Catholics | 1,322 | 1,831 | 1,831 | 1,927 | 2,800-3,000 |
| Protestants | 10,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 15,000 20,000 | - 10,000 |
| Non-Christians | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 |
| Conversions | 246 | 223 | 204 | 284 | 483 |
| Priests | 8 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 13 |
| Brothers | 3 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Sisters | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Catechists | 5+7 = 12 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 19 |
| Church-buildings | 6 | | 4+7 | | 15 |
| Schools | 7 | 11 | 13 | | 16 |
| Schools for boys | | | | 13 | |
| Workshop | 6 | 6 | 6 | | 6 |
| Orphanages | 3 | | | | |
| Nurseries | 2 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Hospitals & Dispensaries | 4 | 6 | 6 | | 6 |

²⁰¹ Although these statistics are from original texts as provided by the missionaries, it has to be borne in mind that their mathematical accuracy can be subjected to serious doubt, since the missionaries often inflated the numbers in order to attract sympathy and funds for the mission

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|---|---|-------|---|
| Schools for girls | | | | 1 | |
| Houses of Refuge | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| Leprosariums | 1 | 2 | | 2 | |
| Villages for the Freed | | 3 | 2 | | |
| Higher Schools | | 1 | | | |
| Hospitals | | | | 2 | |
| Dispensaries | | | | 2 | |
| Seminaries under Construction | | | | 1 | |
| Colleges under Construction | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Pupils | 800 | | | 1,100 | |
| Secondary Schools serving as Seminaries. | 1 | | | | |

B/192/A/04²⁰²

From the data given above, one can see the increase in the number of converts, priests, catechists, church buildings, schools and hospitals in comparison to the figure which Fr. Lejeune inherited from his predecessor.

3.2.3. Bishop Joseph Shanahan C.S.Sp

The Rev. Fr. Joseph Shanahan was an Irish priest born at Glankeen, Tipperary. He was ordained on 22nd April, 1900. Two years after his ordination he

²⁰² Cf. C.S.E. B/192/A/04, Lejeune to Mother House in Paris and to Propagation of the Faith, Rome, Annual Reports 1900-1904. Quoted by Obi C. A. Hundred Years Of Catholicism in Eastern Nigeria, 99

applied to his superiors in Paris to be allowed to go on missionary apostolate. His request was granted. Hence, he was sent as an apostolic missionary to join the missionary band wagon at Onitsha in Southern Nigeria. Without wasting much time he left for Onitsha/Nigeria full of ambition and zeal for the work awaiting him in Southern Nigeria. He was to help Msgr. Lejeune at Onitsha in the Prefecture of Southern Nigeria.

Father Joseph Shanahan's coming to Onitsha marked the beginning of the change of leadership and the transfer of the baton in Southern Nigeria from the French missionaries to the Irish missionaries. The British government was already tired of dealing with the French missionaries who never shared the same political interest with them. There ensued untold misunderstandings which were settled by the systematic replacement of the French missionaries with Irish Holy Ghost Fathers under the leadership of Father Shanahan.²⁰³

After the death of his superior, Fr. Lejeune, Fr. Shanahan was recommended by the Spiritan Superior General in Paris to Propaganda Fide for the position of leadership in the Lower Niger Missions as the successor of Lejeune. Fr. Shanahan was a dedicated and talented missionary. He was tireless and never gave up in the face of difficulties. His missionary ingenuity and achievements led to his being appointed the Prefect of the Apostolic Prefecture of Southern Nigeria. Under his leadership, the missions extended to other parts of southern Nigeria like Calabar, Ogoja and other hinterlands. As the number of Christians increased and the Prefecture extended to other parts of the Prefecture, the Prefecture was raised to the status of Vicariate in April, 1920, and the Prefect (Shanahan) became a bishop. The vicariate according to official documents was 68.306 square miles, including Munchi, and comprised 8 provinces. Of these 8, the vicariate occupied 4: Onitsha, Owerri, Ogoja and Calabar, with a land surface of 37.006 square miles and a population of 5,107,000 inhabitants.²⁰⁴ He died in Nairobi on Christmas Day, 1943, at the end of a memorable life in South-eastern Nigeria.

3.2.3.1. The School Pastoral under Bishop Joseph Shanahan

Education is an essential factor in the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world, in the building-up of human society, and in the development of human life. Bishop J. Shanahan C.S.Sp. gave total commitment to it as his primary instrument of evangelisation, salvation and sanctification in Igbo-

²⁰³ Cf. Ekechi, F. K., *Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland, 1857-1914*. London 1972, 73.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Obi C. A., *The Missionary Contributions of Bishop Joseph Shanahan, C.S.Sp., 1902-1932*, 106-174, 152.

land.²⁰⁵ He went far in the implementation of the programme, in spite of the opposition he received from his mother house. In his defence, he argued thus: “I do not understand what is meant by ‘evangelization in its real sense’. Would one say that we are not evangelising the country in which we find ourselves when we have all its children in our hands? The discipline in the school, the missionary who is in steady contact with the pupils, the facility that one has to bring them to the sacraments, the Masses that are being said all these years, are all these not true evangelization? [...] Let me say it once again that the school does not preclude any other system of evangelization [...] Moral instruction shall go hand in hand with intellectual instruction; so it was [...] and shall not be different with regard to the moral and intellectual education of the immense population of Southern Nigeria.”²⁰⁶

As a deliberate, systematic, and sustained means of transmitting, evoking or acquiring knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities, education did achieve the results which Bishop J. Shanahan set out to achieve in the Vicariate. His model in the missionary enterprise was St. Patrick who had converted Ireland through the schools. Before joining the Holy Ghost Congregation, his father had imbued him with the transformative effects of education. The school enabled Shanahan and his missionaries to gain easy and quick access to the hearts of the Igbo communities even as far as Calabar. As a matter of fact, the schools did contribute much to the formation of new generations of Igbo who were trained in Christian culture, morals and value-system. It prepared the pupils for future missionary and evangelical tasks.

Three types of schools were emphasised: educational/industrial (trade schools), school-chapels, and central schools. In the trade schools, the students learnt a trade and hand work. School-chapel, which was more or less an outstation with catechists in charge, served as places of worship and learning. Catechists were also trained in such schools. The central schools (native authority schools) were set up and run not strictly speaking by the missionaries but by the government.²⁰⁷

It is, however, pertinent to note that the success of the school programme would not have been possible without the co-operation of Bishop Shanahan’s fellow missionaries. He consulted them on a regular basis and solicited their active participation in the process. He depended also on the services of mission catechists “who gave intelligent, sincere and zealous corporation. Every

²⁰⁵ Cf. Njoku R. N., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 36.

²⁰⁶ See CSE: 191/B/IV, J. Shanahan; “Training School for Southern Nigeria,” Onitsha, 6 May, 1910. Quoted by N. I. Omenka, *The School in the Service of Evangelization*, 96.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Nwosu C. U., *Evangelization in Igboland.*, 253.

catechist-station was a hive of Christian activities. Each had its school and chapel where Sunday services were held morning and evening. A committee of elder Christians saw to it that the catechist, the Catholics and catechumens did their work: visits, instructing and baptising the sick, and giving Christian burial to the dead.’²⁰⁸

Statistics showing Mission growth in Onitsha Vicariate and its Schools from 1889-1917.²⁰⁹

| | 1889 | 1901 | 1904 | 1906 | 1912 | | |
|--------------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Fathers | 8 | 9 | 18 | 10 | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| Brothers | 3 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 10 | 6 |
| Catechists | 12 | 14 | 19 | 33 | 42 | 124 | 506 |
| Teachers | | | | | | | |
| Principal Stations | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Outstations | | | | | 16 | 38 | 280 |
| Schools | 7 | 11 | 16 | 24 | 24 | 46 | 287 |
| School Children | 334 | 828 | 1,200 | 3,000 | 2,591 | 6,578 | 20,000 |
| Catechumens | | | | | 1,671 | 5,368 | 32,449 |
| Baptism | 133 | 323 | | 569 | 670 | 1,199 | 2,326 |

3.2.3.2. Promotion of Indigenous Vocations

Bishop Shanahan invested everything in his power in building up a strong Church in South-eastern Nigeria. He recognised the need and importance of having an indigenous church. So he built the first major seminary (St. Paul’s

²⁰⁸ Obi C. A., *The Missionary Activities of Bishop Shanahan, C.S.Sp.*, 151.

²⁰⁹ Okafor G. M., *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 84.

seminary) at Igbariam for the training of interested indigenes to the priesthood. Already there was the practice of preparing prospective candidates through the watchful eyes of experienced priests. The seminary project in Eastern Nigeria yielded enormous fruits for the Church. The seminary was later transferred to Igboariam in the Anambra valley not far from Aguleri in 1924.²¹⁰ The first candidates included Mr. John Cross Ayogu (who later became the first priest of the seminary), Messrs William Obelagu, Michael I. Tansi and J. Nwanegbo.

It has to be noted that Igboland had already witnessed the ordination of its first priest three years before this date. That was the ordination of Paul Obodochina. He cannot be said to be the product of Igboariam, since record has it that “he was among the first fruits of the works of the S.M.A Fathers”.²¹¹ It is probable that he never attended a senior seminary as such, but must have been taught philosophy and theology privately by some specially appointed priests: a method employed for the training of candidates to the priesthood till the Council of Trent (1545-1563).²¹²

From 1929 to 1934 the seminary was relocated to Onitsha close to St. Charles Training College. More candidates: Messrs G. Nwedo, W. Oniah, Gabriel Ebo and E. Ahaji were admitted into the seminary. Being located closer to the training college, the seminarians, now, had the privilege of combining their training to the priesthood with teaching in the college. The seminary project continued to develop in size and strength and to move from one location to another till it finally settled at Enugu in 1941. The following chart gives glimpse into the growth of the Vicariate during the stewardship of Bishop Shanahan.²¹³

| Year | 1905 | 1906 | 1907 | 1908 | 1909 | 1910 | 1911 | 1912 | 1913 | 1914 | 1915 | 1916 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Catholics | 2000 | 2400 | 2420 | 2374 | | 3542 | 6472 | 5563 | 6494 | 10753 | 7924 | 934 |
| Protestants | 8000 | 8200 | 8300 | | | 9500 | 10000 | | | 31900 | 14000 | 20000 |
| Pagans | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 |

²¹⁰ Eke C. I. Priestly and Religious Vocations, in: C. A. Obi (ed.) *Hundred Years of Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria*. Onitsha: African-Fep Pub. Ltd. 1985, 304-330, 305.

²¹¹ Obi C. A., *The Development of Priestly Vocation in Igboland and the genesis of the Bigard Seminary*, in: *Lucerna (Bigard Theological Studies)*, Dec 1986-June 1987, vol. 7, Nr.1

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Obi. C. A., *Missionary Activities of Bishop Shanahan*, 140-141.

| | 000 | 000 | 000 | 000 | | 000 | 000 | 000 | 000 | 000 | 000 | 000 |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Conversions | 380 | 546 | 503 | 741 | | 688 | 17 | 1029 | 1206 | 1072 | 815 | 117 |
| Priests | 11 | 12 | 12 | 15 | | 17 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 18 | 16 |
| Brothers | 8 | 9 | 9 | 12 | | 11 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Sisters | 7 | 10 | 10 | 10 | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Catechists | 25 | 33 | 45 | 39 | | 56 | 82 | 124 | 191 | | 256 | |
| Schools | 18 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NS | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Hospitals | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| Dispensaries | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | | | |
| Workshops | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | | 9 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| HR | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| CP | 26 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Churches | 4 | | 6 | 7 | | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | | 9 | 9 |
| Chapels | | 20 | | 19 | | 17 | 22 | 38 | 56 | | 140 | 190 |
| Boys' School | | 22 | 24 | 24 | | 24 | 33 | | | | | 196 |
| GS | | 2 | 3 | | | 3 | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| Orphanages | | 5 | 5 | 5 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Leprosarium | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Catechumens | | | | | | 2573 | 4735 | 5368 | 10528 | 7529 | 12287 | 19854 |
| SC | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| JS | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| High Schools | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | | |
| PS | | | | | | | | 43 | | | 159 | |
| VLS Slaves | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| PSB | | | | | | | | | 72 | 115 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|-----|--|---|
| PSG | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| CT | | | | | | | | | | 240 | | |
| CC | | | | | | | | | | 97 | | |
| CV | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 2 |

(Keys: NS - Nursery Schools, HR - Houses of Refuge; CP - Converts (Protestants); GS - Girls' Schools; SC - Seminaries in Construction; JS - Junior Seminaries; PS - Primary Schools; VLS - Village for Liberated Slaves; PSB - Primary Schools for Boys; PSG - Primary Schools for Girls; CT - Catechists/Teachers; CC – Churches/Chapels; CV - Christian Villages).

3.2.3.3. Shanahan's Moves towards Inculturated Faith in Igboland

A fair knowledge of the natives and certain aspects of their lives and culture were of immense assistance to Bishop J. Shanahan's apostolate in Eastern Nigeria. He was the first Catholic missionary in Igboland to give attention to the people's culture as a means of Evangelization. As he took over the office of leadership of the mission, he was not in a hurry to make people accept the new ways. Rather, "he made use of the ideas they already had and linked up his simple message of the Gospel. He made use of traditional religious faith and practice of the people in his evangelization. Courtesy and respect for the noble aspect of the peoples' ideas and custom lightened his tough task. He knew when to strike the right note and when to apply firmness."²¹⁴

To realise this aim, the missionaries did not lay the main emphasis on sophisticated theology like the Trinity, the Saints, the Sacrament or the Pope. They adopted the Igbo concept of "Chukwu" (Supreme God) and described themselves as his messengers.²¹⁵ Shanahan's recognition of Igbo religion and culture helped him penetrate to the people.²¹⁶

Bishop Shanahan utilised the above missionary pedagogy and penetrated the hearts of the natives. He de-emphasised the Christian village apostolate because it was designed to cut the natives off from their culture and original environment. He had no use for a missionary who wanted to destroy the crudely

²¹⁴ Njoku R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 37.

²¹⁵ Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 194.

²¹⁶ He "went from village to village on foot, ate the people's food, shared the same shelter with them and spoke to them in a language they could understand. Deeply impressed by the religious instinct of the Ibo, he saw that what Ibo religion wanted was not destruction but transformation. Shanahan's understanding of the Ibo religion undoubtedly contributed to the stupendous outstripping of the protestant mission by the Catholics in the Ibo country" (Ayandele E. A., *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1887-1914*. Ibadan: History Series, Longman 1966, 265).

carved pagan gods that abound everywhere among the people. Such men were iconoclasts rather than missionaries. He did not even believe in preaching that material things had no power, because they were man-made and had neither eyes to see or ear to hear nor lips to speak. He addressed the power of the spirit in the consciousness of the natives during his treks.²¹⁷ Francis Arinze gives the following eye-witness account: “Bishop Shanahan, the great apostle to the Igbos, was always mindful that the missionary never finds an empty void into which to pour the saving truth of our faith. He finds existing religious beliefs and practices, social and other cultural values. Many of these are already stepping-stones prepared by Divine Providence. Bishop Shanahan, therefore, often departed from the Igbo religious tenets to soar to the heights of Christian beliefs and practices. In this he acted like St. Paul who could delude a Jewish audience with masterly rabbinical quotations from the Sacred Scriptures, but could also speak to the Greeks at Athens from the book of nature and by quoting one of their own poets (cf. Acts 17: 12-32)”²¹⁸

With this missionary style Bishop Shanahan succeeded in establishing a Christian faith in the midst of “paganism”.²¹⁹ His success can be attributed to his attitude to Igbo religion and culture. He did not run away from Igbo traditions, Igbo religious centres or shrines, nor did he destroy them.²²⁰ He baptised Children and allowed them to live with their parents, calculating that these children would eventually become apostles to the parents. He was able to speak Igbo and celebrated mass in the language.

3.2.4 Expansion under Archbishop Charles Heerey C.S.Sp. (1890-1967)

Bishop J. Shanahan’s thirty years leadership in South-eastern Nigeria ended with the election of Fr. Charles Heerey C.S.Sp. as his successor in the South-

²¹⁷ Jordan J., *Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria*. Dublin: Elo Press 1971, 114-115.

²¹⁸ Arinze F. A., *The Church and Nigerian Culture*. Onitsha: Tabansi 1973, 14.

²¹⁹ Cf. Onwubiko O. A., *Inculturation in the Service of Evangelization* (A Paper Presented at 1996 Theological Conference of the Archdiocese of Onitsha Monday, 29th April, 1996) 9. The qualification of the adherents of Traditional Religion as pagans, as popularised in the missionary period, is wrong and has been superseded. The missionaries exploited the term in Africa in general in order to devalue the native religion and introduce the Christian religion among the people. However, from our presentation in chapter three of this work on Igbo Traditional Religion and culture, it becomes clear that Igbo (or African) Traditional Religion is theo-centric and monotheistic like Christianity, in spite of the respect accorded to other elements of the Igbo religious system. Hence, to label the people “pagans”, as indicated in some documents, is a misunderstanding and a wrong presentation of the entire religious system and its original meaning.

²²⁰ Cf. Onwubiko A. O., *African Thought, Religion & Culture*. Enugu: Snaap 1991 90.

ern Nigeria Mission.²²¹ Bishop Heerey did not diverge from the programme already established by his predecessor. The main objectives of his regime were essentially twofold. Firstly, it embarked on a mop-up operation to reach the relatively few Igbo towns that were yet to be evangelized. Secondly, it made sustained efforts to exploit and perfect the mission strategies and gains of the earlier administrations. While consolidating the school system of Bishop Shanahan, a serious attempt was made to revive the medical strategy of the Lutz era.²²²

Bishop C. Heerey attached importance to the creation of more mission stations and the erection of houses for priests and catechists within the stations and parishes. He believed that the constant availability of missionaries in these centres would facilitate the process of evangelization in the areas. The natives showed considerable co-operation to the missionaries in the creation of new stations and parishes.

Thanks to the benefits of Western education, which were becoming more apparent to the people, and being convinced that a priest's residence in a town would increase the opportunity for education, as well as bring other temporal and spiritual benefits associated with the Church, the people of various towns mounted pressure on the missionaries to provide resident priests. Consequently, the missionaries could not meet all the requests, as very many towns vied with one another for resident priests. To achieve their aim, the natives resorted to various means of getting the consent of the missionaries. Some of the means included:

- (a) Readiness to provide pieces of land;
- (b) Readiness to provide money and labour for the project;
- (c) Presence of a large school population or the promise of it;

²²¹ Bishop (later Archbishop) C. Heerey C.S.Sp was born on 29th November, 1890. He was ordained priest on 24th Sept. 1921 and began his missionary career in Nigeria six years thereafter. It was at the request of Bishop Shanahan that he opted for the Southern Nigeria mission. In 1927 he was appointed the coadjutor bishop of the Vicariate. With the retirement of Bishop Shanahan he took over the mantle of leadership in the Vicariate. He died in February 1967.

²²² Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism: The Onitsha Connection 1967-1984*. Onitsha: Africana FEP Pub. Ltd. 1985, 15.

- (d) The central position of a town vis-à-vis other towns requesting for a resident priest.²²³

The various villages went as far as to petition to Bishop C. Heerey, giving further reasons why the priests' residence should be located in their village and not in another. A typical example was the petition by Nimo Catholics to Bishop Heerey in 1939 which emphasised numerical strength and superiority as a reason for having the priests residence located in their town. He made the following testimony: the grace of God has been most powerful within us so that the number in our Church is growing by leaps and bounds. We have today in the Nimo Church 1,500 members, while Enugwu-Ukwu and Abagana, which are in the immediate neighbourhood, have 1,050 and 650 Christians and Catechumens respectively. This makes it appear very likely that Christ shall have all the people of Nimo and the environs to Himself in a very near future if we have somebody in the person of a priest to work among us.²²⁴ The competition among the natives for missionary attentions indicated the change of attitude towards the missionaries and Christianity. It showed that they were no longer inimical to the missions but were ready to meet the demands made by the missionaries before the erection of priests' residences in their towns and villages.

3.2.4.1. The Creation of More Prefectures and Dioceses

Bishop Charles Heerey's period of leadership of the South-eastern Nigeria Vicariate witnessed a massive expansion of the mission in South-eastern Nigeria. The extent of the expansion made the creation in 1934 of two prefectures - Calabar and Benue prefectures- out of the Vicariate imperative. The creation of these Prefectures limited Bishop Heerey's area of jurisdiction to Igboland with an area of about 40,490 sq. km, and a total population of about 3,000,000. The area was then correspondingly renamed Onitsha-Owerri Vicariate. In spite of the reduction of the size of the Vicariate, the missionaries continued building new schools and Teacher Training Colleges in almost all zones of Igboland.²²⁵

²²³ Cf. Ekon F. E., *Expansion and Consolidation: Growth in Onitsha, Calabar, Owerri, Ogoja and Umuahia*. In *Hundred Years of Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1985*, Onitsha: Africana-FEP Pub. Ltd., 1985, 175-223, 180.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 181.

²²⁵ „The College of Immaculate Conception (C.I.C) was established in Enugu in 1940; Queen of the Holy Rosary College (Q.R.C.) was launched at Enugu in 1942 but was later transferred to Onitsha in 1949. Other notable Catholic secondary schools were: Stella Maris, Port Harcourt (1948); St. Patrick's College Emene (1956); St. Peter's, Achina; St. John's Alor (1958) and Our Lady's, Nnobi (1959). Mr. E. R. J. Hussey, the Director of Education in Southern Nigeria, had introduced the Elementary Teacher Training College (E.T.T.C.) in the 1930s. The Vicariate went in for these E.T.T.C. - Loretto Training College, Adazi (1943); St. Martins Training College, Ihala; Bishop Shanahan Training College, Orlu 1948); Holy Ghost Training College, Umua-

The Onitsha-Owerri Vicariate witnessed a further division in 1948,. This was the separation of the Owerri zone from the Onitsha zone. This was followed up with the raising of the Onitsha Vicariate to the status of an arch-diocese. With the death of Archbishop Charles Heerey in 1967, F. Arinze (then co-adjutor bishop and now Cardinal) was appointed archbishop and metropolitan of the Catholic Church in whole of South-eastern Nigeria.²²⁶ One striking issue on this appointment was that it marked the first time a native was invested with the responsibility as metropolitan of a whole ecclesiastical province.

The Vicariate of Owerri comprised of the Owerri, Umuahia, Port Harcourt, Orlu, Okigwe and Mbaise zones, with Fr. Joseph B. Whelan C.S.Sp. as bishop. On June 17th, 1950, it was raised to the status of a diocese. He continued the process of pastoral re-organisation of the Vicariate so that the new Vicariate could meet the new challenges facing it. This led to the creation of new dioceses and ecclesiastical institutions and centres. On June 23, 1958, the diocese of Umuahia (comprising the Old-Bende, Okigwe and Ngwa zones) was created, with Fr. A. G. Nwedo C.S.Sp. as bishop-elect. With this election, he became the first resident indigenous Bishop in charge of a diocese. The riverine areas of the Vicariate were constituted into the separate diocese of Port-Harcourt in 1962, in order to hasten evangelisation in the territory.²²⁷ Since the creation of Umuahia and Port-Harcourt dioceses, other zones like Okigwe, Orlu, Mbaise (Ahiara) and Aba have been created into separate dioceses. Consequent upon the speedy spread of the Church in these dioceses, the dioceses of the former Owerri zone were created into a separate ecclesiastical province in 1994 and Owerri, which is the mother of these dioceses, was made an arch-diocese and metropolitan seat of the province.

3.2.4.2. Establishment of Medical/Caritative Services

The Church in Igboland also experienced expansion in the areas of medical/caritative services. The first missionary hospital was opened in Anua (St. Luke's Hospital) in March, 1933. This hospital fell to the Prefecture of Calabar the following year. The Vicariate had six dispensaries and four orphanages in Igboland in this same year. Other maternity homes and health centres were established in the Vicariate. Some of these included: the Holy Rosary maternity, Onitsha (1935); Mount Carmel Hospital, Emekuku (1935). In that same year, the Vicariate had 14 dispensaries and 8 orphanages. Our Lady of Lourdes's

hia (1948); T.T.C., Agulu (1949); T.T.C., Nsukka (1951); T.T.C., Iwollo, (1959), etc.“ (Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism*, 22)

²²⁶ This Province covered the former Onitsha and Owerri Vicariates, as well as the Prefectures of Calabar and some parts of Benue Prefecture.

²²⁷ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Roman Catholicism in South Eastern Nigeria*, 262.

Hospital, Ihiala, was launched shortly after that. Other important Catholic Hospitals were the Mother of Christ Maternity Hospital, Enugu and Borromeo Hospital, Onitsha.²²⁸

Many factors made the medical apostolate flourish during the administration of Archbishop C. Heerey. Among these was the presence of Irish nuns in the Vicariate. These nuns were already advanced in medical training so that they helped in running the hospitals and maternity homes. “From 1944, they began leprosy work in Abakaliki and Afikpo. The Holy Rosary sisters embarked on the medical apostolate with great interest in the 1940s. From 1942, they sent out their members to various medical schools in Ireland and Britain to train as doctors, obstetricians, gynaecologists and nurses. Consequently, the hospitals of the Vicariate were, in the main, staffed by the Holy Rosary Sisters. They began to turn out hundreds of Igbo nurses in their hospitals.”²²⁹

²²⁸ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism*, 23.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE CHURCH IN PRESENT-DAY NIGERIA

The period after Nigeria's independence saw many changes in Catholic Church in Nigeria in general. This period corresponded to the post-Vatican era. As the period was marked by the country's radical break with the past, politically and religiously, the Church was confronted with new challenges especially in the areas of establishing an indigenous Church and clergy, the running of her schools and other pastoral projects, etc. Apart from these internal challenges, the Nigerian Church was also involved in the process of the development of the country.

4.1 The Contributions of the Church to the Development of Nigeria

From the political point of view, the independence of Nigeria in 1960 brought the British colonial regime in the country to an end. The period following the country's independence was characterised by challenges of ensuring a viable and solid self-government able to face the challenges of international politics as well as defend the integrity of the country as a sovereign nation. In spite of the fact that the political history of Nigeria has been dominated by wars, coups and counter coups, the country has made reliant efforts to combat the regional, ethnic and religious problems that have paralysed the growth of the nation.

Although the Catholic Church in Nigeria, which was under the control of foreign missionaries, did not play any significant role in the independence of the country, it did contribute much to the development of the country and to insuring peaceful coexistence, especially during the political crisis which almost split the country apart few years after independence.

The first mention of a convocation of Catholics in Nigeria on a national basis was in 1956, that is, four years before the country's independence. This gathering was convoked under the title, The Catholic Welfare Conference of Nigeria. As this name indicates, the Catholic Welfare Association was not a political body but religious. It later became the administrative organ of the Catholic hierarchy in the country enabling it to could discuss and act on matters of common interest even on political matters.²³⁰

²³⁰ Makozi A. O., Contemporary Trends in the Growth of the Church in Nigeria; in: A. O. Makozi /G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.)The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria. Nigeria: Macmillan Nig. Pub. 1982, 87-99, 88.

The Church's commitment to the development of Nigeria did not begin with the 1960 independence. The Church had committed itself not only to establishing the Christian faith in the country but also to the total development of the human person in all capacities right from the colonial/missionary era. These goals were accomplished by adopting strategies in evangelisation that ensured a total development of the natives.

The strategies included, among others, education, agricultural programmes and medical/health centres. The Church has continued to execute the above projects until the present time. She believes that social reformation and development can come through a social education which has as its primary aim personal human development. Hence, hospitals, health centres, preventive clinics, social development training centres, rural development schemes and adult education programmes have remained the core of the Church's development plan.²³¹ Furthermore, the Church has shown its interest in ensuring peaceful co-existence in Nigeria especially during the Nigeria-Biafra civil war and other politico-military issues that have threatened the country's unity.

Through the assistance of foreign/humanitarian agencies the Catholic Church in Nigeria left no stone unturned in ensuring that the war victims, the sick and hungry were cared for.²³² She was, however confronted with new problems after the country's civil war (1967-70). "While reconciliation was taking place, policies for the gigantic task of rehabilitating the people and places as well as the reconstruction of roads, bridges, hospitals and schools affected by the crisis were outlined. Here [...] the Catholic Church excelled in her total involvement in and commitment to these noble tasks, which became major items in the agenda of the National Episcopal Conference meetings."²³³

4.1.1 Expulsion of Missionaries from Igboland

The forceful repatriation of the missionaries in the Igbo section of Nigeria after the Nigeria-Biafra civil war was one of the sad effects of the war as far

²³¹ Ibid., 96.

²³² According to Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism - The Onitsha Connection 1967-1984*. Onitsha: Africana-FEP Pub. Ltd. 1985, 28. Catholic Relief Agencies in Europe and America, particularly CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS and AFRICA CONCERN, sent in large consignment of food, medicine, money and clothing to both parties in the conflict to relieve the distress and the shortage brought about by the war. As Biafra was blockaded by land, sea and air, these Relief Organisations had to mount costly night flights from Sao Tome to Uli Airstrip in Biafra, with selfless abandon. Between 250 and 300 tons of food were flown in every night. In March, 1969, the record number of flights in one night was 24. By April 1969, the number of flight from Sao Tome to Biafra stood at 2233.

²³³ Ibid., 94.

as Biafra was concerned. One of the root causes for this expulsion was the suspicion by the then Federal Government of Nigeria that the missionaries were of assistance to the Igbo during the war by supporting them through out the war with their caritative activities.²³⁴ In addition to this was the increasing propaganda of denigration mounted against the missionaries by the Nigerian media.²³⁵

Without being sentimental over the expulsion of the missionaries from Igboland, it is interesting to note the adjectives used to defame missionary activities in Igboland as reasons for their expulsion. They faced a lot of torture in the hands of the Federal government, were often arrested, charged and pronounced guilty of entering the country illegally. A report from the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Lagos, states that about 105 missionaries experienced this deportation. The missionaries affected by this deportation were those working in the Eastern part of the country.

4.1.2 The Government Take over of Schools from the Church

The expulsion of missionaries was followed by the forceful and intentional taking over of the ownership and management of all primary and secondary schools in the East Central State of Nigeria (ECS) under the Government of Mr. Ukpabi Asika in 1971.²³⁶ As excuse for the take-over of the schools, the Edict that established the withdrawal stated inter alia:

- (1) The government of the East Central State of Nigeria is anxious that schools in the state become functional within the shortest possible time after the vast destruction and damage suffered by existing schools in the course of the civil war;
- (2) It is desirable and necessary that the State takes over all schools within the State, and their control and supervision, in order to secure

²³⁴ For many people of the former Biafra, the Catholic Church and many other Christian Churches and voluntary organisations engaged in medical and relief works during the war. They protected the people from starvation, diseases and death.

²³⁵ A good example can be cited with the publication on May 15, 1970, in the *Daily Times* on the menace of foreign priests. The paper reported: "Nigerians today are very sceptical about the foreign missionaries in view of the diabolical roles which some of them, acting as agents of foreign Christians bodies, played during the Nigerian civil war. Nigerians still remember very clearly that Ojukwu's rebellion lasted for 30 long months partly because of the support which it had had from foreign sources, especially from some well-known Church organisations, including the Roman Catholic Church".

²³⁶ East Central State (ECS) embraces areas in the present day Igboland and areas within the present Anambra, Imo, Abia, Enugu and Ebonyin States.

central control and an integrated system of education which will guarantee uniform standards and fair distribution of education facilities and reduce the cost of running the schools;

(3) The take over will ensure that schools which are in effect financed by the people and managed by their accredited representatives will more readily provide stability, satisfy the people's basic educational and national needs, combat sectionalism, religious conflicts and disloyalty to the cause of a united Nigeria;

(5) The take-over of these schools is for the efficacy, order, stability and good government of the State particularly in relationship with other States in the Federation;

(7) The proprietorship and management of most schools and institutions in the State have hitherto been in the hands of Voluntary Agencies, mostly Christian Missionaries and private individuals and very recently Local Government Councils, and were thus in the majority run on purely philanthropic basis as institutions of public welfare.²³⁷

These statements try to advance reasons for the take over of schools in the East Central State. But it is evident that the state simply lacked the courage to state clearly that the withdrawal was an attempt to blot out the remaining traces of the missionaries' presence in Igboland. It was a penalty on the missionaries who were suspected by the Government of helping and sustaining Biafra during the civil war. In fact, "the entire force of Catholic European missionaries – some 300 priests and 200 religious men and women – were expelled from the region ... and the Catholic Church was deprived of all its educational institutions, except for a few seminaries."²³⁸

It is pertinent to note that the Government of East Central State remotely manipulated by the General Gowon-led Federal Government, saw the take away of school as a way to penalise the missionaries who it believed supported Bia-

²³⁷ East central State of Nigeria, Public Education Edit, 1970. Edict No. 2 of 1971 Public Education A5. Preamble as quoted by G. O. Okoko Church and State in Nigerian Education Foundation and the Future of Catechesis. Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2001, no date, 121. Part II of the edict dealt with the transfer of the school on the appointed day, 26 May, 1970 – seven months before the publication of the edict – i.e., the edict was retroactive. It transferred to and invested in the state 'all interests in or attaching to premises used for the purpose of a voluntary agency or private school or forming part of a voluntary agency or private school and in equipment, furniture or other removable property used in or in connection with such premises'.

²³⁸ Daly J., Igboland: The Background to the Vocation Explosion, in: AFER, 15 (1973), 259-285, cited by N. I. Omenka The School in the Service of Evangelization, 261.

fra during the civil war.²³⁹ The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, on their part, mounted pressure and campaigns against the Federal Government, requesting it to allow them have control over their property. Since these campaigns proved unsuccessful, the bishops resolved to begin building new schools afresh. Consequently, they encouraged the establishment of kindergartens and primary schools on a parish level, a programme which still thrives today.

The take over of schools from the Church and other voluntary agencies was not limited to the then East Central State. The policy was quickly adapted by the Federal Government which signalled its intention to appropriate all schools owned by the missions and other voluntary organisations in other parts of the country.

It has to be noted that the take over of schools had adverse effects on the Church and on its pastoral activities, since the schools had been the Church's principle means of evangelisation. The withdrawal meant a total set-back in the Church's pastoral work both in Igboland and in the entire country in that the Church lost contact with the pupils at school. The negative effects of the school take over were also felt in other sectors of society. There was gross neglect of the pupils' moral and religious formation, which is indubitably responsible for the current social disorder, lack of respect, corruption and delinquencies which are on the increase in the country.

4.2 New Vitality in Igbo Church since the early 1970s

The Church in Nigeria, and in Igboland especially, has experienced immense vitality in all areas in spite of the threats of the civil war and other programmes mounted against the Church by the state and federal government. The expulsion of foreign missionaries and the consequent take over of schools left the parishes and mission stations with little man-power. Although the bishops were vehemently opposed to the decisions of the government in this regard, their pleas and demonstrations did not help matters. Consequently, they were left with the option of devising means of filling the gap created by the dismissal of missionaries.

This was one of the factors that gave rise to the founding of local religious congregations for men and women in Igboland. In Umuahia diocese, for instance, Bishop Anthony G. Nwedo C.S.Sp. founded the congregation of the

²³⁹ Cf. Uchendu P. K., *Perspectives in Nigerian Education*. Enugu: Fourth Dimensions 1993, 23.

Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy (SMMM) in 1972. The primary apostolate of the SMMM congregation is mission to the poor and abandoned areas in the diocese of Umuahia and beyond, especially where the Church finds it difficult to get workers. At Onitsha, F. Arinze²⁴⁰ founded the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Stephen (BSS) in 1975 for the same purpose. These indigenous religious groups, with their various charismas, were established to help in continuing the work of evangelisation already begun by foreign missionaries.²⁴¹

Before the formation of these congregations, there were other indigenous congregations in Igboland helping the spread of the faith through catechetical teachings and medical works. The congregations include: the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy founded in 1962 by Bishop A. G. Nwedo (C.S.Sp.) and the congregation of Daughters of Divine Love (DDL) founded by Bishop G. M. P Okoye C.S.Sp. on July 16, 1969. These congregations are today also working all around the world – including Europe and America.

4.2.1 Increase in Ecclesiastical Provinces and Dioceses

As the Church continued to extend to the rural parts, the need arose to create more provinces and dioceses in the territory. A comparison between the pre-independence era and the post-independence Church in Nigeria indicates a very speedy rate of growth. The pre-independence Church was made up of three Archdioceses, eleven dioceses and five Prefectures, while the post-independence era has experienced a rapid development in the number of ecclesiastical provinces to nine with thirty-nine dioceses. It has to be noted that these provinces and dioceses are under the leadership of indigenous bishops. It was in recognition of the growth of the Church that the former Owerri Vicariate and Calabar Prefecture were raised to the status of ecclesiastical provinces in 1993. In fact, the creation of new dioceses and its consequence, the appointment of native bishops as local ordinaries, as indicated above, are specific landmarks in the records of Catholic Evangelisation in Igboland.

²⁴⁰ F. A. Arinze was the Archbishop of Onitsha and thereby the Metropolitan of the then Onitsha Ecclesiastical Province. He is presently the Prefect of the Pontifical Secretariat for Inter-Religious dialogue, Rome.

²⁴¹ The Congregations mentioned here were not the first founded in Nigeria. There were already those established in the mission by the missionaries, like the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HH CJ) founded in Calabar (1931) by Mother Mary Charles Worker based in Ireland. The Congregation of Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) was founded in 1937 by Archbishop C. Heerey C. S. Sp. at Onitsha.

4.2.2 The Vocation Boom: Indigenous Clergy/Religious

The growth of the Church in Nigeria can also be measured by the increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life in the country, especially in “Igboland since the 1960s”.²⁴² In the areas covering the former Onitsha ecclesiastical province, there are presently, in addition to the juniorates/spiritual year seminaries in all dioceses, five major seminaries for the training of candidates for the priesthood in philosophy and theology. Furthermore, there is enormous growth in the number of male and female religious congregations (foreign and indigenous) in the country, which have contributed immensely to the enhancement of pastoral activities in Nigeria with their charisma and spirituality. Some of these congregations (numbering more than twenty) have places of formation for their candidates. The active involvement of indigenous clergy and religious in the evangelisation of the people has the advantage that the clergy know the faithful much more closely and can speak the language of the people.

The increase of vocations in Igboland has also attracted much criticism and doubt. By all rules, this should not have been the case, given the devastating effect of the civil war, the sudden expulsion of expatriate missionaries from the region, and the eventual take over of schools from the Church and other voluntary Agencies. Reasons have been advanced for the increase in priestly and religious vocations in Igboland. I. R. A. Ozigbo makes reference to the relatively high economic security and social prestige which the Catholic priests and nuns enjoy as one of the factors responsible for the teeming number of Igbo seminarians and religious.²⁴³ Similarly, C. I. Eke sees the increase as a ‘temporary phenomenon’, probably an after-effect of the civil war. According to him, the sufferings, deaths and after effects of the war could have touched the youth so much, that they decide to ignore the “worthlessness of this passing world and turn their minds to more enduring religious values”.²⁴⁴ Although these factors may come into play, the increase in vocations cannot be totally reduced to the mere urge to enjoy the benefits of the clerical or religious status. They can be explained also as the fruits of the various missionary methods adopted by the missionaries and their successors. These methods, as we have been seeing, include: “western education policies, junior seminaries and juniorates established in most of the Nigerian dioceses from [the] 1950s especially, the care given to their training - morally, spiritually, academically and physically”.²⁴⁵ The establishment of new pastoral structures in the various ecclesias-

²⁴² Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism*, 40.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ Eke C. I., *Priestly and Religious Vocations*, in C. A. Obi (ed.), *Hundred Years of the Catholic Church in eastern Nigeria*. 304-330, 328.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 329

tical quarters helped to build up interest among prospective candidates to the priesthood and to religious life. The fact that the early missionary enterprises and the new pastoral structures in the Church contributed in encouraging the youth into the priesthood and religious life notwithstanding, the validity of the first two arguments cannot be totally dismissed. Considering the teeming numbers of young men and women who struggle to become priests and religious in present day Nigeria, at a time when the economy of the country is in a miserable condition, one can critically ask whether such people are genuine or not. Could it be that those in this category are simply trying to use the priesthood or sisterhood as a means of running away from the economic hardship in the country?

4.2.3 New Pastoral Structures

The expulsion of missionaries from the missions posed enormous problems as well as challenges to the indigenous bishops. For the bishops to adequately tackle the problems and challenges in their various dioceses, they had to develop new pastoral structures on the diocesan and on parish levels. One of these was the formation of pastoral and parish councils to function as advisory boards to the bishops and priests in the various dioceses and parishes respectively. These councils were also charged with the responsibility of promoting the Apostolate of the Laity in accordance with the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay people of the Second Vatican Council; to assist the hierarchy of Nigeria with advice, suggestions and practical help etc.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, they encourage the development of lay apostolate work at grassroots level, especially at the individual Church and parish levels, linking such organisations and other national Catholic organisations with the National Laity Council of Nigeria.²⁴⁷

The Laity Councils organise annual conferences in which they discuss issues affecting the roles and apostolate of the laity in the mission of the Church. They use the opportunity of the meetings to contribute to the political discussions in the country. Through the national body, the Laity Council participates actively in the political discussions in the country. In his opening speech during the 1977 annual conference of this Council on the theme, *The Laity and Political Involvement*, F. A. Job, the Catholic Archbishop of Ibadan, enjoined the laity to actively participate in the forthcoming political elections in the country. He observed that “the theme of this Conference is very necessary and appropriate in our country today. Sooner or later our country shall enter once again

²⁴⁶ Ojo G. A., Emergence of Laity Organization of Nigeria, in: O. A. Makozi/G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.) *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*, 71-86, 77.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

the much feared yet necessary period of political arrangements - can it be said that you have no share in it?

Our members must be guided by the dictates of Christian conscience and work out a temporal order to facilitate the unity which exists in the man, normally the man who is a composite of body and soul, a child of the world and heaven.²⁴⁸

The Laity Council sets itself the task of promoting the apostolate of the Laity in accordance with the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay people of the second Vatican Council and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (LUMEN GENTIUM); serving as animator in lay activities; participating in regional and world conferences of Lay Apostolate and other important meetings; co-operating with the Pontifical council for the Laity in Rome and with the PAN-AFRICAN and Malagasy Councils, and organisations of a similar nature anywhere in the world; and doing anything what-so-ever which the Council may consider necessary, wise or expedient to do for the promotion of its aims and objectives.²⁴⁹

It is furthermore the duty of the laity to work toward the promotion of communication between the clergy and the laity and to assist the hierarchy with advice and practical help.

The Laity was regrouped into four principal groups for easier organisation. These groups include: Christian Men Organisation (C.M.O), Christian Women Organisation (C.W.O), Christian Boys Organisation (C.B.O) and the Christian Girls Organisation (C.G.O). These groups meet frequently to discuss their affairs both at the parish level and at the diocesan level. They also interact with those of other diocese on the provincial or national level. This interaction is always on dialogical basis, whereby each group gives time to their members, urging them to contribute effectively towards the upkeep of the association and the defence of the Church.

The contributions of lay/pious organisations in the fortification of the faithful and in keeping the faith active, both in urban and rural areas, is worthy of mention. Some of these pious societies include the Catholic Biblical Movement (C.B.M.) and the Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (C.B.I.U), Legio Mariae, Block Rosary Crusade, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Sacred Heart of Jesus Crusade, St. Jude's Society, St. Anthony, Catholic Charismatic Renewal

²⁴⁸ As quoted by Ojo G. A., *Emergence of Laity Organization in Nigeria*, in: A. O Makozi /G. J. Afolabi Ojo (eds.), *The History of the Catholic Church in Nigeria*. 71-86, 79.

²⁴⁹ cf. Chukwu F. A., *The Significance of Laity Week*, in LUMEN. Feb. 1998 edition, vol. 2 No. 02, page 14.

etc. These Societies meet on a regular basis to pray together and to keep the faith aflame.²⁵⁰

4.3 Major Areas of Concern

The enumeration of the areas in which the Catholic Church has achieved maximum progress from the missionary period to the present day cannot blur a critical view of the areas to which the Church has yet to give adequate attention. These areas cover situations of conflict between the Christian faith and traditional religion, intolerance among the Christian communions, quitting the Church, desire for autonomy, dichotomy between clergy and laity, etc.

4.3.1 Syncretism: Conflict between Christianity and Traditional Religion

Syncretism, the amalgamation of different elements of two or more religious traditions in a simple religious system, has had different interpretations “both in the history of its usage, and in its contemporary usage”²⁵¹ The term was originally applied to political alliances in ancient Greece. Then it designated the way “the Old Testament assimilated elements from surrounding cultures. In the age of the Reformation it pointed to the links between Christianity and humanism, and to the need for Protestant and Catholic churches to come together. Today it retains many of these varied meanings, with either positive or negative connotations. As used by anthropologists and historians of religion, it is generally used positively. As used by theologians and church leaders, it is used either positively or negatively. Whether one take a negative or positive view of syncretism will depend on how one defines it. This may be obvious, but worth stating.²⁵²

The practice of “*Christopaganism*”²⁵³, a negative form of syncretism, is a rampant phenomenon in the practise of the Christian faith in Igboland in particular, and in Nigeria in general. This can be understood as a common reaction of all traditionalists forced into another religion without due preparation. It refers to the practice of Christianity and paganism at the same time. As regards Christianity in Igboland, the lack of dialogue between Christianity and local culture was responsible for the people’s syncretistic attitude. In short: The Christianity that came to Igboland (and in Nigeria as a whole) presented itself

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 77.

²⁵¹ Schineller P. (SJ), Inculturation and the Issue of Syncretism: What is the Real Issue? in: J. S. Ukpong et. al. (ed.) *Evangelization in Africa in the Third Millenium: Challenges and Prospects*. Port-Harcourt: CIWA Press, 1992, 52-59, 52.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*. New York: Orbis Books, 1988, 360.

from the very start as a missionary, teacher, civiliser, and evangeliser all in one. Hence, the culture and the Christian ideals expected of the Africans were largely Western, and Irish particularly. What was then uppermost in the minds of the French Holy Ghost Fathers was to convert the ‘pagan’, ‘primitive’, natives to the Christian faith. Of course, authentic or orthodox faith was as important to these missionaries as eliminating barbarism or the primitive existence of the people. ‘Orthodoxy’ was equated with the ‘universal’ teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and ‘primitive existence’, was equated with the socio-cultural life of our people.²⁵⁴

The rejection of the people’s culture and some aspects of traditional religion that are not at variance with Christian feelings and faith are directly responsible for the lukewarm and syncretistic approach of these people to the Christian faith. The people were meant to understand authentic Christianity as consisting in “throwing off the ‘old man’. By this they meant everything that was connected with their lives prior to the advent of Christianity.”²⁵⁵

The problem of *Christopaganism* does not restrict itself to the first generation Christians. It prevails in the present times. The people are still superstitiously attached to some cultural or traditional practices, irrespective of the fact that the Church opposes such practices. The cultural commutability between the Christian and African religion created a deep rupture between the Christian faith and traditional allegiance in different dimensions of life for many Christians. Many are often disgusted and simply abandon the Christian faith in order to embrace a different one. The most outstanding manner of turning one’s back on the Catholic Church is by way of joining the Independent Churches.²⁵⁶

The centenary celebration of the advent of the Catholic faith to South-eastern Nigeria in 1885 offered occasion for the organisation of seminars and workshops on the merits of the Catholic Church in former South-eastern Nigeria as well as the challenges and problems facing the Church in the present time. The questions included: “How deeply rooted is the Catholic faith among our people? What possible dangers threaten it? What is the present direction of our

²⁵⁴ Enwerem I. N., *Theology in Igboland: Critique in Method*, in: *The Igbo Church and Quest For God*, 73.

²⁵⁵ Nzomiwu J. P. C., *The Igbo Church and Indigenization Question*, in: C. B. Okolo (ed.), *The Igbo Church and the Quest for God*, 5.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Nwaigbo F., *Church as Communion*, 230. Nwaigbo further confirms that due to the crisis the natives were confronted with, these Independent Churches become *pro tempore* the visiting hoe for many Catholics. It is the most natural conclusion that the several tendencies to these Independent Churches have contributed to the reduction of the number of Christians and change of denomination of most Catholics.

faith practice? How indigenized is our faith? How does it wrestle with the implicit and explicit beliefs and practices of our traditional religion?"²⁵⁷ In like manner, F. Arinze observed that we "can observe among the people that they attend [...] Church service in the morning only to consult the diviner [fortune-teller] in the day. They call a fortune-teller to advise them whether the spirits would allow them to build a big house and live in it in peace. And they invite then a (Catholic) priest to bless the finished house. They receive Holy Communion while they have charms in their pockets or around their babies' waists."²⁵⁸

4.3.2 Intolerance among Christian Denominations

Intolerance and the lack of a spirit of dialogue among various Christian denominations in Nigeria can be traced back to the missionary period.²⁵⁹ The hostile relationship between the Anglican Communion and RCM during the administration of Fr. J. Lutz C.S.Sp. within the first decade of Evangelisation in South-eastern Nigeria attests to this fact. It is worthy of note that this hostile atmosphere between Catholics and Anglicans has continued to prevail even at the present time. The reason for this is partly due to the traditional Catholic lack of interest in the principle of comity, and partly due to the bitter memories of strife and rivalry in Eastern Nigeria between the Catholic mission on the one hand and all the Protestant Churches on the other. Hostilities, mistrust and suspicion are still so fresh and raw that even the recent and common bitter experiences of the Nigeria-Biafra war and the loss of schools to the Government have not been able to make Catholics and Anglicans see themselves as comrades of the same Christian religion.²⁶⁰ Bishop L. I. Ugorji underscores the sins of pride, self-righteousness, rivalry, suspicion, indifference, distortion, prejudice, distrust, jealousy," etc as factors that have helped to keep members of both Churches away from one another and have at times contributed to deepening the wounds of separation.²⁶¹

Each denomination claims to be superior to the other and will not appreciate anything good in the other. Although efforts are being made to achieve to some ecumenical understanding among leaders of the various Christian denomina-

²⁵⁷ Okolo B. C. (ed.) *The Igbo Church and Quest for God*. Uruowulu-Obosi: Pacific College Press Ltd., 1985, v.

²⁵⁸ Arinze F. A. *Answering God's Call*. Glasgow: A Geoffrey Chapman Book, 1983, 22.

²⁵⁹ The „principle of comity“ among the Christian missionaries in South-eastern Nigeria was necessary because of the lack of readiness among the various missionaries to coexist with each other in the same territory.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Ozigbo I. R. A., *Igbo Catholicism*, 86.

²⁶¹ Cf. Ugorji L. I., *That They May Be One: Anglicans and Roman Catholics Overcoming Their Division*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd., 2000, 52.

tions in Nigeria under the auspices of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Church in Nigeria has yet to reap the fruits of selfless and genuine dialogue.²⁶²

Besides the misunderstanding between the Anglicans and the Catholics, which goes back to the missionary period, the Nigerian Church is also confronted with the violent/fundamentalist attitudes and intolerance of Pentecostal Movements and Sects, which claim that members of the traditional Churches are on the wrong path. They challenge the authenticity of the mission-related Churches and claim that there will be no salvation for members of these Churches unless they change over to the Pentecostal Movements and be “born again”. In their activities, these Churches lay emphasis on charismatic and spiritual gifts such as revelation, healing and speaking in tongues as signs of faith in God. The Pentecostal Churches organise open-air crusades and special prayer meetings geared towards healing people from their various sicknesses (spiritual and physical).²⁶³ In short, they shift attention from institutional structures and administrative forms and turn to inner renewal and personal well-being.

²⁶² Ecumenical efforts have been long, although largely cosmetic on the Nigerian scene. Missionary rivalry forced the leading Protestant missions, east of the Niger, to periodic joint conferences between 1904 and 1932. The Conferences led to the formation of the Evangelical Union of Southern Nigeria (1924) which became the forerunner of the Christian Council Of Nigeria (1930). Three members of the Christian Council (Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches) agreed in 1950 to form an organic union as the „Church of Nigeria“ but the proposal collapsed a few days before the scheduled launching of the union in December 1965.

The Catholic Church in Igboland began in the mid-1960s to take some interest in ecumenism, particularly in common religious services, occasionally held in urban centres. It now participates in the Bible Society of Nigeria and co-operates in producing joint translations of the Bible. In 1971, the Catholic Bishops Conference co-operated with the Christian Council of Nigeria to found the Joint National Institute for Training in Moral and Religious Education (Project TIME) in Lagos. Catholic Bishops have also joined the Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N.) and the Christian Health Association of Nigeria (C.H.A.N.). Lurking behind these ecumenical manifestations is a fundamental unwillingness on the part of the Catholic Church in Igboland to engage in a meaningful dialogue with these other Christian Churches, (cf. I. R. A. Ozigbo *Igbo Catholicism*, 85-96.)

²⁶³ Mbiti J. S., *African Religion & Philosophy*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1997, 223. The Churches forbid their followers to use European medicines, teaching them to depend entirely on God’s power through prayer and healing services. Revelation comes through dreams and visions and through meditation when leaders withdraw to solitary places and work of the Holy Spirit, and during worship services people seek to be possessed by him. Speaking in tongues is one of the characteristics of being possessed by the Spirit.

4.3.3 Quitting the Catholic Church

The Christian faith is undergoing a critical phase in the course of its history in Nigeria presently. This phase is characterised by the influence of Pentecostal Movements or what Bishop G. O. Ochiagha calls “small-scale industries”²⁶⁴ in the country, as well as those of the Independent Churches, on members of the mission-related Churches.²⁶⁵ These sects and movements make the teachings and doctrines of the traditional Churches especially those of the Catholic Church objects of caricature, criticism and attack. They come into view in every nook and cranny of the cities of cities and village soliciting for members through promises of good health, wealth, healing from ailments and other psychological means.²⁶⁶ Initially, they operated on non-denominational or inter-denominational level, but later became denominational Churches after they had gathered enough adherents from the already established churches.

It is pertinent to note that the Catholic Church has lost a sizeable number of her adherents to the Pentecostal churches and centres “due to one form of frustration or the other.”²⁶⁷ In a pastoral letter, a Nigerian bishop circumstantially analysed the socio-religious and economic factors that compel people to leave the Church: “Their reasons [...] include the following: seeking for husbands, children (male issues in particular); jobs, wanting progress in business; lack of patience in ill health and sickness; fear of evil spirits and demons; ex-

²⁶⁴ “Healing and healing centres have turned into avenues of making cheap money today. One often hears reported cases of excessive fees charged by the ‘proprietors’ of these centres either as consultation fee or petition fees. Even where this does not obtain, ‘Clients’ are induced by the many false testimonies to make thanksgiving offerings and the way these appeals are made leave one with little or no option (cf. Ochiagha G. O., *The Emerging Healing Centres: Their Potential for Good and/or Evil*. Orlu Diocesan Lenten Pastoral, 1993, 16).

²⁶⁵ Mission-related Churches refer to those Churches established in Nigeria by the missionaries. These include: the CMS, SMA, RCM, Lutheran Church, the Presbyterians, the SIM etc.

²⁶⁶ Bishop G. Ochiagha’s 1993 Lenten Pastoral letter on „The Emerging Healing Centres“ page 10 on how people are psychologically manipulated and in most cases hypnotised to concurring to the prescriptions of leaders of these organization. This according to him „ranges from hypnotism, spiritism, psychokinesis, precognition, auto-suggestion, false imposition of guilt to even imposition of demonic obsessions. It is not uncommon to hear of a client who at first visit to the „healer“ is told that „five“ or more demons can be discerned as operating in him or her and assure that with faith in the healer and his/her practices the demons will all be cast out. Somebody who is told such a fable, if he is of feeble mind, would be ready to do whatever is demanded, only to be told after a few visits and after giving thanks not forced but forcefully induced that he has been delivered. And he will believe when in the first instance there was no case of possession. What a „419“?

²⁶⁷ Ujomu G., *The Priest in Nigeria Today: A Laywoman’s Perspective*, in: L. N. Mbefo/E.M. Ezeogu (eds.) *The Clergy in Nigeria Today*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1994, 59-79, 74.

cessive desire for wealth; seeking protection from enemies, real or imaginary etc. In all these they tend to forget that the bearing of the cross is central to the message of Christ who says to us, if you want to be my disciple, take up your cross of suffering and hardships. They perch like butterflies from one denomination to another and seem thereby to encourage and foster the increasing proliferation of Christian denominations.’²⁶⁸

The above statement is simply a part of the reasons why people desert the Church. There is a feeling of distress among many Catholics who leave the Church. Cardinal F. Arinze puts it succinctly in saying that Catholics have to accept that the sects are really saying to the Church ‘Please, do your homework, please look into your house, and ask yourselves why we attract quite a number of your members? What is it that we have that attracts them that you don’t have?’²⁶⁹

The homework referred to is not unconnected with the Church’s attitude towards its members. The issue of lack of dialogue between the Church leaders (clergy) and lay Christians is principally observed as one of the reasons for Catholics leaving the Church. The exodus from the Church seems to indicate that the people are seeking for something which the Church has not been able to supply to them. They are becoming increasingly aware of their right to freedom and expression. The emphasis on authority by the Church hinders the people from feeling at home in the Church. They are laden with psychological and social problems which they expect the Church to help alleviate. Consequently, they seek for recognition in the free-Pentecostal Churches. Giving the blame for people leaving the Church for another on “priestly pastoral care which has progressively declined”, M. Osuagwu argues that the “seeming loss of firm grip on this pastoral solicitude and strategy is responsible for many members of the Catholic faith quitting our Church in the search to fill up the missing gap and to satisfy the yearning for pastoral concern.”²⁷⁰

4.3.4 Desire for Autonomy: The Problem of Authority

The concept of authority, its use and misuse, has been under scrutiny since the Enlightenment period. Authority, its use or misuse, has brought the Church serious criticism in the present post-modern period, not only in Europe and America but also in Africa. The Enlightenment was originally an ideology

²⁶⁸ Ugorji I. L., *The Scandal of A Fragmented Christianity*. Lenten Pastoral Letter, Umuahia Diocese, 1(1991), 12.

²⁶⁹ Quoted by Onwubiko O.O., *Echoes From the African Synod*, 121.

²⁷⁰ See Nwaokonko G. A., *Run Schools from Kindergarten to Varsity Level – Church Charged*, in: *Lumen*. Vol. 5. No. 5, June 2002, 9.

against the Church.²⁷¹ The protagonists of the ideology considered religion as a function of what was backward and barbarous in human life.²⁷²

The Church in Nigeria is facing cases of people, especially youths, leaving for other Christian communions. The quest for autonomy and freedom is one of the factors that constrain people to join the Pentecostal movements and Independent Churches which, according to them, hold some promise of freedom and the right of active participation in the “up-building of the Church-community”.²⁷³ In a discussion with an ex-seminarian who left the Catholic Church and joined the Pentecostal movement, I learned that this ex-seminarian had problems with the gap between the Church hierarchy in Nigeria and the other members of the Church. Furthermore, he argued that the Church is so clerical that the laity has no place of their own as such. The consequence was his decision to join another denomination because there he is recognised and is allowed to air his views. The criticism of this ex-seminarian is a serious one and requires urgent address. As he said, the gap that exists between members of the hierarchy and lay members of the Church is scandalously enormous. This trend goes back to colonial times when the missionaries presented themselves to the natives as super-human-beings.

Another factor responsible for the exodus of people from the Church is the poor economic condition of the country and the quest for solutions to spiritual problems afflicting the people. The Pentecostal Churches promise green pastures and solution to the spiritual and material problems of their prospective members if they join them.

4.3.5 Dichotomy between Clergy and Laity

It has been noted that, in spite of the progress and achievements of the Church in Igboland, the Church and its leaders have yet to abandon from the

²⁷¹ Burkhardt, J. / Wilhelm F., Aufklärung, in: V. Drehsen et. al., (hg.) Wörterbuch des Christentums. Düsseldorf, 1988, 109-109, 108. „Aufklärung ist zunächst Autoritätskritik. An Stelle einer rein durch Geschichte und Herkommen legitimierten Verbindlichkeit von religiöser Tradition und politischer Ordnung tritt ein Legitimationsmuster, durch das um der Emanzipation des Individuums aus alten Bindungen willen alle Geltungsansprüche auf ihre rationale, intersubjektiv verstehbare Plausibilität hin befragt werden. Für die Theologie bedeutet dies, die überkommenen Dogmen und Lehrsätze der Kirchen auf ihren möglichen. *Vernünftigen* Kern der Tradition freigelegt werden. Diese Kritik führt zu einer teilweise radikalen Auflösung des alten kirchlichen Lehrsystems, das bis in seine Grundlagen hinein als unvernünftig und als Herrschaftsinstrument des feudalistischen Obrigkeitsstaates verworfen wird.“

²⁷² Mbefo L. M., Coping with Nigeria's Two-Fold Heritage. Onitsha Nig.): Spiritan Pub., 1996, 20.

²⁷³ Uzukwu E. E., A Listening Church, 105..

prejudices and clerical tendencies characteristic of the missionaries. In the words of E. E. Uzukwu, the “missionaries’ successors, chosen and appointed by the missionaries, continued their strategy and shepherded the flock. But having been schooled in prudential compliance to authority and tradition, they lacked initiative. The desire [...] for a truly African Church in an independent Africa was more an exception than the rule. Church leaders who operated in a feudalistic institution were much concerned with power and authority. It seems that this inherited pre-Vatican II feudal image of the Church constitutes even today the greatest obstacle to the emergence of dynamic local Churches in Africa.”²⁷⁴ The fact is that the gap between the clergy and lay-Christians is a yawning one. Lay people are seeking ways to assert themselves in the Church.

The dichotomy between the hierarchy and the laity, which is drastically affecting the Church’s apostolate in Nigeria is linked to the authoritarian mentality of the missionary era.²⁷⁵ The clergy present themselves as those who receive the power of Christ and are dedicated to divine services, while the laity are those who do not receive this power, those whose duty is to place offerings on the altar, to pay tithes, able to be saved if they avoid evil and practise good works.²⁷⁶ Consequently, there is virtually no real relationship between the parties; instead, the parties see themselves sometimes as rivals. A Nigerian bishop apportions blames to the National Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) for being responsible for the gap between clerics and lay persons in the Church: “It is regrettable that we, (the hierarchy of the Nigerian Church) are still a long way from reaping the benefits of the rediscovery which we have all made in principle, the fact that the whole Church is a single people of God, and that she is made up of the faithful as well as the clergy. A good number of us still nurse the idea that the Church is the clergy and the faithful are only our clients or beneficiaries.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Uzukwu E. E., *The Birth and Development of a Local Church: Difficulties and Signs of Hope*, in: *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*. (Compiled and Edited by the Africa Faith & Justice Network under the Direction of M. Browne, SND), New York: Orbis Books 1996, 3-8, here 3.

²⁷⁵ The missionaries naturally communicated the post-Tridentine image of the Church to the natives. The training of priests did not permit any questioning of such structures. Bishops and priests have no evident interest in changing the status quo in the Church, which is ‘essentially an unequal society’ made up of those who ‘occupy a rank on the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful.’ (cf. Uzukwu E. E., *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*. Enugu: SNAAP Press, 1996, 120).

²⁷⁶ Cf. Ochiagha G., *An Echo From the Past (Anti-Clericalism Around the Corner)*. Enugu: Nigeria: SNAAP Press Ltd., 1994, 29.

²⁷⁷ Ochiagha G., *Ibid.*, 30.

This assertion calls for a change of course in the relationship between the hierarchy and the lay faithful in Nigeria. The case is more deplorable in Igboland, where the Church has maintained the character acquired during the missionary and colonial years in Nigeria. Such character includes emphasis on the Church as a hierarchical pyramid, comprising the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Brothers, Sisters lay people. The key actor, the Rev father, was almost everywhere a white man. There was a wall between the clergy and the laity - a wall created not only by bureaucratic centralism but also by language and colour barriers. The Igbo people looked upon the Church as a foreign institution necessary for their well-being in the next world, and regarded it with respect, loyalty and obedience, but also with suspicion. It was the Church of the pulpit, altar, confessional, and more specifically, the clergy. This is why the Church is known in Igbo land as 'Uka Fada' i.e. the Rev. Father's Church.²⁷⁸

The "training of the clergy does not permit any questioning of such structures."²⁷⁹ In most cases the training seems to have a fixed idea of the priesthood that the seminarians pass out of the seminary with, a mentality that is purely clerical. A classical example can be illustrated by a famous statement, attributed to one of Nigerian bishops and ones a member of the seminary's teaching staff, to seminarians defending the superior complexity of the system in Nigeria E. E. Uzukwu quoted this bishop as saying: "We are the Church, you are not the Church; the Church speaks, you listen; we talk, you do the listening; we give directives, you obey; you are there, we are here; we send you, you go!"²⁸⁰ This statement influences seminarians in Igboland. After their ordination, there is the general post-ordination attitude of "Now I have arrived".²⁸¹ With this mentality, many newly-ordained find it extremely difficult to engage in meaningful dialogue with their parishioners. Like the bishop, they tend to say in their various categories, 'we are here, you are there'. Hence, it is the responsibility of the laity to obey them without question

²⁷⁸ Nzomiwu J. P. C., *The Igbo Church and Indigenization Questions*, 7.

²⁷⁹ Uzukwu E. E. *A Listening Church*, 120.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁸¹ Odoemena A., *Current Problems of Evangelization in Our Country/Diocese*, in: I. Ugonna/O. Ike (eds.) *Evangelization 2000: The Task Before Us (Proceedings, Lectures and Communique of the 3rd Enugu Diocesan Priests' Annual Seminar April 2 - April 4)*. Enugu: Lay Apostolate Publications, 1990, 10.

4.3.6 Marriage Conflicts

Polygyny²⁸² is a central and fundamental institution in Igbo family structure and society. Marriage to many wives, prosperity, social prestige and power are signs of affluence in traditional African society.²⁸³ In this tradition, a man is “one who lives in accordance with the laws of the land and the traditions of his ancestors, is expected to marry as many wives as he can afford and beget as many children as possible. In the past, for an African to have only one wife at a time was a sign of economic poverty and low class or status. It was a social disgrace.”²⁸⁴ Contrarily, monogamy is generally regarded as a sign of poverty on the part of the man.

Such was the original traditional African marriage system before the people came into contact with the Christian religion and morality, which accepts and extols monogamy as a standard. This Christian view of marriage gave rise to conflicts among the early Christian converts so that many decided not to identify with the Church. The missionaries demanded from the polygynists to select one of the wives for the sacrament of matrimony. The other women were expected to be sent away although they had committed no offence on their own part. Consequently, J. Omoregbe remarks that it was an act of injustice against these women who without committing any offence, without quarrel, without any fault on their part were simply dismissed by their husbands and forced to leave their children.²⁸⁵

This attitude of the Church towards polygynous families has consequences for the Church pastoral work. The Church is accused of acting on double standards, since she depends sometimes on these people for financial assistance for the building of the Church community, as well as for financing diocesan/parish projects but refuse to give attention to them in the moment they need the Church’s assistance; such as at the baptism of their children. In some

²⁸² *Polygyny* is the direct opposite of polyandry (marriage between one woman and many men). With the exception of some parts of East Africa, where such practices are tacitly allowed, Africans are traditionally known as being in favour of *polygyny*. The traditional African polygynous marriage system has always been misconstrued for polygamy. The Webster’s New Dictionary Encyclopedia brings out the meaning of the terms vividly. While it defines polygamy as the “act of relating to, or being a marriage form in which a spouse of either sex has more than one mate at one time“, it understands *polygyny* to mean „the practice of having more than one wife or female mate at one time.” (Webster’s New Encyclopedic Dictionary, op. cit., 780).

²⁸³ Okolo B. C., *The African Synod: Hope For The Continent’s Liberation*. AMAECA Gaba Pub. (Spearheads Nos. 130-131), 1994, 25.

²⁸⁴ Okolo B. C., *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Cf. Omoregbe J. Is Polygamy incompatible with Christianity? in: *AFER* (Vol. 2, No. 6, Dec., 1979), 364.

cases, the wives are disallowed from the sacraments until their husbands die even if the husband is an unbeliever.

4.3.7 Other Christian Churches

The development in other Christian denominations since independence is not so much different from that in the Catholic Church. This is due to the fact that the people, stemming from the same race and culture and irrespective of the different missionary denominations that evangelised them, reacted almost in the same manner as the Catholics reacted in the face of things in Nigeria since the independence of the country. In this analysis I shall be restricting myself to the CMS mission, since it formed a larger part of this research. However, mention will be made of the Spiritual/Independent and Pentecostal Churches which had access to Nigeria as a result of the developments in the missionary Churches.²⁸⁶

A lot of developments (positive and negative) have been noted in these Churches since the independence of Nigeria. Positively, it can be observed that:

- (1) These Churches have developed self-reliance with the dramatic increase in native clergy. With this the CMS Churches have achieved their ultimate goal. The attempt of the foreign missionaries to ignore this venture gave the first opportunity for the establishment of Independent Churches in Nigeria. Despite the increase in the number of those who change to Pentecostal and Independent Churches, these denominations have continued to survive the challenges of time through the leadership of indigenuous natives;
- (2) Through the various missionary programmes (the schools and various educational institutions) the Christian missions trained a new African elite, some of whom, enchanted by European ideas, accepted the idea of nation-building and nationalism. It was this new elitist group that turned back to be the fore runners of Nigerian independence.²⁸⁷

The post-independence period in Nigeria has been marked by an increasing number of Spiritual/Independent and Pentecostal Churches or religious move-

²⁸⁶ The term Spiritual, Independent Churches or the Sects is used in describing Churches which have broken away from the Missionary Churches in Igboland (Africa) and are controlled by African leaders independent of the parent denominations.

²⁸⁷ Cf. Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 230.

ments. The Churches developed as a result of what some members of the missionary Churches considered as racial discrimination meted out to African leaders of the Church.²⁸⁸ The Aladura Church, with over 120 branches all over the country, is prominent among these Independent Churches. The Celestial Church of Christ established in Ibadan in 1964 has about twenty branches in that city alone. The Church has branches all over the country and in Europe and the United States.²⁸⁹

Besides the Aladura and Celestial Churches, there are well over one thousand independent Churches in Nigeria. There is hardly any order in the organisation of these Churches. Efforts made to encourage dialogue between them have not yield the desired fruit. Instead, the Churches use the opportunities they have to cast calumny and insults on others.

4.4 A Comparative Analysis of the CMS and Catholic Missions Methods

From an ongoing study it is clear that the missionaries had the same objectives in Nigeria, that is, the establishment of the Christian religion in the country. They adopted various methods towards the realisation of this objective. It is my intention to bring out the areas in which the Anglican and Catholic methods agreed with each other and the areas where they disagreed bearing in mind that what works for one Church can also work for the other.

4.4.1 Areas of Similarity in Methods

There are a range of areas in which the strategies adopted by the various missions resemble each other. These strategies include the roles of the ex-slaves of Nigeria in attracting the missionaries of both Churches to the country, the recognition of the importance of education in evangelisation, and medical facilities and agriculture.

4.4.1.1 The Redeemed Slaves as Essential Factors

The roles of the freed slaves of Nigeria origin in the introduction of Christianity into Nigeria into the 19th century were very significant. It was as a result of their initiation and request for missionary attention to the CMS headquarters in Sierra Leone that the CMS considered sending their missionaries to Abeokuta in this century. The same was the case with the Catholic mission in Nigeria, when the group of Catholic freed slaves organised themselves under the leadership of Pa-Anthonio before their contact with the first SMA missionary who

²⁸⁸ Cf. Sanneh I., *West African Christianity*, 168-169.

²⁸⁹ Clarke P. B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 201.

was on a private visit to Nigeria in 1834. It was the fear of losing their cherished Christian faith that moved them to demand that missionaries should be sent to them.

The history of Christianity in Nigeria gives us an insight into the contributions of these redeemed slaves in building up the first Christian communities in the country. At Onitsha, for example, they remained undaunted in their faith in spite of the threats and cultural sanctions imposed on them by society.²⁹⁰

4.4.1.2 The Role of Western Education in Evangelisation

Education of the natives was another important factor among the activities of the CMS and RCM missions. The missionaries of both denominations believed firmly in the place and role of education in the success of their missions in Nigeria. However, they differed from each other in their approaches. The major contrast between the approaches of the CMS and RCM missions is related to the fact that the CMS missions were more interested in public evangelism; hence the emphasis on the act of evangelism in their schools²⁹¹ and the adoption of the vernacular as a means of imparting knowledge. The Catholic missionaries, for their part, widened the scope of education. For lack of knowledge of Igbo, they preferred teaching in the English language. Apart from religious knowledge and English, the Catholic missionaries taught Mathematics, Book-keeping, Accountancy, Carpentry and Secretarial studies in their school curriculum as proposed by the government of South-eastern Nigeria.²⁹²

4.4.1.3 Agriculture

The CMS and RCM missions encouraged agriculture and animal husbandry in their missions as an integral part of evangelisation. Alongside their missionary endeavours, agricultural programmes helped the missions take care of the immediate material and economic needs of the converts.²⁹³ The CMS mission operated on the idea of “the Bible and the Plough” as the underlying philosophy behind the idea of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating

²⁹⁰ It has to be noted that becoming a Christian at that time was regarded as an abomination against society and against the gods of the land. Consequently, such defaulters from the traditional religion were ostracised from the village and forbidden to participate in village affairs, traditional titles or ceremonies.

²⁹¹ Cf. Clarke P. B., *The Methods and Ideology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria 1885-1905*, 50.

²⁹² Cf. Obi C. A., *The French Pioneers 1885-1905*, here 86.

²⁹³ Cf. Nwosu L. U., *Christian Missions and Socio-Economic Development in Colonial West Africa, 1824-1900: A Challenge to the 21st Century Evangelism in Africa*, in: *Vidajyothi Journal of Theological Reflection*. (VJTR 60) New Delhi, April 1996, 227-242, 233.

Church in Nigeria.²⁹⁴ In his proposal for such a Church in mission territories, Henry Venn had his eyes on the establishment of industrial schools where the pupils would be taught agricultural and trade skills and the combination of fruitful labour on the field with mental discipline in the classroom. Students were to be educated in brick-making, carpentry and masonry, among other things.²⁹⁵ Through this programme the missionaries went into agricultural production. The mission launched an agricultural scheme in Lagos between 1898 and 1908 under Dr. M. Agbebi who regarded himself as a follower of Henry Venn, preaching what he called ‘the gospel of coffee, cocoa, cotton and work as well as the scripture’. On the failure of this scheme, he secured a tract of land at Agowa near Ijebu-Ode where he developed first a farm, then a school and finally a Church. The farm produced coffee, rubber trees, sugar cane, cocoa and palm oil.²⁹⁶ The RCM mission in Lagos and in South-eastern Nigeria also underscored agriculture as one of the means of running the various Christian villages in Topo (Badagry) and Onitsha/Aguleri respectively.²⁹⁷ This programme contributed immensely to the improvement of the standard of life of the believers and to the spread of the Christian (Catholic) faith around Igbo-land and beyond.

4.4.2 Areas of Divergence in Missionary Methods

The emphasis on Native Pastorate by the CMS mission marked a clear difference in missionary approach in comparison to the RCM method in Nigeria. They believed that effective Evangelisation in Nigeria was only possible if carried out by missionaries who knew the natives well enough. Although, the idea of “Native Pastorate” did not last long in Southern Nigeria, the readiness of the CMS mission to evangelise Nigeria “through native missionaries”²⁹⁸ indicated their intention to inculturate the Church upon the ecclesiastical structures of an indigenous episcopate, independent of foreign aid or superintendence.²⁹⁹

The contrary was the case with the RCM mission in Nigeria. The Catholic missionaries were all foreigners with no knowledge of the people’s languages, culture or ways of life. This was a great handicap for them at the beginning of their apostolate in the country. They were strange to a people who had no con-

²⁹⁴ Cf. Sanneh L., *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*. London: C. Hurst & Company 1983, 159.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁹⁷ Nwosu L. U., *Christian Missions and Socio-Economic Development in Colonial West Africa*, 231.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Njoku. R. A., *The Advent of the Catholic Church in Nigeria: Its Growth in Owerri Diocese*, 193.

²⁹⁹ Ajayi J. F. A., *Christian Mission in Nigeria*, 175.

tact with humans of another colour. In some cases the missionaries were killed for meat because the people did not believe they were human beings. A classic example of the people's reactions at the arrival of the missionaries in Igboland is narrated by the Nigerian novelist, C. Achebe, thus: "The arrival of the missionaries [...] caused a considerable stir in the village of Mbanta. There were six of them and one was a white man. Every man and woman came out to see the white man. Stories about these strange men had grown since one of them had been killed in Abame and his iron horse (bicycle) tied to a sacred silk cotton tree."³⁰⁰ These problems would have been avoided if the missionaries sent to Nigeria were natives. Nevertheless, they struggled to let the people know that they were not meat but fellow human beings. In spite of that, the people remained reserved in dealing with the white missionaries.

The Catholic missionaries were not quick in training natives to the priesthood or religious life. The conspicuous concentration of power in the hands of the Catholic white missionary unlike the CMS missionaries, who relied on African missionaries, tended to suggest and confirm the view that the Church was indifferent to genuine African aspirations right from the beginning of Catholic missionaries' enterprise in Africa, or in Nigeria, as the case may be.³⁰¹ This fact notwithstanding, the missionaries realised the importance of encouraging the natives to the priesthood with the building of the first seminary at Igbariam thirty years after their settlement in Igboland.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Chinua A., *Things Fall Apart*, 101.

³⁰¹ Cf. Sanneh L., *West African Christianity*, 68.

PART TWO: JUGER (*JUDGE*)

CHAPTER FIVE

5 DIALOGUE AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN MODERN SOCIETY

Dialogue is one of the things in which people participate when they communicate with each other without being conscious of what is happening between them. At the present time, the term ‘dialogue’ has become a household word among people in their various orientations and walks of life.³⁰² Traditionally viewed, dialogue is a natural and an important characteristic of human beings because the human person is a rational and a social being. Hence, he is capable of speech-making and communicating with his or her fellow human beings.

The epochal meaning of dialogue does not lie in the concept or in the form of speaking but in the fact that it is the fundamental expression of the being and dignity of the human being.³⁰³ Dialogue has facilitated progress in mass communication, science and technology and has brought the countries of the world so close together that the world has turned into a ‘global village’, or one central market. For philosophers, theologians, politicians, opinion leaders and the press, it forms an essential and effective tool. Dialogue occupies a conspicuous position in family life, and families can disintegrate if that proper understanding does not exist among the parties.

Etymologically, the term “dialogue” stems from the Latin ‘*dialogus*’ which on its part derives from the Greek ‘*dialogos*’. The verb ‘*dialegethai*’ comes from (*dia + legein*) and means to speak. Thus dialogue can be defined as “a conversation between two or more persons [...] an exchange of ideas and opinion”.³⁰⁴

As a rational and social animal, the human being is always in dialogue with himself or herself, with his/her society as well as with fellow human beings. The human being is a being capable of communicating. Hence, dialogue belongs to his rational nature only. It distinguishes him from other creatures that are under the influence of the laws of nature. Consequently, dialogue can be said to be the address and response between persons in which there is a flow of meaning between them, in spite of all the obstacles that normally would

³⁰² Cf. Panikkar R., *Der neue religiöse Weg*. München, 1990, 8.

³⁰³ Cf. Hilberath B. J., *Vom Heiligen Geist des Dialogs: Das Dialogische Prinzip in Gotteslehre und Heilsgeschehen*, in: G. Fürst (ed.), *Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1997, 93-117, 97.

³⁰⁴ Webster’s New Encyclopedic Dictionary. U.S.A: Black and Dog & Levental Publications, Inc. 1896.

block the relationship. It is the interaction between persons in which one of them seeks to give himself as he is to the other, and seeks also to know the other as the other is.³⁰⁵

Speaking and listening are the two essential activities that characterise dialogical process. Dialogue is a communicative process that entails a mutual and an interpersonal relationship between two or more partners on the platform of subject-to-subject communicative encounter. In other words: it is that speech which people carry out face to face with each other: Through speech and counter-speech they mutually transact evidences and counter-evidences as well as questions and answers.³⁰⁶

The watch-words in every dialogical process are always tolerance, otherness, respect, mutuality, patience, reciprocity, humility, docility and preparedness to listen to the other person and to accept the fact that he has also something to communicate in the discussion. A successful dialogue is one in which the partners involved learn from each other. It does not mean speaking alone. Because the partner is very important in every dialogical process, listening to him is also an essential aspect of our discussion. Hence, in dialogue, the partners make sincere efforts to listen and learn; to seek meaning and to try to understand the truth and life of the other as person. Then, dialogue implies complete openness and trust, in order that a real meeting of meaning and understanding can take place between the two partners. In such a relationship the participants experience the other as other and both communicate and learn.³⁰⁷ Because of its mutual nature, dialogue does not mean an endless discussion in which one does not come to any consensus or concrete result nor does it mean speaking for the sake of speaking or speaking as an intellectual sport. It aims at convincing and winning people over to the truth.³⁰⁸

Equality and intersubjective-personal relationship among dialogue-partners is the *conditio sine qua non* for a successful dialogue. Such a communicative encounter is characterised by a one-to-one relation between the communicators. The partners interact with each other as equal subjects and persons with dignity. Dialogue demands the readiness to learn from one's partner in some

³⁰⁵ Howe R. L., *The Miracle of Dialogue* (New York, 1963) quoted in: Howe R. L., *Partners in Preaching: Clergy and Laity in Dialogue*. New York, The Seabury Press 1967, 46-47.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Levinas E., *Dialogue*. In: F. Böckle et al., (Hg.) *Christlicher Glaube in moderner Gesellschaft*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1982, 64.

³⁰⁷ Dhavamony M./ Fries H., *Evangelization and Dialogue*, in: M. Dhavamony (ed.) *Evangelization and Inter-religious Dialogue*. Roma 1975, 249-262, 249.

³⁰⁸ Cf. Rahner K., *Die Gegenwart der Kirche: Theologische Analyse der Gegenwart als Situation des Selbstvollzugs der Kirche*, in: F.-X Arnold / K. Rahner., (Hrsg.) *Handbuch der Kirche: Praktische Theologie der Kirche in ihrer Gegenwart*. Bd.II\1. 1966, 266.

cases. It presumes the readiness to change one's position or actions as a result of the learning. Dialogue cannot be successful if only one partner is ready or disposed to learn.³⁰⁹ This implies that dialogue has nothing to do with someone craving for personal interests, dogmas or preconceived judgements against the partner. The exploitation of weakness, or the application of intrigue and defamation in order to arrive at one's selfish interest does not create a conducive atmosphere for selfless, interpersonal communicative encounter.³¹⁰ In summary, dialogue is contrary to monologue. It implies giving and receiving, speaking and listening, and the readiness not to deceive one's partner; it means re-adapting in respect to the truth which should actually shine out at the end of a well-done dialogue.

5.1 The Philosophy of Dialogue

It is fascinating to note that dialogue occupies a prominent place in the history and development of philosophy, beginning with the Pre-Socratic era and continuing to the present period. One can trace the art of dialogue back to the beginning of organised society and to the Pre-Socratic period in Greek history. Although the concept "dialogue" had not developed at this period as we have it now, it is not out of place to qualify what transpired between the ancient Ionian philosophers and cosmologists, Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes³¹¹, as a purely dialogical enterprise aimed at discovering the basic stuff of all reality. In fact, this period in the history of philosophy provides us with a well-formulated dialogical principle in the form of the question and answer approach in the process of knowledge.

5.1.1. The Platonic Socratic dialogical Method

The famous *Socratic Method*³¹² is an explicit landmark and a typical instance of dialogical communications between two communicants. It is typically an argumentative encounter or question and answer discussion between a pupil

³⁰⁹ Cf. Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung, in Annette Schavan (Hg.) Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukünftige Kirche. Kevelaer, 1994, 25-73, 41.

³¹⁰ Cf. Rahner K., Die Gegenwart der Kirche, 99.

³¹¹ The philosophical Method of the pre-Socratic Ionian cosmologists was in itself a dialogical process. Although the philosophy of dialogue, as we have it now, was not yet developed at this period. These thinkers preoccupied themselves with discussing the basic stuff that makes up all realities. In their various postulates, Thales emphasised "water", Anaximander "the infinite" or "boundless". For Anaximenes fire is the constituent element of all realities.

³¹² Cf. Bürkle H., Dialog der Religion, in: LThk³, Bd. 3, (1993) 196

and his teacher (Socrates), whereby the teacher helps the pupil through dialogue to discover solutions to questions he or she postulated. Put in other word:

Im sokratischen (platonischen) Dialog führt der Frager den Partner stufenweise einer dann gemeinsamen Erkenntnis zu. Das sachlich vorwärtsführende Moment ist dabei die Auffindung und genauere Umgrenzung in einer Argumentation entscheidenden Grundes (Logos) - auf dem Weg etwa, daß der Zusammenhang verschiedener Gründe, die sich während des Gesprächs ergeben, und damit deren Identität oder Differenz geklärt wird. Die platonische Dialektik bietet hierfür ein typisches Beispiel.³¹³

The fact that both partners share a certain confidence and mutuality is central to the Socratic question-and-answer method of argumentation. Such confidence creates an atmosphere of solidarity among the partners, and in the course of the discourse they easily come to the awareness that the solution to their questions are not far from themselves.

Openness to truth is another important factor in the Socratic Method of argument. It demands openness from each participant and the ability to listen to the opinion of the other partner. Hence, the method demands that each partner has to say what he thinks about a given topic under discussion or about a given situation, and to clearly articulate his or her convictions and doubts about the issues.³¹⁴

5.1.2. Aristotle's Three Levels of Relation: "Theoria", "Praxis", and "Poiesis"

The above terminology was original to Pythagoras in the history of Greek philosophy. He used it to categorise the three classes of people who attended the first Olympic Games as far back as 776 B.C.³¹⁵ Pythagoras designated the first group as the *theoroi*, which refers to the people who attended in order to contemplate the games from a distance with a form of spiritual abandonment to the events taking place. The second group were those who actually came to participate (*praxis*) in the events by active competition. The last group, *poi-*

³¹³ Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. Bd. 4. Wiesbaden 1968, 693.

³¹⁴ Cf. Krohn D. Das Sokratische Gespräch in Theorie und Praxis: Zur Einleitung, in: D. Krohn et al. (Hrsg.) Das Sokratische Gespräch: Ein Symposium. Hamburg, 1989 7-20, here, 10.

³¹⁵ For details see: Brockhaus Enzyklopädie. 13. Bd., Wiesbaden 1971, 731-733.

esis, included merchants who were at the scene with the main purpose of exchanging their artefacts and generally having a good time.³¹⁶

Aristotle (384-322BC) adopted these distinctions in his philosophy³¹⁷ and “saw the free person as having three distinctive ways of relating intelligently to life, or, conversely, three human activities from which understanding could arise.”³¹⁸ These three perspectives: *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis*³¹⁹, are for him three ways of coming to the knowledge of reality or three ways of relating to the objective world. They are also the ways in which an (intelligent) person relates to life.

“*Theoria*”, “*praxis*” and “*poiesis*” correspond to the speculative life, the practical life and the productive life respectively. Each of these levels of relationship corresponds to the realities they represent. “The speculative life is the life of contemplation and reflection. The practical life is an ethical life lived in a political context. The productive life is the life devoted to making artifacts, or to artistic endeavours”.³²⁰ The difference between these various levels of knowing, according to Aristotle, lies in their end result or in their motivating factors. “While theoretical knowledge is an end in itself [...] practical knowledge aims at ordering human actions and productive knowledge, at producing a material thing.”³²¹ The *theoroi* were the contemplative visitors to the Greek games who abandoned themselves to the sacred events by “*looking on.*” Aristotle retained the root of *theoroi* but did not use it in a passive state of inertia; for him it was an active state involving *energeia*. However, the term continued to mean an activity of contemplative knowing wherein the knowing is for its own sake and arises from one’s own speculation independent of evidence from reality.³²²

“*Theoria*” is the life of theory. It depicts those who came to contemplate the Olympic Games within the context of Pythagora’s description of the attendants of the above game. A significant characteristic of this group is that it is a

³¹⁶ Cf. Burnet J., *Early Greek Philosophy*. 4th ed., London: Adam and Charles Black 1972, 98.

³¹⁷ Cf. Aristotle: *Die Nichomachische Ethik*. O. Gogon (trans.), München, 1991, a. 1; Aristotle: *Metaphisik*. Schriften zur ersten Philosophie. F. Schwarzer (trans. & ed.), Stuttgart 1970, IX. Buch/1048b.

³¹⁸ Groome Th. H., *Christian Religious Education*, 153.

³¹⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*. (ed.) W. D. Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1949-1956, 1:145-147.

³²⁰ Groome Th. H., *Christian Religious Education*, 153.

³²¹ Lobkowicz N., *Theory and Practice*. Notre Dame, In: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967, 127.

³²² Groome Th. H., *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision*. HarperSanFrancisco, A Division of HarperCollinsPublishers 1980, 154.

disinterested reflection on non-sensible realities. Its purpose is to meditate and discover first principles and to reason downward from them to scientific truth or upward toward transcendental and divine wisdom (Sophia) which is the most perfect knowledge.

Of particular interest to us in these three dimensions of knowing and relating to reality is the pre-eminent place which Aristotle gave to praxis. It constitutes “the second way of life open to free citizens, is constituted by twin moments - one of engagement and one of rational reflection - with each dependent on the other.”³²³ Praxis represents a form of handling in which, relying principally on the basis of intersubjectivity (not instrumentality), one relates to the other dialogically as someone with equal rights with him or her. *Praxis* belongs typically to the ambient of human socio-political life. It is a conduct performed reflectively with a historical purpose. Conversely, it is reflection and intentionality that is realised in human conduct. *Poiesis* depicts a way of life and knowing that is productive and creative-oriented. It illustrates an action by which one makes something out of a structure. It is thus an instrumental action. *Poiesis* is a normal way of relating to things. It is characterised by the tendency to *techne*, that is, art, craft, or skill. But when it is extended to human beings, *poiesis* depicts a way of behaviour which leads to the manipulation or instrumentalising of one’s fellow human beings.³²⁴ Aristotle described this way of life as “productive” or disparagingly as “life of enjoyment”. It is only in terms of how the producer relates or manipulates his/her product.

5.2. Dialogue in the Early Church and Middle Ages

The early Church never had such understanding of the term dialogue as we have in modern times. Although Jesus presented himself in the New Testament as a rabbi who taught with authority and related kindly with people around him, the use of the terms “διαλογισμοί” and “*dialogismos*” in the New Testament did not bring the early Church to the formulation of a real theology of dialogue. “*Dialogixomai*” was used in the sense of ‘conversing or deliberating with somebody. The substantive “*dialogismos*” refers to the dispute between Jesus and his apostles as to who was the greatest among them (Lk. 9,46) as well as the doubt on the resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24:38).³²⁵

Although the early Church had no developed theology of dialogue as in the contemporary period, it borrowed much from Antiquity, especially the Socratic

³²³ Groome Th. H., *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religion & Pastoral Ministry*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco 1991, 44.

³²⁴ Cf. Knobloch S., *Was ist Praktische Theologie*. Freiburg Schweiz 1995, 107.

³²⁵ Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehrer der Kirche*, 48.

Platonic mode of argumentation, in its proclamation and literary presentations and its influence extended to the Middle Ages. Hugo Rahner informs us of three forms of dialogue in the early Church: dialogue as *polemical discussio*, like the dialogue with Judaism on prophetism in the Old Testament and the fulfilment of these prophesies in Christ.³²⁶ Typical of this are the dialogue between Justin the Great and Tryphone in 155 which was the first time the classical literature form of dialogue was used in Christianity;³²⁷ dialogue as *philosophic-dogmatic discussion*. The theological debt of this dialogue is evident in the *consultationes* of Zacharia. Its classical form was represented by Augustine's dialogue work for youths and the *consolatio* of Boethius, whose influence extended to the Middle Ages, etc;³²⁸ and finally dialogue as *ascetical and hagiographic discussion*. This refers to the early monastic literatures which often stem from real discussions with the spiritual fathers and the *collationes* of Johannes Cassianus. The dialogue between Methodius and Philippi on virginity, which had the model of Platonic dialogue, is a typical instance of such dialogues.³²⁹

It is clear from this position that the dialogue in the early Church preoccupied itself primarily with the defence of the Church against Judaism and heresy. Four conditions were necessary for the success of this dialogue:

Das Vermögen der Kommunikation, also die Fähigkeit, sich zumindest versuchsweise auf den Stanspunkt des anderen zu stellen. 2. Das Verständnis, dass die Wahrheit größer ist als das, was menschliches Wissen von ihr zu erfassen vermag. Dies führt aber nicht in den Skeptizismus, sondern, 3. zu der Entscheidung, jede Aussage für wertvoll und kostbar zu erachten, weil sich in ihr, wie gebrochen auch immer, dennoch Wahrheit widerspiegelt. Diese partiellen Erfassungen der Wahrheit treten zueinander in Kontakt, weil sie sich 4. gegenseitig ergänzen und in ihrer Komplementarität der Wahrheit näherkommen als die jeweiligen Aussagen für sich.³³⁰

It is remarkable that the early Church directed its dialogue concern to defending the faith against heresies and encounters with Jews. No impression was given with regard to confronting paganism and its philosophies, which were also threats to Christianity at that time. Its attention was directed to heretics and Jews because of the conviction that these had elements of truth which the

³²⁶ Rahner H., *Dialoge*, in: LThk², Bd. 2 (1959), 340,

³²⁷ Cf. Sauter G., *Dialogik II*, in: TRE, Bd. 8 (1981) 704.

³²⁸ Rahner H., *Dialoge*, in: LThk², Bd. 3 (1959), 339-340, 340.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 49.

Church could not deny, but could accept. However, no room was given to paganism with its denial of fundamental truths about the origin of mankind and religion.

5.2.1 Dialogue in the Form of Disputation in the Middle Age Universities

The Middle Ages had knowledge of dialogical disputation as a way of imparting knowledge in ecclesiastical schools and in convents, as well as in the Church's encounters with heretics and Jews in defence of the faith. The approach was chiefly that of *lectio*: the lector read the text which served as the teaching stuff in order to open his (her) student to the treasures of the ancient times. Besides, the students had access to the classics, which served as materials for *lectio* and meditation.³³¹

The *lectio* took another form with the influx of students with non-Christian orientation, especially Jews and Arabs, who came in with their various cultural and religious views. This development affected the school syllabus in that the question of authority was no longer the central theme. It affected the teaching personnel because it became necessary to recruit teachers of other religious affiliations. However, this new development in the school system paved the way for proper dialogue in the pluralistic context in which the former schools found themselves.³³² It triggered off the formation of the "*Sic et Non*" (i.e., Pros and Cons) method used by Peter Abelard in the 12th century: he juxtaposed conflicting statements of authority, not with the aim of presenting them as unreliable but in order to create an atmosphere that would enable the reader to freely and self-reliantly discuss the question of authority.³³³ The implication of this approach consist in the fact that truth could not be attained if one is contented with what had already been established. Those who define these truth are not 'our masters' but 'our leaders'. Truth stands open for everybody hence; nobody is in total possession of it.³³⁴

In der Schule trat neben die *lectio* die *quaestio*, aus der *lectio* der Autoritäten entstand die *quaestio*. Nun beherrschte dass *utrum* die Szene. Zur Beantwortung der nun gestellten neuen Fragen taten sich

³³¹ Ibid., 50.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Cf. Grabmann M., Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode, 2Bde., Freiburg u.a. 1909, 1911.

³³⁴ Cf. Neuner P., Dialog in der Lehre der Kirche, 51.

die Magister der verschiedenen Schulen zusammen, um sich gemeinsam auf die Suche nach der Wahrheit zu machen.³³⁵

This way of searching for truth had much influence on the university system of the 12th century which, reached great heights through disputation conducted dialogically. In the disputation, the *magister* decided the theme, played and supervised the performance while the bachelor defended the thesis. In the second part, which took place the next day, the *magister* gave the ‘*determinatio*’ and finally formulated the right knowledge to the *disputatio*, The result was the *quaestiones disputatae*.³³⁶

5.2.2. The Disputation with Martin Luther

This *disputatio* forms the background of debate between Luther and the Church. He meant his ninety five 95 theses not to be a *determinatio* but the basis for a disputation which would have led to the attainment of truth about the teachings on indulgence and justification.³³⁷

This method assumed another characteristic in the course of time. Instead of standing for an academic encounter leading to the discovery of truth it became a means of attack and condemnation between partners. Hence, it became more of a means of perpetrating misunderstanding and differences among discussants, and *disputatio* lost its original character. It was against this that Descartes noted in his “*Meditationes de prima philosophia*” that truth cannot be achieved through dialogue but through monologue and in meditation.

Das *meditari*, der alte Begriff für die individuelle Aneignung, wird zum Weg der Wahrheitsfindung. Erkenntnis erfolgt nicht mehr im Dialog, sondern in der Versenkung des autonomen Subjekts, im ‘Monolog des einsamen Denkens mit sich selbst’. Damit war die *disputatio* der Boden entzogen, sie hatte im akademischen Lehrbetrieb keinen Platz mehr und wurde lediglich noch in neuscholastisch geprägten Hochschulen fortgeführt, in denen allerdings, im Gegensatz zur mittelalterlichen Scholastik, wiederum das Autoritätsargument ins Zentrum der Beweisführung rückte.³³⁸

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ As quoted by P. Neuner, Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche, 55.

5.3. Dialogue in the Modern Period

The history of philosophy took a different stance in the modern period. Against the theocentricism of the medieval era, the modern period was anthropocentric. Emphasis was now turned to man, “*anthropos*” (ἄνθρωπος), as a social being, to his potentialities and to the limit of his knowledge. The philosophy of dialogue attained a remarkable degree of development within this epoch. What preoccupied the mind of the modern thinkers was the development of theories that would ensure mutual understanding and the promotion of human dignity in the social world.

Very prominent among the philosophers that dominated the philosophical podium at this period were such thinkers as M. Buber, F. Ebner, H. Cohen, G. Marcel, von F. Rosenzweig, H.-G. Gadamer, E. Husserl, E. Levinas etc. For the sake of precision, we shall not delve into a detailed analysis of their philosophies; rather it suffices to pay attention to few, whose positions will serve as models for our research.

5.3.1. Martin Buber’s dialogical philosophy

Martin Buber³³⁹ formulated and developed his dialogical philosophy as the constitutive element and the bedrock of human self-understanding. This philosophy serves also as the basis for all human interaction/communication and is based on the already-existing philosophy of his predecessors. In his approach to human relations, Martin Buber established a dialectic of human interaction based on the principles of the “*I-Thou*” relation. The “*I-Thou*” relation is for him the epitome of human relationships. It implies that a human being is what he or she is on account of the modalities of his or her relationship to other human beings.

Martin Buber’s understanding of relationship and dialogue was shaped by his Hasidic tradition³⁴⁰ and by his existentialistic philosophy. Both helped him

³³⁹ Martin Buber was a religious existentialist born in 1878 of a Jewish family. He spent his childhood with his grandfather - a business man and a well known scholar of the Jewish literature and rabbinic tradition. He studied philosophy and art at the universities of Vienna, Berlin and Zurich. Martin Buber is well known among other things for his philosophical dialogue and his accentuation of the principle of intersubjectivity as the guiding norm of all human relationship. This subject-subject relationship attains its apogee in our relationship with God. In this case we approach God who sees us and relates to us as subjects.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Stegmaier W., *Heimsuchung. Das Dialogische in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: G. Fürst (Hrsg.) *Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche*. Freiburg im Breisgau, Basel, Wien 1997, 9-29, 20. The Hassidic tradition is characterised with its dialogical tradition. Hence, the Talmud which is a collection of the Tora is presented in a style that is basically dialogical.

identify and criticise the two prevalent errors that plague contemporary society: individualism and collectivism; the former honours only a part of us, and the latter treats us only as a part. Individualism, according to him, understands only a part of the human person, collectivism understands the human person as a part; neither advances the wholeness of the human person, the human person as a whole.³⁴¹ Martin Buber emphasized collectivity in human togetherness. The human being, he confirms, is a social being. He/she is free, creative, and fully human only to the extent that he/she possesses, in action and suffering, in his own life, a relationship which binds him/her completely with others. Hence he argues that: “the primary word “*I-Thou*” can be spoken only with the whole being. Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the *Thou*; as I become *I* say *Thou*. All real living is meeting.”³⁴²

The relationship with things cannot fulfil the human person inasmuch as his or her being always depends on how he or she relates to others. Man can only be man in full relationship with mankind and with the thou.³⁴³ He stressed further that the primary goal of human relationship is relation’s own being, that is, contact with the *Thou*, because through contact with every *Thou* human beings are stirred with a breadth of the *Thou*, that is, of eternal life. He who takes his stand in relations, shares in a reality, that is, in a being that neither merely belongs to him nor merely lies outside him. All reality is an activity in which I share, without being able to appropriate for myself. Where there is no sharing, there is no reality.³⁴⁴

Martin Buber’s understanding of community is very apparent in the above statement. A community, for him, is a “natural group of people bound together by bonds of blood and family, living close together in genuine neighbourliness, developing ties of personal friendship and brotherhood from which arises a common spirit.”³⁴⁵ A true community, he observes, does not necessarily arise when people merely have feelings for one another, but primarily when they take their stand in living mutual relations with *a living centre*, and when they are in living mutual relation with one another. A mutual relation includes feelings but does not originate with them. Community is built up out of living mutual rela-

³⁴¹ Cf. Buber M., *Between Man and Man*. R. G. Smith (trans.), London: Kegan Paul 1947, 200.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁴³ Cf. Weiß P., *Befreit von Angst und Einsamkeit. Der Glaube in der Gemeinde*. Graz Wien Köln 1973, 12.

³⁴⁴ Cf. Buber M., *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Son’s, 1958, 63.

³⁴⁵ Weltsch R., *Buber’s Political Philosophy*, in: *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*. 435-449, 437; Buber M., *Between Man and Man*, 32.

tions, but the builder is the living effective centre. Hence, he contends that “*Inner* reality [...] exists only if there is mutual action. The most powerful and the deepest reality exists where everything enters into the effective action, without reserve the whole man and God the all-embracing-the united I and the boundless *Thou*.”³⁴⁶

The distinction between *I-Thou* and *I-It* relations is typical of Martin Buber’s dialogical philosophy. They designate the two and only two basic attitudes which people can adopt towards the beings with which they communicate. These attitudes determine people’s posture towards the world and elicit different responses and modes of expression from them.³⁴⁷

Martin Buber stresses the basic difference between the “I-Thou” and “I-It” relations thus. “To man the world is twofold, in accordance to his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance to the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words.”³⁴⁸

The primary word IThou does not signify things as such but intimate relations. It is the ideal model for human relationship, based on mutual respect, and intersubjective relationship. The subject sees and approaches his or her partner as subject, not as object. According to Buber, the word “*I*” emerges as a single element out of the primary experiences and out of the vital primary words *I-affecting-Thou* and *Thou-affecting-I*, only after they have been split.³⁴⁹ The “I-Thou” relation does not just mean perceiving someone or having an idea of that person, but it is achieved when one is in direct contact with the ‘*thou-ness*’ of the other person. The “I-Thou” relation consists in confronting a being external to oneself, i.e., one which is radically other, and to recognize it as such. This recognition of otherness, however, is not to be confused with the idea of otherness. To have an idea of something is appropriate to the I-It relation. What is important is not thinking *about* the other, even as an other, but of directly confronting it and of saying *Thou* to it. Hence a real access to the otherness of the other does not consist in a perception but in *thou-saying*, and this is at once an immediate contact and an appeal, which does not posit an object but of which the object-relation is a distortion.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ Buber M., *I and Thou*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons 1958, 89.

³⁴⁷ Cf. Diamond M. L., *Dialogue and Theology*, 9.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Buber M., *I and Thou*. Trans. by R. G. Smith, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994, 15.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 22.

³⁵⁰ Levinas E., *Buber and Theory of Knowledge*, in: P. A. Schlipp/M. Friedman (eds.) *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*. Illinois: The Library of Living Philosophy, Inc. 1967, 133-150, 138.

The “I-Thou” relation has a social context. It promotes a dynamic-social interaction between human beings and can be described as the ontological foundation of every authentic human society. For there to be a human community, and for dialogue to be the guiding principle in such a society, people must choose a personal rather than a functional mode of relating, an “I-Thou” rather than an “I-It” way of being together. By relating intersubjectively (interpersonal relationship or intersubjectivity), one recognises and respects the basic rights, dignity and qualities of the other person. But relating to one’s partner as an “It” (object) is tantamount to a fundamental contradiction that devalues the humanity, rights and dignity of the person relating in this manner.

The “*I-Thou*” relationship is essential in all human relationship for the realisation of one’s ontological dignity and vocation as a human being. Authentic existence is only possible in situations or an atmosphere characterised by intersubjective (I-Thou) relationship. “The I - Thou relation is one in which the self is no longer a subject who always remains alone, and is for this reason Relation par excellence, for it extends beyond the boundaries of the self. [...] The relation is the very essence of the I: whenever the I truly affirms itself, its affirmation is inconceivable without the presence of the Thou. The Thou, as index of the dimension in which the I seeks [...] another being, the Thou as the indeterminate horizon of the encounter, is a priori or innate.”³⁵¹ The fact is that when human beings relate on an “*I - Thou*” basis, they mutually recognise their dignity. This implies that a person’s partner is not merely a dialective partner. When I relate with my partner, he offers me a reflection of myself. Such encounter has a double effect. In the moment I relate to another as a fellow subject with respect, I am not only directly recognising his or her dignity but indirectly confirming my own.

5.3.2. Jürgen Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action

Jürgen Habermas is one of the leading members³⁵² of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research.³⁵³ The establishment of the theory of communicative action

³⁵¹ Levinas E., *Buber and Theory of Knowledge*, 138

³⁵² Cf. Weiß P., *Gemeinde Kirche Ort des Glaubens: Die Praxis als Fundament und als Konsequenz der Theologie*. Graz. Wien. Köln 1989, 147.

³⁵³ The Frankfurt Institute for Social Research is a group of thinkers who, for more than sixty years, have been a powerhouse of theoretical innovation and extensive social research. They are a very diverse group of scholars, but the overall position of the general corpus of their work has come to be called “critical theory”, following the essay in 1936 by their then director Max Hork-

is outstanding in his philosophical works and reflections. In his critical theory, he understands the subjectivity of the human being, and the intersubjectivity that necessarily goes with it, primarily as potential and guaranteeing the basic conditions for truth. His theory admits that the subjectivity of the human person consists in the possibility of taking decisions on intersubjective rational grounds or the ability to bring oneself into such a situation, or the ability to refute one's grounds and motives.³⁵⁴ R. Siebert affords the following insight into Habermas' critical approach to the problems of communication in modern society:

In seiner kritischen Philosophie der kommunikativen Praxis verfolgt Habermas die Absicht, das Prinzip der freien Subjektivität und Intersubjektivität, das christlichen Ursprungs ist und zutiefst in der Transzendenz wurzelt, in humanistischer Form durch eine fortgeschrittene und nachkapitalistische Gesellschaft hindurch in eine nachmoderne Gesellschaft hinein zu retten. Indem Habermas in seiner dialektischen Soziologie kommunikativen Handelns auf den gegenwärtigen Kommunikationsprozeß in den kapitalistischen und sozialistischen Gesellschaften reflektiert, und zwar im Hinblick auf seine systematische Verzerrtheit durch Ideologien, die in Strukturen der Beherrschung des Menschen durch den Menschen wurzeln, nimmt er zugleich eine Sprechsituation oder Kommunikation ohne Gewalt in einer versöhnten nachmodernen Gesellschaft vorweg.³⁵⁵

heimer, "Tradition and Critical Theory". Their numbers have included such major thinkers as Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Friedrich Pollock, Karl Wittfogel, and Alfred Schmidt, as well as Jürgen Habermas. The common characteristic of their work is critique and a relentless attempt to take seriously Marx's slogan, " *We wish to find the new world through criticism of the old.*" But they also realised that such critique will have to be carried on outside the ideological confines of party Marxism. They are a reaction to the fetishized and reified concept of the revolutionary process of party Marxism that was unable to explain the reluctance of the proletariat to fulfil its historical role. They turned to human reason and critical reflection again as essential ingredients to the on-going human quest for emancipation. Here they are in the tradition of Kant and the Enlightenment. Although they accept Hegel's tradition of judging reality before 'the tribune of reason', they do not accept his concept of Reason as a transcendent ideal. As a result, they reunite the object of knowledge with the constitutive activity of the knowing subjects within a historical process. Thus they call for human reason to offset the "objective illusion" of both the capitalist and the Marxist systems. (cf. Th. H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education. Sharing Our Story and Vision*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1980, 181).

³⁵⁴ cf. Siebert R., *Herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation*, in: *Concilium. International Zeitschrift für Theologie*. Jg. 14 heft 1 (Januar 1978) 53-61, 53.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

The Theory of Communicative Action is best known for its striking perspectives on how modernity should be understood. Its underlying goal is the elaboration of how the communicative approach to reason and action helps us to criticise the value of other aspects in such a way as to give us some grounds for 'self-reassurance'.³⁵⁶ Hence, he contends that it is only by sharing self-critical reflections with "communicative competence that ideologies can be unmasked, the truth be known, and emancipation promoted".³⁵⁷

The basic assumption of Jürgen Habermas in the theory of *communicative action* is that the human person is a social and speech-making being with the capability of interacting / communicating with his or her objective world, social world and subjective world. Consequently, he classifies the concept of *communicative action* as "the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extra-verbal means)".³⁵⁸ Communicative competence is not reducible merely to getting someone to believe. It is a process in which the communicators seek to "reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to co-ordinate their actions by way of agreement."³⁵⁹ This implies that one is also prepared to provide justifications for the claims raised with one's utterances, should they be contested, and that one recognises the other as someone who is free to take a Yes/No position with respect to those claims.³⁶⁰ He underscores the mastery of ideal speech situation as one of the component parts of the communicative competence. This does not imply that any type of consensus can make people relate communicatively; hence, the contention in the meaning of communicative competence as the "mastery of ideal speech situation".³⁶¹ An ideal speech situation refers to a circumstance in which there is complete mutuality and intersubjectivity between the partners.³⁶²

Jürgen Habermas distinguished between a true and a false consensus and upheld the conditions on which such a speech situation maintains its validity. This is a situation where the communication is not only not hindered by external, contingent influences, but also not hindered by a force which results from

³⁵⁶ cf. White S. K., Reason, Modernity, and Democracy, in: S. K. White (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Habermas. Cambridge: University Press 1995, 3-16, 8.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 182.

³⁵⁸ Habermas J., The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I, Reason and the Rationalization of Society. trans. T. McCarthy, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, 86.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. 286.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Bayne K. Democracy and the Rechtsstaat: Habermas's Faktizität und Geltung, in: S. K. White (ed.) The Cambridge Companion of Habermas. Cambridge: University Press 1995, 201-232, 203.

³⁶¹ See quotation in Groome Th. H., Christian Religious Education, 182

³⁶² Ibid.

the structure of the communication itself. The condition that the structure of the communication itself produces no compulsion is fulfilled when completely symmetrical relations exist between the participants in the discussion, i.e. when none of the participants is favoured to the utter detriment of the other. He distinguishes between two types of actions.

In his analysis of society, Habermas outlines people's engagement with their social reality as taking place in three modes of interaction. These include: our work upon the world, our communication through symbols with one another, and our participation in social structures - labour, language, and politics. Each mode of engagement, according to him, is a way of knowing reality. However, each mode has its own *knowledge constitutive interest*, i. e. a basic aim of the knowing subject that shapes the outcome of what is known.³⁶³ *Interests* are the orientations that arise from basic human dispositions. They find expression in the work and interaction of human beings and in their struggle for emancipation. The interests of the knowing subject connect the object of knowledge with the possible use to which the knowledge derived may be put.³⁶⁴ The two interests of reproduction and self-constitution are fundamental to the human species. The disposition toward reproduction gives rise to work. That which disposes towards self-constitution gives rise to human interaction and language. He made further allusions to a third mode of social engagement which presents itself in participating in politics. This disposition is rooted in the above two but is prior to them and is motivated by an emancipatory interest that reflects the human quest for freedom. Interests, in Habermas, can be described as the orientations that arise from these basic human dispositions. They find expression in the work and interaction of human beings and in their struggle for freedom. The interest of the knowing subject connects the object of knowledge with the possible use to which the knowledge derived may be put. Thus, theory and practice are united by the knowledge constitution interest of the knowing subject.³⁶⁵ The distinction between strategic action and communicative action is fundamental in Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action.

Types of Action

³⁶³ Cf. Groom Th. H. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*. 103.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Groome Th. H., *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*, 170.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

| | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Action Orientation Action-Situation | Oriented to success | Oriented to reaching Understanding |
| Nonsocial | Instrumental action | ... |
| Social Communicative action | Strategic action | Communicative action |

An action oriented to success, according to Habermas, is called instrumental when “it is considered under the aspect of following technical rules of actions and assess the efficiency of an intervention into complex of circumstances and events”.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, he argues: “We call an action oriented to success *strategic* when we consider it under the aspect of following rules of rational choice and assess the efficiency of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent. [...] By contrast, I shall speak of *communicative* action whenever the actions of the agents involved are co-ordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding.”³⁶⁷

Strategic action depicts people’s relationship with the world of technology and production. It is in itself profit-oriented and characterised by an instrumental interest of manipulation and technical control. Strategic action does not promote a dialectical relationship between human beings and their society; strategic action brings us to technical know-how but not to critical consciousness.³⁶⁸ It is characterised by an instrumental interest of technical control.

³⁶⁶ Habermas J., *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Vol. 1, Th. McCarthy Boston (trans.): Beacon press, 1981 285.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Cf., Groom Th. H., *Sharing Faith*, 103.

Habermas calls actions oriented to success ‘instrumental’ because they follow “technical rules of action and assess the efficiency of an intervention into a complex of circumstances and events.”³⁶⁹

Contrary to success-oriented actions, Habermas qualifies *communicative actions* as the standard for all inter-personal and intersubjective activities. It has the “practical interest”³⁷⁰ of maintaining and promoting understanding within one’s tradition and communities of discourse. Furthermore, he conceives this (communicative) action as a „situation of non-distorted reciprocal communication that is oriented to mutual understanding according to commonly held validity claims. Contrary to interests of personal „success or strategic advantage,“ communicative action takes place in a situation of mutuality between participants; it happens when the symbolic interaction of language is free of domination or manipulation and there is no compulsion to agreement other than the persuasiveness and validity claims of a particular person. In less technical language, it is an honest and fair conversation among partners in quest for truth.³⁷¹ The partners in communicative action are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they go after their individual goals under the condition that they can match their plans of action on the basis of ‘common situation definitions’. This means that the negotiation of the definitions of the situation is very necessary as an essential element of the interpretative accomplishments required for communicative actions.³⁷²

Habermas’ distinction between *strategic actions* and *communicative actions* corresponds to the Aristotelian distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*. In human interaction one operates on the level of *praxis* when one acts communicatively with his partner, recognising him/her not as an object of manipulation but as his or her fellow subject. His emphasis on the establishment of an ideal speech situation as a guarantee for intersubjective communicative action is borne from J. L. Austin’s³⁷³ distinction between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Austin, according to him, “applies the term ‘locutionary’

³⁶⁹ Habermas J., *Theory of Communicative Actions*, vol. One, 285.

³⁷⁰ See Habermas J., *Knowledge and Human Interest*. J. J. Shapiro (Trans.) Boston: Beacon Press 1984, 176.

³⁷¹ Groom Th. H., *Sharing Faith*, 108.

³⁷² Habermas J. *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. One, 286.

³⁷³ The English language philosopher, John Langshaw Austin (1911-1960), was the founder of the speech act theory. His thoughts on the above topic were made famous *post humus* by his followers. His famous work titled „How to do things with Word“ was a collection of his lecture scripts delivered at Harvard University in 1955. By his speech act theory, J. L. Austin implies that when human beings speak, they do not only speak; rather they do something by speaking. [Austin J. L., *How to do Things with Words*. (ed.) J. O. Urmson / M. Sbisà, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1955, 98f.].

to the content of propositional sentences (*p*) or of nominalized propositional sentences (that *p*). Through *locutionary acts* the speaker expresses states of affairs; he says something. Through *illocutionary acts* the speaker performs an action in saying something. The illocutionary role establishes the mode of a sentence (*Mp*) employed as a statement, promise, command, avowal, or the like. Under standard conditions, the mode is expressed by means of a performative verb in the first person present; the action's meaning can be seen particularly in the fact that 'hereby' can be added to the illocutionary component of the speech act: 'I hereby promise you (command you, confess to you) that *p*.' Finally, through *perlocutionary acts* the speaker produces an effect upon the hearer. By carrying out a speech act he brings something into the world. Thus the three acts that Austin distinguishes can be characterised in the following catch phrases: to say *something*, to act in saying something [and] to bring about something *through* acting in saying something.³⁷⁴

Applying the above statement to his analysis of communicative actions, J. Habermas distinguishes between two forms of illocutionary effect - first, the understanding and second the acceptance of a speech act offer. He also distinguishes between three sorts of perlocutionary effects. A locutionary effect designates the effect produced by the speech act on the hearer purely as a result of what follows from its meaning. This class of perlocutionary effect counts as a grammatically regulated one. By an illocutionary effect Habermas refers to an effect on the hearer that is not grammatically legislated by the speech act itself but that could be revealed to the participants in the communication without affecting their understanding and acceptance of the speech act offer.³⁷⁵ Finally, perlocutionary effects refer to „those effects that are not grammatically legislated by the speech act and that could not be revealed to the participants in the communication without affecting their understanding and acceptance of the speech act offer.“³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ “Austin made his conceptual incisions in such a way that the speech act (*Mp*), composed of an illocutionary and a propositional component, is presented as a self-sufficient act which the speaker always performs with a communicative intent that is, so that a hearer may understand and accept his utterance. The self-sufficiency of the speech act is to be understood in the sense that the communicative intent, of the speaker and the illocutionary aim he is pursuing, follow from the manifest meaning of what is said.” cf. Habermas J. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. 288-289.

³⁷⁵ Warnke G., *Communicative Rationality and Cultural Values*, in: S. K. White (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*. Cambridge: University Press 1995, 120-142, 121.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

5.4. Helmut Peukert's Contribution to the Transfer of the Action Theory to Theology

Peukert contributed immensely in according the discussions on communicative action a theological flavour.³⁷⁷ In his work on *Science, Action and Fundamental Theology* he pre-occupied himself with the debate within the theory of science with the intention of establishing a proposal for a fundamental theology, which is a kind of foundational theory of theology. This research brought him to the conclusion that a certain convergence can be established between contemporary reflection on fundamental principles of theology, on the one hand, and the results of research into the theory of science on the other hand. This point of convergence is located in a theory of communicative action.³⁷⁸ He admits, further, that theology “must accept its situation in relation to the modern sciences, both objectively and methodologically, while at the same time attempting to return to its beginnings, where nothing is taken for granted and the individual steps must all be learned again.”³⁷⁹ It must “uncover again the fundamental operations of the theological mode of thinking, recreate the fundamental operations of theological discourse, and introduce its statements so that they are intersubjectively reasonable.”³⁸⁰ Hence, the duty of theology is not restricted to upholding the dignity of the human person as subject, but extends to the realisation of this dignity within the context of mutual respect and intersubjectivity.³⁸¹ It is within the theological enquiry that Peukert proved the competence of theology as a science and the competence of practical theology as the theological theory of communicative action.³⁸²

The theory of communicative action takes its point of departure from an understanding of action that excludes itself from the manipulation of one's partner. It is rather founded on mutual-action or inter-action between self-reliant individuals that are capable of making creative judgement.³⁸³ Consequently, it is the onus of practical theology, as the science of the Church's praxis, to ignore the praxis-model that is aimed at instrumentalising and manipulating its subjects. It should confirm its ability as a reflection of a praxis that does not

³⁷⁷ Lesch W., *Theologische Ethik als Handlungstheorie*. in: E. Arens (Hrsg.) *Gottesrede-Glaubenspraxis. Perspektiven theologischer Handlungstheorie*. Darmstadt 1994, 87-109, 92.

³⁷⁸ Cf. Peukert H., *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology. Toward a Theology of Communicative Action*. J. Bohman (trans.) Massachusetts: MIT Press 1984, xxiii.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ Cf. Stoltenberg G., *Theologische Basismarkierungen der Praktischen Theologie*, in: H. Haslinger (Hrsg.) *Praktische Theologie: Grundlegungen*, Mainz 1999, 123-143, 134.

³⁸² Cf. Knobloch S., *Was ist Praktische Theologie*. Freiburg Schweiz 1995, 112.

³⁸³ Helmut P., *Was ist eine praktische Wissenschaft*, 68.

present itself in a monological relation to an object, but as a dialogically structured action of equal subjects. This would be conceived by all partners as (an) understanding-oriented, that is, a negotiation process devoid of any form of imposition or domination. According to Haslinger:

Praktische Theologie findet also ihre normative Orientierung in jener Kernstruktur kommunikativen Handelns, die darin besteht, 'dass die Kommunikationspartner sich gegenseitig durch alle Dimensionen kommunikativen Handelns hindurch als gleichberechtigt akzeptiert und die gegenseitig Ansprüche als verpflichtend anerkennen ... In der so immer schon vorausgesetzten idealen Sprechsituation muß also jeder Kommunikationspartner prinzipiell die gleiche Möglichkeit haben und dem anderen zugestehen, ... das Gespräch überhaupt zu eröffnen; Behauptungen mit Wahrheitsanspruch aufzustellen oder zu bestreiten, ohne dass bestimmte Voraussetzungen von der möglichen Bestreitung ausgenommen wären; Verhaltensnormen in ihrer Richtigkeit für verpflichtend zu erklären oder abzulehnen, ohne dass gegen Argumente Sanktionen erhoben werden dürften; sich in seiner Subjektivität in das Gespräch einzubringen oder – ohne Täuschung – zurückzuhalten.'³⁸⁴

Peukert toed the line of thought of Aristotle and J. Habermas in distinguishing between attitudes that are work or production oriented and attitudes that orient towards human beings. He admits the human attitude towards work or production is goal-oriented in its nature. Such an act is characterised by a subject-object mode of relation. In contradistinction to this mode of relation, the communicative attitude is an interaction between human beings intersubjectively.³⁸⁵ Following this trend of thought, it is easy to measure the role of the theory of communicative action for practical theology, which understands itself in the context of theory-praxis problems.³⁸⁶

5.4.1. The Ethical Character of Intersubjective Action

Helmut Peukert took time, in his analysis of the competence of practical theology as a scientific discipline, to spell out the structure of communicative action, its universal character and the ethics guiding it. The ethics of intersubjective relation consists in the fact that the way a person relates to his or her communication partners has corresponding effects on the dignity and rights of

³⁸⁴ Haslinger H., *Die wissenschaftstheoretische Frage nach der Praxis*, 108.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Zerfaß R., *Gottesdienstliches Handeln*, in: E. Arens (Hrsg.) *Gottesrede Glaubenspraxis Perspektiven Theologischer Handlungstheorie*. Mainz 108-130, 119.

³⁸⁶ Cf. Knobloch S., *Was ist Praktische Theologie?* Freiburg Schweiz 1995, 109.

the person.³⁸⁷ The point of departure of this ethic is that both partners are equal subjects. It has the implication that the recognition of the basic qualities of my partner as a subject with dignity is the confirmation of my own dignity and rights. It means also that the neglect of my fundamental rights and dignity is a direct neglect of my own rights and dignity. Peukert puts it succinctly thus:

Wenn ich überhaupt mit einem anderen in Interaktion eintrete, so akzeptiere ich ihn grundsätzlich als gleichberechtigten Partner, der mit widersprechen kann, und setze mich in dem, was ich sage, seiner Kritik und Gegenrede so aus, dass ich mich verpflichte, so zu versuchen, in Auseinandersetzung mit ihm zu einer Übereinstimmung über die Wahrheit von Behauptungen oder die Richtigkeit von Normen zu kommen. In der Praxis von Interaktion sind also elementare, in der Interaktion selbst notwendig bejahte Postulate enthalten, sie sich als unausweichlich erweisen und die es ermöglichen, diese primäre Anerkennung in gemeinsam zu findende konkrete Handlungsanweisungen umzusetzen. Diese notwendig immer schon vorausgesetzte gegenseitige Anerkennung kann im Prinzip keinen Kommunikationspartner ausschließen, sie zielt vielmehr auf eine unbegrenzte Kommunikationsgemeinschaft. Sobald ich beginne zu sprechen, trete ich in ein universales Gespräch ein. Handlungsanweisungen können dann nur im Horizont dieser unbegrenzten Kommunikationsgemeinschaft begründet und verantwortet werden. Universale Solidarität ist dann das Grundprinzip von Ethik.³⁸⁸

He argues furthermore:

Die Frage ist, ob die Begründung einer allgemeineren Handlungstheorie nicht nur dann gelingen kann, wenn zugleich eine Grundnorm von Interaktion aufgestellt wird: In meinem Handeln auf den anderen zu, muß ich ihn schon immer als gleichberechtigte Partner anerkennen, wenn ich nicht entweder ihn als Handelnden verfehlen oder ich mich in den Ansprüchen meines Handelns durch mein Handeln selbst negieren soll.³⁸⁹

It is within the context of mutual recognition of the rights, freedom and dignity of one's partner as the basic characteristics of human intersubjective relations³⁹⁰ that Peukert establishes the principle of universal solidarity. Universal solidarity, he argues, "must be realised in concrete actions of individuals in

³⁸⁷ Cf. Stoltenberg G., *Theologische Basismakierungen der Praktischen Theologie*, 135.

³⁸⁸ Peukert H., *Was ist eine Praktische Wissenschaft?*, 68.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ Cf. Haslinger H., *Die Wissenschaftstheoretische Frage nach der Praxis*, 109.

relation to each other".³⁹¹ Intersubjective relation does not limit itself to particular persons or situations but is valid for every person. Its aim is an unlimited communication community. When some one begins to speak he/she involves himself/herself in a universal discussion and the instructions for the actions can be reasonable and justified in the context of this unlimited-communication-community. Thus: universal solidarity is the fundamental principle of ethics.

5.4.2. The Principle of Intersubjective Creativity

Intersubjective creativity builds on the ethics of communicative action. Peukert warns that an attempt to show an unconditional and universal solidarity as the principle norm of all actions, and through it to formulate the basic principle of every action needs to be rendered more precise, otherwise the whole process will meet with serious opposition. He suspects that universal solidarity which directs itself to everybody, forgets that there are people in the socio-political reality who are not capable of recognising the basic rights and dignity of their partner.³⁹²

Political or ethical opposition cannot hinder the obligation to the principle of universal solidarity if one is conscious that the recognition of his or her partner means recognition of his or her fundamental rights, and that political and social actions are obliged to defend the rights of the other.³⁹³ Hence, the principle of universal solidarity is also the principle of intersubjective creativity. It promotes life and aims at free self-determination.³⁹⁴ This brings us to the question of *pedagogical paradox*, which consists in a communication or interaction between two unequal people.³⁹⁵

Eine paradoxe Situation besteht für den Erziehenden insofern, als er von der normativen Grundstruktur von Interaktion her als *Ziel* seines Handelns das mündige Subjekt ansehen muß, während der zu Erziehende, im Normalfall das Kind, an Wissen, Können, Einfluß und Macht unterlegen ist. Es soll also ein Verhältnis vollständiger Ge-

³⁹¹ Peukert H., *Science, Action and Fundamental Theology: Toward a Theology of Communicative Action*. J. Bohman (trans). Massachusetts: The MIT Press 1984, 227.

³⁹² Peukert. H., *Was ist eine praktische Wissenschaft?* 69.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Cf. Peukert U., *Interaktive Kompetenz und Identität: Zum Vorrang sozialen Lernens im Vorschulalter*. Düsseldorf 1979, 53.

gegenseitigkeit angezielt und hergestellt werden unter Bedingungen äußerst Ungleiche.³⁹⁶

This paradox is a problem for the principal norm of interaction, in the sense that it concerns the establishing of human consciousness and human ability to act.³⁹⁷ The question remains, how can one create a conducive and humane atmosphere that will enhance intersubjective communication with students or children who necessarily depend on their parents or teachers for their upbringing?

5.4.3. Jewish-Christian Tradition as the Foundation and Limits of Communicative Action

We have already pointed out Peukert's interest in proving practical theology as the theological theory of communicative action.

Peukert underscores the basic experiences of the Jewish-Christian tradition as the foundation and standard of communicative action. He stresses that the exilic experiences of the Israelites and their liberation from bondage form the basis of Israel's relationship to their neighbours. "This experience is remembered, in ever renewed actualisation, as the Exodus of a group of conscripted labourers, [...] who began to trust in a reality that showed itself to them as a saving, bestowing power of absolute freedom ('I shall be the one who shall be there for you always')."³⁹⁸ This experience of liberation is fundamental in the history and life of the Jews, and they understand it as "liberation from bondage to freedom that has to be reciprocally granted in changing social constellations. It rules out the oppression of fellow human beings and contradicts the un-freedom into which human beings bring each other".³⁹⁹

The experience of liberation committed the Jews to enormous obligations toward their neighbours. "It lays claim to normative status even for later generations; such an experience demands to be remembered and to have its claim socially realised in an ongoing way. This is not merely a matter of private relationships. The touchstone of justice is to be found in specific socially neglected groups, such as widows, orphans, the poor, or foreigners – 'You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment on pledge; but you shall remember that you were a slave in

³⁹⁶ Peukert H., *Was ist praktische Theologie*, 70.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁹⁸ Peukert H., *Science, Action and Fundamental Theology*, 217.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.”⁴⁰⁰

Following this line of thought, the death of one’s communicative partner and one’s own death poses a fundamental problem to the theory of communicative action. Peukert brings out this problem clearly: “The basic experience of liberation through Yahweh, with its normative claim, is called into question at the point where someone is destroyed precisely because he allows this claim to enter into his action.”⁴⁰¹ Peukert cites another instance, the fate of the suffering servant of Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Is. 52:13–53:12). The suffering servant is presented as someone who suffers for the guilt of others but is later saved and lifted up in his downfall (death) by God. In a form that switches between direct discourse with God and a funeral dirge, it is said of the servant of the Lord, who cannot be further identified, that he has been murdered in solidarity with the guilty, in a suffering intercession for them, for the “multitude.” It is said of this figure that God saves him and lifts him up in his downfall. This assertion is put in the mouth of God himself. By letting God himself speak in this way, the text affirms God as the reality for the other, for one who suffers in solidarity; the reality of God proves itself as a reality, inasmuch as God saves those who live in solidarity unto death in death.”⁴⁰² Given this problem, one raises the questions: What becomes of the theory of communicative action if one acts in solidarity and this action is prevented by death?⁴⁰³ According to S. Knobloch:

Hier öffnet nun die christliche Tradition und die Theologie eine neue Ebene, indem sie vom unbedingten Gewolltsein des Menschen durch Gott spricht, das auch jenseits des Todes gilt. Die Theologie hält den von der Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns angemeldeten Anspruch des unbedingten Gleichberechtigseins bzw. Gewolltseins zweier Aktionspartner sozusagen über den Tod hinaus aufrecht. Der Tote kommt im Tod mit seiner Existenz bleibend bei Gott an.⁴⁰⁴

Viewed from the perspective of the Christian tradition, Peukert notes that the New Testament provides a paradigm for elementary structures of human interaction when approached from the stance of the theory of communicative action. The formulation of the two laws of love of God and love of neighbour

⁴⁰⁰ Peukert H., *Science, Action, and, Fundamental Theology*, 217-218.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 220.

⁴⁰³ Knobloch S., *Was ist Praktische Theologie*, 112.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

(cf. Matt 22:37-40), which is the core of Christianity, speaks in this manner.⁴⁰⁵ It is then a truism that the proclamation of Jesus can be reconstructed in correspondence with his speech and action in a general methodological consensus. He did not base his proclamation on doctrines or unimaginable ideas but on linguistic action. This is evident in the Beatitudes, the call of the apostles, the threat, the contrasting comparisons, the illumination in the style of Wisdom literature and through parables.

The life and ministry of Jesus illustrate that he exists radically for God by asserting Him for others practically and by making him to be experienced as a healing, forgiving, saving reality. He asserts God as the saving reality distinct from himself by acting in solidarity for others. It is within the context of this reality that he understands himself.⁴⁰⁶ Jesus' assertion that God is there for the other as unconditional goodness and love is confirmed in his resurrection. This becomes the normative core of communicative action in the dimension of society and thus implies the requirement of social freedom and solidarity.⁴⁰⁷ He embraced this with the awareness of making the eschatological salvation present in his action and in his existence. He "understood his surrender in death as the most extreme consequence and fulfilment of this surrender."⁴⁰⁸

5.5. Conclusion

Our study of the philosophico-theological understanding of "dialogue" brings out clearly how important the term "dialogue" has become in modern society. The term has also attained prominent status in the development of human thought in human sciences and in communication in modern times. The world has turned into a global village as a result of the development of communication and dialogue initiatives in post-modern times. In short, dialogue has become the order the day.

Contrary to monologue (a situation in which one person speaks alone), we have noted in the course of this work that dialogue signals a communicative situation in which participants share equal rights and dignity. It underscores respect, tolerance, mutuality and intersubjectivity in human relation. Dialogue extends to every ambient of human life. It is that quality that characterises human beings, and its denial means the denial of one's dignity and respect.

From the theological point of view, the dialogue between Jesus and his father remains exemplary for all. The Church and her members must have

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 227.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 225.

to learn from it and their dealings with either their members or members of other denominations or religions.

CHAPTER SIX

6. THE CULTURE OF DIALOGUE IN THE CONCILIAR RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH

The term “dialogue” has assumed an important status in the Church and in her theological development since the Second Vatican Council. Through its efforts to ensure the Church’s self-awareness and mission, its awareness of the world around her and the challenges facing her in the task of renewal, the Council has put great emphasis on dialogue. The Church now dialogues with herself, with other churches and followers of other religions.

Before delving into the culture of dialogue in the Church it is necessary observing that the whole idea of dialogue in the practice of faith and evangelisation did not originate with the Catholic Church, but the ecumenical development of the Christian. Notable is the contributions and initiatives of the Pentecostal movements (Churches)⁴⁰⁹ especially through the patronage of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the practise and theory of dialogue as essential elements in every pastoral commitment.

6.1. The World Council of Churches and Dialogue

The development in the theological thinking of the last century led to the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC)⁴¹⁰ as a force that calls all churches “to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship.”⁴¹¹

Founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, the WCC is a world-wide forum for non-denominational encounters, information, and advice. It is the most important institution of those modern ecumenical movements which became standard for Christian and ecclesiastical councils. The reasons for the formation of the Council included seeking ways for the restoration of unity within the divided Christian communities, the search for mutual witness to the faith and Christian living, encouraging the churches on the part of constant renewal in (divine) services and mission, working towards justice and peace, and encouraging re-

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Sievernich M., Neue Evangelisierung in der späten Moderne. Zu einem Leitbegriff gegenwärtiger Pastoral, in: Lebendiges Zeugnis, 56. Jahrgang . Heft 3 . September 2001, 165-175, 167.

⁴¹⁰ Cf. V. Drehsen et al., (Hrsg.) Wörterbuch des Christentums. Düsseldorf 1988, 903-904, 903.

⁴¹¹ Eskinjian S., (compiler) Overcoming Violence: WCC Statements and Actions 1994-2000. Switzerland 1997, 10.

relationships to national conferences, world-wide confessional meetings and other ecumenical organisations.⁴¹²

The WCC was integrated with the International Council for Mission during its third General Assembly in New Delhi (India) in 1961. This integration gave practical impulses to the Council's quest for dialogue and communion with other Churches who had yet not enlisted as members.⁴¹³ Since this assembly, the Council has tried to break away from its previous negative and exclusive attitude towards other world religions. It has steadily continued its journey towards better understanding of, and full dialogue with, the non-Christian religions.⁴¹⁴ It calls for inter-religious dialogue as a necessary means of living out the Christian faith in the service of community with non-Christians.⁴¹⁵

The Catholic Church never interested herself with issues concerning Christian unity in the 1960's, except for the unexpected declaration of John XXIII of his intention to convene an *ecumenical council*, whose focal points would be renewal of the Church and dialogue with fellow Christian churches, non-Christian religions, and with the world. In spite of the emphasis on these themes, the Church has remained careful in identifying with the World Council of Churches. She has rather retained only an observer status in the organisation.⁴¹⁶

The Roman Catholic Church's dialogue with the World Council of Churches attained a remarkable status in 1975, with the publication of the report of the Joint Working Group of both parties, founded in 1965. This report emphasised three priorities: "church unity (with collaboration of Faith and Order),

⁴¹² The establishment of the WCC goes back to the recommendation of the Swedish archbishop, N. Söderblom at Oud Wassernaar in 1919. This recommendation was positively accepted in the 1937 at the World Conference for Practical Christianity in Oxford and the Conference for Faith and Practice in Edinburgh. The constitution of the council was adopted in 1938. These two movements, operating in different forms, joined the Council of the 146 member Churches in 1948. In 1961 the International Council for Missions was integrated. The World Council for Christian Upbringing joined the group. Membership of the WCC was extended to the Orthodox Churches of Russia, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. The anticipation that the Roman Catholic Church would join the Council at the end of the 4th plenary meeting in 1968 at Uppsalla did not come to fruition (cf. Stobbe H-G., *Ökumenischer Rat der Kirche*).

⁴¹³ Cf. Döring H., *Ökumene – Realität und Hoffnung*, in: H. Walter et al. *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie 3 Traktat Kirche*. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1986, 242-259, 244.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Nwaiwu F. O., *Interreligious Dialogue in African Context. Christianity, Islam and African Religion*. Kinshasa-Munich 1990, 33

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Beozzo J. O., *The External Climate*, in: G. Alberigo(ed,) *History of Vatican II vol. I Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a New Era in Catholicism*. J. A. Komonchak (trans.) Leuven 1995, 356-404, 387.

common witness [...] and, finally, collaboration on social issues”⁴¹⁷ It is remarkable that the fifth assembly of the WCC in Nairobi took place in this same year and that the Catholic Church was for the first time in the history of the Council, represented by a team of sixteen observers. This was an indication of a brighter future for mutual co-operation between both parties.

6.2. Dialogue according to Paul VI

The encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* (ES), published on 6th August, 1964, was Paul VI’s compendium on dialogue. Its significance consists in the fact that it was his first encyclical as a pope and at the same time the first papal document to address “dialogue” at all levels in modern times.

Ecclesiam suam was published at the heart of the Second Vatican Council, that is, when the Council was going into the third session. It continued the philosophy of “*aggiornamento*” (ES 50), the idea of ‘opening the door and letting in fresh air’.⁴¹⁸ Paul VI writes: “The purpose of this exhortation of Ours is not to lend substance to the belief that perfection consists in rigidly adhering to the methods adopted by the Church in the past and refusing to countenance the practical measures commonly thought to be in accord with the character of our time. These measures can be put to the test. We cannot forget Pope John XXIII’s word *aggiornamento* which We have adopted as expressing the aim and object of Our own pontificate. Besides ratifying it and confirming it as the guiding principle of the Ecumenical Council, We want to bring it to the notice of the whole Church. It should prove a stimulus to the Church to increase its ever growing vitality and its ability to take stock of itself and give careful consideration to the signs of the times, always and everywhere “proving all things and holding fast that which is good” (33) with the enthusiasm of youth.”⁴¹⁹

Ecclesiam suam had a great impact on some documents of the Council, especially the Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions (*Nostra aetate*) of 28 Oct. 1965, the Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*) of 7 December, 1965, and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, (*Gaudium et spes*) of 7th Dec. 1965. These marked a ‘historical break-through’ in the Church.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁷ Girault R., The Reception of Ecumenism, in: G. Alberigo et. al., (ed.) The Reception of Vatican II. England: Burns & Oates, 1987, 137-167, 147.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Heinz H., Kirche im Dialog – Dialog in der Kirche. Zur Aktualität der Enzyklika Pauls VI „*Ecclesiam suam*“, in: A. Schavan (Hrsg.) Dialog Statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche. Kevelaer 1994, 79-89, 79.

⁴¹⁹ ES 50.

⁴²⁰ Cf. Heinz H., Kirche im Dialog – Dialog in der Kirche, 79.

In the early part of the encyclical, the pope articulated his reasons for writing the document. The first reason was the fact that the Church should look with “penetrating eyes within itself, ponder the mystery of its own being, and draw enlightenment and inspiration from a deeper scrutiny of the doctrine of its origin, nature, mission, and destiny.”⁴²¹ The second motive was the inevitability of renewal and the necessity of bringing the members of the Church to a “clearer realisation of their duty to correct their faults, strive for perfection, and make a wise choice of the means necessary for achieving the renewal.”⁴²² The third reason pointed to the real act of dialogue. This refers to the Church’s relationship with the pluralistic world in which it lives and works.

Paul VI distinguished between two worlds to which the Church is to direct its dialogical concern. “One part of this world [...] has in recent years detached itself and broken away from the Christian foundations of its culture, although formerly it had been so imbued with Christianity and had drawn from it such strength and vigour that the people of these nations in many cases owe to Christianity all that is best in their own tradition – a fact that is not always fully appreciated. Another and larger part of the world covers the vast territories of the so-called emerging nations. Taken as a whole, it is a world which offers to the Church not one but a hundred forms of possible contacts, some of which are open and easy, others difficult and problematic, and many, unfortunately, wholly unfavourable to friendly dialogue.”⁴²³

6.2.1. Dialogue

Paul VI classifies the various peoples to which the Church directs its dialogue in three groups:

1. People with dangerous ideologies and opposed to dialogue. References are made to ideologies like ‘deny God and oppress the Church’ which are “often identified with economic, social and political regimes, [and] atheistic communism.”⁴²⁴ In spite of the difficulties involved in dealing with these groups, it remains the responsibility of the Church to seek better ways of relating with the groups for the sake of peaceful co-existence in the society.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ ES 9.

⁴²² Ibid., 11

⁴²³ Cf. Ibid., 13.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 101.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 106.

2. People or groups who honour the same most high God that the Church honours.⁴²⁶ The content of dialogue with this group embraces the common ideals of religious freedom, brotherhood, culture, social well being and order.
3. Those closely related to the Church and sharing the same faith with it. Here is meant ecumenical dialogue with other churches. With reference to these Churches, the encyclical underlines the teachings/doctrines that hold the Catholic Church and other communions together as the starting point in any ecumenical dialogue. It goes further and observes that, through prayer and penance, the Church is committed to the apostolate of reconciliation with other Christian bodies, in spite of the differences in tradition.⁴²⁷

In writing this document, Paul VI stresses the Church's unlimited and unadulterated commitment to the defence of the truth, irrespective of the infringements of the ideologies of the present time.⁴²⁸ Consequently, he challenged the Church to self-knowledge, renewal and dialogue, thereby demonstrating how vital dialogue is for the world and how much the Church desires to be in contact with the world so that both will get to know and love each other more closely.⁴²⁹ Consequently, dialogue belongs to the Church in her missionary commitment and in her apostolicity.⁴³⁰

6.2.2. Conditions for Dialogue

Every meaningful dialogue has regulations or principles that guide its course. This aphorism is true of the dialogue project of Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam*. The Pope describes these conditions as the mental attitude which the Church must adopt regarding the contemporary world. He calls for clarity before all else, since dialogue demands that what one says should be intelligible.

Dialogue is an invitation to the exercise and development of the highest spiritual and mental powers human beings possess. The conditions for dialogue include: (1) Close examination of the kind of speech used by those involved in evangelisation. One should be mindful that clearer and comprehensible language is easier to understand than complicated and idiomatic constructions; (2) The application of the act of humility and trustworthiness in the dialogical encounter. Paul VI maintains that "it would be a disgrace if our dialogue were

⁴²⁶ Cf. Guitton J., *Dialog mit Paul VI*. Wien, 1967, 157.

⁴²⁷ Neuner P., Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv der Kirche*, in: G. Fürst (Hg.) *Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1997, 47-70, 57.

⁴²⁸ Cf. Heinz H., *Kirche im Dialog*, 81.

⁴²⁹ Cf. GS 3.

⁴³⁰ Cf. *Das Dialogmotiv der Kirche*, 56.

marked by arrogance, the use of mere words or offensive bitterness. What gives it its authority is the fact that it affirms the truth, shares with others the gifts of charity, is itself an example of virtue, avoids peremptory language, makes no demands. It is peaceful, has no use for extreme methods, is patient under contradiction and inclines towards generosity”;⁴³¹ (3) The development of the spirit of confidence is buttressed both by the power of one’s own words and the good-will of both parties to the dialogue. Confidence in dialogue paves the way for intimacy and friendship between the partners involved. Dialogue unites them in mutual adherence to the Good, and thus excludes all selfish interests;⁴³² (4) Prudence on the part of a teacher regarding his/her carefulness to make provision for the psychological and moral circumstances of his or her hearer, especially if the hearer is a child, unprepared, suspicious or hostile. The person speaking should adapt himself/herself and the manner of his/her presentation to the susceptibilities and the degree of intelligence of his/her hearers.⁴³³

Paul VI did not recognise any limit to dialogue. He stresses that the Church possesses the truth while her partners have access to elements of this truth. “Our dialogue” he says, presupposes that there exists in us a state of mind which we wish to communicate and to foster in those around us. It is the state of mind which characterises the man who realises the seriousness of the apostolic mission and who sees his own salvation as inseparable from the salvation of others. His constant endeavour is to get everyone talking about the message which has been given to him to communicate.⁴³⁴ This statement has the implication that it is the Church’s responsibility to speak and determine what happens, while the prerogative of the partner is to listen.⁴³⁵

It is clear from the above that Paul VI’s notion of dialogue is one-sided, a means instead of an vital element in the life and mission of the Church.⁴³⁶ Underlying the possibility of internal ecclesiastical dialogue, he stresses the dominant role of the hierarchy in the whole process. “The desire that the Church’s internal relationships should take the form of a dialogue between members of a community founded upon love does not mean that the virtue of obedience is no longer operative. The right to command and the duty to obey must be pre-

⁴³¹ ES 81.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁴³⁵ Cf. Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 58.

⁴³⁶ Pottmeyer H. J., *Dialog der Wahrheit. Wie Kirche ihre Wahrheit findet und lebt*, in: A. Schavan (Hrsg.), *Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche*. Kevelear 1994, 90-96, 90.

sent in any properly constituted society, especially in the Church which is structured on a sacred hierarchy”.⁴³⁷

6.3. *Communio et progressio*

The Pastoral Constitution *Communio et progressio* (CP) was published on the 29th of January, 1971, as the official position of the Church on communication and mass-media in present-day society. This document is an instruction on the process of communication, the different means of communication and the criteria for such communication.⁴³⁸

Communio et progressio was primarily published as a result of the limitations of *Inter mirifica* which was the most criticised document of the Council, because of the hasty nature of its preparation and its rash publication without much room for debate by other Council Fathers.⁴³⁹ Cardinal John Carmel Heenan of Great Britain declared the document as “unworthy of the Council”.⁴⁴⁰ This gave rise to world-wide protests: “There were articles in the press, radio commentaries broadcast to every part of the world, and even pamphlets distributed to the public and to the Council Fathers on their way to the basilica. Although the protesters were not able to prevent the vast majority from voting in favour of the proposed text, they managed to stir up a minority larger than that for any other conciliar document to cast *non placet* votes. The final result was 1960 votes for and 164 against”.⁴⁴¹

The publication of *Communio et progressio* in 1971 was hailed as a “much more satisfactory document.” Among its more notable recommendations was the plea for better communication within the Church itself.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ ES 114.

⁴³⁸ zu Schlochtern J. M., Das Kirchenbild von “Communio et Progressio” im Kontext der nachkonziliaren Ekklesiologie. In *ComSoz*, 303-319, 303.

⁴³⁹ Kampmann S., Abschied von einem horizontal-dialogischen Medienbild? Zum Wandel kirchlicher Mediendeutung und seinen ekklesiologischen Bedeutung, in: *Communicatio Socialis* 24, 1991, 284-301, 287.

⁴⁴⁰ William E. W., “The Media (Inter Mirifica)” in Andrain Hastings (ed.), *Modern Catholicism – Vatican II and After*. London: SPCK/New York: OUP, 1991, 169; Habbleshwaite P., *In the Vatican*. Britain. Oxford University Press 1986, 183.

⁴⁴¹ Ruzskowski ., The Decree on the Means of Social Communication. Success or Failure of the Council? in: R. Latourelle (ed.) *Vatican II Assessment and Perspective. Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*. New York. Paulist Press, 1989, 548-579, 549.

⁴⁴² Aylward S., *Evangelization and Culture*. New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 103.

6.3.1. The Central Idea of the Document

Communio et progressio has the objective of enhancing communication in the Church while promoting the quest for unity and the advancement of human beings living in society.⁴⁴³ It underscores the people's quest for information and this right to be informed in all circumstances.⁴⁴⁴

Communio et progressio did not mince words in identifying communication as constitutive of every community. Communication, the Instruction notes, affords the people of today the opportunity for a round-table discussion in their search for unity; it enables them to participate in a world-wide exchange of fraternal co-operation; and it provides proper conditions for mutual and sympathetic understanding which leads to universal progress.⁴⁴⁵

Apart from the advancement of human co-operation, social communication is an indispensable means of evangelisation. *Communio et progressio* underlines the important roles which the media play in making the teaching of Christianity reach its audience. It outlines three ways through which the media assist the Church. These include helping the Church reveal herself to the modern world, fostering dialogue within the Church and making clear to the Church contemporary opinions and attitudes. This is necessary because of her mandate to present the message of salvation to people in a language they understand and to involve herself with the concerns of the modern man.⁴⁴⁶

With regard to dialogue within the Church, *Communio et progressio* stresses that the Church as a living body “needs public opinion in order to sustain a giving and taking between her members. Without this, she cannot advance in thought and action”.⁴⁴⁷ It calls for a two-way flow of information within the Church itself, and for openness in communicating with the world.⁴⁴⁸ This free dialogue does no harm to the Church's unity and solidarity but nurtures concord and the meeting of minds by permitting the free play of variations in public opinion even in the event of different opinions among the partners. Catholics must feel free to express their opinions, so that responsible dialogue can take place within the Church on matters of importance. “While the individual Catholic follows the *magisterium*, he can and should engage in free research

⁴⁴³ cf. CP 1.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. CP 125.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.115.

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid., 114-115.

so that he may better understand revealed truths or even explain them to a society subject to incessant change”.⁴⁴⁹

With regard to dialogue between the Church and the world, *Communio et progressio* admits that the Church cannot isolate herself from the world, since she has a special role to play in its evangelisation by virtue of her divine mandate (Mt. 28:20). By dialoguing with the world, the Church brings herself close to the problems and concerns of people living in the world. It is incumbent on the Church to make proper use of the means of communication in her witness to the Gospel. Those with responsible positions are to make profitable use of these positions so as to give a true picture of the Church and her life. Since the media are often the only channels of information that exist between the Church and the world, neglect of their effective use would be to ‘burying the talent given by God’.⁴⁵⁰ Because of the important and irreplaceable role of the media, every Christian is to embrace the challenges met in the service of the means of social communication and to act in such a way that these may serve human ends.⁴⁵¹

6.3.2. Areas of Application

Having noted the importance of the means of social communication both for the improvement of communication in society and in the Church, *Communio et progressio* stresses the areas where these services are needed. These include: the public media system and areas that foster communication within the Church.

The mass media consists of the press, cinema, radio, television and theatre. The influential roles played by these means of communication, in a post humanistic and pluralistic society are stressed. The document makes the following remarks regarding the press: “The press, of its power and nature, is of towering importance. Because of its adaptability, and because of the variety and of the number of its publications, it can go into detail when reporting the news. It can also comment on the news without boring the reader, interpret it in a way that makes him or her think for him/herself. It is a most useful complement to the audio-visual means of communication. It is a most effective means of stimulating men’s critical faculties and of helping them form their own opinions. [...] It has prime place in the promotion of social dialogue”.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 135.

Communio et progressio emphasises the invaluable role which the media play in information within the Church. They help in Christian education and can call on the services of the greatest specialities in religious teaching. In short, the media have at their command all the technical facilities required for attractive and contemporary presentations. They can back up most effectively the personal work of the teacher day by day. Their resources make possible the radical changes that are required in the whole style of religious instruction today.

6.3.3. Evaluation of Paul VI's Contribution to Dialogue in the Church

Pope Paul VI contributed enormously to the growth of the Church. His encyclical on dialogue, *Ecclesia suam*, can be described as a compendium of his teachings on dialogue. Peter Hubblethwaite describes him as the first modern Pope because he discharged his services through dialogue and attentive listening in a way that was quite new to the history of the papacy.⁴⁵³ He describes him further as someone that firmly believed that people are made for dialogue. This conviction, he writes, accompanied Paul VI throughout his life. His spirituality and external outreaching were all sustained by the same source.⁴⁵⁴

As a man of dialogue, Paul VI contributed immensely to the establishment of a Church that is willing to listen to her partner. He believed firmly that the Church can only fulfil its mission in the world when it “looks with penetrating eyes within itself, ponder the mystery of its own origin, and draw enlightenment and inspiration from a deeper scrutiny of the doctrine of its own origin, nature, and destiny.”⁴⁵⁵ His pontificate contributed much to the realisation of this objective. He continued the task of the Second Vatican Council, which was begun by his predecessor, and accompanied the whole sessions in the process of developing of a Church that is open not only to itself but to its neighbours, to the world and to the concerns and afflictions of those living in it.

6.4. Vatican Council II and Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council was an epoch making event: it redirected the course of the Church in the last century. It is the most historically significant council in the Church since the famous council of Jerusalem. Both councils marked a breakthrough in the history of the Catholic Church. The Council of Jerusalem in 49 A.D. marked the passing of the infant Church from a Jewish Christianity to something that was also Gentile and Graeco-Roman. It abandoned its Judaic self-image and such revered Judaic practices as circumcision, the Sabbath, and laws regarding unclean food, practices that were not mere

⁴⁵³ Hubblethwaite P., Paul VI. The First Modern Pope. London: Paulist Press 1993, 12.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁵⁵ EN 9.

externals but traditions with deep theological consequences. No less revolutionary than the Council of Jerusalem was Vatican II when it assumed the theological stand that the Church is in the most literal sense of the word a *world Church*⁴⁵⁶ - in nature supracultural. In essence, the Church is as Asian and African as European. All leading Councils belonged to either the Eastern or Western Churches. Vatican Council II ushered in a new epoch in the two thousand years of the Church's existence. As a new epoch, the Council was the first in the history of the Catholic Church to boldly address issues concerning unity and disunity within the Church and between the Church and the different Christian communions. It was the first Council in history to possess a global character and to address common problems concerning the whole Church and the world. Such problems include dialogue, justice and peace, and human dignity. It was to emphasise this global character that John XXIII appointed African and Latin American bishops in the years before the Council to be personal representatives of their peoples.⁴⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, these appointments "were marked by growing attention to continents other than Europe, by a sharp increase in the choice of clerics from the dioceses to which they were appointed, and by a lowering of the average age of the new bishops, especially in dioceses of the Third World".⁴⁵⁸ In line with his intention to give the Council a universal character, the Pope embarked on the creation of native hierarchies in the developing nations. The native hierarchy in Congo was established on November 10, 1959, and on May 8, 1960, the Pope officiated at the consecration of the Third World bishops. The hierarchies of Vietnam, Korea and Indonesia were created at the beginning of 1961.⁴⁵⁹

6.4.1. The Announcement of the Council

With the surprising announcement of his intention to convene a diocesan synod of Rome and an ecumenical Council for the universal Church (January 25, 1959),⁴⁶⁰ John XXIII emphasised the need for, and called for, the renewal of the Church. This renewal emphasised three major themes: (1) openness to

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. Fries H., *Der Sinn von Kirche im Verständnis des heutigen Christentums*, in: W. Kern et al., *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie 3 Trakt Kirche*. Freiburg im Br. 1986, 17-29, 23.

⁴⁵⁷ Cf. Bühlmann W., *Von der Kirche träumen. Ein Stück Apostelgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*. Graz, Wien. Köln 1986, 234.

⁴⁵⁸ Beozzo J. O., *The External Climate*, in: J. O. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II. Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a new Era in Catholicism*. Vol. I, Maryknoll: Orbis 1995, 357-404, 384.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. Pesch O. H., *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Vorgeschichte – Verlauf – Ergebnisse – Nachgeschichte*. Würzburg 2001, 47.

the modern world; (2) unity among Christians; and (3) the church of the poor.⁴⁶¹

The sympathy which the Pope had won for himself by his pastoral attitudes during the first months of his pontificate created room for the expression of reactions to the announcement of a new Council. These reactions, awakened by his action, were very far-reaching, extending to many different circles, social groups, and cultural strata far beyond the usual confines of Roman Catholicism and crossing the bounds of the usual Atlantic world of Europe and North America.⁴⁶²

6.4.2. Ambivalent Reactions to the Announcement of the Council and Expectations

It is clear from all indications that the announcement of the Council elicited a general feeling of joy all over the world which “had its eyes on the Council, and the common dream [...] that it would contribute to the making of a better world.”⁴⁶³ This fact notwithstanding, there were people who accepted the announcement with a pinch of salt, with the argument that there were no sufficient reasons to convoke the Council.⁴⁶⁴

6.4.2.1 Positive Echoes to the Council

Welcoming the idea of convoking an ecumenical council, the German Cardinal Josef Döpfner “expected from the Council ‘a deepening and strengthening but also a differentiation and adaptation of the inner life of the Church’.”⁴⁶⁵ He insisted that the Council would have a ‘pastoral character’ based on two facts: “First of all, the Church will not pay any heed to the fact that it is surrounded by enemies. Its aim is to rediscover itself in order to gain a deeper understanding of its mission to the world. [...] On the other hand [...] the Church soberly

⁴⁶¹ Cf. Gutierrez G., *The Church and the Poor: A Latin American Perspective*, in: G. Komonchak et al., (ed.) *The Reception of the Vatican Council*. England: Burn & Oates 1987, 171-193, 175.

⁴⁶² Alberigo G., *The Announcement of the Council. From the Security of the Fortress to the Lure of the Quest*, in: G. Alberigo (Ed.), *History of Vatican II: (vol. I) Announcement and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a new Era in Catholicism*, Orbis: Maryknoll 1995 1-54, 18.

⁴⁶³ Wittstadt K., *On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council (July 1 – October 10, 1962)*, in: G. Alberigo (ed.) *History of Vatican II. vol. I Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a New Era of Catholicism*. (J. A. Komonchak engl. trans.) Maryknow: Orbis 1995, 405-500, 406.

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Pesch O. H., *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 55.

⁴⁶⁵ Wittstadt K., *On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council*, 406.

recognises, as it seeks its self-renewal, that it exists in an age that does not grasp its ultimate mystery.’⁴⁶⁶

The reaction from South America was an expression of hope that the Council would help the “worldwide Church to acknowledge its responsibility for the human race. The Council reveals and at the same time intensifies a new ecclesial self-awareness, to a greater degree than in the past, in collaborate action.”⁴⁶⁷

Reactions from Africa underlined the “hope for a new impulse for the ecumenical movement, since the division among Christians could only have a negative effect on the credibility of missionary work [...] In particular, it was hoped that the Council would lead to better contacts, at all levels of the universal Church, between the young mission countries and the old European Churches.”⁴⁶⁸

From Italy, Cardinal Giovanni B. Montini of Milan addressed a “*Messagio*” to his clergy and faithful on January 26: “At the Council the Church is seeking herself, trying with great trust and a great effort to define and understand herself better as she really is. After twenty centuries of history, the Church seems to be submerged by the civilisation of the world, so that she appears to be in fact absent from the contemporary world. She is therefore feeling the need for recollection, self-purification, and self-renewal, in order to be able to set out again on her own part with great energy. ... While she is thus working to define and identify herself, the Church is also examining the world, and trying to enter into contact with contemporary society. ... And how is this contact to take place? It means re-entering into dialogue with the world, discerning the needs of the society in which it acts, observing the hopes that lie within men’s heart.”⁴⁶⁹

The bishops of the United States of America reacted, in a joint pastoral letter, but admitting that, although their Church has not had a long tradition, they could make a special contribution to the Council by bringing to it the experience of a new kind of Church such as could develop only under the conditions of the pluralism that characterised North American society. Although the Church of the United States was not so rich in tradition, it could represent the

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 409

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Montini G. B., *Discorso al Clero 1957-1963* (Milan, 1963), 78-80 as quoted by H. Carrier S.J., *The Contribution of the Council to Culture*, in: R. Latourelle (ed.), *Vatican II Assessment and Perspective. Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*. New York: Paulist Press 1989, 442 - 465, 445.

advantages ‘which have come to the Church from living and growing in an atmosphere of religious and political freedom’.⁴⁷⁰

The above reactions point in the same direction. They demonstrate the acceptance of John XXIII’s announcement of the convocation of an Ecumenical Council. In clear terms, they signal the importance of dialogue for the Council and for the Church of the twenty-first century. The Council “accounted for the great turnabout toward the end of the first session and opened up pathways along which the work of the Council would advance very fruitfully”.⁴⁷¹ Given these facts, it can be said that the Second Vatican Council was dialogue-oriented. It did not restrict this concern for dialogue to the Church’s self-knowledge of its missionary nature and the means of accomplishing this mission, but to dialogue with other Christian communions and with the modern world.⁴⁷²

6.4.2.2 Negative Reactions to the Announcement of the Council

The fact that the decision to summon the Council was popularly welcomed throughout the world does not mean that there was no opposition to the plan. The announcement met with tremendous criticism among members of the Roman Curia and beyond. The reactions of the 17 Curia Cardinals with the exception of Cardinal Domenico Tardini (then secretary of State), and a few others who had an earlier information of the Pope’s intention to convoke an Ecumenical Council, are eloquent testimony to their reservations. Many went as far as questioning the competence of the Pope to execute such a project. John XXIII expressed surprise over the reaction of these Cardinals and could not help observing that he, humanly speaking, had expected that the Cardinals would have immediately rallied around him and his plan with their agreement, support and good wishes. On hearing of the Council, they maintained rather a holy and impressive silence!⁴⁷³

Many broke their silence with expressions of dissatisfaction because they did not expect such a thing from him. They expressed surprise because they did not expect such a project from the Pope, who was elected to the papacy at the age of 77 and was seen as a transitional Pope, one whose reign would be short and would peacefully heal the traumas inflicted by Pius XII’s long and dramatic reign.⁴⁷⁴ Hence, they undertook all within their ability to dissuade the him

⁴⁷⁰ Cf. Wittstadt K., On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council, 408.

⁴⁷¹ Gutierrez G., The Church and the Poor, 175-176.

⁴⁷² Cf. Döpfner J., Die Erneuerung der Kirche in der Modernen Welt, in W. Sandfuchs (Hrsg.) Das neue Volk Gottes, 115-127, 118.

⁴⁷³ See quotation in Pesch O. H., Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil, 50.

⁴⁷⁴ cf. Alberigo G., The Announcement of the Council, 2.

from convening the Council.⁴⁷⁵ A brief review of some statements of some of these Cardinals will give us more clues about their state of mind.

Kardinal Siri, Erzbischof von Genua, einer der besonders veränderungsunwilligen Kirchmänner der Zeit, der 1978 sogar um ein Haar noch Papst geworden wäre: 'Die Kirche wird 50 Jahre brauchen, um sich von den Irrwegen Johannes' XXIII zu erholen.' Kardinal Spellman, Erzbischof von New York, war bei der Nachricht von der Ankündigung des Konzils am 25. Januar 1959 so schockiert, dass er sagte, 'ich glaube nicht, dass der Papst ein Konzil einberufen wollte, aber er wurde dazu von Leuten gedrängt, die seine Worte verdreht haben' [...].

Kardinal Lercaro, Erzbischof von Bologna, der später auf dem Konzil eine so wichtige und förderliche Rolle vor allem für die Liturgiereform spielte, ließe sich wie folgt vernehmen: 'Wie kann er es wagen, nach 100 Jahren und nur 3 Monaten nach seiner Wahl, ein Konzil einzuberufen? Papst Johannes ist vorschnell und impulsiv. Seine Unerfahrenheit und sein Mangel an Bildung führten ihn zu diesem Schritt, zu diesem Paradoxon. Ein Ereignis wie dieses wird seine ohnehin schon schwache Gesundheit ruinieren und das ganze Gebäude seiner angeblichen moralischen und theologischen Tugenden zusammenstürzen lassen. Selbst Giovanni Battista, Erzbischof von Mailand, der später als Papst Paul VI. so energisch das Konzil weiterführen und zu Ende bringen sollte, rief am Abend jenes Ankündigungstages seinen alten Vertrauten, den Oratorianerpater Giulio Bevilacqua an mit den Worten: 'Dieser heilige alte Knabe scheint nicht zu merken, in was für ein Hornissennest er da sticht.' Aber Bevilacqua gab die richtige Antwort: 'Keine Sorge, Don Battista, lassen Sie nur, der Heilige Geist ist noch wach in der Kirche.'⁴⁷⁶

In spite of this disconcerted or perhaps defensive silence of the cardinals present in St. Paul Outside the Walls in view of John XXIII's plan to convene the Council, the Pope stuck to his guns and set forth his plan to convoke the Council and to discuss matters concerning the inner nature of the church and the Church's responsibility towards dialogue in pursuit of Christian unity, inter-religious relations and solidarity with the world. He stressed that he was motivated "solely by a concern for the 'good of souls' and that the new pontificate

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. Döpman H.,-P., (hrsg.) NIKODIM Metropolit von Leningrad und Nowgorod: JOHANNES XXIII. P Papst einer Kirche im Aufbruch. Berlin 1984, 254.

⁴⁷⁶ Pesch O. H., Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil, 52.

might come to grips, in a clear and well defined way, with the spiritual needs of the present times.’⁴⁷⁷

Reacting to his critics and to the argument that his pontificate could not embark on such a lofty plan, John XXIII remarked with his usual humour in his *Journal of a Soul*, the spiritual diary which he kept faithfully down to the last days of his life: “When on 28 October 1958, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church chose me to assume the supreme responsibility of ruling the universal flock of Jesus Christ, at seventy-seven years of age; everyone was convinced that I would be a provisional and transitional Pope. Yet here I am, already on the eve of the fourth year on my pontificate, with an immense program of work in front of me to be carried out before the eyes of the whole world, which is watching and waiting.’⁴⁷⁸ In a letter to the clergy of Venezuela (24th April, 1959) he draws out his expectations from the Council. We pray and hope above all that the drama of Christ’s ascension in Jerusalem which renewed and united Apostles: united in thoughts and prayers with Peter – a presentation of energies, which enables the seek for new energies that help her in the search for solutions to challenges to the apostolate of the present day.⁴⁷⁹ Es concerns the great event. May the Lord not look on our sins but on the faith of his Church and grant her full unity and peace in accordance to his will so that she acquires an inner power and listen to her shepherd’s voice, follow him and form in this way a sheepfold according to the heart of Jesus.⁴⁸⁰

6.4.3. Relationship between Dialogue and Colloquium

The original Latin text of the documents recognises two words, “colloquium” and “dialogue”, in relation to the Church’s relationship with herself (*ad intra*) and with external bodies (*ad extra*). Colloquium, which has the elements of emotional, familiar and fraternal relationship, belongs to the micro-level. It depicts the mode of interaction within the Church as a family. Dialogue belongs to the macro-level. It represents a more formalised mode of interaction between the Church and other churches, religions and ideologies. A simple word count indicates the frequency at which these terms occur in the conciliar documents. We shall be coming back to this later.

⁴⁷⁷ See quotation in Alberigo G., *The Announcement of the Council*, 1

⁴⁷⁸ As quoted by Alberigo G., *The Announcement of the Council*, 9; cf. Pesch O. H., *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 51.

⁴⁷⁹ See quotation in Döpmann H.-P (hrsg.) *NIKODIM Metropolit von Leningrad und Nowgorod*, 255.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

6.4.3.1. “Dialogus”

Dialogue is the great code word of the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁸¹ This is not only confirmed by John XXIII’s emphasis on Christian unity and inter-religious relationship, but also by the frequency references that were made to it in the various conciliar documents. A word count reveals that ‘dialogue’ appeared twenty five times in the original texts of the documents: “Unitatis red-
integratio” – 9 times, “Gaudium et spes” – 6 times, “Lumen gentium” – 6 times, “Gravissimum educationis” – 2 times, “Dignitatis humanae” – 1 time and “Optatem totius” – 1 time. Before we enter into a study of the conciliar teachings on dialogue, it will be pertinent to embark on a break down of these texts, arranging them according to the various dialogue-themes they dwell upon:

- (I) Ecumenical dialogue: UR 4, 9, 19, 21, 22; GS 40; GE 11;
- (II) Dialogue with all men and women: GS 92, AG 12, 34; GE 8, 11;
- (III) On the formation of seminarians (OT 19);
- (IV) Dialogue as a means of preventing conflicts and settling disputes between cultures GS 56;
- (V) On international co-operation (GS 85);
- (VI) Dialogue in the service of religious freedom (DH 3).

With these, Vatican II acknowledges that modern man seeks dialogue as a privileged means of establishing and developing mutual understanding, esteem, respect and love between groups and between individuals as well. This dialogical approach consists in the will to understand the interlocutor more and more, instead of condemning him or her; in the respect shown to his/her dignity and liberty in the face of pluralism; in the attempt to discover the elements of truth contained in the views of the other, and in the exposition of one’s own conviction in the face of the other’s opposition and slow assimilation.⁴⁸²

To concretise its commitments to the above objectives and to demonstrate its readiness to foster mutual dialogue with other Christian bodies and non-Christian religions, the Council created three Secretariats, namely: the Secretariat for Christian Unity, which was set up in June, 1960, the Secretariat for Non-Christians instituted in 1964 to search for suitable methods and ways

⁴⁸¹ Karrer O., Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Reflexionen zu seiner geschichtlichen und geistlichen Wirklichkeit. München 1966, 73.

⁴⁸² Kaufmann L/Klein N., Johannes XXIII. Prophetie im Vermächtnis, 17.

of opening dialogue with non-Christian bodies; and the Secretariat for Non-Believers, set up in April, 1965, with the responsibility of studying the phenomenon of atheism and non-belief, and seeking ways to dialogue with people who hold such views.⁴⁸³ Hence, the Church wishes to establish a system or situation of mutual understanding and respect in its relationship with other Christian Churches (ecumenism) and in its relationship with non believers. Dialogue, for the Catholic Church, now embraces churches or groups no matter what degree of separation or disagreement they have with it. With the establishment of the above mentioned Secretariats, the Council declares its intention and readiness to listen to these groups and to establish relationships and better understanding with them.

The Council's application of the word "dialogue" has been criticised. For Peter Neuner it was a fundamental deficit for the Council to use 'dialogue' with reference to the Church's relationship with other Christian denominations and her interaction with non-believers, without paying attention to relationships within her circles. To restrict dialogue to those who are separated from the Church is clearly different from the dialogue approach of the early Christians through the Middle Ages up to the modern period. The present stand means that the more distant the partner is to the Church the more intensive is the Church's interest in dialogue with him or her.⁴⁸⁴

That the Council did not explicitly use the word "dialogue" with regard to internal relationships or interaction in the Church does not mean a deficit, nor does it mean that it (the Church) hasn't any other model for interaction or togetherness within the Church. A thorough reading of the various conciliar documents reveals the distinction the Council made between two modes of relation. This is a distinction between more complicated and formal relationships, that is, dialogue *qua tale*, and a non-formal, but a familiar, fraternal, informal and spontaneous relational inter-action, that is, "colloquium". Colloquium can be described as discourse, conversation or dialogue at the micro-level of the Church, while dialogue with its formal/diplomatic relationships belongs to the macro-level. Before embarking on a deeper study of these modes of interaction, it will be profitable to conduct an excursion into the various conciliar documents for more insights into the usage of the terms.

⁴⁸³ Cf. Arinze F., *Church in Dialogue: Walking with Other Believers*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1990 210.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 61.

6.4.3.2. Colloquium

Etymologically, the word ‘colloquium’ derives from the two Latin words “*cum*” (together) and “*loquium*” (speaking). The latter derives from “*loqui*” (to speak) and means conversation, speaking together, mutual discourse, conference, to converse. It was originally characteristic of, or proper to, ordinary conversation, as distinguished from formal or meta-language.

The term “colloquium” occurs thirty-two times in the documents of the Second Vatican Council to describe internal communication and interaction within the Church. In contrast to dialogue, colloquium connotes the tendencies of familiar and fraternal conversation. It is conversation on the informal and micro-level.

The call for fraternal collaboration is necessitated by the rapid advancement in technology in the present times. This advancement is an enhancement of interpersonal relations which leaves the Church no option but to enter into genuine and fraternal dialogue. This dialogue calls for a deeper level of personal fellowship and mutual respect for the full spiritual dignity of the human person. The Christian revelation greatly fosters the establishment of such fellowship and at the same time promotes deeper understanding.⁴⁸⁵ The Council underscores the relevance of good relationships. If these are to be cultivated, it is necessary for genuine human values to be at a premium, especially the art of living and working on friendly terms with others and entering into dialogue (colloquium) with them.⁴⁸⁶ Adults, it admits, have a special role in this regard. They are to enter into friendly dialogue with the youth irrespective of any age-difference between them.⁴⁸⁷

Within this same context of inner harmony, understanding and fraternal relationship in the Church, the Council uses the term “colloquium” in spelling out the duties of diocesan bishops in the promotion of dialogue in and within the Church.⁴⁸⁸ The document proceeds to articulate the various levels in the Church to which colloquium should be extended. These include the individual and collective relationship between bishops and diocesan priests (individually and collectively), as a means of ensuring an increasingly effective apostolate;⁴⁸⁹ the promotion of good relationship between the clergy and laity,⁴⁹⁰ the training of Church personnel through the continuous training of priests by means of

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. GS 23.

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. AA 29; GS 43.

⁴⁸⁷ AA 12.

⁴⁸⁸ CD 13.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 28

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. AA 25

seminars, conferences and further studies,⁴⁹¹ the training of seminarians in a conducive atmosphere⁴⁹², and relationships with the laity.⁴⁹³

6.4.4. Dialogue Culture in the Conciliar Sitings

Since we have observed above that Vatican Council II played a special role in the establishment of a more dialogue-conscious Church, it is my intention here to examine out how this came about. One of the ways of doing this is by examining how deep and to what extent the Council itself was dialogical in its sessions. If the Council retained the dialogue concept as contained in *Ecclesiam suam* in the strict sense of the word, it would realise itself as an “event”, thereby cultivating what could be understood as a dialogue culture for the future Church. The participants came out of the Council and reported that the prevailing atmosphere from the very start of the Council was one of friendliness.⁴⁹⁴

A lot of spectacular events marked the beginning of the Council and paved the way for the establishment of a dialogue culture at the Council. One of these events happened ever before the beginning of the Council. Before the Pope gathered the bishops together for this great Council, he requested them to direct all problems in writing to him which they would wish the Council to discuss. The result of this request filled an entire library.⁴⁹⁵

The first accent on dialogue at the Council was set by Cardinals Achille Liénart of Lille (Chairman of the French Episcopal Conference) and Cardinal Joseph Frings of Cologne (Chairman of Episcopal Conference of Germany), who interrupted the programme and argued that delegates be allowed free hands in choosing members of the various commissions. For this to be successful, the first day of the Council should be dedicated to know-yourself round to enable the bishops have enough time to know each other.⁴⁹⁶ They should have time to know the best candidates⁴⁹⁷ to be elected into various commissions and be able to develop certain level of confidence in them and in each other at the Council before ever they delving into the strenuous task of the Council. It has to be noted that this suggestion was greeted with resounding echo by the dele-

⁴⁹¹ Cf. OT 17.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 11.

⁴⁹³ Cf. AA 31

⁴⁹⁴ Wittstadt K., On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council, 405.

⁴⁹⁵ Cf. Loew J. *Ihr sollt meine Jünger sein: Schule des Glaubens*. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1978, 230.

⁴⁹⁶ Wiltgen R. M., *Der Rhein fließt in den Tiber: Eine Geschichte des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*. Felgkirche 1988, 16.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

gated.⁴⁹⁸ A bishop from Holland described this breakthrough as their ‘first victory’ as he was telephoning a friend on his way out of the Council’s Aula.⁴⁹⁹ It was in reaction to this development on this first day of the Council that Archbishop Pericle Felici consulted shortly with Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, the moderator for the day, and declared that the Council’s presidium had accepted the request of Cardinals A. Liénart and J. Frings and postponed the day’s session to Tuesday, 16th, October by 9.00 a.m.⁵⁰⁰

Taking the initiative further, Cardinal J. Frings invited German and Austrian bishops to the *Anima* on the evening of 10th Oct. 1962, for a meeting. According to W. Weiß:

Das Treffen in der Anima an jedem Montag während der Sitzungsperiode wurde zu einer festen Institution im Konzilsgeschehen. Hier konnte die offene Debatte geführt werden, die in der Aula von Sankt Peter wegen des Umfangs der Vollversammlung und der damit notwendigen relativ starren Tagesordnung nicht stattfinden konnte.⁵⁰¹

This same approach was adopted by other bishops’ conferences. The meeting later became an important part of the Council. The function of the conferences was not to form blockage groups but to make possible a collective opinion on issues and to avoid the isolation of groups, thus, the avoidance of particularisation at the Council.⁵⁰² A co-ordinating committee, comprised of a representative of the various bishops conferences, was formed for the purpose of enhancing communication between the various conferences.

Dieses Miteinander der verschiedenen Bischofskonferenz wurde zu einem ursprüngliche nicht vorgesehenen wichtigen Strukturelement des II. Vatikanums, erst durch diese Verflechtung wurde es möglich, das Prinzip der konziliaren Kollegialität praktisch umzusetzen. Die Bischofskonferenz wurde als ‘Vorstufen der Konsensfindung ... die entscheidenden Gelenke des konziliaren Organismus’.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Josef Kardinal Frings, *Für die Menschen bestellt: Erinnerungen*. Köln 1974, 253.

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. Wiltgen R. M., *Der Rhein fließt in den Tiber* 16.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁰¹ Weiß W., *Die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und das II. Vatikanum*, in: K. Wittstadt/W. Verschooten (Hrsg.), *Der Beitrag der Deutschsprachigen und Osteuropäischen Länder zum zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*. Leuven: 1996, 27-44, 34.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*

⁵⁰³ Ratzinger J., *Kardinal Frings und das II. Vatikanische Konzil*, in D. Froitzheim (Hrsg.) *Kardinal Frings. Leben und Werk*. Köln, 1980, 191-205, 196 as quoted by W. Weiß *Die deutsche Bischofskonferenz und das II. Vatikanum*, 34.

The internal contacts between the various bishops' conferences before and after the opening of the sessions on 10th October were decisive for the future of the Council. "A clear sign of an 'internal contact' was the fact that without any prior arrangement an overwhelming majority opted for free elections to the commissions. According to Cardinal Suenens, this was the "salvation of the Council'. By this he meant that the Council had now become a Council of the Council fathers'."⁵⁰⁴ The decision of the Council Fathers to reject the already formulated schemes for discussions during the sessions, and the unanimous acceptance of their own proposal indicated some readiness to embrace the challenges of dialogue right from the beginning of the Council.

6.4.4.1 The Reactions of the Bishops to the Initial Schemata

Another spectacular event at that moment of the Council was the rejection of the initial schemata presented by the preparation committee. Walbert Bühlmann description of this phase of the Council as "*dialogischen Durchführung*" and "*regelrechten Rebellion*"⁵⁰⁵ "are fitting. The dialogical breakthrough and rebellion consisted in the fact that there was an air of dissatisfaction and widespread complaint about the unsystematic character of the preparations, confirmed by the disorganised sequence in which the texts were being brought before the Central Preparatory Commission (CPC.), and the "fears about the Council itself and particularly that it would not correspond to the intentions of the Pope."⁵⁰⁶

The criticism of the French bishops focused on the content of this draft. The "perspective in the draft was "*ad intra*", focused on internal affairs, and then only in a very restricted form, whereas questions "*ad extra*", dealing with matters outside the Church, were given no attention. Yet it was this that people expected, namely, that the Church would work out a healthy and fruitful relationship with the modern world, with science, and with nonbelievers and those of a different faith."⁵⁰⁷

With the rejection of the initial schemata of the Council, the bishops intensified contact with each other and with their theologians in working out other schemata, with the exception of the paper on the Liturgy, in order to enable the

⁵⁰⁴ Wittstadt K., On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council, 500.

⁵⁰⁵ Bühlmann W., Von der Kirche träumen: Ein Stück Apostelgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert. Graz, Wien, Köln 1986, 28.

⁵⁰⁶ Komonchak J. A., The Struggle for the Council During the Preparation of Vatican II (1960-1962), in: G. Alberigo (ed.), History of Vatican II. vol. I Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a New Era in Catholicism. J. A. Komonchak (trans. eng. edition) Orbis: Maryknoll 1995, 166-356, 339.

⁵⁰⁷ Wittstadt K., On the Eve of the Second Vatican Council, 421.

Council turn out to be what it became at last.⁵⁰⁸ In place of the seventy schemata submitted by this committee, they came out with sixteen on which the Council concentrated its deliberations. These schemes embraced such areas as the internal renewal of the Church, new relationships with other Christians and world religions, renewed mission of the Church in the world which embraces the dignity of human vocation, the dignity of the human person and personal rights, marriage and family, culture and development, social and economic issues of the human community, and justice and peace in the world.⁵⁰⁹

The decision of the bishops at the first General session of the Council to act independently of the preparatory commission was an exciting development during the Council. It signalled the readiness of the bishops to assume full responsibility for the Council, instead of leaving themselves at the disposal of the Commission of the Roman Curia.

Es gab keine Manipulation. Die Kurienkardinäle drängen sich nicht in den Vordergrund, sie blieben eher schweigsam und überließen dem Weltepiskopat das freie Wort. Die Gelegenheit dazu wurde auch rechtlich genützt. [...] Es gab auch keine eigentliche Konfrontation, wie man es aufgrund der zwei Arten von Präludien hätte erwarten können. Man hörte nichts von 'offenem Widerstand' des Paulus gegenüber Petrus (Gal 2,11), des Weltepiskopates gegenüber der römischen Kurie.⁵¹⁰

The informal dialogue atmosphere that existed between the bishops and theologians at the Council is worthy of note. The presence of these theologians was of importance to the bishops because they had to be consulted on the latest theological stands of things and on the formulation of new concepts. In addition to this there was the role played by the Council's observers and delegates from non-Catholic churches who, though without possessing the right to vote, served as catalysts for an all-embracing discussion at the sessions.⁵¹¹ There was outstanding dialogue between the Fathers of the Council and observers of other Christian confessions attained. Appreciating this fact, an observer noted with surprise noted that he observed how they (observers) day to day really formed part of the Council.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Bühlmann W. Von der Kirche träumen, 28.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Lehmann K., Glauben bezeugen, Gesellschaft gestalten. Reflexionen und Positionen. Freiburg/ Basel/ Wien 1993, 317.

⁵¹⁰ Bühlmann W., Von der Kirche träumen, 46.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 316.

⁵¹² Cf Wiltgen R. M., Der Rhein fließt in den Tiber, 128.

6.4.4.2 The First Statement of the Council: A Letter to Humanity

The Fathers of the Council demonstrated their readiness to dialogue at this stage of the Council by unanimously agreeing to send a message of hope and solidarity to people of good will on the 20th October, 1962, based on the recommendations of the two French Dominican theologians and Council theologians, Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Conger and support of four French bishops. This letter was the Council's answer to the Pope's opening speech. The message did not pass any judgment but promised mercy; it turned attention first to the kingdom of God but did not close its eyes to the problems of the world.⁵¹³ In this letter, the Council Fathers qualified the Council as a bond of unity of all nations and promised to work to specify what the dignity of man was about and what would contribute towards the realization of a real community of all races of the world.⁵¹⁴ A rundown of some parts of this message gives an insight into the importance of the subject matter for the Fathers of the Council. They declared as follows:

Bei dieser Versammlung wollen wir unter der Führung des Heiligen Geistes Wege suchen, uns selbst zu erneuern, um dem Evangelium Jesu Christi immer treuer zu entsprechen. Wir wollen uns bemühen, den Menschen unserer Zeit die Wahrheit Gottes in ihrer Fülle und Reinheit so zu verkünden, daß sie von ihnen verstanden und bereitwillig angenommen werde. [...] Wir tragen in unseren Herzen die Nöte der uns anvertrauten Völker, die Ängste des Leibes und der Seele, die Schmerzen, die Sehnsüchte und Hoffnungen ... Unsere erste Sorge eilt deshalb zu den ganz Schlichten, zu den Armen und Schwachen ... Wir fühlen uns mit allen jenen solidarisch, die noch kein menschenwürdiges Leben führen können, weil es ihnen an der rechten Hilfe fehlt. Deswegen legen wir bei unseren Arbeiten besonderes Gewicht auf jene Probleme, die mit der Würde des Menschen und mit einer wahren Völkergemeinschaft zusammenhängen ... Wir bekennen, daß die Menschen insgesamt Brüder sind, gleich welcher Nation und Rasse. – Wir setzen unser Vertrauen auf die Kraft des Gottesgeistes, den unser Herr Jesus Christus der Kirche verheißen hat.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ Cf. Karrer O., Das zweite vatikanische Konzil, 80-81.

⁵¹⁴ Moeller C., Die Geschichte der Pastoralkonstitution, in: LThK, 2 (1968) 242-279, 246.

⁵¹⁵ See quotation in Karrer O., Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil, 81-82.

The message appealed to the whole world to join in all humility and urgency in building up healthier and more fraternal principles of human society in this world.⁵¹⁶

The direct dialogue at this stage of the Council between the Council and all the people of God expresses the readiness of the Council to identify with the problems and concerns of humanity as problems and concerns of the Church. The impending danger facing humanity at that period, when the world was on the brink of self destruction in the Cuba crisis⁵¹⁷ and the USA–USSR cold war was on the point of turning into an atomic war was a source of threat and concern to the world. There were also the problems of industrialization, which gave rise to the development of city-states and to the impoverishing of the poorer societies; nationalism and fascism, which attained their climax in the Second World War, the development of the world's economy, the media, tourism and the culture of consuming as the core of the economic development which not only gave rise to a new consciousness but also produced the North-South conflict, that is the impoverishment of the southern part of the globe etc.⁵¹⁸

It is remarkable that the Council paid attention to these problems at this stage assuring the world of her heartfelt solidarity. This singular gesture remains remarkable in the annals of the Catholic Church which, for the first time identified the problems of the world and humanity as those of the Church.

6.4.4.3. Gaudium et spes - A Hermeneutic Key to the Understanding of the Council

There is a close relationship between the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, and the letter the Council addressed to the world on October 20, 1962, before the Council started its programmatic sessions. The similarities in the documents not only consist in the fact that they were written at the beginning and closing of the council respectively, but that they represent more of a “*Concil à la dimension du monde*”⁵¹⁹ Both of them

⁵¹⁶ Wittstadt K., Julius Kardinal Döpfner – Eine Bedeutende Persönlichkeit des II. Vatikanischen Konzils, in: K. Wittstadt/W. Verschooten (Hrsg.) Der Beitrag der Deutschsprachigen und Osteuropäischen Ländern, 45-66, 52.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Pesch O. H., Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil, 344.

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Zerfaß R., Volk Gottes unterwegs – die Vision des II. Vatikanum, in: Konferenz der bayrischen Pastoraltheologen (Hrsg.) Das Handeln der Kirche in der Welt von Heute. Ein pastoraltheologischer Grundriß. München 1994, 21-31, 22.

⁵¹⁹ Chenu Marie-Dominique, Un Concile au dimension du monde, in: Chenu M-D., L'évangile dans le temps de dieu II, Paris 1964, 633.

preoccupy themselves with the same subject matter: a message of hope to the world.

In its intention of communicating with the world of today, the Council “desires above all to establish a dialogue with ‘all men of good will in whose hearts grace works in an unseen way’. Further, this dialogue is focused on the idea of *humanitas*”.⁵²⁰ Reiterating the first letter, *Gaudium et spes* underlines the Church’s solidarity with, and intention to enter into dialogue with the entire human family.⁵²¹ It brings out this intention, as well as the reason for the solidarity, clearly in its preface: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. For theirs is a community composed of men, who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards to the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of solidarity with the human race and its history”.⁵²² It is clear from its context and content that this message was not directed to the members of the Church alone or to Christians but to the “entire human race seen in the context of everything which envelopes it: it is a world as the theatre of human history, bearing the marks of the travail, its triumphs and failures, the world”.⁵²³

As the last document of the council, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World summarizes the entire concern of the Council. It is the hermeneutic key for the understanding of the Council. The document consists of two parts but remains an organic unity.⁵²⁴ “It is called “pastoral” because, while resting on doctrinal principles, it seeks to set forth the relation of the Church to the world and to the men and women of today. [...] In Part I, the Church develops her teaching on man, the world he inhabits, and her relationship to him. Part II treats at length of various aspects of life today and human

⁵²⁰ Rulla L M et. Al., *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation. Conciliar and Postconciliar Aspects*, in: R. Latourelle (ed.) *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*. New York: Paulist Press 1989, 402-459, 402-403.

⁵²¹ This point is clearly stated in the third article and then repeated a number of times in the course of the document. Thus, for example, No. 11, introducing Part I, declares that “The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord ... [and] labors to decipher authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose,” and then states that “faith throws a new light on everything, manifests God’s design for man’s total vocation, and thus directs the minds to solutions which are fully human. Likewise, the same article, affirms in its third paragraph that in the teachings of GS, ‘the Church will show its religious, and by that very fact, its supremely human character’ (ibid.).

⁵²² GS 1.

⁵²³ GS 2.

⁵²⁴ A. Flannery (ed.) *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1981 903.

society and in particular deals with those questions and problems which seem to have a greater urgency in our day. The Constitution is to be interpreted according to the general norms of theological interpretation, while taking into account, especially in Part II, the changing circumstances which the subject matter, by its very nature, involves.⁵²⁵

The special characteristic of *Gaudium et spes* consists in the fact that it is of considerable originality. It urges the Church, for the first time, and in a text that is the longest in the whole history of the Church Council, “to awaken to the deep changes affecting human society, so that it can be present to contemporary men and women in language intelligible to every generation ... answer the ever-occurring questions which men ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other”.⁵²⁶ The document has its roots in the Council itself and tries to articulate the basic elements in the opening speech of the Council by John XXIII. According to E. Klinger:

Alle sechzehn Dokumente des Konzils – die vier Konstitutionen, neun Dekrete und drei Erklärungen – sind vom Programme der Eröffnungsrede geprägt und nach ihrer Zielsetzung gestaltet. Fragt man jedoch, welches Dokument sich auf diese Rede ausdrücklich bezieht und ihren Ansatz, den Sprung nach vorn in dogmatischer und pastoraler Durchdringung zur Grundlage der eigenen Erörterung macht, so ist ohne jede Einschränkung zu beantworten: die Pastorkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute, *Gaudium et spes*. Diese Konstitution behandelt das zentrale Thema der Eröffnungsrede, die Aufgabestellung der Kirche in der heutigen Welt. Sie stellt sich bei seiner Erörterung auf den Boden der Eröffnungsrede und geht den Weg einer immanenten Apologetik: sie greift alle dogmatischen Aussagen unter einem pastoralen Gesichtspunkt auf und stellt ihre pastoralen Aussagen unter einem dogmatischen Gesichtspunkt dar. Die Grundlage dieser Zuordnung von Dogmatik und Pastoral ist der Glaube an die Berufung des Menschen in Gott und Christus. Die Kirche wird durch diesen Glauben befähigt, die Probleme des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenlebens heute im Licht des eigenen Auftrags, aber auch diesen Auftrag im Licht jener Probleme betrachten.⁵²⁷

He specifies further:

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Latourelle R., *Absence and Presence of Fundamental Theology at Vatican II*, in: R. Latourelle (ed.) *Vatican II Assessment and Perspective. Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*. Vol. 3, New York: Paulist Press, 1989, 378-415, 386.

⁵²⁷ Klinger E., *Armut*, Die Herausforderung Gottes, 96-97.

Die Pastoralconstitution ist das Prinzip der Auslegung des Konzils. Sie hat das Programme direkt aufgegriffen, das dem Konzil zugrunde liegt, und was ist nach dessen Maßgabe nicht nur formal gegliedert, sondern auch inhaltlich gestaltet. In ihr findet jener Sprung nach vorne statt, durch den die Kirche ihre Treue zur Tradition erweist, indem sie die Inhalte der Tradition dogmatisch neu erfaßt und pastoral verwirklicht. ‘Gaudium et spes’ ist auch die einzige Konstitution, die sich keiner Vorlage verdankt und ganz von Konzil selbst entworfen wurde.⁵²⁸

From its historical development, the pastoral constitution is a document that was not part of the original plan for the Council, but latter became the climax of the entire conciliar concern. Its root stems from the bishops of Latin America, especially Bishop Dom Helder Camara, the Auxiliary bishop of Rio de Janeiro, who, insisting that the Council should give attention to the relationship between the Church and the world, posited the following questions: What are we to do now? Should we concentrate only on ‘internal’ problems of the Church when two thirds of humanity is dying of hunger? What will we do with regard to the problems of underdevelopment? Has the Council nothing to say on the problems of humanity?. Should the Pope be left alone in this fight? Is the problem of Latin America that of lack of priests? No, he answered but underdevelopment.⁵²⁹ It is in reaction to these thought-provoking questions that the Council came to the decision to work on the so called Scheme XIII which was later to become the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*.⁵³⁰

Gaudium et spes initiated a historical burst through in the world community. It did not tackle the problems of developing countries in a general chapter, but in the context of economy, politics, culture, family, work, freedom, disarmament, world community etc, thereby articulating the problems of these countries as those of the entire world. Stressing the importance and the complex nature of the culture of dialogue for the Church, it admits unequivocally that sincere dialogue (*sincerum dialogus*) is the only means of guiding modern man, who is “perplexed by questions about current trends in the world, about their place and their role in the universe [...] and finally about the destiny of nature and of men”.⁵³¹ The Church enters into dialogue with humankind as an expression of closeness, respect and love by way of witnessing to the faith. This dialogue is

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁵²⁹ Moeller C., *Die Geschichte der Pastoralconstitution*, 247.

⁵³⁰ Cf. Langhorst P., *Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik. Von der Hilfe zur Zusammenarbeit*. Paderborn. München. Wien. Zürich 1996, 121.

⁵³¹ GS 3.

not restricted to Christians but to “other ecclesial communities” and religions (*apertum dialogus*)⁵³² as well as to people who present themselves as enemies of the Church. In virtue of its mission to enlighten the whole world with the message of the Gospel and gather together in one Spirit all men of every nation, race and culture, the Church shows itself as a sign of the spirit of brotherhood which not only renders sincere dialogue possible, but also strengthens it. “Such a mission esteems reverence and harmony, and acknowledges all legitimate diversity; in this way, all who constitute the People of God will be able to engage in ever more fruitful dialogue, whether they are pastors or other members of the faithful. [...] Our eagerness for such dialogue, conducted with appropriate discretion and leading to truth by way of love alone, excludes nobody; we would like to include those who respect outstanding human values without realising who the author of those values is, as well as those who oppose the Church and persecute it in various ways. Since God the Father is the beginning and the end of all things, we are called to be brothers; we ought to work together without violence and without deceit to build up the world in a spirit of genuine peace.”⁵³³

The Council’s teaching on the dignity of the human person, the community of mankind and the deep significance of human activities as we have underscored above, “provides the basis for discussing the relationship and dialogue between the Church and the world”.⁵³⁴ In its concern for mutual relationship, it made it clear that the Church does not only give but also receives. She enriches her partner and at the same is ready to be enriched by them. This aspect of mutual giving and receiving between the Church and the world are distinctly stipulated by the pastoral constitution. It has to be acknowledged that just as it is in the world’s interest to acknowledge the Church as a social reality and a driving force in history, “so too the Church is not unaware how much it has profited from the history and development of mankind. It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of the sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures through which greater light is thrown on the nature of man and new avenues to truth are opened up. The Church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the context and language of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of the philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all men and the requirements of the learned, insofar as this could be done.”⁵³⁵

⁵³² Ibid., 40.

⁵³³ Ibid., 92.

⁵³⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 44.

6.4.4.4. Faith-Culture Relationship

The intention of the Council in providing itself with a tool for cultural analysis was that of emphasising the close link between culture, evangelisation and the mission of the Church.⁵³⁶ In *Gaudium et spes*, it devotes an entire chapter (GS 53-62) to this link, underscoring the importance of culture in the life of mankind. “There are many links between the message of salvation and culture. In his self-revelation to his people culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his incarnate Son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age.”⁵³⁷ The Church also understands the extent to which cultures can influence religious life: cultures can themselves become the privileged locus for evangelisation.⁵³⁸ The Council made it clear that the Church existed through the centuries in varying circumstances and has maintained good relationships with different cultures, utilising their resources in its preaching to spread and explain the message of Christ, to examine and understand this message more deeply, and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in the various aspects of the life of the faithful.⁵³⁹

Culture is not only an important feature in the life of mankind but also an inseparable part of man, hence the classical understanding of the human person as a “cultural animal”. The Pastoral Constitution underlines this fact and admits that it is “one of the properties of the human person that he can achieve true and full humanity only by means of culture, which is through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. Whenever, therefore, there is a question of human life, nature and cultures are intimately linked together”.⁵⁴⁰

The document notes with unequivocal certainty that the Good News is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, or to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practice, ancient or modern, nor is it the prerogative of any culture. It calls for the inculturation of the Good News in the life, language, customs and cultures of its addressees. Through proper inculturation, the good news continues to renew the life and culture of fallen mankind, combats and removes the errors and evil which flow from the ever-present attraction of sin, and never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. It takes the spiritual qualities and endowments of every age and nation, and

⁵³⁶ Carrier H., *The Contributions of the Council to Culture*, in: R. Latourelle (ed.), *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives Twenty-five Years After*. New York: Paulist Press 1989, 442-465, 455.

⁵³⁷ GS 58.

⁵³⁸ Carrier H., *The Contributions of the Council to Culture*, 455.

⁵³⁹ Cf. GS 58.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

with supernatural riches it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within; it fortifies, completes and restores them in Christ.⁵⁴¹

The document charges bishops, priests, and those responsible for the pastoral ministry, to employ the services of modern tools of human sciences, and especially of psychology and sociology, in order to throw light on the cultural circumstances in which they must proclaim the gospel.⁵⁴² They are to encourage research in this field and do all they can to uplift the culture of man. By so doing, they will be contributing immensely to implanting the Good News in all departments of human life, as well as contributing in no small measure to the development of mankind.

6.4.4.5 Evaluation

Right from the time of the announcement of the Council by John XXIII it was clear that the Council stood under the sign of the mystery of unity,⁵⁴³ hence the Council's emphasis on dialogue. Our study of the place of dialogue in Vatican Council II shows the importance of this Council and its recommendations for the development of the Church since the last quarter of the last century. It identifies itself with the world and with the problems and concerns of the contemporary man. The Council "recognised the signs of the times and was itself [...] the greatest of such signs. It conceived the Church in the truest sense as a "world" Church, not in theory but in actuality."⁵⁴⁴

Commenting on the benefits of this universal character of the Council, K. Rahner argues that the presence of the representatives from the so called Third world countries (Africa, Asia and Latin America) and their active participation at the Council were signs of the Church's discovery of her universal character and an official realisation of herself as world Church. It was indeed the first time in the history of the Church that "the Church's living space was from the very outset the whole world," not simply an European Church.⁵⁴⁵ He argues, in another instance, that Church is no longer the Church of the West that exports her theology to the whole world. She is today actual and not merely in potency. She is a world Church with regional local Churches that seek historically and socially to differentiate themselves from Europe inculturation.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 62.

⁵⁴³ Cf. Häring B., *Das Konzil im Zeichen der Einheit*. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1963, 9.

⁵⁴⁴ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*, 109.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. Rahner K., *Concern for the Church*: New York 1981, 78 and 79.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Rahner K., *Aspekte europäischer Theologie*, in: *Schriften zur Theologie*, Bd. XV, Zürich-Einsiedeln-Köln 1983, 88.

The Council's readiness to enter into dialogue was based on many sources, including the votes and sentiments of all bishops, their coadjutors and auxiliaries, as well as those of other ecclesiastical prelates, Superior Generals of religious congregations. The First Vatican Council had depended more on the votes of the thirty-six selected bishops.⁵⁴⁷

The involvement of all Church leaders in Vatican Council II signalled the direction which the Council planned to take. It implied the Church's readiness to consult, dialogue and interact with its members and with the world through the bishops and their representatives. It was a Council that recognised and respected the importance of dialogue for the future growth of the Church. The Pope's request to the bishops to make written submission of the problems facing the Church - which they wanted the Council to discuss - is worthy of note. F. X. Kaufmann articulates the outcome of this act of inter-personal relationship that took place in the Aula of the Council in vivid terms:

Das Ergebnis des Konzils ist das Werk eines unendlichen Vielzahl zwischenmenschlicher Kommunikation von Gesprächen in Cafeterias, Zusammenkünften in kirchlichen Häusern, nächtlichen Debatten um entscheidende Textstücke, mutigen Reden in der Konzilsaula und überlegten Modi der Konzilsväter. Durch die Vernetzung unendlich vieler kleiner Zirkel, durch die Verbindung einer informellen und einer formellen Struktur ist aus soziologischer Sicht dieses Konzil zu einem Ergebnis gekommen, dessen gleichzeitige Komplexität und Kohärenz beeindruckt.⁵⁴⁸

The fact that the Council allowed an atmosphere of freedom among the participants is a basic element in its dialogical concern. Its four sessions were characterised by elements of a collegial sense of responsibility and commitment by the bishops,⁵⁴⁹ hence the rare intervention of the curia. The timely interventions by the bishops' right before the sittings began, are eloquent testimonies to the freedom of speech that prevailed. The insistence on the change of the original schemata prepared by the Curia, the coming together on an informal basis (colloquium) for the purpose of getting to know each other, the

⁵⁴⁷ Pottmeyer H. J., Die Voten und ersten Beiträge der deutschen Bischöfe zur Ekklesiologie des II. Vatikanischen Konzils, in: K. Wittstadt/W. Verschooten (Hrsg), Der Beitrag der deutschsprachigen und osteuropäischen Länder zum zweiten vatikanischen Konzil, 143-155, 143.

⁵⁴⁸ Kaufmann F.-X., Das II. Vatikanische Konzil als Moment einer Modernisierung des Katholizismus, in: K. Wittstadt/W. Verschooten (Hrsg), Der Beitrag der Deutschsprachigen und Osteuropäischen Länder zum zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, 3-24, 23.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Stockmeier P., Kirche unter den Herausforderungen der Geschichte, in: W. Kern et. al., (Hrsg.) Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie, 3 Trakt Kirche, Freiburg. Basel. Wien 1986, 122-152, 150.

dialogue with the theologians present at the Council, and their address to the world and people living in it, remain proofs of the dialogue atmosphere that prevailed at the Council.

Vatican Council II, as we have noted, brought to light a new understanding of the Church in history, thanks to the multiple perspectives of what the Church really is, especially the views of the Church as a people of God, as a sacrament or sign, as a herald, as a servant, and as an institution. The resulting insights and corresponding practical applications to Christian living were indeed revolutionary in many ways. The new emphasis on the *whole* People of God signalled the fact that as well as the hierarchy, the clergy, religious and laity alike are all truly and fully and equally members of the Church.⁵⁵⁰ They, therefore, participate in their own right as baptised Christians in the mission of Christ.

The Council opened the door to the world.⁵⁵¹ It committed itself to the service of the world and humanity. This openness to the world and its concerns and anxieties can be identified as the council's character and the basis for the Church's missionary apostolate. In the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et spes*, it further opened the way for what would become liberation theology. This document, as we have noted, described and defined the Church in its relation to the world. It defined human existence socially and referred to the social dimension of sin. It recognised the enormous social problems of humanity and pledged the Church's commitment to them. It pointed out the inadequacy of an individualist morality to deal with these issues.⁵⁵² It urged local Churches to use the social sciences to understand their specific conditions (cf. 44), encouraged theologians to inculturate Christian teaching in their particular situations, and guaranteed their freedom in their efforts.⁵⁵³

6.5 The Post-conciliar Period and Dialogue

The term "dialogue" has experienced a broader understanding in the post-conciliar period and documents. Giving it a philosophical and theological approach, the post-conciliar times and documents are challenged with the need of situating dialogue where it belongs in the Church. Hence, it is recognised as a vital and fundamental element in the Church. To appreciate in detail the new understanding of dialogue in the period in question, we shall be analysing the contributions of the various Secretariats.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*, 126-127.

⁵⁵¹ Holze A., *Vatikanum II: Reformkonzil oder Konstituante einer neuen Kirche*, Schweiz 1977, 70.

⁵⁵² Cf. GS 30.

⁵⁵³ Cf. GS 62.

6.5.1 Dialogue with Non-Believers

The Secretariat for Non-Believers was created as an arm of the Church that concerns itself with studying the phenomenon of atheism and non-belief and seeking ways to promote dialogue with people who hold such doctrines. Under the chairmanship of Cardinal F. König, this Secretariat defined the concept of dialogue in its maiden document on *Dialogue with Non-Believers* and deliberated on how the concept could be correctly explained as well as in what senses it was different from other forms of relationship between believers and non-believers.

Distancing itself from the restrictive understanding of dialogue, the Secretariat for Non-Believers presents a broader definition and an all-embracing understanding of dialogue. The above mentioned document expresses that:

Er [Dialog] bezeichnet nicht insgesamt die (freundlichen) Beziehungen zu einem Gegenüber; vielmehr wird gleich im Vorwort festgehalten, dass es auch andere legitimer Formen der Begegnung gibt, etwa, Apologetik, vergleichende Gegenüberstellung und Diskussion [...]. In deutlicher Absetzung von *Ecclesiam suam* wird betont, dass der Dialog 'nicht notwendig ein apostolisches Ziel' [...] hat, also der Verkündigung dient. Würde und Wert der menschlichen Person verlangen, dass 'der andere' eben als 'der andere' bereitwillig anerkannt und angenommen wird.⁵⁵⁴

Bearing in mind that dialogue presupposes mutual respect and recognition of the dignity, value and abilities of the partners involved, this Secretariat encourages the Church to be more involved in the task of dialogue. It was blunt in recommending that Christians should work towards its promotion as a binding responsibility of fraternal love with all classes of people in a way that meets with the demands of the present times.⁵⁵⁵

It make a distinction between three kinds of dialogue: establishment of a human relationship that guarantees or produces confidence and sympathy, the mutual search for truth, and encounters on the level of action. Dialogue is to be pursued at all levels especially in those places where it seems difficult to practise.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Neuner P., Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche, 63.

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Dokument über den Dialog mit den Nichtglaubenden, 36-37.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Neuner P., Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche, 63.

The intrinsic readiness for dialogue demands correct behaviour and respect for one's partner as a sign of sympathy and goodness for the other. This is only possible, if the 'other' is freely recognised and accepted as the 'other'.⁵⁵⁷

Dialogue with Non-Believers is necessitated by the fact that it is the responsibility of the Church to extend the knowledge of the kingdom of God to all humanity, and the unbelievers to whom the Church should direct the Gospel are parts of the human family. Unlike *Ecclesiam suam*, the Secretariat for Non-Believers does not entertain doubts in the dialogue with atheists and people (or systems) of other ideologies. It spoke of an encounter with the aim of establishing human relationships so that the partner can untie themselves from isolation and mutual distrust and develop an atmosphere of sincere sympathy, honesty, and respect for each other; an encounter in the context of truth and an encounter within the context of action, which, in spite of doctrinal differences, aims at reaching conditions for working together for the realisation of certain aims.⁵⁵⁸

Dialogue enriches the partners not only from the point of view of general human values, but also from the consideration that it can lead to a better understanding of religious questions. It is at the service of evangelisation and has much to contribute to the renewal of the Church. Dialogue demands the freedom of all partners.

It is interesting to note that this document was published during the turbulent summer of 1968 as students' strikes were spreading from France to Germany and other parts of Europe. This was also a time when the cold war between the East and the West was at its peak and Marxism was the main representative of Unbelief. The call for dialogue, which was to be carried out on the basis of common action and interest in this document, demonstrates a major breakthrough in the Church's quest for peaceful co-existence and tolerance in the world.

6.5.2 Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions

Inter-religious relationship refers to "the coming together of people or groups of people of different religious affiliation with the aim of enriching, deepening and broadening their religious life through mutual understanding of one another's convictions and witness."⁵⁵⁹ Interreligious dialogue is a meeting of heart and mind between followers of various religions; a walking together of

⁵⁵⁷ Cf. Dokument über den Dialog mit den Nichtglaubenden, 37.

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. Ibid., 42-43.

⁵⁵⁹ Nwaiwu F. O., *Inter-Religious Dialogue in African Context. Christianity, Islam and African Religion*, 63.

members of various religions towards truth and a working together of these people in projects of common concern.⁵⁶⁰

Understanding the Church as a sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of mankind,⁵⁶¹ the Council seeks means of promoting this unity and understanding among members of the various religions. Accordingly, it stresses the fact that with regard to the present day situation in which people are drawing more closely together and the bonds of friendship between them are being strengthened, “the Church examines with greater care the relation which she has to non-Christian religions. Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, she reflects at the outset on what men and women have in common and what tends to promote fellowship among them”.⁵⁶²

The Council enjoins the Church, further, to enter into dialogue and collaboration with followers of other religions, especially considering the fact that every human being is a creature of God irrespective of his or her religious inclination. It equally emphasises closer communication with members of monotheistic religions like the Jews, Muslims and “those who through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ and his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their consciences.”⁵⁶³

It is for the purpose of promoting relations with people of these religions that the Commission for Non-Christian Religions was instituted on Pentecost Sunday, 1964, as a section of the Roman Curia. The Commission, which was formerly known as the Secretariat for Non-Christians until 1988, when it was renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), was created to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious traditions and to encourage the study of religions and the promotion of the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.

The Commission for Non-Christian Religions produced its first document on “Dialogue and Proclamation” (DP) in 1991, underscoring three different aspects or understandings of dialogue. “Firstly, at the purely human level, it means reciprocal communication, leading to a common goal or, at a deeper level, to interpersonal communion. Secondly, dialogue can be taken as an attitude of re-

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. Arinze F., *Church in Dialogue: Walking with Other Believers*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1990, 162.

⁵⁶¹ LG 1.

⁵⁶² NA 740-744.

⁵⁶³ LG 16.

spect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelising mission of the Church. This can appropriately be called ‘the spirit of dialogue’. Thirdly, in the context of religious plurality dialogue means ‘all positive and constructive inter-religious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment’, in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions. It is in this third sense that the present document uses the term dialogue for one of the internal elements of the Church’s evangelising mission”.⁵⁶⁴

Interreligious dialogue helps the participants grow in their faith when each confronts his/her faith with that of the other, because truth is often better reached, further studied, deepened, appreciated, understood and lived when met by other views. Cardinal Francis Arinze, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), articulating the positive values and mutual enrichment of dialogue, writes: Christianity can contribute to other religions’ elevation, inspiration and universality. It has helped them shed some of their unworthy beliefs or practices. It has enabled Buddhists show more interest in social work and initiatives towards human promotion. Buddhists and Muslims can see in Christianity a religion which gives women a higher status than theirs. On the other hand, Christianity gains something from non-Christian religions such as the cultural settings in which they exist, including language, philosophical categories, ritual expressions and local styles proper to their people. They enrich Christianity with these gifts.⁵⁶⁵

Apart from the promotion of deeper understanding between members of different religious inclinations, inter-religious dialogue is an essential factor in promoting co-operation and peace among people so that they can build up human society in mutual respect, justice peace and fraternal collaboration.

The theology of interreligious dialogue consists in the fact that it derives its character from the relational dialogue within the Godhead, the dialogue between God and humanity, God and the people of Israel, and the dialogue God and the pilgrim Church. Consequently, this dialogue “finds its place in the Church’s salvific mission; for this it is a dialogue of salvation (DP 39).

⁵⁶⁴ DP 9.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. Arinze F., *Church in Dialogue*, 167-168.

6.5.3 Ecumenical Dialogue

The Council defined ecumenism as “the initiatives and activities encouraged and organised, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offered, to promote Christian unity.”⁵⁶⁶

The first mention of ecumenical dialogue was made in 1963 by the central committee of the WCC during the Rochester conference, when the Second Vatican Council was still in progress. At this conference, the central committee called for the beginning of a real ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and other Churches. It suggested, further, that every opportunity should be employed at every ecclesiastical level for such dialogue.⁵⁶⁷

Lukas Vischer, a theologian of the evangelical Church, appreciates the dominant role which dialogue occupied at the Council and how it was recognised as the method of ecumenical work.⁵⁶⁸ In 1965, a combined work-group between the Catholic Church and the WCC was founded, with the assignment to work out a document on ecumenical dialogue. It was with this background that the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (SPCU) published the “*Arbeitsdokument über den ökumenischen Dialog*” in 1970.

Ecumenical work in the Catholic Church has attained great heights since the creation of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) in 1960.⁵⁶⁹ The above *Instrumentum Laboris* on ecumenical dialogue indicates

⁵⁶⁶ UR 4.

⁵⁶⁷Cf. Vischer L., *Die eine ökumenische Bewegung*, Zürich, 1966, 58 as quoted by Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 64.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 64-65.

⁵⁶⁹ Originally, the name of the Pontifical Council was *Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity*, it was established on 5 June, 1960, by John XXIII originally as one of the preparatory organising commissions for the Council. Cardinal Augustine Bea was its first President. The first main function of the Secretariat was to invite the other Churches and World Commissions to send observers to the Second Vatican Council. In 1963, it was specified that the Secretariat would be made up of two sections dealing with the Orthodox Churches and ancient Oriental Churches, on the one hand, and with the Western Churches and Ecclesial Communities on the other hand. The name of the Congregation was changed by John Paul II to the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* in March 1989.

The duties of the Council are twofold: the promotion of unity within the Catholic Church and the promotion of an authentic ecumenical spirit according to the conciliar decree *Unitatis redintegratio*. It was for this purpose that an Ecumenical Directory was published in 1967-1970 and a revised edition issued in 1993, entitled “*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*”. At the same time the Pontifical Council also aims to develop dialogue and collaboration with the other Churches and World Communions. Since its creation, it has also

that the Church wants ecumenical dialogue. It concretises what dialogue means to her, that is, opening her to the process. It is in this sense that the text's concept of ecumenical dialogue goes beyond that of *Ecclesiam suam* and to an extent, that of the Second Vatican Council.⁵⁷⁰

Allgemein wird gesagt, dass 'Gegenseitigkeit (Reziprozität) und gemeinsames Engagement Wesensbestandteil des Dialogs' sind [...], die Kirchen werden durch ihn in die Lage versetzt, 'die Reichtümer, die der Heilige Geist in ihnen reifen läßt, einander mitzuteilen' [...] Diese Gegenseitigkeit wird sogar als sich selbst dem anderen ausliefern“ (*se livre*) bezeichnet.⁵⁷¹

This statement emphasises the importance of mutual reciprocity and activities for the success of ecumenical dialogue. This implies that dialogue among Christians can achieve its objectives if all partners (Churches) involved accept and appreciate the rights, dignity and freedom of expression of each other.

The above insight into the developments in the Church since the end of Vatican II Council signals the Church's commitment to the goals it placed before itself at the Council. Identifying itself with the service of the Gospel and humanity, the Church pledges itself to sincere dialogue based on mutual esteem and understanding.

6.6 Pope John Paul II on Dialogue

Through his pastoral visits and writings, John Paul II has proved himself to be a great promoter of dialogue in the Church of post-conciliar times. He underscores in his Pentecost Message of 1980 that the Church of today is becoming more than ever a Church of dialogue.⁵⁷² An analysis of the writings of the Pope will bring us closer to the details of his views on dialogue and to what extent his pontificate has moved the Church in its commitment to understanding itself and engaging in dialogue with those around it.

6.6.1 Christifideles Laici

The Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Christifideles Laici*" was published by John Paul II as an outcome of the 1987 Synod of Bishops, that is twenty

established a cordial co-operation with the World Council of Churches, whose headquarters are in Geneva.

⁵⁷⁰ Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche*, 65.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² See quotation in the Forward of G. Fürst (Hrsg.) *Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche*. Freiburg et. al., 1997, 7

years after the Second Vatican Council. As a document that dwells on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful, *Christifideles laici* re-affirmed the conciliar teachings that the call to ‘go into the vineyard’ is not a “concern of pastors, clergy, and men and women religious alone. The call is addressed to everyone: lay people as well are called by the Lord, from whom they receive a mission on behalf of the Church and the world.”⁵⁷³ It underlines the urgency of the participation of the faithful in the task of the Church: “The basic meaning of this Synod and the most precious fruit desired as a result of it, is the *lay faithful’s hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord to work in his vineyard*, to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church in this great moment in history, made especially dramatic by occurring on the threshold of the Third Millennium.”⁵⁷⁴

The Pope argues that a “new state of affairs today, both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so.”⁵⁷⁵ The Church’s mission of salvation in the world, he maintains, is realized not only by the ministers in virtue of the Sacrament of Orders but also by all the lay faithful; indeed, because of their Baptismal state and their specific vocation, in the measure proper to each person, the lay faithful participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ.⁵⁷⁶

Discussing the responsibilities of the lay faithful to the mission of the Church, the document adequately addresses the issue of dialogue and working together between members of the hierarchy and the laity. A critical look at it reveals that it is only on two occasions that *Christifideles laici* referred to dialogue in general. The first instance was with reference to interreligious encounter. “The [...] lay faithful can favour the relations which ought to be established with followers of *various religions* through their example in the situations in which they live and in their activities. [...] All the Faithful, especially the lay faithful who live among the people of other religions, whether living in their native region or in lands as migrants, ought to be for all a sign of the Lord and his Church, in a way adapted to the actual living situation of each place. Dialogue among religions has a pre-eminent part, for it leads to love and mutual respect, and takes away, or at least diminishes, prejudices among the followers of various religions and promotes unity and friendship among peoples.”⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷³ CL 2.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 35.

A glance through the document indicates that it is only on a few occasions that mention was made of dialogue, that is, with regard to dialogue between religions as rooted in human dignity.

The second mention of dialogue was in general with reference to the need for more and immediate formation of the lay faithful. The parish is called to instruct its members in “hearing God’s Word, in liturgical and personal dialogue with God in the life of fraternal charity, and in allowing a more direct and concrete perception of the sense of ecclesial communion and responsibility in the Church’s mission.”⁵⁷⁸

Apart from these passages, *Christifideles laici* made no reference to dialogue within the context of the communal life of the Church. It laid emphasis on the theology of *communio*⁵⁷⁹ as the centre of interaction within the ecclesial body

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁷⁹ To understand the term *communio* or community it is pertinent to investigate its background as *koinonia* in Greek philology. In classical Greek, *koinonia* primarily points to the action of possessing something in common, sharing in, or participating in something in a general manner. In Greek society, the term also designates a formula of an established legal relationship, especially a contract of a binding nature. The root of the term *koinonia*, *koinon*, derives from the adjective *koinos*, signifying *communio*. The opposite *idos* meaning *individuum* is used in profane literatures to denote various interpersonal relationships such as in business companies, common life of a group of people who are living together, in marriage bonds, in friendships or sharing in the same citizenship (cf. Campell J. Y., “KOINONIA and its Cognates in the New Testament. In. Journal of Biblical Literature” 51, (1932) 354). The term is also very significant in its non-Christian religious sense, especially as designation of a meal-offering as a *koinonia* with the gods and men. Human beings and gods are sharing together ‘as table companions in the context of a sacrificial meal’

Communio is the translation of *koinonia* in classical Latin. It is mostly observed in profane literatures, for instance in Aristotle’s analysis of friendship, but it also became a favourite word of Christian writers, especially St. Paul.” (cf. Congar Y., *Mysterium Salutis*, IV/2, 404-405). Its amphibious etymology originates either from the combination of *cum moenus*, which signifies “a defensive installation such as fortress, or from *cum munus*, a common task, duty, or undertaking. In either case, the point is that diverse people make their own proper contributions to one and the same activity’. The word *communio* is also associated with the verb *munire*, which means to go along with the crowd. In this sense, the concept of *communio* has a limited meaning. But to broaden its significance more, ‘the term *communio* is associated with another word, *munus* and on this plane designates a task which is executed dependently and inter-relatedly among people in common. From this last perspective, the term *communio* gained a dynamic significance, and is applied to those who are in the same field of interest, of work, of trade, and to those who have the same mission with regard to each other are said, in this sense, to be in a communion with one another (cf.. Nwaigbo F., *Church as a Communion: An African Christian Perspective. Theology of the Local Church in the Light of the Second Vatican Council*. Frankfurt a M et al. 1995, 76-78).

and thereby recognising the place of the lay faithful within this ecclesiological framework, irrespective of the fact that it did not refer to dialogue in its use of the term *communio*.

Peter Neuner's stand on the alternative use of the terms "Communio" and "dialogue" deserves closer attention. According to him:

Es legt sich die Interpretation nahe, dass auch in den neueren kirchenamtlichen Verlautbarungen *Communio* und Dialog eher als Alternativen erscheinen, denn als aufeinander verweisende Modelle. Dialog impliziert eine Gegenseitigkeit und eine Verpflichtung zum Aufeinander-Hören, die kirchenamtliche Dokument innerkirchlich offensichtlich nicht zugestehen wollen. Die eigentlich naheliegende Präzisierung der *Communio* durch ein dialogisches Kirchenverständnis wird vermieden, sie wird anders bestimmt, als es der Begriff Dialog impliziert. *Christifideles laici* sieht "Communio" in kindlicher Anhänglichkeit zum Papst, dem bleibenden und sichtbaren Prinzip und Fundament der Einheit in der Teilkirche, sowie in der gegenseitigen Hochschätzung aller Formen des Apostolates in der Kirche" (Nr. 30). Im Schreiben der Glaubenskongregation "Über einige Aspekte der Kirche als *Communio*" erscheint der Begriff "Dialog" nur als ökumenischer Dialog, er findet keine Ausweitung auf den innerkirchlichen Bereich. Wenn das amtliche Verständnis von *Communio* dieser Konzeption folgt, ist es nur konsequent, wenn man das innerkirchliche Zusammenleben nicht mit dem Begriff "Dialog" umschreiben will.⁵⁸⁰

It is an overstatement for P. Neuner to maintain that recent (post-conciliar) documents of the Church understand and apply "*Communio*" and "*dialogue*" as alternative terms. It is also an overstatement for him to reduce *communio* within the Church to mere childlike dependence of the faithful on the Pope as the steady and visible principle and foundation of the unity of the local Churches, as the above statement tries to project.

"Communio" and "dialogue" illustrate the ways in which the Church, as the People of God, understands herself, and the way her members relate to each other within the Church (*communio*), and the way they relate to members of other Christian communions, religions and the world at large (dialogue). It is evident from the Second Vatican Council and recent post-conciliar publications that the *communio* ecclesiology underscores the intrinsic character of the Church as People of God and the mode of relationship that exists or should

⁵⁸⁰ Neuner P., Das Dialogsmotiv in der Lehre der Kirche, 70.

exist within the community. This relationship does not imply the perpetuation of childlike dependency of the laity on the hierarchy, but a familiar, uncomplicated and fraternal correlation within the Church. The relationship between dialogue and colloquium in the language of the Council becomes distinct in this context. *Christifideles laici* applied dialogue to the Church's relationship with her external partners. The emphasis on *communio* has already underlined the kind of relationship that exists within the community.

6.6.2 Redemptoris Missio: Interreligious Dialogue

This encyclical, dedicated to the permanent validity of the missionary mandate of the Church, was published on 7th Sept, 1990. In this document, John Paul II addressed the Church's missionary activity and the factors surrounding the activity. "Inter-religious dialogue is a part of the Church's evangelising mission. Understood as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*; indeed, it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions. The mission is addressed to those who do not know Christ and his Gospel, and who belong for the most part to other religions" (RM 55). Referring to the missionary attitude, he admonished those taking part in this dialogue to be consistent with their own religious traditions and convictions, and be ready to understand those of the other party without pretence or close-mindedness, but with truth, humility and frankness, knowing that dialogue can enrich each side. "There must be no abandonment of principles or false irenicism, but instead a witness given and received for mutual advancement on the road of religious inquiry and experience, and at the same time for the elimination of prejudice, intolerance and misunderstandings. Dialogue leads to inner purification and conversion which, if pursued with docility to the Holy Spirit, will be spiritually fruitful."⁵⁸¹

Redemptoris missio encourages inculturation, that is, dialogue with culture. It understands dialogue as a slow journey which accompanies the whole of missionary life (cf. no. 54), and enjoins missionaries to respect the beliefs and sensibilities of all as it confirms its faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour of all humanity (cf. no. 11). It follows the example of St. Paul, who through dialogue penetrated to his audience in Lystra and Athens (Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31). *Redemptoris missio* charges missionaries to develop the spirit of dialogue in order to win the people to Christ. It emphasised further that the Church "addresses people with full respect for their freedom. *The Church proposes, she imposes nothing*. She respects individuals [...] and honours the sanctuary of conscience."⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ RM 56,

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 39.

Redemptoris missio also paid attention to ecumenical co-operation or dialogue among missionaries of different Churches, so that they can jointly work for the same goal: the success of mission *ad gentes*. Acknowledging the success of ecumenical activity and harmonious witness to Jesus Christ by Christians who belong to different ecclesial communities, it recommended that it is “ever more urgent that they work and bear witness together at this time when Christian and para-Christian sects are sowing seeds of confusion by their activity.”⁵⁸³

6.6.3 Ut Unum Sint

John Paul II dedicated his encyclical “*Ut unum sint*” (*US*) to the Church’s commitment to ecumenism at the threshold of the new Millennium. In this encyclical, published on 25th May, 1995, the Pope continues the clarion call for Christian unity already initiated by Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam* and promoted by the Council. He articulates the motivating factor for the writing of the encyclical letter: “At the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church committed herself irrevocably to following the part of the ecumenical venture, thus heeding the Spirit of the Lord, who teaches people to interpret carefully the ‘signs of the times’ [...]. I myself intend to promote every suitable initiative aimed at making the witness of the entire Catholic community understood in its full purity and consistency, especially considering the engagement which awaits the Church at the threshold of the new Millennium. That will be an exceptional occasion, in view of which she asks the Lord to increase the unity of all Christians until they reach full communion. The present Encyclical Letter is meant as a contribution to this noble goal. Essentially pastoral in character, it seeks to encourage the efforts of all who work for the cause of unity.”⁵⁸⁴

Ut unum sint emphasises the Church’s commitment to ecumenism. In this document, the pope almost used the words ‘dialogue’ and ‘ecumenism’ interchangeably. Recognising that dialogue has its root in human nature and dignity, he argues philosophically that man is in fact the only creature on earth whom God willed for Himself; thus he cannot ‘fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself’.⁵⁸⁵ Therefore, dialogue is an “indispensable step along the path *towards human self-realisation*, the self-realisation both of *each individual* and of *every human community*. Although the concept of “dialogue” might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension (*dia-logos*), all dialogue implies a global, existential dimension. It involves the human subject in

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 50.

⁵⁸⁴ US 3.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. 51

his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each.’⁵⁸⁶

Ecumenical dialogue demands reciprocity and readiness to shed the spirit of antagonism of the participants. John Paul II noted the importance of respect and mutual acceptance among partners for dialogue, if it is to achieve its desired results. The success of ecumenical dialogue depends on the elimination of “words, judgements, and actions which do not respond to the conditions of separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations between them more difficult.”⁵⁸⁷

Dialogue for John Paul II cannot take place only on a horizontal level, that is, restricted to meetings, exchanges of points of view or even the sharing of gifts proper to each community. Primarily, it has a vertical thrust, “directed towards the One, who as the Redeemer of the world and the Lord of history is himself our Reconciliation. The vertical aspect of dialogue consists in the mutual recognition that we are men and women who have sinned. This acknowledgement creates in brothers and sisters living in communities not in full communion with one another that interior space where Christ, the source of the Church’s unity, can effectively act.”⁵⁸⁸

As a means of enhancing unity among Christians, the ecumenical relation does not merely aim at mutual knowledge, common prayers and dialogue but presupposes and calls for every possible form of practical co-operation at all levels - pastoral, cultural and social - as well as that of witnessing to the Gospel message as an effective instrument in resolving disagreement.⁵⁸⁹ This co-operation vividly expresses the bond which already unites the Churches and sets in clearer relief the features of Christ.⁵⁹⁰

Dialogue transcends mere doctrinal discussions between partners but engages the entire human person and dignity. This encounter is described as “dialogue of love”. Considering these qualities, the encyclical enjoins Catholics to “joyfully embrace, acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among the separated brothers and sisters. It is right and praise-worthy to recognise the riches of Christ and [the] virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to shedding their blood.”⁵⁹¹ It acknowledges the progress in ecu-

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁸⁷ RM 29.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., 35

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. US 40

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 47.

menical relations, especially in mission countries, as signs and results of “the contacts between Christians and of the theological dialogue, because both contacts and dialogue have made Christians aware of the elements of faith which they share in common.”⁵⁹²

6.7 A Theological Appraisal

The fact that dialogue assumes an unprecedented status in human life cannot be denied. Its role in advancing human relationships and developments in the present pluralistic and globalised society, cannot be over-estimated. Dialogue has become the main pivot on which all forms of relationship and diplomatic contacts in the world and in the Church turn. Its impact is felt in the theological developments of the Church since Vatican Council II and, more especially, in her self-understanding, and her relationship with other sister Churches, non-Christian religions and the world in general. Vatican Council II marks a break with the self-centred ecclesiology of the pre-conciliar era and laid emphasis on the ecclesiology of *aggiornamento*, renewal and dialogue. One of the achievements of the Council consists in the fact that it evolved a Church that seeks unity with other Churches, religions and non-believers through dialogue.

Although dialogue was more or less understood in official ecclesiastical documents as an instrument for the promotion of better relationships between the Church and her partners, the post-Conciliar period has raised the consciousness of re-situating it in its proper place. The emphasis now is on its intrinsic quality as an essential factor in the Church because a Church that wishes to make herself understandable and to guarantee her dignity and rights, as well as the dignity and rights of her members, is a Church that is in dialogue and tolerates dialogue. This awareness has led to the understanding of dialogue not only as a form of argument but also as a form of Christian life and ecclesiastical existence and thus a characteristic feature of the Church.⁵⁹³

The theological and ecclesiological basis for the demand for dialogue in the Church consists in the fact that dialogue can neither be separated from the Church nor from its nature. As the model of the dialogical communion of the Triune God,⁵⁹⁴ the Church is in Christ at the same time the sacrament and instrument of communion with God and of unity among the entire human race.⁵⁹⁵ Hermann J. Pottmeyer was blunt in his argument on the Church and dialogue. He notes that the Church lives its truth, image and witness to God, as

⁵⁹² Cf. *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁹³ Cf. Fuchs O., *Dialog und Pluralismus in der Kirche*, 191 .

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. Pottmeyer H. J., *Dialog und Wahrheit. Wie die Kirche ihre Wahrheit findet und lebt*, in: A Schavan (Hrsg.) *Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung*. 90-96, 94.

⁵⁹⁵ LG 1.

well as its nature as the sacrament of God's love, when it establishes itself as a dialogue-community, since a Church without dialogue is in fact a contradiction to the will of God.⁵⁹⁶

The various images of the Church (people of God, *communio* etc) reveal and presuppose a dialogical relation both on the horizontal and on vertical levels. Horizontally, dialogue among the People of God enhances growth and deeper knowledge of the truth of life and of Christian faith.

Elmar Klinger underlines the people-of-God image of the Church as the fundamental root of *communio ecclesiology* and, as such, the basis for the ecclesiology of dialogue. According to him:

Eine Kirche, die sich vom Anderen her versteht, seine Rechte anerkennt und in einen Dialog mit ihm eintritt, ist eine Kirche des Dialogs. Sie versteht sich vom Anderen her. Sie ist eine Kirche des Anderen [...].

Die Ekklesiologie des Volkes Gottes ist die Ekklesiologie einer Kirche im Dialog, denn Volk Gottes umfasst grundsätzlich die Anderen. Sie sind durch Gott zur Mitgliedschaft in ihm selber berufen. Ihre sehr unterschiedliche Einstellung zur Kirche wird in der Konstitution des II. Vatikanums 'Lumen Gentium' auf dieser Grundlage erörtert. Sie ist ein Prinzip des Dialogs.⁵⁹⁷

It can be said that dialogue, on the horizontal level, calls for some kind of symbiotic relationship: otherwise the Church loses its character as *communio*. This ecclesiology disposes the Church to consider its members as equal subjects with different and complementary functions to perform.

⁵⁹⁶ Pottmeyer H. J., *Dialog und Wahrheit*, 95.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Klinger E., *Macht und Dialog: Die Grundlegende Bedeutung des Pluralismus in der Kirche*, in: G. Fürst (Hrsg.) *Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche?* Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 1997, 150-165, 162.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 THE NOTION OF EVANGELISATION

The term “evangelisation” is new in the vocabulary of the Church. This does not imply that the Church knew nothing about spreading the Good News prior to this time, because spreading the Good News belongs to her fundamental mission.

The term “evangelisation” has a biblical root (εὐαγγελιζεσθαι), especially in the Lukan theology (Acts 5,42) and in the theology of Paul (I Kor 1,17). It was hardly used in the sense of the history of mission, but the idea was contained in words like *praedicare*, *(an)nutiare* and *seminare*. The only exception was *Jose de Acosa* (1540-1600) who, in his day, spoke of new method of evangelisation, a recommendation that was not accepted.⁵⁹⁸

The concept “evangelisation” was not popularised until the 16th century, because there was no need for evangelisation in the preceding three centuries. Christianity in Europe was static at that period, because Western Europe was already “carved up into Protestant states and Catholic states, where the faith of the citizens was determined more by political and sociological factors than by personal conviction”.⁵⁹⁹ Missionary attention was rather directed to the newly-discovered mission countries in America, Asia and Latin America.

Evangelisation experienced its resurgence in Europe and America in reaction to the effects of secularism on people and their culture. This gave rise to loss of faith in areas that used to have Christian identities. The Church could no longer rely, as it previously did, on political and sociological factors to maintain the faith. Consequently, faith increasingly became an issue of “personal decision in response to the testimony of convinced believers” and evangelisation became the means of preaching the Good News anew and winning back the people to the Christian faith.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Sievernich M., *Neue Evangelisierung in der späten Moderne*, 168

⁵⁹⁹ Dulles A., *John Paul II and the New Evangelisation - What does it Mean?* in: R. Martin/P. Williams (ed.) *John Paul II and the New Evangelization: How you can bring the Good News to Others*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1995, 25-39, 26.

⁶⁰⁰ Dulles A., *John Paul II and the Evangelisation*, 26.

7.1 The Protestant Origin of Evangelisation

“Evangelisation” has its origin in the Protestant/Evangelical churches. As a method of re-awakening the faith as was practised in pietism and other revival movements, it was directed to both “inner mission” and “external mission”.⁶⁰¹ It was first introduced in England and then in the United State of America in the nineteenth century, in reaction to the growing lack of faith among the people. Its resurgence goes back to the First Union Missionary Convention held in New York on 4th and 5th November, 1854.

Answering questions at the end of the meeting, A. Duff, one of the well-known missionaries of the time, said that “the chief means of divine appointment for the evangelisation of the world are - the faithful teaching and preaching of the gospel of salvation to duly qualified ministers and other holy and consistent disciples of Jesus Christ - accompanied with prayer and any other instrumentality fitted to bring the world of God home to men’s souls - together with any process which experience may have sanctioned as efficient in raising up everywhere indigenous ministers and teachers of the living gospel.”⁶⁰² For R. E. Speer (the secretary of the Presbyterian church, U.S.A) “the aim of mission is the evangelisation of the world, or to preach the Gospel to the World [...] to make Jesus Christ known to the world”.⁶⁰³ Another attendant answering to the question: What is meant by “evangelisation” in this generation?, said that evangelisation is to give every person an adequate opportunity to know Jesus Christ”.⁶⁰⁴

Like in England and USA, evangelisation found access into Germany in the middle of the 20th century through the revival activities of the Evangelical Church. In contradistinction to the initial foreign-missions understanding of evangelisation that was in practice between 16th and 18th centuries, the main thrust of the revival activities was to revive the city churches through emphasis on personal conversion of members. It succeeded in spreading all over the country through the assiduous work of its early protagonists. L. Hofacker introduced the revival work in Württemberg; A. Henhöfer in Baden and G. D. Krummacher brought it to Rheinland. J. H. Volkening and L. Harms established it in Ravenburg and Limburger Heids respectively.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰¹ Sievernich M., *Neue Evangelisierung in der späten Moderne*, 168.

⁶⁰² See quotations in Nwosu C. U., *Evangelisation in Igboland*, 33.

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰⁵ Hollenweger W. J., *Evangelisation*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie (TRE)* 10 (1983) 636-637, 636.

The year 1848 was very significant in the growth of this movement. It witnessed the collective founding of the *Evangelische Gesellschaft für Deutschland* for the purpose of establishing Evangelical Schools and co-ordinating the process of evangelisation in Germany.⁶⁰⁶ They contributed immensely to the reactivation of the spirit of pietism in city Churches through the media, mission vehicles, and the organisation of pastoral weeks and public evangelism, like in America.⁶⁰⁷ J. H. Wichern emphasised free proclamation in market places, on the streets and outside the doors of the organised Church. The evangelical school, *Johanneum*, was founded in 1866. His colleague F. Schrenk (+ 1913) defended the Pentecostal inner-mission of the Church through the influence of the peoples' mission.⁶⁰⁸ The Angel and Saxons style of evangelisation laid emphasis on individual conversion. The evangelical society was established in England by G. Whitefield and Wesley, the first missionaries. They directed attention to people, especially workers, who were neglected by the national Church.

The evangelical movement in modern times was enormously influenced by the American Pentecostal Billy Graham.⁶⁰⁹ His call for world-wide and common *modus operandi* on evangelisation in 1966 during the World Congress for Evangelisation in Berlin helped in the development of the principles guiding the various activities of evangelical movements.⁶¹⁰ These principles include:

- I. Emphasis on the literal inspiration of the bible and its absolute authority for faith and life;
- II. Belief in an unshortened Christology of the Apostles;
- III. Emphasis on the subject rather than the object of salvation (the experience of rebirth based on personal conversion);

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ cf. Algermissen K., *Evangelisation*: in: *Lthk*² 3, (1959) 1236-1237, 1237.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. Zerfaß R., *Die kirchlichen Grundvollzüge – im Horizont der Gottesherrschaft*, in: *Konferenz der bayerischen Pastoraltheologen (Hrsg.) Das Handeln der Kirche in der Welt von Heute. Ein pastoraltheologischer Grundriß*. München 1994, 47.

⁶¹⁰ Beyerhaus P., *Evangelikale Bewegung*. in: *Lthk*⁴, (1995) 1032. There are numerous branches of evangelical movements. The Fundamentalists, among them, hold the bible as absolute truth. Confessing obedience to the scripture, the reformation declaration and its sacramental understanding. The Neo-Evangelicals attempt to understand the bible in the light of modern knowledge. Radical evangelicals advocate obedience to the sermon on the mount, and to pacifism. The last evangelical group are the charismatics who emphasis on the Holy Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit.

- IV. The importance of salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit and through prayer, bible study and acts of love;
- V. The distinction between the Christian community formed through true faith, and the visible institution;
- VI. Priority of mission;
- VII. Intensive eschatology, de-emphasis of the visible character of the Church, office, liturgy and sacrament.⁶¹¹

This period, dominated by secularism and modernism, affected the European and American culture so much that the Churches were hindered from relying on political and sociological factors to maintain the faith as they previously had done. The threat of secularism in these countries and its consequences on the Christian religion prepared the way for the development of evangelisation. Hence, the emphasis is no longer on sending missionaries to foreign countries but to evangelise the people as in the New Testament, announcing a joyful message centred on Jesus Christ in order to win or maintain adherents.⁶¹²

7.2 Evangelisation in the Catholic Church

Roman Catholicism underwent its evangelical renewal in the second part of the twentieth century as a result of the dechristianisation of former Catholic countries in Europe. The increasing ecumenical and biblical awareness in the century were also major factors behind the Church's renewed move to evangelise.⁶¹³ The Second Vatican Council was also very significant in the re-discovery of evangelisation as the Church's mission.

7.2.1 Vatican Council II and Evangelisation

The Second Vatican Council's (1962-1965) deliberations, proposals and declarations have experienced resounded echoes in the history and mission of the Catholic Church since the last quarter of the last century. It is accountable for the great change in the Church's pastoral and ecclesiological views. It marks an unequivocal departure from the exclusive views of the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) to an ecclesiological position that is more inclusive.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹¹ Hollenweger W. J., *Evangelisation*, in: TRE, 10, 637.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*,

⁶¹³ Cf. Dulles A., *John Paul II and the New Evangelisation*, 26.

⁶¹⁴ Cf. Knobloch S., *Kirche: als Volk Gottes Sakrament in der Welt*, in: H. Haslinger (Hrsg) *Handbuch Praktische Theologie: Grundlegungen*. Bd. 1., Mainz 1999, 157-177, 158.

The Pope, John XXIII⁶¹⁵, underlined the aims which the Council intended to achieve in his opening speech of the 11th October, 1962. The Speech emphasised *aggiornamento* (renewal, updating), the deepening of the faith and dialogue with Christians of other communion, and dialogue with non-Christian religions. John XXIII called for an impeccable and unimpeded transmission of the doctrine of faith without any form of cheapening or falsifying of the Gospel. The Council, he said, will not preoccupy itself with the protection of the precious treasure as if she is interested only in the past, rather, it will dedicate itself to the challenges of the present times. He further urged the Council not simply to repeat the teaching of the Fathers of the Church and of the theologians, ancient and modern, and not to confine themselves to safeguarding the doctrinal treasure of the Church. The need, he said, was rather that “this certain and immutable doctrine, to which we must faithfully adhere, should be examined and explained (*pervestigetur et exponatur*) in a way that meets the needs of our times (*ea ratione ... quam tempora potulant nostra*)”.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁵ Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born on November 25, 1881, at Sotto il Monte (Bergamo) as the third of thirteen children of a family of sharecroppers. He attended elementary school in the town, was tutored by a priest of Carvico, and entered the seminary at Bergamo at the age of twelve. A scholarship from the Cerasoli Foundation (1901) enabled him to go on to the Apollinaris in Rome where he studied under (among others) Umberto Benigni, the Church historian. He interrupted his studies for service in the Italian Army but returned to the seminary and completed his work for a doctorate in theology. He was ordained in 1904.

Continuing his studies in canon law he was appointed secretary to the new bishop of Bergamo, Giacomo Radini-Tedeschi. Angelo served this social-minded prelate for nine years, acquiring first-hand experience and a broad understanding of the problems of the working class. He also taught apologetics, church history, and patrology.

With the entry of Italy into World War I in 1915 he was recalled to military service as a chaplain. On leaving the service in 1918 he was appointed spiritual director of the seminary, but found time to open a hostel for students in Bergamo. It was at this time also that he began research on a multi-volume work on the episcopal visitation of Bergamo by St. Charles Borromeo, the last volume of which was published after his elevation as Pope.

His first appointment in Rome in 1912 was the reorganisation of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In 1925, he was nominated titular archbishop of Areopolis and apostolic visitor to Bulgaria. This assignment exposed him to the problems of the Eastern Churches. In 1934, he was transferred to Turkey and Greece as apostolic delegate. He set up an office in Istanbul for locating prisoners of war. In 1944 he was appointed nuncio to Paris to assist in the Church's post-war efforts in France, and became the first permanent observer of the Holy See at UNESCO, addressing its sixth and seventh general assemblies in 1951 and 1952. In 1953 he became cardinal-patriarch of Venice, and expected to spend his last years there in pastoral work. He was correcting proofs of the synodal Acts of his first diocesan Synod (1958) when he was called to Rome to participate in the conclave that elected him Pope. He died on June 3, 1963.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. Ruggieri G., Faith and History, in: G. Alberigo et al., (ed.), *The Reception of Vatican II*. M. J. (trans.) O'Connell, England: Burns & Oates, 1987, 91-114, 98.

John XXIII's call for *Aggiornamento* was a move towards the updating of the Church's relationship to the world, to other Christian communions, and to members of non-Christian religions. Another section of the opening speech brings out this aspect clearly:

Die katholische Kirche sieht es als ihre Pflicht an, sich mit Nachdruck dafür einzusetzen, dass 'das grosse Geheimnis' der Einheit sich voll offenbart. Um dies hat Jesus Christus am Vorabend seines Opfertodes zu seinem himmlischen Vater inständig gebetet. Die Kirche weiss, dass sie in dieses Gebet Christi einzubeziehen ist und ihr das Glück des Friedens zugesichert ist. Auch macht es sie froh, wenn sie sieht, wie dieses Gebet auch bei jenen, die ausserhalb ihrer Gemeinschaft stehen, Frucht trägt und Heil bringt. Ja, wenn wir es recht bedenken, bricht sich das Licht der Einheit, um die Christus für seine Kirche gebete that, in drei Strahlen: die Einheit der Katholiken untereinander, die als Vorbild ungebrochen bewahrt werden muss, die Einheit mit den vom apostolischen Stuhl getrennten Christen, deren Gebet und leidenschaftliche Hoffnung darauf abzieht, dass wir wieder zusammengeführt werden, endlich die Einheit, die die noch nicht christlichen Religionen mit der katholischen Kirche in Wertschätzung und Respekt verbindet. [Eröffnungsrede 19].⁶¹⁷

The Council underlines the Church's commitment to the service of the Gospel. Its Decree on the Missionary Activities of the Church admits in a fundamental sense that evangelisation is a quality that is naturally proper to the Church by virtue of the mission she receives from the Lord. (AG 2). The work of evangelisation (*opus evangelizationis*) is the primary task of the entire People of God (AG 35).⁶¹⁸

Hence, the Council regarded evangelisation as the key concept of modern pastoral activities. A. Dulles draws attention to the frequency with which the term is referred to by the council in comparison with Vatican Council I: "A simple word-count indicates the profound shift in focus. Vatican Council I used the term 'gospel' (evangelium) only once and never used the terms 'evangelize' and 'evangelization'. Less than a century later, Vatican II mentioned the 'gospel' 157 times, used the verb 'evangelize' eighteen times and the noun 'evangelization' thirty-one times. When it spoke of evangelization, Vatican II generally meant the proclamation of the basic Christian message of salvation through

⁶¹⁷ See a full text of the Speech in Kaufmann L/Klein N., Johannes XXIII. Prophetie im Vermächtnis. Fribourg/Brig, 1990, 142 .

⁶¹⁸ cf. Sievernich M., Neue Evangelisierung in der späten Moderne, 168.

Jesus Christ.⁶¹⁹ This proclamation is directed to all peoples in their socio-cultural and religious structures “in order to foster a vital contact and an exchange between the Church and different cultures.”⁶²⁰ Although the term evangelisation became more widely used after Vatican II, its comprehensive definition emerged only as a result of the 1974 Synod of Bishops meeting in Rome, and the subsequent publishing of Paul VI’s apostolic exhortation, *On the Evangelisation in the Modern World*, in 1975.⁶²¹

The emphasis on evangelisation initiated the shift from the pre-conciliar meaning of the term as the Church’s missionary activity directed to bringing the Good News to non-Christians in mission territories, to that of a triple understanding, namely missionary preaching,⁶²² the entire ministry of the Word,⁶²³ or the whole missionary activity of the Church.⁶²⁴

7.2.2. The People of God: Subject of Evangelisation

The understanding of the Church as community of the People of God” is one of the new discoveries of the Council. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, has been “hailed as one of the most significant achievements of the Second Vatican Council. In this document, the Council offered a more biblical and dynamic view of the Church, emphasising the paradoxical union of the divine and the human.”⁶²⁵

The structural arrangement of themes discussed in *Lumen gentium* gives insight into the importance which the Council attached to the nature of the Church as People of God before giving attention to the hierarchical structure of the Church. The first step the Council took was the establishment of the trinitarian and theological basis for its teaching on “People of God”, before exploring the depth of this concept. Article 9 shows the profundity of God’s bond with his People – the Israelites as well as with the people of the new dispensation in and through Christ. This text testified to the fact that it has pleased God to make men and women holy and save them not as individuals without any bond or link between them but rather to make them into a people

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁶²⁰ Cf. GS 44.

⁶²¹ Cf. Boyark K., What is ‘New’ in the New Evangelisation, in: B. L. Marthaler et. al. (eds.) *The Living Light: An Interdisciplinary Review of Catholic Religious Education, catechesis, and Pastoral Ministry*, 1993, 3-8, 4.

⁶²² AG 6, 26.

⁶²³ Cf. LG 35; CD 6; GS 44; AA 2

⁶²⁴ Cf. LG 23; 27.

⁶²⁵ Craghan J. F., People of God, in: J. A. Komonchat et al. (eds.) *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Delawale: Michael Glaziers, inc. 1987, 755-757, 755.

who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness.⁶²⁶ He, therefore, “chose the Israelite race to be his own people and established a covenant with it. He gradually instructed this people – in its history manifesting both unto himself and the decree of his will – and made it holy unto himself. All these things, however happened as a preparation and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be ratified in Christ, and of the fuller revelation which was to be given through the Word of God made flesh.”⁶²⁷

The emphasis on “People of God” in the second chapter of this document - before the hierarchy in the third chapter - signals the prime position which this “People of God” occupy in the Church. By opting for this choice, the Council turned its back on the ecclesiology of Vatican Council I, which understood the Church as comprising of two distinct categories of Christians, the hierarchy and the laity.⁶²⁸

The ecclesiology of the People of God provides the basis for the acknowledgement and recognition of the vocation and competence of the People of God both in witnessing to the faith and in contributing to the up-building of the Church. This ecclesiology attributed active roles in the Church to the hierarchy, while the laity was left with passive roles. In this context, the individual clergy was defined and understood as “the historical continuation of the person and functions of Christ (“Christ’s re-presentative,” “God’s viceroy,” “channel of all graces,” “shepherd of the flock,” etc.). And the individual Christian, and the church congregation, stood before him passively, as something “directed,” “led,” and indeed “sanctified” by him”.⁶²⁹

It is clear from the above exposition that the question of the relationship between clergy and laity in the Church is, in the final analysis, that of the Church itself. The ecclesiology of the First Vatican Council focused on a hierarchically arranged Church, while Vatican Council II developed the teaching of the unity of all members of the Church.⁶³⁰ Vatican II brought about a ‘Copernican revolution’⁶³¹ in the Church of the twentieth century, a revolution that turned the

⁶²⁶ LG. 9

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Cf. Mette N / Blasberg-Kuhnke M., *Kirche auf dem Weg ins Jahr 2000: Zur Situation und Zukunft der Pastoral*. Düsseldorf 1986, 135.

⁶²⁹ See quotation in Duffy Regis A., *A Roman Catholic Theology of Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1983, 9.

⁶³⁰ Cf. Karrer L., Laie/Klerus, in: Eicher P., (Hrsg.) *Neues Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe*. München 1984, 363-374, 367.

⁶³¹ Cf. Klinger E., *Auseinandersetzung um das Konzil*, 158.

Church from a Church of the hierarchy to a Church of the People of God.⁶³² Before examining the various ways the People of God participate in the Church, it is worth investigating the concept briefly.

7.2.2.1. The Concept “People of God”

The Council discussed the character of the Church as “People of God” in the second chapter of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. The Church, according to this Constitution, comprises of the People of God no more no less. Without this “People” there is no Church as fundamental sacrament.⁶³³

The theology of the People of God has its root in 1 Pt. 2: 9-10 in which Christians were described as *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart*.⁶³⁴ Referring to the divine nature and origin of this People, the Council noted that it is God’s will “to make mankind holy and save them not as individuals without bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness.”⁶³⁵

The history of God-human relation’s is an eloquent testimony to the divine origin and nature of the People. Hence, *Lumen gentium* upholds the view that “He [God] chose the Israelite race to be his own people and established a covenant with it. He gradually instructed this people [...] and made it holy unto himself. All these, however, happened as a preparation and figure of that new and perfect covenant which was to be given through the Word of God made flesh. [...] Christ instituted this new covenant, namely the new covenant in his blood (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25); he called a race made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit, and this race would be the new People of God.”⁶³⁶

The basic point we wish to emphasis in the above statement is that the People of God was constituted by God himself. The idea of the Church as “People of

⁶³² Cf. Bühlmann W., Die Entwicklung der Evangelisation seit dem II. Vatikanum: Schwerpunkte–Problemfelder-Perspektive, in 11-29, Bertsch L/Schlöser F., (Hrsg.) Evangelisation in der dritten Welt: Anstöße für Europa. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1981, 11-29, 12.

⁶³³ Cf. Fuchs O., Kirche, in: H. Haslinger (Hrsg.) Praktische Theologie. Grundlegungen. Mainz 1999, 364.

⁶³⁴ Rahner K., Das Volk Gottes, in: W. Sandfuchs (Hrsg.) Das neue Volk Gottes - Eine Einführung in die Dogmatische Konstitution „Über die Kirche“. Würzburg 1965, 27-37, 27.

⁶³⁵ LG 9.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

God” excludes all forms of privatisation of the Church. She is not an exclusive property of the hierarchy or the laity. In the words of Karl Rahner:

Das Entscheidend darin ist dies: Ist die Kirche Volk Gottes, dann ist von vornherein das Mißverständnis ausgeräumt (das eine tausendjährige Geschichte hat), dass nämlich die Kirche bloß eine hierarchische Institution sei, die vom Klerus allein getragen werde und für die die christliche Laien nur das Objekt ihrer Heilsorge bilden. Alle Glieder der Kirche, alle sind Subjekt, nicht nur Objekt der Kirche. Sie ist gegliedert, nicht jeder hat dieselbe Funktion in ihr, alle gehören als aktiv, verantwortliche Glieder zu ihr selbst. Sie ist des wandernde Gottesvolk; jeder trägt sein eigenes Charisma aktiv zu ihrem Leben und Wandern bei, alle haben eine bezeugende, missionarische Aufgabe; selbst die Unfehlbarkeit ihres Glaubens ist mitgetragen durch den Glaubensinstinkt aller; im Empfang der Sakramente empfängt man nicht nur eine Gabe der Gnade Gottes aus der Hand der Kirche, sondern baut man aktiv den Leib Christi auf.⁶³⁷

Something special about the “People of God” concept is that it has an identity constituting character. It makes the people what they are, that is, God’s own people. The concept recognises the vocation of all the faithful by affirming that they are called into community with God and into community with one another.⁶³⁸ This understanding implies that if the Church is the community of the people of God, and the members constitute this community by virtue of their calling and sending, then all build up the Church in principle. This finally puts behind the age-long distinction between Church (the Pope, Bishops and Priests) and the people of God (the laity). This idea has at least become anachronistic.⁶³⁹

Hans Küng did not mince words in exposing the implications of the conciliar understanding of the People-of-God ecclesiology. He maintains that all the faithful are People of God; hence, a clericalisation of the Church is out of place. He argues that:

Wird die Kirche als Gottesvolk verstanden, so ist eindeutig: Kirche ist nie eine bestimmte Klasse oder Kaste, nie nur eine bestimmte Behörde oder Clique innerhalb der Gemeinschaft der Glaubenden. Kirche ist immer und überall das ganze Gottesvolk, die ganze Ekklesia, die *ganze* Gemeinschaft der Glauben. Alle sind das auserwählte Ge-

⁶³⁷ Rahner K., *Das Volk Gottes*, 27.

⁶³⁸ Cf. Gmelch M., *Impulse für eine zukünftige Gemeinde Spiritualität*, in: *Diakonia* 20 (1989), 162-166, 162.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

schlecht, die königliche Priesterschaft, das heilige Volk Alle Glieder dieses Gottesvolkes sind von Gott berufen, in Christus gerechtfertigt, im Heiligen Geist geheiligt. Darin sind alle in der Kirche gleich.⁶⁴⁰

The central point in the theology of “People of God” consists in the fact that the concept embraces the entire members of the Church. Both hierarchy and laity constitute this new people of God, the messianic people of God, the people in Christ. This new person, the Church, is neither constituted through the hierarchy nor through the laity but through Christ himself, who brings it together and permeates it with life. He is its hope and its priest.⁶⁴¹ It is nice to note that the people of God have equal share in the priestly, kingly and shephading ministry of Christ irrespective of the positions, office or status in the Church, the people of God. How do the laity share in the mission and ministry try of the Church?

7.2.2.2. The Laity as Subjects of Evangelisation

Witnessing to the mission of Christ and the mission of the Church are the right of every member of the Church – clergy as well as the laity.⁶⁴² The following conciliar statement attests to the co-responsibility of the clergy and laity towards the realisation of the mission of the Church. “Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelisation the fundamental task of the people of God, this sacred Synod invites all to undertake a profound interior renewal so that being vitally conscious of their responsibility for the spread of the Gospel they might play their part in missionary work among the nations.”⁶⁴³

Although the Council recognised the different ways by which the clergy (ministerial priest) and the laity (universal priest) fulfil their obligations to the Church, both are partners in the same Christian vocation and as partners none is superior or inferior to the other. “The ministerial priest [...] forms and rules the priestly people; in the person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful [...] by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise their priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity.”⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁰ Küng H., *Die Kirche*. München – Zürich 1977, 151-152.

⁶⁴¹ Cf. Klinger E., *Das Amt des Laien in der Kirche*, in: Klinger E / Zerfaß R., (Hrsg.) *Die Kirche der Laien*, 67-85, 71.

⁶⁴² Cf. Windisch H., *Pastoraltheologische Zwischenrufe*. Würzburg 1998, 36.

⁶⁴³ AG 35.

⁶⁴⁴ LG 10.

The participation of the laity in the mission of the Church is rooted in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation and not in ordination⁶⁴⁵ or in the discretion of the clergy. As bearers of the Church's mission of evangelisation,⁶⁴⁶ the primary duty of the laity consists primarily in making the Church "present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become salt of the earth. Thus every lay person, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal.'⁶⁴⁷

Although the lay person works effectively in making the Church present and fruitful in their families and places of work, as the above statement provides, the Council did also make other provisions for they can be called in different ways to more immediate co-operation in the apostolate of the hierarchy,⁶⁴⁸ being "appointed to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end."⁶⁴⁹ These views lend credence to the argument that the lay person is of age in the Church. They belong naturally to the ecclesiastical system and as such are subjects (not objects!) of the mission to proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God in all parts of the world. As living, responsible and conscious members of the Church, the laity are not the addressees but also active subjects of the salvific mission of the Church.

As subjects in the Church, the lay faithful ought to be treated with care, respect and dignity.⁶⁵⁰ It is pertinent to refer back to the first generation Christians who knew nothing about this polarity within the People of God.⁶⁵¹ A his-

⁶⁴⁵ Cf. Zerfuß R., *Menschliche Seelsorge. Für eine Spiritualität von Priestern und Laien im Gemeindedienst.* Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1985, 75.

⁶⁴⁶ Cf. Klinger E., *Christologie im Feminismus – Eine Herausforderung der Tradition.* Regensburg 2001, 47.

⁶⁴⁷ LG., 33.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Bausenhart, G., *Das Amt in der Kirche. Eine not-wendende Neubestimmung.* Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1999, 300.

⁶⁴⁹ LG., 33

⁶⁵⁰ The 37th article of *Lumen gentium* was very distinct in legislating that pastors "should recognise and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity [...] They should willingly use their prudent advice and confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, leaving them freedom and scope for acting. Indeed, they should give them the courage to undertake works on their own initiative. They should with paternal love consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desire proposed by the laity. Moreover, the pastors must respect and recognise the liberty which belongs to all in the terrestrial city."

⁶⁵¹ According to O. Bitz *Die Kirche differenziert sich*, in: *Gemeinde von Morgen* 1969, 37-52, 42: "Die Christen der ersten Generation wären nie auf der Idee gekommen, die mit bestimmten Aufgaben Betrauten als 'Priester' im Sinne eines sakralisierten Standes zu bezeichnen. – Erst in den folgenden Jahrhunderten konstituiert sich immer deutlicher ein eigener Klerikalstand, der beson-

torical insight into the origin of the term “laity” and its understanding in the early Church will be of much help in our concern to relocate the dignity and competence of the laity in the mission and ministry of the Church especially in this post-conciliar time.

7.2.3 The Historical Origin of the Word “Laity”

The word “laity” goes back only indirectly to λαός, which simply means a crowd of people in profane-Greek, but primarily acquires in the Septuagint and the New Testament a more religious meaning in reference to Israel and the Christian community as “People of God”.⁶⁵² Although the Old Testament knew about the distinction between prophets and laity (the common people cf. Ex 19:24; Jer 26:7 etc.), the New Testament uses the term “People” to refer to the Church or the faithful. In I Pt. 2:9 the New Testament established the Church’s relationship to Israel and her title as “royal priesthood”, “a consecrated nation” and a people set apart.⁶⁵³

According to Medard Kehl:

Unmittelbar stammt das Wort “Laie” vom griechischen Adjektiv “λαϊκός” ab, womit im außerbiblischen Griechisch ursprünglich profane, nicht für den Kult bestimmte Gegenstände bezeichnet wurden, was gelegentlich auch auf den Sprachgebrauch der griechischen AT-Übersetzungen außerhalb der Septuaginta äfärbte (z.B. 1 Sam 21,5. Ex 22,26). Vereinzelt wird dabei ebenfalls von Personen bzw. vom Volk als den “Laien” im Unterschied zu den Priestern gesprochen (z.B. Jes 24,2; Hos 4,9). Im Neuen Testament kommt dieses Adjektiv nicht vor, denn da alle Gläubigen “Heilige”, “Auserwählte” Gottes, “Tempel des Hl. Geistes”, “Brüder und Schwestern”, “Geistliche” sind, läuft die Trennlinie zwischen Profanität und Heiligkeit nicht mehr durch die Gemeinde, sondern scheidet diese als ganze von der nicht-glaubenden Welt.⁶⁵⁴

dere Vorrechte und Verpflichtungen hat und vom übrigen Kirchenvolk abgesondert wird. Damit parallel läuft die Verfeierlichung der Liturgie und die Ritualisierung christlichen Lebens. Während im Neuen Testament jeder Glaubende, der sein Leben aus heiligem Geist verwirklicht, ein ‚Pneumatikos‘ genannt wird, ein ‚Geistlicher‘, wird der Ausdruck später nur noch vom kirchlichen Amtsträger gebraucht.“

⁶⁵² Cf. Kehl M., Die Kirche. Eine katholische Ekklesiologie. Würzburg 1992 118.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 119.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

"*Laikos*" appeared for the first time in the early Christian literatures around 96 AD in the epistle of Clement of Rome to Christians in Corinth (40,6)⁶⁵⁵ to "denote the largest body of Christians governed by regulations affecting the laity in contrast with the smaller group of individuals (*klerikos*) to whom special ecclesiastical tasks have been assigned".⁶⁵⁶ Clement used this distinction in analogy with the Jewish distinction between 'high priests and the people' (Isa. 42.2; Hos. 4.9), but this terminology did not in any way indicate a difference of status between laity and clergy. A *klerikos*, in this sense, is someone who has a *kleros*, i.e. a ministry. What we have here is a distinction of function, not in an official civic sense, but in an ecclesial sense, however, there were charismatic functions in the Church which were of a specific kind compared with other ministries in the community.⁶⁵⁷

It is clear from these analyses that the NT did not use the word λαός in the sense of a distinction between priests (clerics) and people (laity) within the community like in the OT. *Laos* refers more to the union of the members of the community without distinction. A distinction was only possible to differentiate members of this community (people of God) from non-members of this community (pagans). The distinction between clerics and laity which we experience in the Church today is a development that traces back to the third century.⁶⁵⁸ Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen etc., were instrumental in using the terms in the sense of inner-ecclesiastical differentiation at the beginning of that century. They distinguished between office-holders as "*ordo sacerdotalis*", and the people (*plebs*), or laity as "*ordo ecclesiae*", although the distinction did not lead to a distinct differentiation or to a concentration of the entire responsibility of the Church in the hands of office-holders.⁶⁵⁹

The socio-cultural and political situation of things in early the Middle Ages contributed much to the division between the clergy and laity and led to the clericalisation of ministry. This division began to develop with the "establishment of Christianity as the state religion in the fourth century and with the transformation of the clergy into a kind of civil service, with the political and economic privileges of rank and status."⁶⁶⁰ The old pagan priesthood played a significant civic and political role in the empire; it often functioned as part of

⁶⁵⁵ Karrer L., *Laie/Klerus*, 364.

⁶⁵⁶ Keightley G. M., *Laity*, in: J. A. Komonchak et al (ed.) *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Delaware: Michael Glazier, inc., 1987, 558-564, 558.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf. Schillebeeckx E., *Ministry: A Case for Change*. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1981, 70.

⁶⁵⁸ Küng H., *Die Kirche*, 152.

⁶⁵⁹ Kehl M., *Die Kirche*, 120.

⁶⁶⁰ McBrien R. P., *Ministry: A Theological, Pastoral Handbook*. San Francisco. Harper & Row 1987, 38.

the local service. As Christianity became the established religion, Christian priesthood acquired more reputation and social privileges and was expected to fill the civic roles of the old pagan priesthood. It was the desire to overcome this division, which placed the clergy over and above the laity, that led to the formation of the lay movements in the 19th and 20th centuries. This continued up to the Second Vatican Council, which tried to bridge the gap between both sides.⁶⁶¹

7.2.4 Evaluation

It is the concern of Vatican Council II that all members of the Church are aware of their place in the Church and contribute, each person according to his state of life, to the mission and ministry of the Church. In spite of their different ways of participation in the Church, the faithful possess equal participation in, and exercise their activities in the building up of, the Body of Christ (cf. LG 32).⁶⁶² In the words of R. Zerfaß:

In der Frage nach der Würde und den Rechten des Laien geht es um den Rang und die Würde des Individuums, die Autorität des einzelnen Glaubenden, das Recht und die Rolle einer Biographie im Leben der Kirche, im Anbruch der Gottesherrschaft in dieser Welt⁶⁶³.

The call to evangelise or to carry on the mission of the Church is not an exclusive reserve or right of a particular class of people in the Church, but a responsibility that rests with every member of the People of God. The basis of this ecclesiology is that all Christian faithful participate in the prophetic, priestly and loving services of Christ by virtue of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.⁶⁶⁴ This participation is concretely realised in active participation in the different services in the Church and in recognition of the charisma bestowed on members for the common good of the entire community.⁶⁶⁵

The persistence of the dichotomy between clergy and laity should always be seen as a historical development which in itself affects the relationship between members of the Church and the Church's mission. Thomas H. Groome advocates a shared practice in the Church's comprehensive approach to religious

⁶⁶¹ Kehl M., *Die Kirche*, 120.

⁶⁶² Cf. Boff L., Was bedeuten theologisch "Volk Gottes" und Volkskirche"? in: *Concilium* 20 (1984) 516.

⁶⁶³ Cf. Zerfaß R., Die Laien ist allgegenwärtig, in: E. Klinger / R. Zerfaß (Hrsg.) *Die Kirche der Laien. Eine Weichenstellung des Konzils*. Würzburg 1987, 7-14, 7.

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Bausenhart G., *Das Amt in der Kirche. Eine notwendige Neubestimmung*. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1999, 301.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. LG 12.

education and pastoral ministry. He argues that the “Church” needs many different styles of ministry, and each particular minister a “style” that is uniquely their own.⁶⁶⁶ He argues further: “Without overclaiming for it. I believe the commitments and dynamics of a shared praxis approach suggest one fitting and effective style that can be adapted to various functions and many occasions of Christian ministry. It reflects commitments to engage and empower people in their whole “being” as agent-subject-in-relationship in the world, to honor the tradition and community of Christian faith and their import for life, to bring people to partnership, mutuality, and dialogue in an inclusive community of participants. Its dynamics suggest a style of ministry that engages and enables people to express and reflect on their lives, that renders them access to the life-giving resources of Christian faith and community that intends to empower them in holy and humanising ways, and [...] to renew them in Christian living. Its commitments and dynamics suggest a general perspective through which ministers and communities can fittingly review and imagine their ministry.”⁶⁶⁷ In her day-to-day pastoral activities, the Church is obliged to adjust (‘aptare’, ‘accommodare’) to the challenges of the world without imitating (‘assimilare’ imitare’) the world;⁶⁶⁸ she is to relate to the world and bear witness to the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

7.3 The Precursors of the Council

Many people, ecclesiastical prelates and theologians, contributed in no small measure in supporting John XXIII’s wish to summon the council. Our attention will be restricted to the contributions of the Belgian Cardinal Leon J. Suenens’ intervention and formulation for the programme of the Council.⁶⁶⁹ They paved the way for the realisation of the objectives of the Council and influenced the theological development in France on the Council.

7.4.1 Léon-Joseph Cardinal Suenens

Cardinal Suenens was so courageous in his proposals during the Council that his proposals (schemata), contrary to those originally prepared by the preparation committee, signalled the right of the Fathers of the Council to choose the themes upon which the Council would base its discussions. In fact, there was no clear-cut plan on the themes the Council would discuss at the time of the

⁶⁶⁶ Groome Th. H., *Sharing Faith. A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education & Pastoral Ministry*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco 1991, 332.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Ebertz M. N., *Kirche im Gegenwind. Zum Umbruch der religiösen Landschaft*. Freiburg (Br.) 1997, 145.

⁶⁶⁹ Cf. Klinger E., *ARMUT: Eine Herausforderung Gottes. Der Glaube des Konzils und die Berufung des Menschen*. Zürich 1990, 91.

announcement and inauguration of the Council by John XXIII. The Curia initially proposed seventy schemes which were rejected by the bishops for their incoherence.⁶⁷⁰ It was at this point when the Council Fathers never knew in which direction the Council should be directed, that the Pope (John XXIII) urged the Belgian Cardinal, Léon-J. Suenens, to prepare a concept for the Council based on the opening speech. Cardinal L.-J. Suenens presented his plan for the structure and process of the Council. He insisted that the Council should try to render help to Christian life in modern times and not condemn anything or any person.⁶⁷¹ The plan established some kind of relationship between Vatican Council II and the First Vatican Council. The relationship was based on the fact that, although it was a totally new Council, Vatican II would continue from where Vatican I stopped. A section of this plan brings out this idea very clearly:

Das Vatikan II soll anschließen an das Vatikanum I, das bereits ein Schema vorgegeben hat, das Schema "De Ecclesia", von dem aber nur ein Aspekt abgeschlossen werden konnte: der Primat und die Unfehlbarkeit des Papstes. Man hatte keine Zeit mehr, über die Rolle der Bischöfe und die Laien innerhalb der Kirche nachzudenken. Ein Durchdenken dieser Punkte wird die Kirche auch den orthodoxen und den protestantischen Brüdern näherbringen.⁶⁷²

Das Konzil wird zwei große Sektionen umfassen: Ecclesia ad intra, Ecclesia ad extra. Es wird für die Bischöfe letztlich nur eine Frage geben, die es zu beantworten gilt: Wie kann die Kirche des 20. Jahrhunderts das Werk Christi fortsetzen und seinem Auftrag gerecht werden, das heißt:

- Euntes ergo
- Docete omnes gentes
- Baptizantes Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti
- Docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis.⁶⁷³

Cardinal Suenens ended his plan with the request that the Council should end with a message directed to all people: to believers and to the world. This mes-

⁶⁷⁰ Klinger E., Das Aggiornamento der Pastoralstruktur, in: Kaufmann F.-X / Zingerle A. (Hrsg.): Vatikanum II und Modernisierung. Historische, theologische und soziologische Perspektiven. Paderborn . München . Wien . Zürich 1996, 173.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Cf. Wittstadt K., Erneuerung der Kirche aus dem Pfingstereignis. Würzburg 1984, 117.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 117-118.

sage should be a message of hope and directed to our separated orthodox and Protestant brothers and sisters. It should be directed to the world and to all faithful, and to all atheists. The Church must continually renew itself, because she is an “*Ecclesia peregrinans et in via*”.⁶⁷⁴

Elmar Klinger throws clear light on the importance of Cardinal Suenens’ plan for the Council.

Der Schwerpunkt des Planes von Suenens liegt bei der Kirche selbst. Sie hat nach diesem Plan zwei Aufgaben. Sie muß nicht nur die Frage nach sich selbst stellen: Wer gehört zu ihr? Wo kommt sie her? Was ist ihr Auftrag? Welche Standpunkte vertritt sie? - Die Kirche hat in sich selbst Gewicht. Sie ist „*ecclesia ad intra*“, aber sie ist nicht um ihrer selbst willen eigenständig, sondern um der Sendung willen, die sie hat. Daher muß sich nicht nur die Frage nach sich stellen, sondern auch nach den Menschen, an die sie sich wendet, für die sie da ist und zu denen sie auch gehört: Wer sind diese Menschen eigentlich? Was ist ihre Bestimmung? Welche Probleme haben sie? Gibt es einen Beitrag, den sie selbst zu leisten hat, um diese Probleme zu lösen? - Die Kirche steht nicht über die Menschheit, sondern ist ein Teil von ihr und gehört zu ihrer Geschichte. Sie ist „*ecclesia ad extra*“.⁶⁷⁵

With this contribution to the successful take-off of the Council, Cardinal Suenens counts among the major forerunners and planners of this epochal event. His contribution did not end with designing the aforementioned concept, which was popularly accepted by the Pope and the Council fathers as a functional concept because it accommodated the issues raised by John XXIII in the opening speech: he participated actively during the conciliar sessions and in major decisions taken by the Council. It was in recognition of his contributions during the first session of the Council that he was appointed by Paul VI, the successor of John XXIII, alongside three other Cardinals - G. Agagianian, J. Döpfner and G. Lercaro - as moderators of the Council charged with the duty of supervising the discussions and debates in the second session of the Council.

7.4.2 The French-Priests’ Workers Movement

The pastoral developments in French theology since the 1940s, that is the formation of the movement of Priest-workers (*Prêtres ouvriers*), had enormous influence on the Council’s teachings on the Church’s responsibilities towards

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁶⁷⁵ Klinger E., Armut – Eine Herausforderung Gottes, 88-89.

the world, as well as on the post-conciliar attention of the Church to the problems affecting the modern world. A brief glance at the historical development of the movement will give us clearer insights into the objectives of the priest-workers movement.

7.4.2.1 Historical Development of the Movement

The movement of priest-workers was formed in France in 1940 as a movement of diocesan and religious priests who organised themselves on the quay of Marseille to articulate pastoral ways of vivifying the faith in a de-Christianised society⁶⁷⁶ and to demonstrate in practical terms the Church's closeness and solidarity with the plight of civil workers tormented by poverty and economic deprivations. Its establishment was preceded by the foundation of the *Séminaire de la Mission de France* in Lisieux, in order to give prime attention to the working class populace.⁶⁷⁷

Till the 20th century France was predominantly an agricultural society, in a process of industrialisation. This led France into sharp social inequality and extreme political polarisation. In addition to this there was the division of the country in two parts as a result of the occupation of Germany as from 1940.⁶⁷⁸ A part was under German occupation, the other part, the Vichy-government, was established with the permission of the Germans under Marschall Petain. He set the three central concepts of the French Revolution – freedom, equality and fraternity - against another three contrary concepts: work, family and fatherland.⁶⁷⁹

This development was not without adverse effects on the people. Different groups, the majority of whom comprised members of the leftist-parties, socialists, Jews and Christians already inclined to the workers movement under the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*, got involved in the political programme, combined forces and led the opposition (*résistance*) against the system.⁶⁸⁰ The Christians who participated in this opposition were confronted by numerous obstacles: some were arrested, some deported and some were publicly executed because of their participation in the opposition. It was this mutual ex-

⁶⁷⁶ Ludmann R., Arbeiterpriester, in: LThk², 1957, 811-813, 811.

⁶⁷⁷ Siefer G., Arbeiterpriester, in: V. Drehsen et al., (Hrsg.) Wörterbuch des Christentums. Düsseldorf 1988, 88-89, 88.

⁶⁷⁸ Kruij G., Frankreich als Missionsland – das Evangelisierungskonzept der französischen Arbeiterpriester, in: Ute F. -H / Kruij G., (Hrsg.): Kirchliches Leben und Theologie in Frankreich. Dokumentation der Fachtagung in Kooperation mit der Arbeitsstelle für Jugendseelsorge zur Vorbereitung des Weltjugendstages in Paris 1997; Odenthal-Altenberg, 1997, 49-66, 52-53.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 53.

perience of misery, humiliation and unjust treatment, as well as a sense of solidarity, that led many priests to discover and respect the people: Christians, non-Christians and communists, hoping for a better human dignity and prepared to sacrifice themselves.⁶⁸¹

The priests were not interested in academic or scientific research, but in identifying with the less privileged and the working class. The first prominent members of the movement included Pater Jacques Loew, OP, who gave up his intellectual pursuits to work in the wharf in Marseille, after studying the living situations of the workers, for the purpose of attending to their pastoral needs.⁶⁸² Other foundation members included the mathematics professor, Marcel Legaut who forfeited his academic career for life as farmer, the philosopher C. Foucauld, and Frère R. Schutz who founded the ecumenical *Communauté de Taizé* in Cluny in 1940.

The basic characteristic of the priest-workers movement was their personal and collective contributions to the new missionary outburst in the French Church and society of the post World-War II era. They dedicated their time and apostolate to the welfare of workers defending their just and social demands, living in a work-milieu and dedicating their time to manual work in industries. Further attempts were made during the German preoccupation as thousands of young French were dispatched to the German quarters. The situation is well described by the following testimony:

Während der deutschen Besatzung wurde ein weiterer Versuch gemacht, als Tausende junger Franzosen in die deutschen Fabriken geschickt wurden, unter ihnen waren 2300 Seminaristen und 8000 Mitglieder der Katholischen Aktion. Der seelsorgliche Betreuung dieser Arbeiter wurden von seiten der Behörden so viele Hindernisse bereitet, dass der französische Episkopat die Gründung eines geheimen Seelsorgewerkes beschloss, dass sich besonders der Seminaristen und Mitglieder der katholischen Aktion annehmen sollte. 25 Priester stellten sich zur Verfügung. In dieser ganz andersartigen Lebensweisen entdecken sie ungeahnte apostolische Möglichkeiten.⁶⁸³

The number of priest-workers continued to increase as time went on. Many approached their bishops with the request that he permit them to work in the

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁸² Ludmann R., Arbeiterpriester, 811.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

industries. The number increased to twenty-five in 1947, fifty in 1950 and one hundred in 1954.⁶⁸⁴

The increase in the number of priests, and their de-emphasis on the traditional functions of the priests gave rise to misunderstandings and conflict between them and the authorities in the Church. Some bishops were worried about the social status of the priests, while Rome (Vatican) raised concern with regard to the spiritual life of the priests as well as their parish responsibilities which they gave up for industrial work.⁶⁸⁵

The death of Cardinal Suhard (1949), the archbishop of Paris, who defended the interest of the priests provided Rome with the opportunity of dealing with the conflict. His defence of the priest-workers in his Lenten pastoral Letter *Le prêtre dans la cité*, is remarkable:

In allzuvielen sogenannt christlichen Ländern, insbesondere in Frankreich, tritt die Kirche trotz dem Vorhandensein von Kultusgebäuden und Priestern für eine Menge Menschen nicht mehr in Erscheinung. Sie haben nicht mehr die Möglichkeit, sich für oder gegen Gott zu entscheiden. Ein gewaltiger Haufen von Vorurteilen hat das Antlitz der Kirche in ihren Augen völlig entstellt. Zum Priestertum finden sie noch weniger Zugang. Daher ist es gut, dass Priester wiederum zu Zeugen werden. Viel weniger um zu überzeugen, als um 'Zeichen' zu sein. Man hat denn auch gesagt: Zeuge sein heißt nicht Propaganda treiben, ja nicht einmal verblüffen, sondern ein Mysterium bilden. Es heißt so leben, dass das Leben unverständlich wäre, wenn es keinen Gott gäbe. Zeugen, viel weniger durch äußere Änderung ihrer Lebenswelt als durch ihren festen Willen, mit den enterbten Massen eine wirkliche Schicksalsgemeinschaft zu bilden. Das Leben dieser Priester ist keine Flucht noch Sittenstudium noch selbst ein Vorhaben zu 'erobern'; es ist eine Berufung zu erlösen. Die Arbeit bildet für sie nicht einen Vorwand oder eine Gelegenheit zur 'Propaganda'; sie ist 'der Akt der Einwurzelung' des Priesters in einem Volke, wo er nunmehr ein Fremder war; sie ist das leidende und büßende Teilen der Lage des Menschen.⁶⁸⁶

Cardinal E. Suhard's death robbed the priest-workers of a great defender and mentor. The first step was taken by the Vatican to clamp down on the movement was the letter of 24th August, 1953, addressed to the priests involved

⁶⁸⁴ Kruij G., Frankreich als Missionsland, 56.

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. Ludmann R., Arbeiterpriester, 812.

⁶⁸⁶ Suhard E., Der Priester in der Welt des Menschen. Luzern-München 1961, 102

through the nuncio Marella, requesting a temporary closure of the *Séminaire de la Mission de France*. Another instruction of similar weight was issued on the 19th January, 1954, which enjoined the bishops to put an end to the experiment of the priest-workers.⁶⁸⁷

The bishops tried to intervene on behalf of the priests involved by leading a delegation under the leadership of Cardinal Liénart to Rome. The meeting at Rome concluded with the following compromise that the priests to dedicate only three hours to manual work, while the rest should be concentrated on their parochial activities;⁶⁸⁸ they should not participate in any sort of workers' union; the bishop is the person to chose those who are to work; and finally, they should not to be known and addressed as *Prêtres Ouvriers* (priest-workers) but *Prêtres au travail* (priests at work).⁶⁸⁹

This compromise did not help the situation for a long time, because the conflict was taken up again during the Pontificate of John XXIII, irrespective of the fact that the Pope had a soft spot for the activities of the priest-workers.⁶⁹⁰ The Pope stood in defence of the movement in spite of the interruption of Cardinal Pizzardo of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities in 1959, who abolished the above-mentioned compromise.⁶⁹¹

7.4.2.2 The Priests-Workers Movement and its Influences on Evangelisation

The problems which confronted the priest-workers did not hinder them from defending the course they represented. This course, as we have noted above, consisted in showing solidarity with the poor conditions of paid workers by giving up their standard of life and parish atmosphere and taking up employment with workers in factories, and by sharing their proletariat living circumstances with them.⁶⁹²

The theologian and one of the advocates of the priest-workers movement, Marie-Dominique Chenu (OP), made a statement in defence of the movement and their activities which brings out the fundamental principle of the movement. He took his point of departure from the fact that the Church is not of the world, she is in the world. Hence she should not behave as if she lived outside the world or independent of it. The priestly engagement of Christ demands

⁶⁸⁷ Ludmann R., *Arbeiterpriester* 812.

⁶⁸⁸ Cf. Drehsel V., *Arbeiterpriester*, 89.

⁶⁸⁹ Ludmann R., *Arbeiterpriester*, 812.

⁶⁹⁰ Cf. Pesch O. H., *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, 59-60.

⁶⁹¹ Kruij G., *Frankreich als Missionsland*, 58.

⁶⁹² Cf. Ludmann R., *Arbeiterpriester*, 812.

solidarity with the poor and with the workers in the context of industrialisation. This solidarity with workers is not possible without involvement in political parties or workers movement. The priests-workers must not only identify with the workers' world (*Monde Ouvrier*) but also with their union (*Mouvement Ouvrier*). This shows that the priesthood of the priests-workers was not restricted to the sacramental functions of priests, because the conferment of the sacraments should flow from a creditable witness to the faith. Hence, proclamation of the Word and conferment of the sacraments require presence in the world of the workers.⁶⁹³ The priests-workers introduced a new pastoral paradigm in the Church's evangelisation, in comparison with the old-mission-centred paradigm. Instead of placing the emphasis on the Church as the absolute possessor of an unchanging truth, whose way of transmission and proclamation does not bring about any changes, the priest-workers, on the contrary, began with the experience of the culture of the workers as well as the experience of their humanity, their high faith in the possibility of more humanness, even if they had nothing to do with the Church. They do not approach the people with hands full of things to distribute, but with empty hands in order to listen and to transform themselves, to learn and to witness to Christ through this transformation.⁶⁹⁴ The difference in these approaches is clear. While the traditional mission was a process from outside, the priest-workers' approach was from inside, beginning with learning and acceptance of the culture of the workers and witnessing through their life. Contrary to the individual-centred nature of the traditional mission, the priest-workers understood their mission as a political issue and they committed themselves to witness to God's justice and fight for a just society and by solidarity with the oppressed. This political engagement did not aim at re-christianising the people in the traditional sense but at a political practice which is based on a kind of faith that would not turn its back on the world and its challenges.⁶⁹⁵

7.4.3 The Relationship of Popes Roncalli and Montini to France and its Influences

It is clear from our study that the activities, life-practices and theological concepts of the French priests-workers had much significance for the pastoral practice of the Church in many countries, especially in Latin America.

Marie-Dominique Chenu, the acclaimed theologian of the priest-workers, described the movement as the 'most important event since the French Revolu-

⁶⁹³ Cf. Kruij G., *Frankreich als Missionsland*, 59.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 60

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

tion.⁶⁹⁶ It exercised enormous influence on the Church and on her social teachings since the pontificates of John XXIII (1958-1963) and Paul VI (1963-1978). These influences can be appreciated in the new understanding since the Vatican Council II of the evangelising mission of the Church in the world, the relationship between faith and practice, and the relationship between clergy and laity.⁶⁹⁷

7.4.3.1 Angello Roncalli: Apostolic Nuncio in France

The twenty years of Cardinal Angelo Roncalli's (later John XXIII) diplomatic duties in foreign missions brought him into friendship with Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard of Paris, for whom he developed a deep regard and respect. This friendship was of such enormous influence on Roncalli that he read the three significant pastoral letters of the cardinal on the '*Éssor ou décline de l' Église*' (1947), '*Sens pour Dieu*' (1948) and '*Le prêtre dans la cité*' (1949) in which the situation was theologically explicated.⁶⁹⁸

Cardinal Suhard's interest in the activities of the priest-workers so captivated the nuncio (Roncalli) that he took the side of the movement, even when Vatican signalled its resentment against it. He demonstrated his solidarity with the Cardinal and the movement by putting on the rochet of the late Cardinal while officiating at the ordination⁶⁹⁹ of twenty-nine priests of the movement on June 29, 1949. G. Kruip describes Pope John's closeness to Cardinal E. Suhard appropriately:

Die tiefe Verehrung Roncallis für Suhard setzte sich nach dessen Tod fort, und vielleicht ging es Roncalli erst als Patriarch von Venedig voll auf, was es mit dem pastoralen Konzept Suhards auf sich hatte. Ja [...] erst mit der Wahl zum Papst sei Roncalli *suhardien* im Sinne von kühner Dynamik geworden.⁷⁰⁰

The influence of the contact with French theology played a major role in the pontificate of the Pope. It also played a central role in his engagement for justice and peace in the world, and in turning the attention of the Church to the world. The influence attained its highest point in the revolutionary events of the Second Vatican Council in which Roncalli the Pope called for the updating

⁶⁹⁶ Cf. Kruip G., *Frankreich als Missionsland*, 50.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. Kaufmann L / Klein N., *Johannes XXIII. Prophetie im Vermächtnis*. Fribourg/Brig 1990, 37.

⁶⁹⁹ Cf. Nikodim, *Johannes XXIII. Papst einer Kirche im Aufbruch* (herausgegeben und geleitet von Hans-Dieter Döpman). Berlin 1984, 82.

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. Kaufmann L / Klein N., *Johannes XXIII*, 38.

(*aggiornamentation*) of the Church's teachings and relationship to the world. With this, he demonstrated his firm belief that faith owes much to society, on whose problems and anxieties she cannot turn her back.

Roncalli's interest in dialogue between the Church and the world and in the Church's responsibility towards the world, marks a distinct change in the attitude of the Church towards the world before his election as Pope. The view before him was that the world was a hostile if not an antagonistic, challenger, which must be opposed and from which Christians must be protected through the teachings on what are allowed to do and not to do as Christians. Behind this notion was the conviction that the Church was the *Societas perfecta*, the perfect society, which possesses all that she needs in order to exist in itself. It was a society which had something to render to the world, but not vice-versa.⁷⁰¹ John XXIII's *aggiornamento* marked a difference in attitude of the Church towards the world. He challenged the Church to self-renewal and the renewal of her attitudes towards others, especially in the area of dialogue with other Christian communions, religions and the world at large.

7.4.3.2 Giovanni Baptista Montini

G. B. Montini had much regard for French culture, philosophy, creativity, vitality and intelligence. In an interview granted to the philosopher Jean Guitto on September 8, 1950, he describes the French attitude as a *sign of vitality*.⁷⁰²

Wenn die Franzosen vom heiligen Stuhl und vom Vatikan so häufig einen Wink erhielten (manchmal in negativem Sinn), dann wohl sehr oft deshalb, weil sie so eifrig, lebendig, schöpferisch und, ich wiederhole es. So intelligent sind sie. [...] Übers Ziel schießen nur mutige und hochherzige Naturen. Mit anderen Worten: Einen lebendigen Geist ermahnen, heißt durchaus nicht, ihn nicht gleichzeitig auch zu bewundern, ja sogar bisweilen beneiden. [...] So manche Gegenden der Welt bereiten und keine derartigen pädagogischen Sorgen, weil der dortige Katholizismus nicht die gleiche Kraft und gleiche schöpferischen Elan besitzt wie in Frankreich. In Rom weiß man, dass Frankreich das Haupt des Katholizismus ist, zumindest in missionarischer und intellektueller Hinsicht.⁷⁰³

G. B. Montini's first contact with the French priest-workers movement goes back to the period of his Vatican appointment as the Pro-Secretary for Extra-

⁷⁰¹ Pesch O. H., Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil, 61.

⁷⁰² Cf. Guittou J., Dialog mit Paul VI. Wien 1967, 27.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

ordinary matters of the Church. This office exposed him to the conflict between the Vatican and the priest-workers movement, and to the attempts made by the French bishops to find solutions or compromise between both parties.

The appointment of G. B. Montini at the Curia ended with his nomination as the archbishop of the rich industrial city of Milan⁷⁰⁴ on January 5, 1955, where he demonstrated his interest in the course of the priests' movement by declaring himself "archbishop of workers".⁷⁰⁵ He revitalised the entire diocese, preached the social message of the Gospel, worked to win back the labour class, promoted Catholic education at every level, and supported the Catholic press. His impact upon the city at that time was so great that it attracted world-wide attention. This conviction was Montini's motivation for standing on the side of the marginalized. He demonstrated his commitment to the down-trodden by refusing to celebrate his first Christmas feast in his magnificent Cathedral but in a candle-hut made of wood, with people living in the slums of the suburbs.⁷⁰⁶

Giovanni B. Montini's election to the papacy in 1963 availed him of the opportunity to pay attention to the problems of social injustice and marginalisation in the world. 1971 was very spectacular during his pontificate. He not only convoked the Synod of Bishops to discuss the themes of "Justice" but also issued the Apostolic letter "Octogesima adveniens" (OA).

In this document, addressed to Cardinal Maurice Roy, the President of the Council of the Laity and of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, to mark the eightieth anniversary of the Encyclical "Rerum novarum", Paul VI noted the "wide diversity among the situations in which Christians [...] find themselves according to regions, socio-political systems and cultures".⁷⁰⁷ This makes it impossible to "utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity".⁷⁰⁸ These difficulties did not hinder the Pope from the responsibility of addressing the burdens under which people live. They rather gave him the opportunity to challenge local Churches to embark on an objective analysis of the situation which is proper to their own countries "to

⁷⁰⁴ Cf. Pesch O. H., *Das Vatikanische Konzil*, 145.

⁷⁰⁵ Cf. Bauer C, *Arbeiterpriester und Citykirche. Versuch einer semiotischen Analyse praktischer Orte der Theologie*. Diplomarbeit eingereicht an Lehrstuhl für Pastoral Theologie der Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2000, 74.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁷ OA 3.

⁷⁰⁸ OA 4

shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and for action from the social teachings of the Church".⁷⁰⁹

The above exposure equips us with insight into how the theological developments in France, and especially the priest-workers, exerted influence on events in the Church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Paul VI did not hide his interest in continuing the Council initiated by his predecessor, John XXIII. These were in keeping with his interest in directing the face of the Church to the world and to the problems and concerns of modern man.

7.5 Paul VI and Evangelisation

Paul VI can be described as the first modern Pope. He played a significant role in the formulation of the themes of the Vatican Council II and specified the objectives of the Council as "the self-awareness of the Church; its renewal; the bringing together of all Christians in unity; the dialogue of the Church with the contemporary world."⁷¹⁰

Basing his teachings on evangelisation on the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council which, among other things, underscore the missionary character and preoccupation of the Church, Paul VI devoted his pontificate to the task of evangelisation. Most of the activities he carried out portray his commitment to evangelisation. His choice of the name Paul signified his intention to take the Apostle of the Gentiles as the model for his ministry.⁷¹¹ To focus attention on the evangelising mission of the Church, he "changed the name of the already-existing Congregation for the Propagation of Faith to the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples in 1967."⁷¹²

Paul VI was the first Pontiff to step outside the gates of the Vatican on apostolic journeys to other countries.⁷¹³ With these pastoral journeys, he demonstrated his deep commitment to evangelisation and the enhancement of healthy relationships between the Catholic Church and other communions and religions. This commitment to evangelisation was also demonstrated in his will in which he desired that an open book of the Gospel be placed on top of his coffin at his burial.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ See quotation in Derek Holmes J., *The papacy in the Modern World 1914-1978*, 223.

⁷¹¹ Dulles A., *John Paul II and the New Evangelization - What does it Mean?* 1-39, 27

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ His first visit in 1964 took him to the Holy Land. In 1968 he travelled to New York. He visited Geneva and Uganda in 1969 and in 1970 he toured Tehran, East Pakistan, the Philippines, West Samoa, Australia, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

7.5.1. Sources of Paul VI's Concept of Evangelisation

There were both remote and proximate factors at the background of Paul VI's commitment to evangelisation. An examination of these factors will dispose us to properly appreciate his teachings on evangelisation in the modern world.

7.5.1.1. Paul VI's Family Background and Early Childhood

Giovanni Battista Enrico Montini was born on September 26, 1897, in Concesio (Lombardy) to a wealthy family of the upper class. His interest in dialogue says much about his family background. As son of a non-practising lawyer turned editor and a courageous promoter of social action, he had a sound childhood and upbringing in a familiar atmosphere open to tolerance and freedom of speech.

His childhood experience and his exposure in the course of his academic pursuits⁷¹⁵ influenced the life and activities of G. B. Montini as Cardinal Secretary for the Church's internal affairs and as Archbishop of Milan. Such exposure also disposed him for the strides he took during his pontificate as Pope Paul VI. He decided to continue the Council⁷¹⁶ even after the death of his predecessor, committing himself to various aims of the Council as laid down by John XXIII: the pursuance of a deeper self-knowledge and self-consciousness of the Church, its renewal, ecumenical orientations, and dialogue with modern people of the world.⁷¹⁷

As someone committed to the realisation of the decisions of Vatican II Council, Paul VI showed a high degree of respect and tolerance in both internal and external matters of the Church. He demonstrated this by undertaking a journey to the Holy Land (4th-6th January, 1964) and dialoguing with Athenagoras I the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch of Konstantinople, as well as Patriarch Athenagoras I in Jerusalem within the first year of his pontificate.⁷¹⁸ Five months later

⁷¹⁵ His early educational journey began with the Jesuits near his home in Brescia. After his priestly ordination, he left for the Gregorian University, Rome, (1920) and the University of Rome for further studies. In 1922 he was transferred to the Acedemia die Nobili Ecclesiastici. He left for Warsaw the same year as attaché of the nunciature. In 1924 he was recalled to Rome for health reasons and was assigned to the Secretariat of State under the leadership of Cardinal Pacelli, later Pius XII.,

⁷¹⁶ Cf. Karrer O., *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Reflexionen zu einer geschichtlichen und geistlichen Wirklichkeit.* München 1966, 104.

⁷¹⁷ Cf. Wiltgen R. M., *Der Rhein fließt in den Tiber. Eine Geschichte des zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils.* Feldkirch 1988, 87.

⁷¹⁸ Girault R., *The Reception of Ecumenism*, in: Alberigo G et al., (eds.) *The Reception of Vatican II.* England: Burns & Oates 1987, 137-167, 141.

he visited India and participated in the thirty-eighth International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay. His meeting with the archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, in Rome (24th March, 1967) and with the ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul on 25 July of the same year are clear indications of Paul VI's ecumenical interest.⁷¹⁹ His journey to Geneva in 1969, to visit and address the World Council of Churches are eloquent evidence of the Pope's interest in dialogue and Christian unity. Before this visit, he endorsed the Church's involvement in the Joint Working Group with members of the World Council of Churches "to determine the principles that should govern collaboration and to establish the methods to be followed"⁷²⁰ in this process.

Paul VI's visits were not only ecumenically motivated but also geared toward the preservation of the integrity of the Christian faith. The courage and discipline with which he went about this course owe a lot to his family. Jean Guitton, a French philosopher of the University of Sorbonne and the Pope's biographer, describes Paul VI's readiness to interact with the people like a father with his children.⁷²¹ He described the Pope aptly in these terms:

Mehr als die übrigen Päpste unserer Tage macht Paul VI, der ein junger Pontifex ist, den Eindruck eines liebevollen Vaters, der mit den Menschen wie mit Brüdern und Söhnen plaudern und nicht nur Gehör, sondern auch Verständnis und Zustimmung finden möchte. Das hat er gleich in seiner ersten Enzyklika ausgesprochen. Und gäbe es ein allgemeines, ein weltumspannendes Fernsehen, in welchem sich das Pfingstwunder wiederholte, dann könnte ich mir gut vorstellen, wie er jeden Sonntag zu jedem Mitglied der Menschheitsfamilie in dessen eigener Sprache redet, sich einfach, herzlich und ganz familiär mit ihm unterhält.⁷²²

7.5.1.2. The Influence of the Evangelisation Concept of Madeleine Delbrêl

Paul VI's concept of evangelisation shares some relationship with the French theological developments of the 1940s and with the evangelisation concept of Madeleine Delbrêl, a social worker, who witnessed to the Gospel through her attention to the poor and the socially deprived.

⁷¹⁹ Cf. Mauritsson M., (Hrsg.) Papst Paul VI. Der erste Moderne Völkerapostel. Siegburg: Verlag Franz Schmit, 1989, 14. It has to be recalled that his encyclical letter on dialogue (*Ecclesiam suam*) published on 6th August, 1964, was a direct fruit of Paul VI's ecumenical experiences during the aforementioned visits.

⁷²⁰ Cf. Girault R., *The Reception of Ecumenism*, 141.

⁷²¹ Guitton J., *Dialog mit Paul VI*. Wien, Verlag Fritz Molden, 1967,13.

⁷²² *Ibid.*

Born on 24th October, 1904, in the Southern French city of Mussidan, Madeleine's life can be divided into different stages. Prior to her conversion to the Christian faith, she had contacts with communists and was indeed a strict advocate of intellectual atheism. Her relationship with Jean Maydieu and his affection brought about outstanding changes in her life. Her years as a student of philosophy, history and art at the University of Sorbonne exposed her to further experiences that aided her conversion. These experiences included her contacts with young Christians, who did everything together with her, but never raised any doubt about the existence of God.

Madeleine Delbrêl was later converted (on the 29th March, 1924,) a conversion that marked a significant turning point in her life.⁷²³ She thought of joining the Carmelites when she came into contact with the parish of St. Dominic in the diocese of Ivry. She turned her back completely on her atheistic past and embraced a modest life of social service and witnessed to true Christian life in the midst of the socially deprived, and especially within the communist milieu of Ivry - in spite of the scorn of her colleagues. Schlinder describes her new life aptly:

Sie versteht sich als 'verborgene Zeugin, die weiß: ihr Zeugnis 'ist an einen Hauch des Geistes gebunden, sein Weg ist eng mit dem Schweigen verbunden. Man hat es oft mit dem Sauerteig verglichen. Der Sauerteig arbeitet geräuschlos ... Die Zeugen werden durch den, der in ihnen wohnt, zu Zeugen. Sie machen sich nicht selbst zu Zeugen – in einer Art von höherem Komödiantentum. Der Platz dieses Leben ist der letzte und der am tiefsten vergrabene. Das ist die wichtigste Bedingung dafür, daß es keimt und Frucht bringt.⁷²⁴

Madeleine Delbrêl was a strong supporter of the priest workers' movement. She was the first lay person to take up a lecturing appointment in the séminaire de Mission de France in 1941, an opportunity she utilised to lecture the pioneer students and members of the priest-workers on her ten years of communist experience, as well as on her current preoccupation as a Christian and social worker on densely communist-populated streets of Ivry.⁷²⁵ She expressed her unalloyed solidarity with priest-worker in the 1950s, as the crisis between the movement and Vatican officials was at its peak. She embarked on pilgrim-

⁷²³ Cf. Boehme, K., "Nichts soll uns profan sein" Das geistliche Profil Madeleine Delbrêls, in: Fuchs, G., (Hrsg.) "... in ihren Armen das Gewicht der Welt". Mystik und Verantwortung: Madeleine Delbrêl. Frankfurt a. M 1995, 40-62, 42-43.

⁷²⁴ Schleinzer A., Die Liebe ist unsere einzige Aufgabe. Das Lebenszeugnis von Madeleine Delbrêl. Ostfildern 1994, 193-194.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 224.

ages to the grave of St. Peter for prayerful assistance. It was during her last pilgrimage to Rome that she had a brief audience with Pius XII and G. B. Montini (later Pope Paul VI) in the Secretariat of State.

Madeleine's contact with Montini was facilitated by another worker in the Secretariat, Msgr P. Veullot (her spiritual companion and later archbishop of Paris). This encounter gave G. B. Montini the opportunity of appreciating her pastoral concept of evangelisation in the modern world. A brief look at M. Delbrel's concept will enable us to better appreciate its influence on Paul VI's teaching on evangelisation.

Madeleine Delbrel's idea of evangelisation was based on being *Présence* and incarnate in non-Christian milieus and simply witnessing to the love of the neighbour, instead of preaching and conversion.⁷²⁶ Evangelisation, for her, does not mean going to the people like justified person in the midst of sinners, or like educated people in the midst of the non-educated. She made it clear that we go to them in order to speak with them about our common father, who is known to some people and unknown to others; we go to them like people who have been forgiven and not like people who have not committed any sin.⁷²⁷ Reacting to those who criticised her attention to communists, she replied in biblical terms that God did not say: love your neighbours like you love yourself – with the exception of the communists.⁷²⁸ She maintained firmly that the Church is indebted to communists, she has to evangelise them and live the Gospel with them without discrimination. As Jesus Christ did not discriminate but looked with love at individual persons and provided for their needs, the Church's missionary activity consists primarily in personal encounter, using the language of the heart (love) and the goodness which is the language of Christ. This implies penetrating people's hearts with one's heart, listening to their hopes, strengthening them and working towards the establishment of a dignified human life.

Madeleine Delbrêl's understanding of evangelisation found a resounding echo in Paul VI's teaching on the evangelising mission of the Church in the modern world, *Evangelii nuntiandi*. Her view that she strived towards the world as a flame strives towards straws had direct influence on Paul VI's classification of evangelisation as "the special grace and vocation of the Church" (EN 14).

⁷²⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., 268.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 146.

7.5.2. The Synod of Bishops (1974)

The Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was convened by Paul VI in 1974, that is ten years after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. Paul VI mandated the Synod assembly to “reflect on the topic of evangelisation in the light of [...] Vatican Council II, which had ended some nine years earlier.”⁷²⁹ The main objective of the Synod was to articulate means of committing the Church more actively to the service of evangelisation and advise the Pope on how best to go about it, considering the present challenges facing the Church.

Irrespective of the fact that the Synod took exciting strides, it “concluded with only a short and disappointing Declaration”.⁷³⁰ Nevertheless, the Synod represented many months of serious preparation at both the national and regional levels.⁷³¹ Some of the exciting events at the Synod were the contributions from participants from Africa. The trend of events during the Synod suggests strongly the coming of age of the Third Church. This is evident in the fact that during this Synod the African bishops (for example) emerged committed to taking their destiny into their hands in the development of the African continent. They demanded a break from the so-called ‘theology of adaptation’, in preference for the ‘theology of Incarnation’.

With the rejection of the “theology of adaptation” and the insistence on the “theology of Incarnation” the bishops insisted on “Africanisation” as a “life-or-death” matter for the Church in Africa. Archbishop Zoa of Yaounde, Cameroons (the unofficial leader of the African group) was one of the most articulate and determined advocates of “Africanisation”. He insisted that African theologians have to do for their Continent what the Fathers of the Church did for the first Christian centuries as they expressed the Christian message in Greek and Roman categories. Their resolution is summed up in their rejection of the ‘until now’ “one-way” traffic notion of evangelisation (from Western Church to mission lands) in which “missionary spirit” in the Western Church was exclusively aimed at „foreign“ missions, geographically envisaged, distant, and in which personnel and funding were estimated on the standards of the older (western) Churches. Hence the bishops declared: that “Missionaries coming from abroad will take into account the aspirations of the young Churches for more autonomy and responsibility. The young churches in their pursuit of financial autonomy call upon their flocks to be more self-supporting and call upon their elder sister churches for help in a spirit of sharing and

⁷²⁹ Boyack K., *Go and Make Disciples*, 72.

⁷³⁰ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*, 111.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

communion. Financial help coming from outside must be integrated into projects planned, and to be worked out by the local Churches, instead of being decided upon unilaterally and handed over too mathematically.⁷³²

The reason for the rejection of the theology of adaptation by the synod is clear. The bishops wished to register their disgust about the mission-style of the missionaries, which attempted to establish a European coated Christianity in Africa. Hence, the choice for incarnation theology and the insistence on the theology show, on the one hand, that the African Church was coming of age. On the other hand, it shows the importance the bishops attached to the African culture and their intention to take inculturation (incarnation) of the faith more seriously, not only in documents but also in deeds so that Christianity would not be received by the people as a mere offshot of European culture but be given the chance to take form and flesh from places and cultures in which it finds itself.⁷³³ This emphasis on culture as an essential tool for evangelisation by the African bishops at the Synod enabled the Synod to take the whole question of the Church and non-Western cultures more seriously.

The Synod is said to have had a disappointing end because the participants could not come up with a document unanimously accepted by all parties involved in the session, without any compromise.⁷³⁴ Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's position during the Synod was instrumental to this lack of compromise. As the Synod's relator, he was charged with the responsibility of giving a position paper on the theological aspects of evangelisation, to draw the conclusions from the debate to work on the final report.⁷³⁵ Cardinal Wojtyła's report was disappointing to both Latin American and African representatives. The report on experience presented by Cardinal E. Pironio spelt out the expectations of the Latin American Church on popular religion, basic communities, the liberation movement, new ministries and all the exciting developments that had flowed from Medellín in 1968. African attendants at the Synod were disappointed because their position on colonialism, *apartheid*, Africanisation, political ideologies and frontier evangelisation were turned down by the report from Wojtyła.⁷³⁶

⁷³² Cf. Nwosu C. U., *Evangelization in Igboland*, 95).

⁷³³ Cf. Bühlmann W., *Von der Kirche träumen: Ein Stück Apostelgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*. Graz Wien Köln 1987, 48.

⁷³⁴ Cf. Dorr D., *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1992, 240.

⁷³⁵ Habbleshwaite P., *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993, 626.

⁷³⁶ The disappointment in Wojtyła's paper consists in the fact that it was expected to be a *response* to the reports from Latin America and Africa. This was not the case, since it had been written in advance with the help of the Kraków theologian, Józef Tischler, during their summer

Cardinal Wojtyla's report was disappointing because it failed to address the questions raised by these third-world countries. The fact is that the report was allegedly prepared ahead of the synod and could not anticipate the problems raised during the sessions.

Instead of "the "signs of the times" approach to evangelisation developed by the Latin Americans, he tried to take the Synod back to the old deductive method in which pastoral experience was of secondary value. For him the starting point of evangelisation is Christ's mandate to the Apostles, and it is continued through the mission of bishops and pastors. Hence, it consists in "conversion and liberation" by the power of the sacraments, but the "liberation" in view is from sin and Satan, and "conversion" consists in rejecting the "world" and its false values. True, proclaiming the Gospel does have socio-political implications, but these are of their nature indirect."⁷³⁷

The appearance of the relator's report on the final documents, and its rejection contributed to the inability of the Synod to come up with a unanimously accepted document. Consequently, the Synod of bishops decided to forward the documents to the Pope, telling him that they "awaited from him a fresh forward impulse, capable of creating, within a Church still more firmly rooted in the underlying power and strength of Pentecost, a new period of evangelisation."⁷³⁸ It took a complete year, after the submission of the documents, to issue the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on evangelisation (*Evangelii nuntiandi*) a synthesis of the materials handed on to him by the Synod Fathers. This document can be described as a complete and updated summa of the problems and exigencies that the task of evangelising the modern world raised. Just like the request made by the Bishops as they handed in their proposals to Paul VI for the final document, the Synod ushered in a new wave or era in the Church's evangelising mission.

Paul VI noted the reasons for the writing of the document. "This is what we wish to do now at the close of the Holy Year in the course of which the Church, striving to proclaim the gospel to all men has sought to fulfil its function as the herald of the good news brought to us by Christ and promulgated through her by virtue of these two fundamental exhortations: 'Put on the new nature' and be reconciled to God'."⁷³⁹ He argued further that it was fitting to

holidays in the Masurian Lakes. So instead of the "signs of the times" approach to evangelisation developed by the Latin Americans, he tried to take the Synod back to the old deductive method in which pastoral experience was of secondary value (ibid.).

⁷³⁷ Ibid., 636-627.

⁷³⁸ EN 2.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

use the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council to address the Church's responsibility towards evangelisation. Hence, the teaching of the document can be summed up in this single objective: "to evaluate the impact of the Council [...] to renew the Church's efforts in carrying out the agenda set forth by Vatican II"⁷⁴⁰, and to ensure that the Church of the twentieth century would emerge ever better equipped to proclaim the gospel to the people of this century.⁷⁴¹

Paul VI was careful in his use of the term "evangelisation". It is important to note the avoidance of titles like "mission" or "catechetics". The following statements give distinct insight into Paul VI's choice of the word:

Die Mission schien ihm als Leitwort pastoralen Handelns zu stark durch die Kolonisierungsgeschichte diskreditiert und unter dem Verdacht eines expansiven kirchlichen Denkens zu stehen; der Begriff Katechese war zu kognitiv mit dem Anspruch der Doktrin belastet, um zum Ausdruck zu bringen, was ihm vor Augen stand: eine Neuformulierung der kirchlichen Aufgabe insgesamt [...]. Der Begriff der ‚Evangelisierung‘ will die Pastoral der Kirche insgesamt erfassen, sofern sie an der frohen Botschaft Jesu vom Reich Gottes ausgerichtet ist und von einer Hoffnung getragen wird, die sich auf das Engagement Gottes in unserer Welt gegründet weiß. Katechese und Mission sind allenfalls Teilspekt dieses Evangelisierungsprozesses.⁷⁴²

In fact, the term "evangelisation" embraces the entire pastoral activities of the Church so long as they are directed towards the course of the Good News of the kingdom of God and are based on the hope founded on God's involvement in the world. Catechetics and mission are only parts of this evangelisation process.⁷⁴³

Taking its roots in both the New Testament and the Second Vatican Council, *Evangelii nuntiandi* identified evangelisation as the mission of the people of God, and went on to articulate modalities through which this mission can be effectively executed and realised.

⁷⁴⁰ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*, 111

⁷⁴¹ EN 2.

⁷⁴² Zerfaß R., *Die kirchlichen Grundvollzüge – im Horizont der Gottesherrschaft*, in: *Konferenz der bayerischen Pastoraltheologen* (Hrsg.) *Das Handeln der Kirche in der Welt von heute. Ein pastoraltheologischer Grundriß*. München 1994, 33-50, 47.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

7.5.3. *Evangelii nuntiandi*

The Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in the Modern World, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, published on 8th December, 1985, that is, a year after the conclusion of the Fourth International Synod of Bishops on Evangelisation (1974), can be described as “the Roman Catholic Magna Charta on the mission of the Church”⁷⁴⁴

As the compendium of Paul VI’s teaching on evangelisation, *Evangelii nuntiandi* can be understood as an exceptionally valuable document, one that explores in depth several vital theological and pastoral issues that had arisen since the time of Vatican II. Although, it is built on the teachings of Vatican Council, it does not hesitate to deal with new questions or to offer fresh insights into old questions. One of the most important features of the document is the broad sweep of the vision of evangelisation which it offers.

Paul VI did not offer any clear-cut definition of the concept he was dealing with as a result of his awareness of the complex nature of evangelisation. Instead, he made an all-inclusive description of the concept, being conscious of the fact that it is not possible to grasp the meaning of evangelisation if one does not try to keep all elements that make up the concept in view. Consequently, he described evangelisation as “a complex, made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative.”⁷⁴⁵ Without stopping at mere description of evangelisation, he proceeded to warn against any move at partial or fragmentary definition of evangelisation which might attempt to impoverish or distort the reality of evangelisation in all its richness, complexity and dynamism.⁷⁴⁶

The basic nature of evangelisation consists in the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith as a process of bringing the Good News of the kingdom of God into all segments of the human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Evangelisation is an integral part of the Church’s mission. It constitutes her primary duty, which she derived from her founder, Jesus Christ. It is, in the real sense of its nature, the “grace and vocation of the Church, Its deepest identity [...] the Church exists in order to evangelize.”⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁴ Luzbetak L. J., *The Church and Cultures*, 111.

⁷⁴⁵ EN 24

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid., 14.

Judging from the above statement, we can describe evangelisation as all attempts made by the Church to realise the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. Evangelisation does not only aim at the proclamation of the Good News, since that is only a part of the whole process. Its goal is the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world and in human hearts. Hence, evangelisation is interested in the development and in the uplifting of the human person so that the human race will come to the knowledge of God and share the joy of the children of God through the Gospel preached to them.

7.5.3.1 The Structure of the Document

Evangelii nuntiandi is structurally made up of eight parts. The introductory part (1-5) presents Paul VI's special commitment to evangelisation. It underlines three events which are connected with the publication of the document: The publication marked the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council; the end of the Holy Year (1975); and the anniversary of the end of the Synod of Bishops.

Part I (6-16) focuses attention on the theme "From Christ the Evangeliser to the Evangelising Church". Here Paul VI establishes the christological aspect of evangelisation. He reflects on the following themes: (a) Jesus' (the first evangeliser's) witness and mission; (b) the proclamation of God's Kingdom and liberating Salvation; (c) the price of crucifying effort; (d) tireless preaching supported with evangelical signs, and the building up of a community of both the evangelised and evangeliser (6-14). Here, Paul VI identifies evangelisation as the proper vocation of the Church. He also underlines the „reciprocal link between the Church and evangelisation."⁷⁴⁸

Part II of *Evangelii nuntiandi* (17-24) focuses attention on what evangelisation really means. It emphasises the complexity of evangelisation and warns against any partial or fragmentary definition of the term. However, the Pope underlines the factors that are involved in the entire evangelisation process. These include: conversion, the renewal of humanity and inculturation. Furthermore, he stresses the primary importance of witness of life and underscores the necessity of explicit proclamation for vital and community acceptance. These, he said, demand a new apostolate.

Part III (25-39) of *Evangelii nuntiandi* is dedicated to the content of evangelisation. Paul VI underlines salvation in Jesus Christ under the sign of hope as the central message (27). Evangelisation, he says, is the message of liberation and is linked to authentic human advancement with an accent on its religious

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 15.

finality, without reduction or ambiguity. Liberation means openness to the divine Absolute, centred on God's kingdom. Commitment to the building up of more human and just structures is part of conversion. The specific contribution of the Church is limited to evangelical means. It includes also the fundamental right of religious liberty.

In Part V (40-58) the various features of evangelisation are discussed. In this section, Paul VI reiterates witness of life as a primary feature. Others include: preaching, liturgy of the word, catechesis, utilisation of the means of social communication, personal contact, the Sacraments and popular piety. These methods vary with time, place and culture.

In Part VI (49-58), which dwells on the beneficiaries of evangelisation, Paul VI affirms that evangelisation is directed to all. He proceeds further to enumerate the calibre of people the Gospel is addressed to. First evangelisation, which is also known as missionary evangelisation, refers to the task of bringing the Good News to non-believers. The second evangelisation is directed towards members of the Church for their consolidation in the faith and nourishment. This type of evangelisation is pastoral in nature. Through it the Church tries to deepen the faith of its members. The need for pastoral evangelisation is particularly felt in the Church because of the effects of the modern secular age on the Christian faith. The third group is the de-Christianised world, and the non-Christian religions. The reference here is to unbelievers and non-practising Christians.

Part VII (59-73) dwells on the workers of evangelisation. It establishes that the whole Church is missionary, and that evangelisation is an essential act proper to the Church. The consequence is that evangelisation is no one's exclusive prerogative at the perspective of both the universal Church and local (individual) Churches. Paul VI outlines those involved in evangelisation: for example, bishops, priests, religious, laity, families and youths. Thereafter he discussed the various ministries in the Church.

Part IX (74-81), the concluding part, examines the spirit of Evangelisation. Paul VI underscores in this section the importance and role of the Holy Spirit in the evangelising and pastoral mission of the Church. It is only under the action of the Holy Spirit that evangelisation is possible. Hence, to justify his views on the primary role of the Holy Spirit in evangelisation, Paul VI refers to those aspects of the life and activities of Jesus and the apostles in which the Holy Spirit plays a significant role. He then argues, in relation to the Church, that it is "only in the consolation of the Holy Spirit" that the Church increases. The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. It is He who explains to the faithful the deep meaning of the teaching of Jesus and His mystery. It is the Holy Spirit

who, today just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangeliser who allows himself to be possessed and led by Him.”⁷⁴⁹

7.5.3.2 The Various Elements in the Global Concept of Evangelisation

While the Pope did not define evangelisation, he did not hesitate in mentioning that it consists of various elements. These elements must be taken into account in describing what evangelisation is. Stressing one at the expense of the others gives a distorted vision. The various elements are complementary, mutually enriching and form an articulated reality:

1. Christian witness, which makes present the incipient kingdom and constitutes a silent but powerful and effective proclamation of the Gospel.⁷⁵⁰ The prime position of living witness among the other features of evangelisation should be noted. In fact, witness can be explained with the age-long aphorism ‘actions speak louder than words’. The relevance of this aphorism shows itself in the dynamism of the Gospel which every Christian receives. It spurs the receiver into action and living witness to the Gospel, irrespective of age, sex or vocation.
2. A clear, unequivocal and explicit proclamation of the Lord Jesus (22).
3. This proclamation reaches its full development when it is accepted and adhered to by the listener, in his individual and community dimension. Thus he enters into the community of believers, the Church and lives her life fully, especially through the sacraments, while himself becoming an evangeliser (23, 24).
4. The Gospel offers integral salvation, which is liberation from sin as well as from other evils so conspicuous in society today, namely misery, exploitation and injustice of every kind (30-38).
5. The Gospel permeates human culture and should be at home in every culture. Evangelisation thus is not complete without inculturation. Strictly speaking, inculturation is not an element as such, but a modality of realising the above elements.

7.5.3.3 The Central Characteristics of the Document

Paul VI classified evangelisation as “the grace and vocation of the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners to

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid., 24.

God“ (14). Evangelisation is not only a necessity for the evangelised but also for the evangeliser. Hence, he strictly instructed that the Church must herself be evangelised in order for it to be able to execute its evangelising function effectively.

He enumerates the reasons for evangelisation. As a community sharing a common faith and a common hope which “she proclaims and communicates to others by her life, and sharing likewise a common fraternal love, it is essential that she should constantly hear the truth in which she believes, [...]. As the people of God [...] which has been placed in the world and is often tempted by its idols, she needs to hear constantly the proclamation of ‘the mighty works of God’ by which she has been converted to the Lord so that she may hear his call anew and be confirmed in unity [...]. If the Church is to preserve the freshness, the ardour and the strength of her own work of preaching the gospel, she must herself be continuously evangelised.”⁷⁵¹

Paul VI contributed immensely to the discovery of a new understanding of evangelisation in the contemporary era. He called for a renewal of the Church’s evangelising mission and underscored the category of people to whom the Gospel is to be directed. These include: those who have not received the Gospel;⁷⁵² the innumerable people who have been baptised but live quite outside Christian life as a result of the frequent situations of de-Christianisation in our day, and finally the simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith.⁷⁵³

It is important to note the way Paul VI clarifies the nature of evangelisation and the relationship which he established between witness of life and proclamation. Proclamation, according to him, “must take place above all by witness ... a witness which requires presence, a sharing of life, and solidarity; in the carrying out of evangelisation this witness is an essential part, and often the first one ... However, even the most perfect witness will be of no avail in the end unless there is a clear unambiguous proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ, to throw light on and justify the witness ... and to reveal explicitly its true meaning.”⁷⁵⁴

Paul VI’s position of placing witness of life above proclamation and other features of evangelisation marks a notable theological advancement on Vatican II, which gave priority to verbal preaching while relegating witness to a secondary place. The Council’s stand is clear in the Decree on the Missionary Activities of the Church, *Ad Gentes divinitus*. While understanding the “special aim of

⁷⁵¹ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁵² Ibid., 51.

⁷⁵³ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 21-22, 41-42.

evangelisation as the implanting of the Church among people or groups in which it has not yet taken root”,⁷⁵⁵ the Council declared the primary importance of verbal preaching over witness. “The principal instrument in this work of implanting the Church is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. [...] The situation, however, is often of such a nature that for the time being there is no possibility of directly and immediately preaching the Gospel. In that case missionaries, patiently, prudently, and with great faith, can and ought at least to bear witness to the love and kingdom of Christ and thus prepare the way for the Lord, and in some way make him present”.⁷⁵⁶

In contrast to the above position, Paul VI insisted that “words and witness are both of fundamental importance – each in a different way. Witness without words may remain ambiguous or opaque, words without witness lack credibility.”⁷⁵⁷ This refusal to put witness in a secondary place marks Paul VI’s rejection of the older theology which tended to see worldly activity as just a preparation for the Gospel or at best an indirect evangelisation; and such an older theology could not easily show how action for justice is a constitutive element in evangelisation in the proper sense.⁷⁵⁸

The witness of Christian living is the first means of evangelisation. It is a witness which requires presence, a sharing of life, and solidarity’. This witness is an essential part in carrying out evangelisation, and often the first one (no. 22). Through active presence evangelisers are among people what they really are by grace: the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the leaven in the dough. This active presence is called missionary because it is the instrument of the missionary presence of the Church in the world. Contemporary man listens more willingly to witness. The reason for this is that the modern man and woman reject what appears as mystification, facade, and compromise. In this light we see the importance of a life that really echoes the spirit of the Gospel (41; 46). It is by witnessing through the way they conduct themselves and lead their lives that they become real evangelisers.⁷⁵⁹ This message does not come to someone so that he or she buries it within himself or herself. One receives it and allows it become a plan to be publicised. The message gains a voice in the person for reaching to other’s ears and hearts.

⁷⁵⁵ AG 6

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Dorr D., *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years After Vatican Social Teaching*. Dublin: Grill and Macmillan 1992.

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. EN 21.

7.5.3.4 The Holy Spirit - The Principal Agent of Evangelisation

Pope Paul VI did not undermine the roles of the Holy Spirit in the life and in evangelising mission of the Church. He underlines the primary role of the Holy Spirit in the life and earthly ministry of Christ and those of his apostles. He declares emphatically that “there is no evangelisation without the cooperation of the Holy Spirit”.⁷⁶⁰

Having established the place of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ of his immediate followers,⁷⁶¹ Paul VI stressed the work of the Spirit in the Church and in her evangelising mission. According to him: it is “not by chance that the great inauguration of evangelisation took place on the morning of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Spirit”. Consequently, “It must be said that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelisation: it is he who impels each individual to proclaim the gospel, and it is he who in the depths of conscience 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, with that unity in variety which evangelisation wishes to achieve within the Christian community. Through the Holy Spirit the gospel penetrates to the heart of the world, for it is he who causes people to discern the signs of the times – signs willed by God – which evangelisation reveals and puts to use within history.”⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁶¹ Stressing his point further, he noted that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus of Nazareth when he was being baptised and at that moment the voice of the Father clearly affirmed the election of Jesus and his mission. Furthermore, Jesus, being ‘led by the Spirit’, went into the wilderness and undertook the decisive contest and supreme test before beginning his mission. In the power of the Spirit he returned to Galilee to preach in his own city, Nazareth and there he applied to himself the words of the prophet Isaiah: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me’ and added ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled’. Furthermore, when he was about to send forth his disciples, breathing on them, he said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’. In fact it was after the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that the apostles set out to all parts of the earth to undertake the great work of evangelisation entrusted to the Church. And Peter explained their mission to the people as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel when he said: ‘I will pour out my spirit on all flesh’. Peter himself is filled with the Holy Spirit when he speaks to the people about the Son of God. And Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit before undertaking his apostolic mission. Similarly Stephen is full of the Holy Spirit when he is chosen as a deacon and later achieves martyrdom. The Spirit, who caused Peter, Paul and the twelve to speak, inspiring the words that they should say, descends likewise ‘on those who hear the Word of God. cf. EN 75.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

The emphasis on the Spirit indicates that he (the Spirit) imparts the wisdom to seek out new and effective methods, the discretion to speak the appropriate words, and the courage to bear witness with power.⁷⁶³

7.5.4. Evaluation

Our study on Paul VI's teachings on the Church's evangelisation in the modern world illustrates the importance he attaches to this great task of the Church. Considering the reasons that gave rise to its publication and the objectives which the *Evangelii nuntiandi* sets out to realise, it can be admitted that the document has proved itself to be an important vehicle for reaffirming, clarifying, balancing, concretising, and indeed further developing the mission thinking of the Second Vatican Council. It reiterated and reinforced the call for "the mobilisation and engagement of the whole Church for evangelisation, acknowledging the role of the Church in liberation; calling for humanisation as an essential part of the Church's mission; appreciating the right of local churches to their own cultural faith-expressions; and accepting non-Christian faiths as, ultimately, a part of God's own plan of salvation."⁷⁶⁴ The Synod of Bishops was responsible for more than merely reaffirming and clarifying the teachings of the Council and balancing misguided reinterpretations. The synodal documents, especially *Evangelii nuntiandi*, served to help concretise some of the conciliar ideas. It sought to illustrate how such authentic signs of God's presence might more easily be recognised. It showed, too, how these signs of God's presence might more easily be recognised.

7.6. John Paul II and Evangelisation

In spite of cardinal Karol Wojtyla's sceptical approach and opposition to suggestions from Latin America on popular religion, basic communities, the liberation movement, new ministries raised, and colonialism, apartheid and Africanization raised by African bishops at the Synod of Bishops on Evangelisation in 1974, John Paul II demonstrated an enormous change of attitude toward these realities a his election to the papacy in 1978. This change is not only characterised by tolerance to issues which he, as Cardinal K. Wojtyla, was earlier opposed to, but by his personal commitment to the promotion of the Church's "missio ad gentes".

Summarising the main orientation of his pontificate, he declared in Mexico City on May 6, 1990: "The Lord and master of history and our destinies has

⁷⁶³ Cf. Dulles A., John Paul II and the New Evangelisation – What does it Mean? in: R. Martin/P. Williams (ed.) John Paul II and the New Evangelisation. How you can Bring the Good News to Others. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1995, 25-39, 38.

⁷⁶⁴ Cf. Luzbetak., The Church and Cultures, 112.

wished my pontificate to be that of a pilgrim pope of evangelization, walking down the roads of the world, bringing to all peoples the message of salvation".⁷⁶⁵ He demonstrated this by attending the Conference of the Latin American bishops on "Evangelisation at Present and in the Future." in Puebla shortly after his election as pope.

John Paul II introduced a new phrase, that is "new evangelisation", into the vocabulary of the Church in his quest to continue the task of evangelisation in the Church. The term was initially coined in an earlier address on March 9, 1983, at Port-au-Prince, Haiti. John Paul II underlines what this new terminology is all about. By it he meant something entirely new in the sense of "a commitment [...] not of re-evangelization, but a new evangelization - new in its fervour, in its methods and in its expression."⁷⁶⁶ This statement implies that the „new evangelisation needs new witnesses ... people who have experienced an area of change in their lives because of their contact with Jesus Christ, and who are capable of passing on this experience to others.“⁷⁶⁷ With the new evangelisation, John Paul II coined an expression for the universal Church that implies the end of something old, the beginning of something new, and the continuity of something transcendent.⁷⁶⁸ The following declaration in one of his encyclicals on evangelisation spells out his desire that the Church gives unshaking attention to evangelisation. He believes that "God is opening before the Church the horizon of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelisation and to the mission *ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no divine institution of the Church, can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."⁷⁶⁹

Repeatedly, John Paul II has used the occasions of his pastoral journeys, addresses to Synods, Episcopal Conferences, Discourses, Audiences and Angelus Messages etc. to awaken the consciousness of the need for a new evangelisation.

⁷⁶⁵ Arrival Speech in Mexico City, May 6, 1990; L'Osservatore Romano (English ed.), May 7, 1990, 1 and 12.

⁷⁶⁶ Quoted by L. Boff, *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor*. R. R. Barr (trans.), New York: Orbis Books, 1990 xii.

⁷⁶⁷ See Quotation in Jacobs S, *How Must Catholics Evangelize? Evangelization and the Power of the Holy Spirit*, in: R. Martin/P. Williamson (ed.), *John Paul II And the New Evangelization*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995, 60-68, 60.

⁷⁶⁸ Cf. Christian R., *Priestly Formation for a New Evangelization*, in: *Seminarium*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1991), 118-134, 118.

⁷⁶⁹ RM 3.

Since its formulation, the “new evangelisation” has struck a chord throughout the Catholic Church and has given rise to several dynamic interpretations. Its point of departure, according to John Paul II, is the infinite richness in Christ which cannot be exhausted by any culture or time, but to which people are led so that they can change their lives.⁷⁷⁰ It has, however, to be noted that the “new evangelisation” does not mean a kind of addition or up-date of the old evangelisation. It does not imply that the old evangelisation has lost its value or that it can no longer bear fruits. It does not mean the proclamation of another Gospel different from the old. The Good News remains the same since the first moment of its proclamation by Jesus Christ. A new evangelisation is indispensable because of the challenges and questions that confront people in the present times. In these times, evangelisation is interested in questions like, “How can the response to the Gospel among Christians be more authentic and dynamic? The missionary approach of teaching the faith, of course, continues even today but should we be satisfied with only this? The new evangelisation aims at putting aside the memorising approach used by the missionaries but wants to help the faithful in such a way that they can relate the faith to life.”⁷⁷¹

The core of the new evangelisation is the re-vitalisation of faith in the hearts of the people. Hence, it has to be taught in order that the receivers develop a search and encounter approach.⁷⁷² It seeks for proper strategies, methods and ways of expression that should be explored so that the Gospel will be “heralded with new energy and in a style adapted to the people of our day.”⁷⁷³ This means that the Gospel should be “made relevant to times and places and to the prevailing cultures, while being faithful to its content.”⁷⁷⁴

By challenging the Church to new evangelisation, John Paul II envisages a remedy to the threat of secularism in the technological cultures of the Western industrialised world, as well as considering countries in which Christianity had not taken firm root from the beginning, places in which the faith had not made significant headway.⁷⁷⁵ Hence, the call for new evangelisation serves as a check on the radical secularisation and concomitant consumerism that tend to exclude all forms of transcendence and religiosity from the dominant culture and

⁷⁷⁰ Cf. Neue Evangelisierung Förderung des Menschen Christliche Kultur: Schlußdokument der 4. Generalversammlung der lateinamerikanischen Bischöfe in Santo Domingo 12.-28. Oktober, 1992, 24, in: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (Hrsg.), *Stimmung der Weltkirche*, Bonn, 1993, 34

⁷⁷¹ Mroso A, J., *The Church in Africa and the New Evangelisation: A Theologico-Pastoral Study of the Orientations of John Paul II*. Rome: Gregorian University Press 1995, 16.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷⁷³ Dulles A., *John Paul II and the New Evangelization*, 28.

⁷⁷⁴ Cf. Dhavamony M., *The Ways and Means of Evangelization*. 152/153.

⁷⁷⁵ Cf. Shorter A., *Evangelization and Culture*, 22.

from the public and civil life. John Paul II foresees the capability of the *new evangelisation* in providing solutions to “a world torn asunder by war, so that the ‘liberating truth of the Gospel will inspire the building of a new world of authentic peace and justice animated by love’.”⁷⁷⁶

7.6.1 The Areas involved in the New Evangelisation

Pope John Paul II, like Paul VI in his description of evangelisation, did not exclude any segment of society or the human situation from the task of the new evangelisation. In *Redemptoris missio*, he enumerated three situations to which evangelisation are directed. These include:

- (I) People, groups and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known. He qualifies the Churches attitude toward this group as *mission ad gentes* in the proper sense of the term. The Gospel is directed to such people in such a way that they will appreciate its contents and become converted to the Lord;
- (II) Christian communities which already possess adequate and solid ecclesial structures. Since these Communities are already established and are fervent in their faith and Christian living, the Church’s attention is that of nourishment of the faith and pastoral care.
- (III) The last is an intermediary situation between the first and second groups. It refers particularly to situations where the entire groups of the baptised have lost a living sense of faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. What is needed in this case is a “new evangelization” or a “re-evangelization”.⁷⁷⁷

John Paul II did not preoccupy himself with the issue of the definition of evangelisation or the modalities of the new evangelisation. By so doing, he avoided any kind of legislation for a particular system but left the stage open for creativity in various regions. In line with the conciliar teaching that “the task of evangelization is the fundamental task of the people of God”,⁷⁷⁸ he underlines that *mission ad gentes* is incumbent upon the entire Church as a People of God.⁷⁷⁹ Consequently, the new evangelisation does not tolerate any dichotomy of apostolate or ministry. It, however, accommodates oneness of mission be-

⁷⁷⁶ Jacobs S., How Must Catholics Evangelize? Evangelization and the Power of the Holy Spirit, in: R. Martin/P. Williamson (ed.) Pope John Paul II and the New Evangelization, 60-70, 61.

⁷⁷⁷ RM 33.

⁷⁷⁸ Cf. LG 35.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid., 71.

cause bishops, priests, religious and laity each has specific contribution to make to the same mission.⁷⁸⁰

The discovery of the involvement of all baptised in the mission of the Church has given way to another phase of evangelisation, technically described as the new evangelisation. The involvement of the faithful in the mission and functions of the Church has helped in promoting the course of the Gospel in recent times. Through their contributions, the “new period of evangelization has produced a stunning array of Church teaching which guides Catholics into a new way of thinking and behaving.”⁷⁸¹ This involvement of the laity in evangelisation is a right they acquired through baptismal commitment and through their dignity as children of God.

7.6.2 Forms of the New Evangelisation

Today, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nation. I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians [...] respond with generosity [...] to the calls and challenges of our times.⁷⁸²

John Paul II’s teaching on the new evangelisation did not end with the emphasis on its characteristics but extended to the various ways of evangelising so that the Gospel will be of meaning to its addressees in their socio-cultural situations. The above statement illustrates the importance of witness and proclamation in the mission of the Church.

7.6.2.1 Witness of Life

John Paul II concept of the new evangelisation recognises the importance of reputable Christian witness as “the first and irreplaceable form of mission.”⁷⁸³ Admitting that “modern man puts more faith in a witness than in a teacher, he prefers experience to teaching, life and action to theory”⁷⁸⁴; he proceeds to stress the basic element of such witness, especially with regard to the development of mankind and the establishment of peace and justice in human soci-

⁷⁸⁰ John Paul II, „Unita di missione nella chiesa“, *Insegnamenti* V/1 (1982) 427, as Quoted by Mroso A. J., *The Church in Africa*, 14.

⁷⁸¹ Boyack K, *Go and Make Disciples: The United States Bishop’s National Plan for Catholic Evangelization*, in: R. Martin/P. William (ed.) *John Paul II and the New Evangelization. How you can Bring the Good News to other*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1995, 71-85, 73.

⁷⁸² RM 92.

⁷⁸³ RM 42.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

ety. “The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity towards the poor, the weak and those who suffer. The complete generosity underlying this attitude and these actions stands in marked contrast to human selfishness. It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel.”⁷⁸⁵

Witness of life as illustrated in this statement refers to taking seriously the living situations of people around us. In his concern that Christians bear faithful witness through the way they conduct their lives, the Pope urges them not to turn their eyes away from these problems and the effects of poverty that drastically affect the living of authentic human life in society. He stresses that “commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is [...] a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for the persons and is directed towards integral human development.”⁷⁸⁶

Effective evangelisation, therefore, demands nearness to the people especially the poor and afflicted. It demands patience and courage, especially with modern man. Its attitude is not that of condemnation or manipulation but one of tolerance and concern. Such witnesses are forces of attraction to people who have not heard or received the Gospel.

7.7.2.2 Proclamation

The new evangelisation does not limit itself to witness of life alone but extends to other aspects of the mission and ministry of the Church. John Paul II stresses proclamation and its importance in opening the people to the knowledge of the Good News of Jesus Christ. “The Church”, according to him, “cannot elude Christ’s mandate, nor deprive men and women of the ‘Good News’ about their being loved and saved by God.”⁷⁸⁷ In line with *Evanglii nuntiandi* (cf. art. 27; 23), he stresses that “evangelisation will always contain – as the foundation, centre and at the same time the summit of its dynamism – a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.”⁷⁸⁸

7.7.2.3 Incarnating the Gospel in People’s Culture

Inculturation is a term that denotes the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture, processes which result in the

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

reinterpretation of both without being unfaithful to either.⁷⁸⁹ It is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation.⁷⁹⁰

Inculturation is an essential form of evangelisation. It is a profound and all-embracing process that involves the Christian message and also the Church's reflection and practices in human culture.⁷⁹¹ Given this relationship, John Paul II stresses that inculturation should enable the Gospel to address all sectors of the people's lives, taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. It enables the Church to give a more intelligible sign of what she is, and become more effective instrument of mission and the kingdom of God.⁷⁹²

The insistence that the Church respects the culture of each people has never been lacking from the speeches of the Pope. He makes it clear that "offering the Gospel message, the Church does not intend to destroy or abolish what is good and beautiful. The Gospel purifies them and enfolds into Christian worship certain elements of a people's custom. It can be said again that the Church comes to bring Christ; she does not come to bring the culture of another race."⁷⁹³

John Paul II recognises that the culture of a people is the proper place for inculturation of the Gospel and evangelisation. Referring to African culture, he underlines that, by "respecting, preserving and fostering the particular values and riches of a people's cultural heritage, the evangeliser is in a position to lead them to a better understanding of the mystery of Christ, which is to be lived in the noble, concrete and daily experiences of the African life."⁷⁹⁴

Describing the relationship between the Good News and human cultures, Pope wrote: "Inculturation plays a role in the culture of various nations, sustaining culture in its progress toward truth and assisting in the work of its purification and enrichment" (Centisimus Annus no. 59).

⁷⁸⁹ Cf. Shorter A., *Evangelisation and Culture*. New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 32.

⁷⁹⁰ Arrupe P., *Letter on Inculturation to the Whole Society of Jesus*. 87-88, in: *Indian Missiological Review*, 1,1 (1979) 87-88.

⁷⁹¹ Cf. RM 52.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*

⁷⁹³ Mroso A. J., *The Church in Africa and the New Evangelisation: Theologico-Pastoral Study of the Orientations of John Paul II*. Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana 1995, 263.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

7.7.3 The Reception of the Council in Latin America

The Second Vatican Council is one of the Councils in the history of the Church that has special echoes all over the Catholic world and beyond. Its recommendations have been of great value to the Church in the modern world. Although the Council was to a great extent determined and influenced by the western world, its effects were first felt in the Churches of the developing countries, especially Latin America and Africa. This may be because of the social, political, economic, cultural and religious factors that posed obstacles to the people's existence, survival and development.⁷⁹⁵

7.7.3.1 The Latin American Church

The conciliar declaration that the "joy and the hope, the grief and anguish, of the men and women of our time, especially of those who are poor and afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well"⁷⁹⁶, forms a befitting background to the response of the Church in Latin America to the problems affecting the people. As a matter of fact, during the years of the Council "the typical and original conditions (perhaps unmatched anywhere else in the universal Church) were being created in which Latin America received the stimulus of the Council".⁷⁹⁷ The Council exposed the attendants to the awareness of the injustices about them and ways of understanding them and/or finding solutions to them.

The entire continent of Latin America was faced with difficult situations politically, economically, socially and religiously⁷⁹⁸, which prepared it for the acceptance of the declarations of the Council. Despite relatively satisfying results in the post-war period in Latin America, the rate of growth was so slow after 1980 that the continent was torn apart by population increase. Industrialisation and economic expansion, though quite impressive in some countries, have not succeeded in reducing pockets of destitution in both rural and urban areas.⁷⁹⁹ This resulted in such inequality, underemployment and social tensions in the entire continent that the people lost the sense of their dignity and fundamental

⁷⁹⁵ Cf. Klinger E./Zerfaß R., (Hrsg.) *Die Kirche der Laien: eine Weichstellung des Konzils*. Würzburg 1987, 6.

⁷⁹⁶ GS 1

⁷⁹⁷ Galilea S., *Latin America in the Medellín and Puebla Conferences: An Example of Selective and Creative Reception of Vatican II*, in: G. Alberigo et al (ed.) *The Reception of Vatican II*. 1987, 59 -73, 60.

⁷⁹⁸ Cf. Boff L. *Jesus Christus, der Befreier*. Freiburg . Basel . Wien 1982, 24.

⁷⁹⁹ Louis de Vaucelles, *The Changing Social Contexts of Postconciliar Catholicism*, in: G. Alberigo et al., (ed.) *The Reception of Vatican II*. M. J. O'Connell (trans), England: Burns and Oates, 1987, 44-58, 48.

rights. Leonardo Boff paints a similar picture as he stresses that the “*culture of domination* characterise all Latin America”.⁸⁰⁰ This *culture of domination*, according to him, reveals the presence of foreign powers with their imported languages, their imported sciences and technology, their imported customs, imported values, and even their way of organizing Christianity, which is Roman or Western. in the territory. It represents ongoing violence because it is superimposed on the cultures already here, obliging the people to restructure themselves, and, in large part, to dissolve. Hence, the people feel like strangers in their own home, where the conqueror has climbed in through the windows and expelled those who lived there, or attacked and murdered them.⁸⁰¹

The Council’s discussions on social justice, just labour wages and respect for human dignity and rights formed great stimuli for the articulation of a new theological approach to such problems as political despotism, injustice, economic/cultural exploitation, coupled with the poverty confronting the continent⁸⁰² This made a group of priests and lay women and men pool their resources together in a pastoral forum with the aim of discussing the conditions of the Church in their continent.

The bishop’s conference reacted instantly to the situation and called for profound social changes as a cure for the institutionalised violence that was threatening the peace of Latin America.⁸⁰³ They identified the various faces of poverty that distress the entire continent and noted that the increasing rate of poverty in the people’s concrete lives should not make the people give up their faith but help them live the faith. Hence, the passion (suffering and death) of Christ should be seen as a continuous challenge to the entire Church. The bishops identified the various faces of poverty

- in the faces of children who were already afflicted by poverty before birth,
- in the faces of young people without orientation,
- in the faces of the Indios and the Afro-Americans, who live on the edge of society, and in the faces of workers who find it difficult to defend their rights,

⁸⁰⁰ Boff L., *New Evangelization: Good News to the Poor*. R.R. Barr (trans.) New York: Orbis Books 1991, 50

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Cf. Shineller P., *A Handbook of Inculturation*. New York: Paulist Press 1990, 97.

⁸⁰³ Louis de Vaucelles, *The Changing Social Context of Postconciliar Catholicism*, in: Alberigo G. et. al., (ed.) *The Reception of Vatican II*. England: Burns & Oates, 1987, 45-73, 48.

- in the faces of the lowly employed and unemployed,
- in the faces of the aged who are excluded from the progress of society.⁸⁰⁴

Poverty, the bishops maintained, did not occur arbitrarily but is the result of economic, social, political structure.⁸⁰⁵ Having noted the extent of poverty in the entire continent, the bishops opted for concrete steps which aimed at addressing the situation of things in the continent and proposing new possibilities, challenges, and hopes not only to the people but also to the universal Church.⁸⁰⁶ They issued a document indicating a new sense of self-awareness and mission which is of paramount importance in the future life of the continent. They admitted, without mincing words, that they are part of their people's history as Latin Americans. They assured the people that they wish to commit themselves with the life of the people as shepherds with common responsibility. Thus it is part of their responsibility to condemn those conditions in Latin America which are sources of insult to the faith.⁸⁰⁷

Besides scholastic theology, which remains abstract and un-committing, the Latin Americans introduced a theology from below, which is a theology of the people and of life. It is a theology which enables someone to confront his or her situations and to ask what the Gospel says on such situation. The theology interests itself in finding concrete steps towards transforming the situation.⁸⁰⁸ They conducted several conferences, enlightenment campaigns, seminars and workshops,⁸⁰⁹ organised at all levels of the Church as a way of enlightening themselves on the deplorable conditions facing the people and the practice of the Christian faith in the continent. Famous among these campaigns were the conferences of Medellín (1968) and Puebla (1979) organised under the auspices of the *Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM)*.

7.7.3.2 The Conference of Medellín

The Conference of Medellín, which was convened in August 1968 in Medellín, Columbia was one of the remarkable events in the life of the Church in Latin America and the entire Catholic Church. Considering the importance of the

⁸⁰⁴ Cf. The Puebla Final Document, Nr.30-39.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ Cf. Klinger E., *Armut Eine Herausforderung Gottes*, 22.

⁸⁰⁷ Cf. Weber F., "Da fehlt es an einer richtigen Inkulturation". *Wie lernfähig und inkulturationsbereit ist der "Missionskontinent" Europa?* in: *Lebendiges Zeugnis*. Heft 3, (Sept., 2001) 176-187, 182.

⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Bühlmann W., *Von der Kirche träumen*, 30.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid., 29.

conference to Latin America, Paul VI convened and entrusted its organisation to the Bishops' Conference of Latin America. The theme for the conference was the reception of the Vatican Council and its official formulations: "The Church in the Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council" shows its relationship to the Council. The very idea of convoking the Latin American "synod" originated during the final sessions of the Council.⁸¹⁰ For the Latin American bishops such a task "would be completely feasible and productive, given the (relative) sameness of the human and Christian problems throughout the region, and the consciousness of an ecclesial co-ordination that had been created in the 1950s and was being consolidated by numerous small-scale meetings during the years of the Council."⁸¹¹

Before going into the details of their meeting, the Bishops took time to study and acquaint themselves with the real situation of the people and that of the continent. Slides and photographs showing the conditions afflicting so many of their people were watched so that they would acquaint themselves with the real situation before they could delve into their subject matter.⁸¹² The pictures were those of poverty and hunger, of unemployment and homelessness. It dawned on them that the economic development they had sought and had been led to expect was not forthcoming. Instead of this, the conditions were worsening on a daily basis.⁸¹³ From the pastoral point of view, they carefully analysed the cultural situations and "found it to be far from the vision of the kingdom of God. The document they issued went from an emphasis on development to a call for liberation: the political and economic theories of development were found wanting; a more radical solution, a solution of liberation was needed. One way to approach such a solution was to encourage the establishment of basic Christian Communities where the reflection on the Bible and Catholic teaching, as well as on local conditions and injustice, would take place."⁸¹⁴

The Conference of Medellín proposed an 'option for the poor' as a means of getting out of these problems. It distinguished between material poverty, spiritual poverty, and poverty as a commitment. Decrying the massive structural injustice in society, they saw material poverty as an evil caused mainly by injustice. Hence, they committed themselves to giving preference to the poorest

⁸¹⁰ Galilea S., *Latin America in the Medellín and Puebla Conferences*, 61.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹² Schineller P., *A Handbook on Inculturation*. New York: Paulist Press 1990, 99

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*

and most needy sectors of society, and accepted the obligation to being in solidarity with them and the marginalized.⁸¹⁵

The bishops observed that the conditions of things on the continent were far from the vision of the kingdom of God. They noted that the political and economic theories of development were lacking in the entire continent and arrived at the conclusion that there was need for liberation in the system. This was realised through the encouragement and organisation of Basic Christian Communities (BCC) in which the biblical instruction was the preferable place for theological and situation-exposing reflections and at the same time the centre of energy for creative hope, theological communication and acts of solidarity.⁸¹⁶ Hence, the BCC provides opportunity for drilling in the scriptures, the teachings of the Church and better ways of getting out of their economic and political quagmire.⁸¹⁷

That Medellín formulated the specific mission of the Latin American Church at its critical moment on the basis not only of the Christian faith but also of the historical situations in which the continent found, was an important achievement and characteristic of the conference. The conference was able to record its success thanks to the influences of some conciliar decrees and constitutions especially, *Gaudium et spes* (which exerted an undeniable influence on the style of the Conference), and of the encyclical *Populorum progressio*.⁸¹⁸ The encyclical provides a most lucid set of Christian directives regarding the problems of justice and human development in the developing world. Through the influence of these documents (conciliar documents and *Populorum progressio*) the Conference of Medellín was able to consider the reality of Latin America and its historical processes and discern the values, ambiguities, and sinfulness found therein, seeing them as playing a part in the history of salvation and as pointing the way for Christian experience and mission.

⁸¹⁵ Dorr D., *Option for the Poor: Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1992, 207.

⁸¹⁶ Mette N/Blasberg-Kuhne M., *Kirche auf dem Weg ins Jahr 2000*, 144.

⁸¹⁷ Shineller P., *A Handbook on Inculturation*, 100.

⁸¹⁸ Galilea S., *Latin America in Medellín and Puebla Conferences*, 63. It was not out of place that *Populorum progressio* was published immediately after the Second Vatican Council. It served to complement and make up the deficiencies of the Council, which was still very European and weak in regard to Third World concerns. The encyclical serves as a supplement to *Gaudium et spes*, especially in areas where the document omitted themes affecting the Third World. This clarifies the effect of the document on Medellín and on the theological thinking about liberation that was developing in Latin America. The document was also an important aid in applying the Council to the realities in which these peoples were involved.

7.7.3.3 The Conference of Puebla

This Conference of Latin American Bishops took place at Puebla, in Mexico, from 27th January to 13th February, 1978, that is, eleven years after Medellín. The conference was the third of its kind in the history of the Church in Latin America. The Puebla Conference was significant in many ways. Like Medellín, it enjoyed wide publicity and interest. The attendance and active involvement of pope John Paul II, through his inaugural speech and other speeches, added much weight and recognition to the conference.⁸¹⁹ The papal speech was remarkable because it helped to dispel the fear that gripped the Church in Latin America, viz: that given the outcome of the previous conference, especially the emphasis on liberation theology - which was largely suspected and criticised for being Marxist-inclined⁸²⁰ “there might be a withdrawal or pullback from the forward thrust of the theology of liberation”.⁸²¹ John Paul II’s reservation during his inaugural speech at the conference on liberation as an attempt to depict Jesus as a political activist or as a fighter against Roman domination is worthy of note. He maintained that Jesus unequivocally rejects recourse to violence and opens his message of conversion to all.

This criticism did not discourage the bishops from pursuing the course they had resolved to pursue. They reaffirmed Medellín, underscoring the people’s liberation from the socio-cultural shackles and condemning all forms of injustice, and programmes that impede progress and freedom in the continent.

The Puebla conference was a continuation of Medellín in the sense that it complemented its shortcomings and tried to provide answers to the questions which Medellín did not or could not handle.⁸²² The conference took over and repeated, in even more pointed and urgent terms, the commitment of the Church to the poor and their integral and liberating evangelisation. Latin America decided for this option because of the need to initiate a “radical transformation of structures which will put an end to the privileges of a small minority which maintains itself through great political and economic power.”⁸²³

⁸¹⁹ Weber K., Die Konferenz von Puebla und die Befreiungstheologie: *Betrachtung eines Beobachter*, in: B. Sclegelberger et al. (Hrsg.) *Von Medellín nach Puebla: Gespräch mit lateinamerikanischen Theologen*. Düsseldorf 183-205, 183.

⁸²⁰ In his inaugural speech John Paul II criticised the attempt to depict Jesus as a political activist or as a fighter against Roman domination and the authorities, and even as someone involved in the class struggle. He insisted that Jesus unequivocally rejects recourse to violence and opens his message of conversion to all.

⁸²¹ Schineller P., *A Handbook on Inculturation*, 102.

⁸²² Cf. Galilea S., *Latin America in Medellín and Puebla Conferences*, 69.

⁸²³ Cf. Schillebeeckx E., *Ministry: A Case for Change*. London: SCM Press 1981, 134.

The deliberations at Puebla derived their influence from three main sources: the decisions of the world bishops' council at Vatican II, the decisions of the Bishops' conference at Medellín, and the apostolic exhortation "*Evangelii nuntiandi*" of Pope Paul VI. Puebla came up with an understanding of the Church with regard to local cultures, and committed the entire Latin American Church to an option for the poor, which was already considered at Medellín.

Mit erneuerter Hoffnung auf die belebende Kraft des Geistes machen wir uns wieder der Auffassung der 2. Vollversammlung zu eigen, die eine klare und prophetische, vorrangige und solidarische Option für die Armen zum Ausdruck brachte, trotz der Abweichungen und Deutungen, mit denen manche dem Geist von Medellín seine Kraft nahmen, trotz der Unkenntnis und sogar der Feinseligkeit anderer [...]. Wir bestätigen die Notwendigkeit der Umkehr der gesamten Kirche im Sinne einer vorrangigeren Option für die Armen mit Blickrichtung auf deren umfassende Befreiung.

Dieses Eintreten, das durch die ärgerniserregende Realität des wirtschaftlichen Ungleichgewichts im Lateinamerika notwendig wird, muß dazu führen, ein würdiges und brüderliches menschliches Zusammenleben herzustellen und eine gerechte und freie Gesellschaft aufzubauen. Wir bemühen uns darum, die Mechanismen zu erkennen und anzuklagen, die diese Armut hervorrufen.⁸²⁴

The bishops emphasised evangelisation as an essential factor in the pursuit of liberation, hence, the choice of the theme *Evangelisation in Latin America's Present and Future* for their Puebla conference. They made clear distinctions between the old evangelisation in Latin America, from which they publicly distanced themselves, and a new evangelisation. The old evangelisation was rejected because of its close association with the colonial history of the continent. Leonardo Boff gives a touching account of 'missionary colonialism' in the argument that this evangelisation took place under the "sign of subjugation, and gave rise to a colonial Christianity which reproduced the religious models of the metropolis. It occurred at the intersection of two forces: the expansion of Iberian commercial interests and the reinforcement of the Christian image of the world as *orbis Christianus*. In the dominant ideology of the time, the *orbis Christianus* represented the order willed by God on earth. Popes, kings and princes had to spread this order by every means at their command. Pope Alexander VI's bull, *Inter Caetera* (1493), is a fine example of this outlook - the understanding in which Latin American evangelisation was steeped: 'Let the

⁸²⁴ Die Evangelisierung in der Gegenwart und in der Zukunft Lateinamerikas, nos. 1134, 1154, 1160.

Catholic faith and the Christian religion, especially in our times, be exalted, and everywhere spread and propagated. Let the salvation of souls be procured. Let the barbarian nations submit and let them be reduced to the faith'.⁸²⁵

This evangelisation was not able to avert the genocide that attended the wars, the abuse, and the slave labour under the sign of colonialism. L. Boff reports that the native population was reduced by a ratio of 20 to 1 between 1500 and 1600. In 1519, when Hernán Cortés reached the plateau of Anahuac in Mexico, some 25,200,000 persons were living there; by 1595 only 1,375,000 remained.⁸²⁶ It is against this inhuman treatment that he recommended that “the new evangelisation must [...] make the connection God-poor-liberation altogether clear, in opposition to the connection: God-powerful-domination that predominated for centuries.”⁸²⁷ In 1980, an association of priests picked up courage and addressed a letter to the Pope when he visited the continent. This letter did not fail to recall the atrocities meted out to Latin Americans under the sign of the cross:

Holy Father, we, priests of different churches in Latin America, address you on the occasion of your journey to this continent, [...] Everyone knows the history of Latin America. But not everyone has had the same experiences. Some have been the conquerors and others the conquered. [...] The first colonists found the original inhabitants of this land ‘primitive’ and ‘uncared for’. That was sufficient justification for one of the most blatant cases of genocide in human history. The indigenous population was decimated and oppressed in the name of Jesus Christ. His cross, the symbol of redemption, took the form of the sword of the conqueror, which was blessed by all but the good pastors of their church. This dishonouring of the gospel and the involvement of the church with the colonists and their system has been a source of serious ambiguities in the faith which still persist even now.⁸²⁸

The conference of Puebla took the bull by the horns in its call for new evangelisation in replacement of the old. This call can be viewed as a radical departure from their past experience on the continent. The bishops believe that the Church has something to offer in redirecting the fate of the people. Since the mission of the Church is to bring the Good News to the people, the Church in

⁸²⁵ Boff L., *New Evangelization*, 64

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁸²⁸ See the complete text of this letter in Schillebeeckx E., *Ministry: A Case for Change*, 131.

Latin America will effectively realise this mandate when it approaches the people in their history and changing situations.⁸²⁹

In a nutshell, the new evangelisation is an attempt at making the Gospel message address the needs of present-day human beings in a dynamic, attractive, and persuasive way. It has to stir up enthusiasm or the people who languish in foul, scandalous, inadequate living conditions.⁸³⁰ The emphasis is on the liberating dimension of the Good News in practice. It has to address the real situation of the people and seek ways of giving succour and liberating them from their fate. The Bishops underscored cultural revival and inculturation of the Christian faith as essential moments of the new evangelisation. The Good News must be inculturated in a ‘dynamic’ way for the new evangelisation to be able to achieve its aims and objectives. It must not be the mere repetition of what has already been said and taught by the missionaries but something vital, flexible, and able to portray the humanising force of the Christian proposition in practical terms. Evangelisation must be done in an “attractive way”.⁸³¹

The bishops did not use the already-known *terminus technicus* “theology of liberation”, realising that the term had gone through many forms of interpretation in recent years. Rather, they spoke of the comprehensive liberation of man in his earthly and transcendental dimension.

Taking the three-steps method of *see-judge-act*, Latin America developed the Christology of liberation which sees Jesus as liberator.⁸³² This Christology sees his words and deeds, his death and resurrection and his whole person, in the context of mankind’s concern about existence. It underscores that the kingdom of God is God’s plan for people’s existence and the project of their liberation.⁸³³ Christ is the model for this theology of liberation with his concern and commitment to the poor. He identified with the poor and broken-hearted. According to P. Langhorst,

Geht man von seinem Leben und seinem biblischen Lehrsatz ‘Das Reich Gottes ist mitten unter euch’ (LK 17,21) aus, dann gehört zum Prozeß der Inkarnation Jesu und seiner geistigen Botschaft auch die befreiende Dimension von Politik, Gesellschaft und Geschichte. Aus der Sicht der Armen interpretiert das Dokument unter dem Stichwort ‘befreiende Evangelisierung’ die ungerechte Situation in Lateinameri-

⁸²⁹ The Puebla Final Document, 3.

⁸³⁰ Boff L., *New Evangelisation*, xiv

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸³² Cf. Boff L., *Jesus Christ Liberator: a Critical Christology for Our Time*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1978, 29; Boff L., *New Evangelisation*, 201.

⁸³³ Cf. Klinger E., *Armut: Eine Herausforderung Gottes*, 189.

ka. So wird Unterentwicklung nicht als der Anfang einer zu beschleunigenden kapitalistischen Entwicklung gesehen, sondern dependenztheoretisch 'als ein von der Überproduktion' der Reichen sowie den Interessen des transnationalen Kapitals und seiner Brückenköpfe in der 'Dritten Welt' abhängiger Zustand begriffen.⁸³⁴

7.7.3.4 Evaluation

Both theology and Church have experienced a radical change since Vatican Council II and its commitment to the problems of contemporary society. Young churches in developing countries are becoming more conscious of their duty and responsibility towards their well-being. The changes and developments in Latin America since Medellín are a good example of the new consciousness that has made inroad into the lives of the people. The uprising of the people against social and economic discrimination has produced the basis of a theology that makes the realisation of social justice through holistic liberation possible. The societal suppression in Latin America caused by military and feudalistic systems was the factor that motivated Latin American theologians to articulate the Good News, above all in sociological and political nomenclature.

A stock-taking of the achievements in Latin America shows us how a people afflicted by untold colonial, socio-economic and political problems developed into an active populace ready to confront their problem. This is a model for the universal Church, especially with its example on how young Churches and the developed Church should face the problems of poverty. It did this by emphasising the two poles that complement each other: option for the poor and basic Christian communities, the first of its kind in the history of the Church.⁸³⁵ The developments in Latin America are sources of challenge to the universal Church. The developments demonstrate how an old, clerical, sacramental and capitalistic Church in the continent can turn into a Church of evangelisation within a short time. It demonstrates how a Church with abstract and universal theology can transform itself to a contextual Church – a life-transforming liberation theology.⁸³⁶

The option for the poor, initiated in Medellín and embellished by Puebla, challenges every unjust socio-political and economic structure. The bishops took concrete steps and initiated actions towards ensuring justice and peace by encouraging the formation of basic Christian communities. They encouraged the formation of basic communities for the concrete and practical application of

⁸³⁴ Cf. Langhorst P., *Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik*, 201.

⁸³⁵ Cf. Bühlmann W., *Von der Kirche träumen*, 29.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

this option. They are the core of liberation and development. They unfold a new way of being Church, especially in the people's articulation of their religious and political engagements.

The theology of liberation calls for a shift from the earlier ways of theologising, based on self-legitimation. It involves not only reflection on faith, but practice. In the pastoral and hermeneutic context, this theology spends time and effort on the examination and analysis of the cultural situation in which the Christian community finds itself.⁸³⁷ It does not limit itself to the liberation of the individual, but includes the complete liberation of the entire human race in its earthly and transcendental dimensions. This theology of liberation analyses the social and structural conditions that have led to the situations of injustice and poverty. According to Ludwig Kaufmann:

Die Herausforderung des lateinamerikanischen Kontinents ernst nehmen heißt: Von jetzt ab sind die Armen bzw. die je Ärmeren und Ärmsten der Bezugspunkt, der entscheidende Blickwinkel, unter dem die Geschichte zu beurteilen ist, die Situationen zu analysieren und die notwendigen Änderungen einzuleiten sind: nicht nur in der Gesellschaft, sondern auch innerhalb der Kirche, wie sie sich selbst zur Darstellung bringt, wie sie sich mit den Mächtigen benimmt und welche Optionen sie trifft, sowohl hinsichtlich ihrer bevorzugten Partner und Bundesgenossen, wem sie da Vertrauen schenkt.⁸³⁸

This theological approach has assumed the task of liberating humanity and the world from the root of sin, from egoism, from collective sin and its effects and objectification in the inhuman structures of injustice, be they in the international market or in any kind of dictatorship.⁸³⁹ It enables various nations and continents to articulate means of making the Church's ministry relevant to the really life challenges of the people. Many essays have been written and conferences held on the theology of liberation and its implications for every continent.

⁸³⁷ Shineller P., *A Handbook on Inculturation*, 104.

⁸³⁸ Kaufmann L., *Gott im Herzen der Geschichte*. M.-D. Chenu (1895-1990), eine notwendige Erinnerung an französische Impulse, in: Chenu, Marie-Dominique: *Kirchliche Soziallehre im Wandel*; Fribourg/Luzern 1991, 101-121, 188.

⁸³⁹ Cf. Bühlmann W., *Welt Kirche. Neue Dimensionen – Modell für das Jahr 2001*. Graz. Wien Köln, 1984, 117.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8 The Relationship between Dialogue and Evangelisation

Dialogue is a key word in the Church's evangelising mission in that it indicates what the nature of mission in itself is: a communicative process, that is, a communication-process of the self-communicating God in Jesus Christ testified through an inter-personal encounter.⁸⁴⁰

The Second Vatican Council established the reciprocal relationship between dialogue and evangelisation and stressed that Christians should establish rela-

⁸⁴⁰ Cf. Spindel S., Dialog und Mission, in: LThK Bd.3 (1993) 195.

tionships of respect and love, in order to bear witness fruitfully. They should acknowledge themselves as members of the groups in which they live and through the various undertakings share in their social and cultural life.⁸⁴¹ On the other hand, *Nostra aetate*, which is dedicated to dialogue, speaks of the necessity and urgency of evangelisation and mission. “Yet she proclaims and is in duty bound to proclaim without fail Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 1:6). In him in whom God reconciled all things to himself (2 Cor. 5:18-19) men find the fullness of their religious life.”⁸⁴²

Our analysis of the concept and aims of evangelisation shows the close relationship between evangelisation and dialogue. The Church’s attitude in evangelisation is dialogical. The dialogical-encounter between the Church and non-Christian religions benefits both parties. The Church comes in contact with people of other religions and cultures with the intention of getting to know more about them and communicating to them the truth which she believes, as well as enriching itself with the truths about these religions and cultures. From this conciliar point of view, M. Dhavamony made the following observations on the basic relationship between evangelisation and dialogue: “The significance of the mission of the Church in its relation to non-Christian religions, and of their values and limits present in them, is thus outlined by the Council. In explicit reference to whatever good is found sown in the minds and hearts of people or in the rites and customs of people, words such as *conservare*, *liberare*, *sanere*, and *elevare et consummare* are used.”⁸⁴³ Referring to the spiritual and moral values of religions, the Council uses the words *agnoscere*, *savere*, and *promovere*, without prejudicing in any way the preaching and witnessing of Christ (NA 2).⁸⁴⁴ In order for the Church to accomplish the complex duty of purification, assumption, and elevation, evangelisation ought to be integrated with dialogue. Dialogue and evangelisation thus summarize the attitude of the Church towards other religions in the perspective of the plan of God.⁸⁴⁵

It is only in a situation of a mutual and sincere dialogical and intersubjective-communicative approach that evangelisation can be effective. The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church attests: “In order to bear witness to Christ fruitfully, they should acknowledge themselves as members of the group

⁸⁴¹ Cf. AG 2.

⁸⁴² NA 2.

⁸⁴³ Cf. GS 17; AG 9.

⁸⁴⁴ Dhavamony M., *Evangelization and Dialogue in Vatican II and in the 1974 Synod*, in: R. Latourelle (ed.) *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-five Years After (1962-1987)*, Vol. III, New York: Paulist Press, 1989, 264-281, 274.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

in which they live, and through the various undertakings and affairs of human life they should be familiar with their national and religious traditions and uncover with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them.”⁸⁴⁶

This statement not only mandates missionaries to respect and recognise the dignity of the people they are to evangelise, but also reminds them of the need for mutual relationship, identifying with them so that the encounter with the people will lead them not only to the knowledge of the Christian faith but to mutual enrichment and peaceful cohabitation. Consequently, “dialogue is itself by its inner dynamism on the part of the Christian, dialogue calls for evangelisation, for no Christian can be insensible to the call of Christ that he witnesses through dialogue in the non-Christian partner. Although it is true that dialogue does not serve as bait or means for evangelical activity, it creates certain truths and new lights in the understanding of religious truth in the partners, and this may well require the Christian to preach the gospel.”⁸⁴⁷

The establishment of the inseparable relationship between dialogue and evangelisation has given rise to theological and pastoral confusion in recent times. Some Christians thought that, by emphasising dialogue, the Church had renounced evangelisation as a positive work of preaching the gospel to non-Christians and of converting them to the Catholic faith, and had substituted it by dialogue. The non-Christians thought that dialogue was a new and more subtle form of evangelisation.⁸⁴⁸

Although relating dialogue with evangelisation seems contradictory, as the above suspicion indicates, the fact that both terms can be put in the service of each other cannot be denied. Dialogue and evangelisation are “authentic elements of the Church’s evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable: true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognised and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue. The two activities remain distinct but, as experience shows, one and the same local Church, one and the same person, can be diversely engaged in both”.⁸⁴⁹

It is the mission of the Church to evangelise. As she evangelises, she comes into contact with people with different views and religions, and becomes her-

⁸⁴⁶ AG 11

⁸⁴⁷ Dhavamony M., *Evangelisation and Dialogue*, 276.

⁸⁴⁸ Dhavamony M., *Evangelisation and Dialogue in Vatican II and in the 1974 Synod*, 273.

⁸⁴⁹ *Dialog und Verkündigung* (Hrsg.) Päpstlicher Rat für den Interreligiösen Dialog, Kongregation für die Evangelisierung der Völker. 1991 77.

self enriched through this contact. The Church can only successfully minister to people by first of all entering into dialogue with them. Hence, the difficulty in separating dialogue from evangelisation. Both concepts, according to H. Fries, “constitute an inseparable whole’ because evangelisation could not be what it is and what it wants to be, without correspondence, and this correspondence cannot be furnished without dialogue, without the possibility and ability of man to bear witness”.⁸⁵⁰ He substantiated this conviction by arguing that “the Gospel as the good news about the dealing of God [...] could not be news and ‘message for’; for man. Man himself could not receive this good news as such, unless he were able to receive it; and he could not receive it unless he could understand it. Thus the matter of the dialogue is already introduced. The good news of the gospel has to be preached and brought to the context of what man knows experiences, thinks, wishes, speaks of and questions. Without orientation of the Logos of man which is a Dialogos a speaking Gospel would not succeed, it would not touch and move man, would be alien, out of place, without relation. In short, it would not be Gospel at all. What should a message even the best, and news of the best, do if it could not be received, accepted and heard? And precisely this happens in the form of the word which, as human word, is of dialogue, and as such can and ought to be a response.”⁸⁵¹

It is to advance this relationship that the Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue (now the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue) was created in 1964. The secretariat came out with its first document on “The Attitude of the Church Towards Other Religions” in 1984, in which the relationship between dialogue and mission were spelt out. Admitting that mission is a single but complex activity, the document underscored the principle elements of this mission as “presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and contemplation; interreligious dialogue; and finally, proclamation and catechesis.”⁸⁵² The secretariat stressed further that proclamation and dialogue are component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelising mission of the Church because both are oriented towards the communication of salvific truth.⁸⁵³ The same argument was later taken up by John Paul II when he noted in *Redemptoris missio* that “Inter-religious dialogue is a part of the Church’s evangelising mission. Understood

⁸⁵⁰ Fries H., *Evangelisation and Dialogue*, in: M. Dhavamony (ed.) *Evangelisation, Dialogue and Development*. Roma: Universita Gregoriana Editrice 1978, 249-262, 250ff.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵² Cf. *The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Proclamation*, AAS 75 [1984], pp. 816-828; (This document will be referred to henceforth as DP).

⁸⁵³ DM 2.

as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*; indeed, it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions.”⁸⁵⁴

The Church’s attitude towards cultures and religions is that of comprehension and discernment, of sincere and patient dialogue with the primary intention of discovering in them “providential elements and the ways of God toward humanity”.⁸⁵⁵ Evangelisation involves dialogue and dialogue is itself a form of Christian witnessing. It is the authentic expression of fraternal relation to people and an encounter in which the authority of the Church is not considered as the basic or only condition, but in which the divine truth is attested in the human relations.⁸⁵⁶ As a form of evangelisation, dialogue enriches the Church from various points of view. It enhances the Church’s knowledge of herself and her mission to all mankind, no matter their colour, race, culture or religious points of view. It provides the evangeliser with a fruitful means of approaching his or her interlocutor, thereby deriving some knowledge about his or her religion. The Council sets Christ as the model for dialogue in evangelisation and mission: just as Christ penetrated to the hearts of men and by a truly human dialogue led them to the divine light, so too his disciples, profoundly pervaded by the Spirit of Christ, should know and converse with those among whom they live in order that through sincere and patient dialogue, these men might learn of the riches which a generous God has distributed among the nations.”⁸⁵⁷ Consequently, all Christians are called to be personally involved in these two ways of carrying out the one mission of the Church, namely proclamation and dialogue. The manner in which they do this will depend on their circumstances and also on their degree of preparation. They must, nevertheless, always bear in mind that dialogue, as has already been said, does not constitute the whole mission of the Church, that it cannot simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation in so far as the dynamic process of the Church’s evangelizing mission reaches in it its climax and its fullness. [...] Christians in dialogue have the duty of responding to their partners’ expectations regarding the contents of the Christian faith, of bearing witness to this faith when this is called for, of giving an account of the hope that is within them” (*I Pt.* 3:15).⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁴ RM 55.

⁸⁵⁵ Dhavamony M., *Evangelisation and Dialogue*, 273.

⁸⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁷ AG 11.

⁸⁵⁸ *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 82.

PART THREE: AGIR (*ACT*)

This part will bring our three-stepped study of the culture of dialogue in evangelisation with special reference to Igboland in Nigeria to an end. Having seen the situation of the Church and judged the situation from both philosophical and theological/ecclesiastical insights, we shall now seek for models in our quest towards establishing a better relation between dialogue and evangelisation by examining their contributions in the pastoral and theological growth in the German and French Churches.

8.1 Two Initiatives for Dialogue in Europe

We have observed that the achievement of self knowledge, self-renewal and the achievement of dialogical Church were *inter alia* the major aims that the Sec-

ond Vatican Council set for itself.⁸⁵⁹ It was also to realise these objectives that the Pontifical Councils for the promotion of dialogue with other Christian Churches, non-Christian religions and dialogue with non-believers were created. A critical perusal of the Documents, Constitutions and Decrees of Vatican Council II reveals that provision was made for dialogue as such within the Church. But a Church that does not recognise the importance of dialogue within its circle cannot effectively recognise or apply it in its relationship with other external bodies. Attentions have been drawn to this deficiency by many a contemporary theologian and Church leader, as well as many an ecclesiastical organisation and laity.

The lack of discussion on internal dialogue in the Church lies is due to the Council's restricted understanding and application of the term "dialogue". Therefore, it neither encouraged internal dialogue nor created any organ(s) or Secretariat for the promotion of this course. P. Neuner's insight into the omission or avoidance of internal-Church dialogue in official ecclesiastical document of the post-conciliar times is remarkable.⁸⁶⁰

The dialogue-document of the *Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken (ZdK)* on "Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung"⁸⁶¹ has made a break through and is an explicit landmark in the discussions on dialogue within the Church. The document's sub-title "*Wie in der Kirche miteinander umgehen*" gives clear insight into the subject matter of the document.

The ZdK paper distinguishes two central forms of dialogue and thereby presents a helpful explanation of the concept. It distinguishes between dialogue as

⁸⁵⁹ Cf. Neuner P., *Das Dialogmotiv in der Kirche*, 56.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 67 "Im CIC wird [Dialog] lediglich einmal genannt, wobei er bezeichnenderweise die Pflicht der Missionare besagt, mit den nicht an Christus Glaubenden einen 'ehrlichen Dialog' zu führen ((CIC 787 § 1), im Weltkatechismus erscheint er jedenfalls im Register nicht. Wie im Konzil auch in der nachkonziliaren kirchenamtlichen Lehre ein innerkirchlicher Dialog kaum im Blick. Dies ist um so bemerkenswerter. Als derzeit gerade ein innerkirchlicher Dialog nachdrücklich eingefordert wird, Dialogforderung und Dialogbereitschaft also aneinander vorbeizugehen droht".

⁸⁶¹ This paper addresses issues concerning dialogue in the Church. This document, which was the brain-child of the *Kommission 8 "Pastorale Grundfragen"* of the ZdK was produced in 1994, aims at addressing issues concerning the form of the Church and dialogue. The paper underscores the importance of dialogue for the self-understanding of the Church and its roots in the Christian faith in the Triune God as described by Paul VI in "*Ecclesiam suam*". This document, which was the brain-child of the *Kommission 8 "Pastorale Grundfragen"* of the ZdK was produced in 1994, aims at addressing issues concerning the form of the Church and dialogue. The paper underscores the importance of dialogue for the self-understanding of the Church and its roots in the Christian faith in the Triune God as described by Paul VI in "*Ecclesiam suam*".

interpersonal communication (that is, dialogue between two people who dispose themselves and declare their readiness to recognise the freedom and confidence of each other in the communication) and *structural dialogue* which is an encounter with two worlds which, for structural reasons, have become foreign to each other. It is here a matter of taking defined things seriously.⁸⁶²

Annette Schavan, a co-author of the paper and leader of the 8th Commission of the *ZdK*, summarises what the discussion on dialogue is all about and the reason for the discussion.

Mit Dialog ist eine Grundhaltung gemeint; eine Grundhaltung der Neugierde und des Verstehenswollens. Anstelle eines Lamentos über unzureichende Zustände in Kirche und Gesellschaft tritt die Selbstverpflichtung, gewissenhaft zu analysieren, Ideen und Interessen zusammenzutragen und abzuwägen und die visionäre Kraft der christlichen Botschaft in dieser Welt wirken zu lassen. Dialog ist in dieser Situation der Kirche keine Antwort auf alle Fragen und nicht schon Lösung aller Probleme. Aber: Das dialogische Prinzip ist das Ferment einer sich wandelnden Kirche ... Die Kirche hat sich selbst und der ganzen Welt eine neue Idee, ein neues Verfahren und eine neue Hoffnung gegeben.⁸⁶³

She articulates further the implications of de-emphasising dialogue *ad intra* and *ad extra*, and stresses that a Church that is not ready to dialogue and able to enter into dialogue within itself cannot be dialogical in its relation to the world. If she is not able to dialogue, proclamation of the salvific message of Christ by Catholic women and men in the world will not be successful.⁸⁶⁴

One of the objectives of the dialogue paper was to create awareness of the importance of dialogue and to draw attention to the factors that hinder healthy interpersonal relationships within the Church. These factors include the tension that exists between the situations of the faithful within the Church, on the one hand, and their democratic responsibilities in the society, on the other hand. In society, they are aware of their rights to freedom of speech, self-determination and autonomy, but they don't enjoy these rights in the Church. Hence the difficulty in leading double lives, that is a democratic life-style in the state and a life of total submission to the dictates of authority in the Church that is hierarchically and clerically structured. Noting very well that the Church is not yet

⁸⁶² Cf. Dialog statt Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung, in: A. Schavan (Hg.) Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche. Kevelaer 1994, 40.

⁸⁶³ Schavan A., Selbstvollzug der Kirche. Zur Einführung, in: Schavan Annette (Hrsg.) Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche. Kevelaer 1994, 13-23, 15.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid., 16.

fully cognisant of the self-consciousness of the people of the present day,⁸⁶⁵ the ZdK paper advanced measures that will create room for dialogue and respect of the human rights to freedom of speech etc. The dialogue paper stresses the importance of dialogue in the Church. It underscores the mutual nature of this process. It demands readiness to learn more from one's partner(s), i.e. changing the premises of one's actions, because dialogue cannot be successful if only one side alone is prepared to learn.⁸⁶⁶ Consequently, one can only dialogue with the intention of learning (not only of teaching) and with the ability to revise, renounce and change one's opinion as the case may be.⁸⁶⁷

Bishop (now Cardinal) K. Lehmann gave significant impetus to the search for dialogue in the Church in a lecture entitled "Vom Dialog als Form der Kommunikation und Wahrheitsfindung in der Kirche heute", delivered to the Plenary section of the Episcopal Conference of German Bishops on September 19, 1994. In this paper, he not only outlined the importance of dialogue for the Church's encounter with the modern world, but also emphasised dialogue as the principle of the discovery of truth to which there is presently no alternative. He specified the conditions for successful dialogue and its consequences in the relationship between theology and the teaching office of the Church, as well as the relationship with communal life in the Church.⁸⁶⁸

8.2. The French Church and her New Pastoral Realities

The year 1994 was remarkable in the annals of the Catholic Church in France especially with reference to the new pastoral developments in the country. This year witnessed the publication of a letter to the French faithful by the Bishops' Conference under the title «*Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle*» under the auspices of Bishop Claude Dagens of the diocese of Augoulême. Following this request, Bishop C. Dagens prepared a text which throws light on the range of communication between French Catholics on the Christian faith, the strength of this faith and its relevance in society.⁸⁶⁹ With this letter, the French

⁸⁶⁵ Lücking-Michel C., Für eine dialogische Kirche. Genese, Anliegen und Wirkung öffentlicher Erklärung im Interesse des Dialogs in der Kirche, in: G Fürst (Hrsg.): Dialog als Selbstvollzug der Kirche. Freiburg, Basel, Wien. 1997.309-328, 318.

⁸⁶⁶ Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Wie in der Kirche miteinander umgehen. Diskussionsbeitrag der Kommission 8 "pastoral Grundfrage" des Zentralkomitees der deutschen Katholiken, in: Schavan Annette (Hrsg.) Dialog statt Dialogverweigerung. Impulse für eine zukunftsfähige Kirche. Kevelaer 1994, 25-76, 41.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁸ Lücking-Michel C., Für eine dialogische Kirche, 69.

⁸⁶⁹ Cf. Scheuchenplug P., Den Glauben vorschlagen in der heutigen Gesellschaft" Impulse des Dialogprozesses in Frankreich für die Evangelisierung in Deutschland, in: Lebendiges Zeugnis, 220-229, 221

Church made a major shift in its pastoral approach from a pastoral of receiving (“*pastorale de l’accueil*”) to a pastoral of proposing (“*pastorale de la proposition*”).⁸⁷⁰

Basing their point of departure on Paul VI’s exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, the bishops used the opportunity to seek ways that would enable a missionary outburst and new evangelisation in the country under present-day to take place.⁸⁷¹

The objective of the letter was not only to develop new strategies for communicating the faith but also to demonstrate the commitment of the French Catholics to faith in the God of Jesus Christ as lived and deepened in the ecclesial community.⁸⁷² Although the Church is presently in the minority, the bishops wish to encourage the people in the faith because it is a strong faith which leads them to a successful life.⁸⁷³

Proposer la foi dans le société was divided into three parts (following the pastoral method of see-judge-act) under the topics: ‘Understanding our faith as Catholics in the present society’ and the ‘Forming a Church that proposes the faith’.⁸⁷⁴ With these themes, the bishops had the intention to address a letter to French Catholics, and the how they were to go about it. They committed themselves to the following options: the examination and assessment of the relatively new conditions that confront the faith and the Church in France; understanding how the Christian faith can be presented (*proposer*) in the 21st century and the establishment of a Church in freedom and solidarity that is ready to evangelise as it offers the faith in its truthfulness and lives it in reality.⁸⁷⁵

8.2.1 Notre situation de chrétiens dans la société actuelle

Die Krise, durch die die Kirche heute geht, ist weitgehend zurückzuführen auf ein ganzes Bündel schneller und tiefgreifender sozialer wie kultureller Veränderungen von weiten Dimen-

⁸⁷⁰ Cf. Riße G. Evangelisierung im Missionsland Europa, 163.

⁸⁷¹ Cf. Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (Hrsg.) Den Glauben anbieten in der heutigen Gesellschaft. Brief an die Katholiken Frankreichs, in: Stimme der Weltkirche, 37, Juni 2000, 7

⁸⁷² Ibid., 7 and 10.

⁸⁷³ Ridez L., Missionsland Frankreich. Neue Zeiten für des Evangelium, in: Lebendiges Zeugnis, 217-219, 217.

⁸⁷⁴ Scheuchpenplug P., „Den Glauben anbieten in der heutigen Gesellschaft“. Impulse des Dialogprozesses in Frankreich für die Evangelisierung in Deutschland, 223.

⁸⁷⁵ Den Glauben anbieten, 10.

sionen, die sich in der Kirche selbst wie im Leben ihrer Glieder auswirken.⁸⁷⁶

The above statement gives us an insight into the influence which the social and cultural developments in France have had on the Church. For them to arrive at a reliable solution and articulate means of meeting the challenges posed by the new situation, the bishops conducted an up-to-date analysis of the crisis in society and decried the increasing rate of social break-up in the country in the form of estranged social classes, hostility towards foreigners as a result of the increasing rate of immigration into industrial areas, and the negative effects of these things on the Church. They presented the following findings:

In der heutigen französischen Gesellschaft bereitet uns ein Phänomen besondere Anlass zur Sorge: die wachsende soziale Brüche. Wir wissen wohl, dass weltweit die Kluft zwischen armen und reichen Ländern sich unaufhörlich vertieft und dass die Globalisierung finanzieller und wirtschaftlicher Abläufe diese Kluft womöglich noch weiter vertieft.

Aber in Frankreich selbst erleben wir seit etlichen Jahren wachsende Arbeitslosigkeit und immer mehr ungesicherte Arbeitsplätze. Soziale Schichten haben sich gebildet, denen ihre Notlage zum Schicksal geworden zu sein schein. In diesem Zusammenhang darf man die schwierige Situation der Immigranten nicht vergessen, die auf unserem Staatsgebiet leben, wobei die Verschärfung der Krise und des Gefühls der Unsicherheit zur Entstehung kaum verhüllter Fremdenfeindlichkeit beitragen.⁸⁷⁷

It was noted that the problems and crises in society have negative effects on the Church, even in situations where there is a well-defined separation between both systems in France. In his analysis of the effects of the societal breakdown on the Church, Bishop C. Dagens made the following eye-opening remarks:

J'ai compris ainsi que, comme chrétiens nous ne pouvons pas séparer le question: 'Que devient notre Eglise' de la question 'Que devient notre société?'. Tous, chacun a sa manière, nous devons faire face a des défis communs. Nous devons nous situer dans cette période charnière, ou l'on perçoit ce qui disparaît, mais ou l'on a du mal a identifier ce qui émerge. Cette prise de conscience commande aux chrétiens un attitude réaliste: c'est de l'intérieur de notre société

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid., 18.

que nous avons à relever le défi de la foi. Parce que la foi chrétienne est touchée elle-même par les ruptures et les incertitudes qui ébranlent la société. Mais c'est une belle et bonne occasion de vérifier l'appel de l'évangile à devenir levain dans la pâte et lumière pour le monde. Je n'hésite plus à dire, parce que je l'ai constaté, que l'Évangile du Christ est attendu aujourd'hui dans des conditions nouvelles : comme une force pour vivre, pour aimer la vie et pour y tenir ses responsabilités.⁸⁷⁸

The point is that the crisis in the French Church is not unconnected with the development of things in society. *Henri-Jerôme Gagey* admits that the French Church is passing through a crisis situation which has the potentiality of exposing her to the demands of the faith.⁸⁷⁹

Gottesdienstbesuch und Sakramentesempfang so wie Katechese und religiöse Berufungen gehen zurück, religiöse Überzeugungen haben keine prägende Kraft mehr. Das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl zur Kirche bröckelt mehr und mehr ab. Alles spricht von einer institutionellen Schwächung der Kirche. Auch das christliche Gedächtnis geht verloren, und man kann auch nicht mehr wie selbstverständlich auf eine mit der Glaubenerfahrung verknüpfte Lebensweisheit zurückgreifen. Der christliche Glaube ist nicht mehr Teil der gesellschaftlichen Landschaft, wie er das zur Zeit der teilweise noch lebenden älteren Generation war.⁸⁸⁰

8.2.2 Aller au cœur du mystère de la foi

Confronted with the difficulties outlined above both, in society and in the Church, the bishops' addressed a letter to the faithful calling them to action in facing up to the situation. They urged Christians not to approach this situation with nonchalant attitudes or resignation. The situation should challenge them to be more involved in the mystery of faith and become more decisive followers of the mystery of Christ. This appeal was an appeal for the people to be courageous in the face of societal confusion, as well as an appeal for solidarity towards all peoples without any kind of discrimination and the recognition of the inalienable rights and dignity of humankind.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁸ Dagens C., Un tournant dans le cheminement post-conciliaire de l'Église de France? in: H. Müller et. al., *Sprechende Hoffnung – Werdende Kirche*. Ostfildern 2001, 99-104, 101.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. Ritter H., Den Glauben anbieten. Ein französischer Weg – in der deutschen Diskussion, in: *Christ in der Gegenwart*. (No 41/01), 346

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. Müller H., *Im Übergang zu einer noch nicht gewussten Kirche*, 4.

⁸⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

This appeal opens the way for dialogue in the course of finding solutions to the problems facing French society and Church. This is necessary because faith can be proposed to others more effectively if Christians understand social ills and draw close to people who suffer under such situations as themselves, thereby testifying that faith in Jesus Christ is not a vague reference point for us, but the main reason for our deeds and the source of our hope, even in situations which leave us with little hope.⁸⁸²

Judging from the fact that the Gospel and person of Jesus Christ are the sources, strength and base of the Church's being and activities, the bishops recommended that the people should go back to the roots of their faith and embark on evangelisation. They argued that they would try more to present the word to the faithful so that they can freely say how their lives have been shaped through their acceptance of the God of Jesus Christ and their practice of the faith and how the Church can retain confidence even in difficult periods of time. They should know why they still wish to share their experiences with others and how they can collectively stir up the quest for God and love for the Church.⁸⁸³

The readiness of the Church to propose the faith and identify with people and their experience indicates her readiness to enter into dialogue and readiness to seek better understanding with other Christians. She no longer approaches them with the consciousness that she is perfect and self-sufficient. Instead she listens more and seeks for the confirmation of her nature amidst all conflicts with other Christian communions.⁸⁸⁴ With regard to the separation in France between the State and the Church (*Laizität*) - the result of historical developments in the country - the bishops enjoin the people not to approach it negatively as an aggressive and anti-Catholic phenomenon, but more positively as a welcome challenge, spurring the people to stand up to the demands of their civil and religious commitments. In spite of the division, Catholics remain citizens of 'both cities': citizens of the Church and citizens of French society, thus availing themselves of the opportunity to be able to distinguish between what belongs to God and what belongs to the state.⁸⁸⁵

8.2.3 **Forme une Église qui propose la foi**

In the third letter, on building a Church that proposes (propose) the faith, the French bishops suggest some concrete pastoral steps for the Church. This

⁸⁸² Ibid.

⁸⁸³ Ibid. 5.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁸⁵ Cf. Den Glauben anbieten, 21.

recommendation was submitted in recognition of the fact that they were confronted with a time in their history when the Church was in the minority, hence the importance for Christians to know that faith is the factor which leads to a successful life.⁸⁸⁶ It is in this connection that the bishops outlined three pastoral areas that demand attention. These consist in improving the course of evangelisation; forming the Church in our society as the sacrament of Christ; the practising of the pastoral guidelines in the context of the three fundamental features of the Church: proclamation of the Good News (*Martyria*) rendering service to humanity (*Diakonia*) and the celebration of the liturgy and sacraments (*Leiturgia*).⁸⁸⁷ Although these elements work together in the Church's mission, people have the habit of preferring one to the other. It is clear that inasmuch as the Church is a custodian of the Good News, which she proclaims by virtue of her divine mandate (cf. Mt. 20:28), she is also called to service, attain their highest point in the celebration of the liturgy through which the community listens to the Word and prays for the world.⁸⁸⁸

Leiturgia, that is, the liturgical and sacramental dimensions of the life of the Church, takes pride of place because it is the means of communicating the wonders of God's mystery and of celebrating the sacraments. This emphasis does not imply a de-emphasis on *Martyria* or *Diakonia*; neither does it mean bringing "cult" and "engagement in society" into conflict. Rather, it stresses the special aspect of the liturgical celebrations as the centre from which all activities of the Church flows, be it proclamation or social engagement, and the point to which they are drawn. To overlook the liturgical and sacramental celebrations has the consequence of reducing the activities of Christians in society, and the proclamation of the Gospel, to mere activism and propaganda respectively.⁸⁸⁹

The bishops called for the reinforcement of the Church's pastoral activities as a way of getting to the people. They advocated the enhancement of a sacramental pastoral with focus on the proclamation of the Good News, intensive reception of the Word, and care of people who entertain desire for the sacraments in a real spirit of dialogue, so that they can realise the hopes of their faith.⁸⁹⁰ Other quarters in which the Church has remarkable experience include the pastoral of confirmation, anointing of the sick, reconciliation and matrimony.

⁸⁸⁶ Ridez L., *Missionsland Frankreich*, 217.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁸ Cf. *Den Glauben anbieten*, 71.

⁸⁸⁹ Cf. Ridez L., *Missionsland Frankreich*, 217.

⁸⁹⁰ Cf. *Den Glauben vorschlagen*, 72.

8.2.4 Evaluation

The *Lettre aux Catholiques de France* is an explicit landmark in the history and development of the French Church in modern times, with its influence extending beyond the frontiers of France. It calls the people to a new commitment to the faith and to evangelisation in their theological, pastoral, historical and sociological perspectives. The letter admitted that all efforts employed in the process of presenting the faith will enable them understand better that the exchange of faith is possible and that the exchange does not exclude differences in perception, forms of expression, experience and commitment.

The necessity for this letter and the issues set out to address in the French Church have become sources of challenge to the European Church which, thanks to the effects of secularism, has assumed the status of a diaspora Church, that is a Church in mission land.⁸⁹¹

The influence of the *Lettre aux Catholiques de France* on the German Church has been noted. The German edition of this letter testifies that:

Ähnlich wie in der Kirche von Frankreich steht auch für Deutschland die große Herausforderung einer neuen Evangelisierung und einer missionarischen Seelsorge an. Wir erleben einen immer stärker werdenden Pluralismus kultureller, weltanschaulicher und religiöser Art. Das bedeutet, dass Christinnen und Christen herausgefordert werden, ihnen eigenen Lebensentwurf aus dem Glauben deutlicher zu vertreten. Viele Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter in unseren Gemeinden stellen sich dieser Herausforderung. Ihnen kann der Brief der französischen Bischöfe im Sinne einer vergleichenden Pastoral eine wertvolle Anregung sein für ihr eigenes Engagement.⁸⁹²

The need for a comparative pastoral between the French Church and the German Church, as suggested by the above statement, found expression in the ecumenical congresses held on 9th April, 2000, in the Katholische Akademie Freiburg and by the *II. Deutsch-Französische Ökumenische Kongress* (16th – 18th November, 2001) in Magdeburg in 2002.⁸⁹³ These congresses were organised under the auspices of the Missiological Institute Aachen in co-operation with the respective dioceses. *Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle* calls for «*présence*» and «*authenticité*». It was a dialogical encounter between Chris-

⁸⁹¹ Cf. Riße G., *Evangelisierung im Missionsland Europa*, 163.

⁸⁹² Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (Hrsg.). *Den Glauben anbieten in der heutigen Gesellschaft. Brief an die Katholiken Frankreichs*. In: *Stimme der Weltkirche*, 37, (11. Juni 2000) 7.

⁸⁹³ Scheuchenpflug P., „Den Glauben vorschlagen in der heutigen Gesellschaft“, 221.

tians and non-believers. However, the point of departure was not the non-believer but the Christian. *Présence* and *authenticité* imply the Christian's coming back to himself and to his faith. The person has to accept the situation around him as a challenge in deepening his or her faith. This recognition will dispose him to encounter his society or dialogue partner without prejudice but with an open mind. An honest encounter with the non-believer enriches both parties. It presupposes mutual respect among the partners and respect for each other's point of departure or belief system.

CHAPTER NINE

9 The African Church and Evangelisation in Modern Times

The history of Christianity in Africa has witnessed several attempts at bringing the Good News to this part of the world. The Church did not make notable inroads into the lives of the people till the post-colonial period, when the Church came into the hands of Africans. Consequently, they assumed the function of being missionaries unto themselves. In spite of the structural and numerical achievements experienced in the African Church since post-colonial times, it cannot be said that the faith has really taken proper root in the lives and cultures of the people. A major break-through was recorded with the convocation of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, and the concerted efforts made to discuss the course of the Church on the continent, her successes and failures, and the issue of evangelisation on the continent for the sake of deepening the faith and preparing the African Church for the next millennium.

9.1 The Synod For Africa

The Synod for Africa, which took place from April 10th to May 8th 1994, marks an outstanding landmark in the annals of the Catholic Church in the en-

tire continent. It was a “historic moment of grace”⁸⁹⁴, a moment that marked “the third time the whole world turned its eyes to Africa.”⁸⁹⁵

The second time all eyes turned to Africa was the era of frontier missionaries in the wake of colonisation. The period witnessed another type of *partition of Africa* with the intent of Christianising and civilising the pagan heathen African. To these early missionaries, Africa was a dark continent, enveloped in superstition, witchcraft, ritual murder and all sorts of godless cultural beliefs and practices. The people were seen as mere “object” in the hands of these early evangelisers. Their personality and culture were totally overlooked in the process of evangelisation, with the result that the people remained passive with the missionaries as they had done with the colonisers, being content with whatever spiritual mould and direction they received from them.⁸⁹⁶ The convocation, organisation and execution of the Synod of Africa was the third time in which Africa received the world’s attention. This time around, Africans did not allow themselves to be handled as slaves, objects or as observers. Their participation was active and they contributed generously in addressing the problems facing the Church in Africa and society at large.

9.1.1 The Announcement of the Synod: The Initial Shock!

The intention to convoke a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was made known to the public by the pope during his Angelus talk on 6th January, 1989. Its purpose was to promote an organic pastoral solidarity within the entire African territory and nearby islands. This announcement, however, did not take place unaware, because the African Bishops, priests, theologians and representatives of the laity had earlier nursed the intention of convening an “African Conference to discuss indigenisation, contextualization, Africanization and later inculturation of the Church in Africa.”⁸⁹⁷ Although they had the choice between a Council and a Synod, they wanted and anticipated an “African Council instead of a Synod”⁸⁹⁸ because of the fear that a council would

⁸⁹⁴ EA 9.

⁸⁹⁵ Okolo B. C., *The African Synod: Hope for the Continent’s Liberation*. Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Pub., 6.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁷ Onwubiko O, A., *Echoes From the African Synod, The Future of the African Church from Present and Past Experiences*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1994, 77.

⁸⁹⁸ Mveng E., *The Historical background of the African Synod*, in: *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*. Africa Faith & Justice Network (ed. & Pub), New York 1996, 20-31, 23.

not allow them “a certain level of freedom and right to discuss their issues/problems without the interruption of the Holy See”.⁸⁹⁹

Several factors gave rise to this shock. In the first place, Africans wanted and expected an African Council in stead of a synod. They knew that a council, as a matter of right, had the right to decide and had more power and weight than a Synod. A Synod, according to Canon 342, can only advise, but of itself

⁸⁹⁹ Nwaigbo F., *Church as a Communion: An African Christian Perspective. Theology of the Local Church in the Light of the Second Vatican Council*. Frankfurt a Main, 1996, 356-357, traces the origin of the idea of the African Synod as a development of an initial intention for an African Council. He goes further to underscore why this plan for a Council was not realised. According to him, the intention for an African Council or African Synod had been for many years in the minds of some bishops and theologians of Africa. In the period of preparation of the Second Vatican Council, the idea of a parallel Council for Africa advocated by some African students at a symposium in Fribourg, in Switzerland, which took place from 13th to 17th April, 1962. The debate over an African Council came openly into discussion in a colloquium organised by the African Cultural Society, under the theme ‘Black Civilization and the Catholic Church’. The colloquium was held in September, 1977, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. In December, 1977, an ‘Ecumenical Union of African Theologians’ was established in order to foster and promote the idea of an African Council. The union organised two consultations (one in 1984 in Yaounde, Cameroon and the other in 1986 in Kinshasa, Zaire) on the question of an African Council, which would also serve as a mobilizer for the People of God in Africa. The theologians of the union offered suggestions for the theme of the Council and the concrete phases of its preparations through Commissions. On 3 May, 1980, when John Paul II visited Zaire, the bishops of Zaire requested from him officially the authority to conduct an African Council. Towards this end, the thirty five Bishops’ Conferences of Africa and neighbouring Madagasca were interviewed by Rome on their intention for an African Council. Fifteen voices supported the idea, eight were against it, and twelve were *nonplacet*. Even those who supported the idea were very cautious. They pointed out that the time had not yet ripened for holding an African Council, instead, it would have been better to substitute the word Council with the word Synod. This opinion was in the mind of many bishops from English-speaking areas of Africa. However, the impetus to hold a Council for all Africa came from a few bishops from East, and West African French-speaking countries, to be precise, from Zaire, and Cameroon in Central Africa. In a consultation of African theologians, which took place in Yaounde, Cameroon, from 11 to 22 April, 1984, the concept of Council was explained and easily applied to the Church in Africa. However on 25 January, 1983, the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church came into force. The theologians saw under Canon 439, § 1 the possibility of holding a Council. According to this Canon, the term Council stands specifically for Bishop’s Conferences of a particular region. They argued that it would be applied to the SECAM-Symposium for Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagasca. Unfortunately, the SECAM is not the Bishop’s Conference of a *particular region* in the sense of the above canon. It is only a symposium of various and many Bishops’ Conferences of various regions. Under these circumstances, this Symposium is not qualified, according to the law of the Church, to hold a Council. From this vantage point, the idea was predominantly that the gathering was to be a Synod, according to canon 342 and 348, which stated that a Bishops’ Synod can be convened as an affair of particular regions – Canon 345.

cannot take any decision, since it is an advisory organ,⁹⁰⁰ while a Council is a “decisive body, and can rule matters not depending necessarily on the Pope.”⁹⁰¹ Consequently, the decision for an African Synod instead of the desired Council made some African theologians from the onset doubt if anything would come out of the assembly since their contributions and proposals would only be accepted if they agreed with the mind and expectations of Rome.

Another factor that raised eyebrows among African bishops and theologians was the Vatican venue of the Synod. Africans had expected an assembly that would have an African character in all its ramifications. Hence, the Synod was expected to take place on African soil, preferably in Uganda because of the ecclesiastical significance of the country.⁹⁰² Hence, there was instant reaction and disgust at the announcement of the Vatican venue. Although the bishops had no other option than to accept the proposal, an „Open Letter to the Pope” signed by Renato Kizito expresses the reaction of some African bishops to the Rome venue. A section of this letter reads: “While you were in Kampala a member of our [...] staff was in the hall where the bishops were waiting for you and heard the rumour of disappointment when - a few minutes before your entrance - they were told that the Synod would be in Rome. Those who planned for this anticipated announcement did not want you to hear the expression of the bishops’ disappointment. Yet minutes after the conclusion of the session, most bishops were able to put on a smile and show enthusiastic support for Rome as the venue. But don’t quote me’. In all of them the smile was hiding a deep wound.”⁹⁰³

⁹⁰⁰ Cf. Langhorst P, Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik, 328.

⁹⁰¹ Nwaigbo F., Church as Communion, 357.

⁹⁰² Onwubiko O. A., Echoes from the African Synod. 82-83. The choice of Uganda by African bishops as the proper place for the Synod was because of the ecclesiastical significance of the country since the Vatican II Council. The historic and courageous death of the martyrs of Uganda, and their canonisation during the Council, gave the country a significant position in the ecclesiastical map. Furthermore, Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, was the first place in modern times to experience the visit of a Roman pontiff in Africa. It was during his visit there that Paul VI challenged Africans in 1969: ‘By now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves’. [...] It was also in Kampala, during that same occasion, that the Pope’s address was directed ‘To the heart of Africa’, that he inaugurated SECAM., the body that tirelessly worked for the convocation of this Synod. It was in Kampala, Uganda, that Pope John Paul II published the *Intrumentum laboris* of this Synod and announced its Vatican venue, which was a source of grief. It was an anti-climax.

⁹⁰³ Ibid.

9.1.2 The Preparation and Execution of the Synod

The announcement of the Synod was followed by a period of five years of intensive preparation. Its organisation went through seven stages:

1. the announcement by the Holy See, the outline paper and the production of the Lineamenta;
2. the distribution of the Lineamenta (L) to all Christians and its discussion at the grassroots level;
3. the production of the working paper Instrumentum Laboris (IL) from the answers obtained from the discussions by the General Secretary and the Council of the Synod;
4. the study of the working paper at the basis of Small Christian Communities, parishes, and dioceses;
5. the Synod begins at the fifth stage and ends with the formulation of propositions or suggestions which were passed on to the Council of the Synod, who issued a second document with the final message to be made known to the public;
6. the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation;
7. finally, the Synod ends with the realisation of its resolutions in the daily life of the local Churches.⁹⁰⁴

The Synod took place in Rome after exhaustive and painstaking deliberations and debates on the logistics involved. It started officially on 10 April, 1994, in St. Peter's Basilica, with the Opening Liturgy which was presided over by the Pope himself with 1 Patriarch, 35 Cardinals, 39 Archbishops, 146 Bishops and 90 Priests.⁹⁰⁵ as concelebrants.

In spite of the disappointment many Africans felt at the announcement of the Roman Venue of the Synod for Africa, echoes from the Synod are showing that the Synod has been a blessing for the continent. These echoes are pointing to a bright future for the Church in Africa. The *Message of the African Synod* affirms that: "Right from its first sessions [...] the Special Assembly for

⁹⁰⁴ Cf. Nwaigbo F., *Church as a Communion: An African Christian Perspective*, 1995, 355-356.

⁹⁰⁵ Okoye C. J., *The Synod Challenges the Church in Africa*, in: *The Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* Vol.6/2:1994, 25-40, 25. The Synod had a "total number of 242 members, 46 observers, 20 experts and 7 Fraternal Delegates. To this number is to be added the staff of 30 assistants, the special press corps, the Vatican Radio and the Vatican Information services".

Africa of the Synod of Bishops received from Christ himself its profound significance, namely, *the Synod of Resurrection, the Synod of Hope*".⁹⁰⁶ Further evidence shows that the Synod afforded the African Episcopate the occasion to demonstrate and act with one voice and extend solidarity to each other. In short, it gave the Bishops and the entire Church in Africa the opportunity to identify and address the real problems of Africa, with the sincere determination to help the Africa find real and lasting solutions for them. Hence, they spoke out with one voice. The Synod demanded greater justice between the North and South poles. They submitted that there should be an end to presenting Africans in a ridiculous and insignificant light in the world scene, after foreigners had brought about and maintained structural inequality and were upholding unjust terms of trade!⁹⁰⁷ "The unjust price system brings in its wake an accumulation of external debt which humiliates our nations and gives them a regrettable sense of culpability which is imposed on us. But at the same time we appeal to all our African brothers who have embezzled public funds that they are bound in justice to redress the wrong done to our people."⁹⁰⁸

Another spectacular event which took place during the Synod was the confession by some Western theologians, and their apology, to Africans because of their contributions to the problems of Africa. They submitted unanimously: "We, Christian men and women from Europe [...], salute the entire church in Africa on the occasion of your Synod in 1994. With you, we desire this Synod to become a milestone on your journey toward being a truly African church. As Europeans, we have reason to turn to you. In grief and pain we acknowledge the countless wrongs inflicted on African people. We are ready to identify ourselves with the sins of our ancestors. We have begun to examine the ways in which we ourselves up to this day have taken part in the oppression of, and contempt, for your dignity and self-determination, politically, economically, ecologically. We confess to having both individually and communally contributed in various ways to existing social structures, as well as to ecclesial paternalism. We regret not always having played our part to undo social injustice. It seems impossible to assess the extent of such sin or even to undress it. We dare ask for forgiveness of yourselves and of your ancestors only before God and His son Jesus Christ who reconciled us to Himself and to one another through His own suffering and death."⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁶ See quotation in: Onwubiko O. A., *Echoes from the African Synod.*, viii

⁹⁰⁷ cf. *Message of the African Synod, no. 2*, in: *The African Synod; Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*. Compiled and edited by Africa Faith & Justice Network, New York: Orbis Books, 1996, 13.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁹⁰⁹ *Admission of Guilt: Northern Theologians*, In: *African Synod; Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*. (ed.) Africa Faith & Justice Network, 1996, 71. This document was signed by many

9.2 Evangelisation: The Central Theme

The Synod defended the view that the Church is an indispensable agent of evangelisation. In line with Vatican Council II, it admitted that evangelisation is a missionary vocation by nature.⁹¹⁰ Evangelising is the Church's proper grace and vocation, her deepest identity. She exists so as to evangelise.⁹¹¹ Evangelisation was the central theme on which the Synod for Africa was conducted. The theme of the Synod: "The Church in Africa and her Evangelising Mission Towards the Year 2000. You Shall be my Witness", indicates the main aim of the Synod as being to review the mission of the Church in Africa and to propose means of making the mission more effective.

9.2.1 The Challenge of Renewed Evangelisation in Africa

In its efforts to ensure that the Church in Africa does not experience the fate of the earlier communities established in Africa before the 19th century, the Synod of Africa calls for new evangelisation in the continent. This renewed evangelisation will involve every member of the Church and has to be organised in such a way that the faith will take root in the life and culture of the people. In this connection, the Synod distinguishes between first (primary) evangelisation and second or (renewed) evangelisation and highlights its challenges for the Church in Africa. The synod's *Instrumentum Laboris* draws attention to the fact that since "there are teeming millions of unevangelised people in Africa, the Church in this continent is faced with an *enormous, challenging and urgent mission* of bringing them the saving message of Jesus Christ. This urgent mission consists in primary evangelisation, [...]. It is absolutely necessary and urgent for the Church in Africa to engage in this task [...]. This first proclamation is addressed to the millions of Africans who are either adherents of African Traditional Religion or Islam. [...] To the above-mentioned task of primary evangelisation (or first evangelisation) must be added an indispensable, renewed evangelisation of those already baptised. [...] This second evangelisation is rendered even more indispensable in Africa on account of new challenges which demand new approaches. 'Evangelisation needs to be renewed today, for the reason that the rapid development of the society gives rise to new challenges similar to what certain ancient Churches experienced, especially as regards such phenomenon as family uprooting, urbanisation, unemployment, all sorts of materialistic seductions, secularisation and an intellectual

religious, clerics and lay people, including Pedro Casaldaliga, Erwin Krautler, Bernhard Häring, Notker Wolf, Peter Hunermann, Wolfgang Hoffmann, Giuseppe Alberigo, Norbert Greinacher, Walter Bühlmann, Hans Küng.

⁹¹⁰ AG 2

⁹¹¹ Cf. EN 14.

perturbation accentuated by an avalanche of ideas insufficiently scrutinised, and by the influence of the media. Therefore you need to devise, often with limited means, an appropriate pastoral strategy to face these new kinds of problems.’⁹¹²

Focusing attention on evangelisation in Africa as its general theme, the African Synod discussed such burning issues as inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication that have enormous influence both on the practice of the Christian faith in Africa and on the socio-political and economic life of the continent. Before the actual proceedings, there was a thorough study of the history of the Catholic Church and the various strides made by evangelisation on the continent. While regretting the failure of early attempts to christianise Africa, it extolled the noble activities of the missionaries in the latter part of 19th century. The Synod noted the factors that constitute obstacles to the Church in the present time.

Although the need for a new evangelisation did not originate with the Synod of Bishops for Africa, the Synod contributed enormously to the realisation of its urgency. The Pope had used the occasions of his pastoral visits to Africa to appreciate the works of evangelisation in Africa and to conscientise the people on the need to devise new means of making the Christian faith take root in the lives and cultures of the people. In 1980, for instance, he challenged the priests, religious and seminarians of Zaire (Republic of Congo) on the occasion of the centenary of the Catholic Church in the country. He said: “A new stage is open to you, a no less exalting one, even if it necessarily involves new trials, and perhaps temptations of discouragement. It is the stage of perseverance, that in which it is necessary to pursue the strengthening of the faith, the conversion, in-depth, of souls and of ways of life, so that they will correspond better and better to your sublime Christian vocation; not to mention evangelisation which you must yourselves continue in sectors or environments where the Gospel is still unknown.”⁹¹³

Similarly, he launched the process in Nigeria in February 1982. It is pertinent to note the importance which John Paul II attached to developing an effective method of evangelisation in the context of this new era of evangelisation. In one of his statements during his Nigerian visit, John Paul II said to the bishops of the country: „Having herself embraced the Gospel, the Church is called to communicate it by word and action. The Catholic people, under your pastoral leadership, have the opportunity, the privilege and the duty to give a corporate witness to the Gospel of Jesus in the culture, into their live. They have the

⁹¹² Instrumentum Laboris 19.

⁹¹³ Ibid., 8.

power to bring the Gospel into the very heart of their culture, into the fabric of their everyday lives."⁹¹⁴

9.2.2 Aspects of Evangelisation Handled by the Synod

The Synod for Africa was organised under a five-points programme. It dwelt on the continuation and intensification of evangelisation; the dialogue with other Christian communions, Islam and traditional religions in Africa; the inculturation of the Gospel message of Christ in native cultures and the lives of the people; the social problems of justice and freedom; and the mass media and means of social communication. The Synod wished to pay attention also to specific African experiences like: marriage as marriage in stages, or polygamy; the understanding of death, ancestors and life; the understanding of individual and community; and the Small Christian Communities.⁹¹⁵

9.2.2.1 Proclamation of the Gospel

Proclamation refers to bearing witness to the Good News and to the mysteries of God for all people in Jesus Christ. It received the greatest emphasis in the African Synod in comparison to the other topics which the Synod examined. According to a statistic, "of the 62 propositions formulated as summaries of the Synod work, 26 were on proclamation. The rest were as follows: Inculturation - 10, Dialogue - 6, Justice and Peace - 12, Social Communication -7."⁹¹⁶ Proclamation is closely related to evangelisation. It refers to the bearing of witness to the Good News of Christ in words and deeds. This does not imply that other topics were of less importance to the Church in Africa. The emphasis on proclamation shows the relevance of a continued evangelisation in Africa.

9.2.2.2 Inculturation

Inculturation is the encounter between the Gospel and a culture, or an on going dialogue between faith and culture. Its goal is to lead people to a better understanding of the mystery of Christ, so that, the faith can be lived in a noble and concrete way in the daily situations of life. The Synod for Africa recognised the relationship between evangelisation and African cultures but noted, with

⁹¹⁴ Papal Message to Nigeria: A Collection of Speeches Delivered by His Holiness Pope Paul II on the Occasion of his Visit to Nigeria, From 12th to 17th Feb., 1982, 39.

⁹¹⁵ Cf. Langhorst P., Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik, 329; Doppelfeld B., Für eine Synode der Kirche Afrikas: ZMR 74 (1990) 64-67, 64.

⁹¹⁶ Onaiyekan J., What we Saw and Heard at the African Synod, in: Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology. The African Synod: Initial Results and Reflections. Published by The Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians. Vol. 6/2: 1994, 3-14, 8.

concern, that the faith that was presented to the natives was so clothed in foreign culture that the people found it difficult to identify with it. Through the process of inculturation, the Church wishes to go to the root of the being of the period, by transforming authentic cultural values through integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity into the these cultures.⁹¹⁷

Inculturation is an important factor in the evangelising mission of the Church. It touches the entire human life, as well as the social, economic, political and cultural being of the human person. This life-oriented evangelisation stands against all forms of underdevelopment and inhuman suppression. It is interested in the proclamation of an authentic theology of development.⁹¹⁸ This shows that inculturation has overtaken the missionary idea of evangelisation, which understood its role as a campaign of rationalism for opposing the magic and witchcraft mentality of the black race. Inculturation is more than adaptation of the faith to specific cultural forms of expression in Africa. It penetrates more deeply into the many ways through which the faith can be understood and gain access to the lives of the people.⁹¹⁹

By studying the various aspects of African cultures and underscoring the areas that are relevant for evangelisation, it also marks the importance of inculturated pastoral care. Pastoral care, in this context, must be analysed in the light of the inculturation of Christianity in Africa, its ability to build a dynamic Christian community, to determine the role of the laity, to respond to the longings after spiritual experience and to answer to the quest after the word of God.⁹²⁰ It must also “give answers to the relevant questions pertaining to life, suffering, sickness and death“.⁹²¹

Another aspect of the African culture that attracted the attention of the synod was the role of the family in the culture. The family was discovered as an essential model of the Church and as such an essential factor in the Church’s evangelisation in the continent.

The realisation of the new model of the Church as the family of God is one of the significant ecclesiological discoveries of the African Synod. Although the Synod traced this concept to the efforts of African theologians,⁹²² it is clear that the idea of the Church as family of God is not entirely new. The bible and Church history, for instance, are not unaware of such metaphors. The letter to

⁹¹⁷ Cf. ES 59.

⁹¹⁸ Cf. Langhorst P., *Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik*, 329.

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁰ Cf. Nwaigbo F., *Church as Communio*, 367.

⁹²¹ *Ibid.*

⁹²² Cf. EA 56.

the Galatians makes reference to the Church as the family of faith” (Gal. 6:10). In 1 Pet.4:17, it is described as the “house of God”. “The same idea finds its best expression in Mk 3:31-35, where Jesus called those who do the will of God his “brothers and sisters and mother”.⁹²³ From the perspective of the Church history, the views of the Church as “mother” by Cyprian and as “Instructor” by St. Augustine presuppose also the understanding of the ecclesia as the family of God.⁹²⁴

Since the family is not only the cell of the living ecclesial community but also the cell of the entire human society,⁹²⁵ the Synod’s emphasis on the understanding of the Church as ‘family-of-God’ is a call for the Church to build the family in Africa on the solid cultural pillars and noble values of the African traditional family.⁹²⁶

The traditional African family is open to dialogical. Although the culture and tradition are in most cases patriarchal, there is always mutual relationship between every member of the family. The family is a holy place where the riches of the African tradition like respect and protection of life and dignity their bearing.⁹²⁷ The realisation of this goal was the Synod’s vision when it spoke of, and called for building the Church as family of God. Consequently, it presupposes the creation of vital Christian Communities as places for deeper experience of communal life, development of human kind and witness to the faith.⁹²⁸ It recognised that African communities are places for “treating the real problems of life in the light of the Gospel, of promoting the responsibility of the members and learning to live as Church. In them the universal love of Christ breaks through all barriers.”⁹²⁹ Hence it called on all to “live concretely and authentically the experience of fraternity. Each is moved to construct the Family of God, a family entirely open to the world from which absolutely nobody is excluded”.⁹³⁰

⁹²³ Cf. Nnamani A. G., *The African Synod and the Model of Church-as-Family*, in: *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* 6/2: 1994, 41-55, 47.

⁹²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁵ EA., 80.

⁹²⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹²⁷ Cf. Ugorji L. I., *Afrikanische Theologie – Theologie im Kontext*, in: *AFRIKA-FORUM mit Lektürekreis Afrikanische Theologie*, Nr. 1 (Sept. 2000) 2.

⁹²⁸ Cf. EA 89.

⁹²⁹ Okoye C. J., *The Synod Challenges the Church in Africa*, in: *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* 6/2: 1994, 27-40, 29.

⁹³⁰ *Message of the Synod*, No. 28.

The Synod extolled qualities of the extended family system: respect for life, the love between the members and its hospitality⁹³¹ as of great importance in the establishment of the Church in Africa as a community united by love, respect, hospitality, etc. As a little Church the Synod wishes that each African Christian family should be a privileged place for evangelical witness', a true 'domestic Church', a community which believes and evangelises, a community in dialogue with God and generously open to the service of humanity.

The Synod stressed the problems that severely affect the family in Africa and wished that such obstacles be part of the programme of the Synod. Such problems, as articulated by the members of the Inter-religious Meeting of the Bishops of South Africa" (IMBISA), include "high percentages of Catholics live in unions that are canonically speaking invalid. Many have never had their marriages blessed in Church, and others may finally do so after many years of marriage. As a result, a very large number of adult Catholics are barred from the sacraments. The result is eucharistic famine in Zimbabwe and in Africa."⁹³²

After noting the factors militating against Christian married life in the Continent, it was suggested and expected that that the Synod should be bold enough to address the problems at stake and re-consider the demands on "canonical norms for marriage so that Catholic couples may have their as yet invalid unions solemnised (convalidated) more easily."⁹³³

9.2.2.3 Dialogue

Dialogue plays a special role in the mission of the Church. It enhances communication and understanding between the Christian faith and culture. Hence, it ensures that the Gospel is preached in a manner that the recipients are convinced of its need. The necessity of dialogue is felt in Africa particularly because of the influences of African Traditional Religion and Islam on the people. There is also need for dialogue on the internal-Christian-forum for ecumenical reasons. There are many Christian denominations and African independent Churches in the Continent which often have doctrinal differences and conflicts. As a way out, the Synod "invited Catholics to develop an *ecumenical dialogue* with all their baptised brothers and sisters of other denominations, in order that the unity for which Christ prayed may be achieved, and in order that their services to the peoples of the Continent may make the Gospel more credible in the eyes of those who are searching for God."⁹³⁴

⁹³¹ Cf. The African Synod. Documents, Reflection, Perspectives, 91.

⁹³² The African Synod., 46.

⁹³³ Ibid.

⁹³⁴ EA 65.

9.2.2.4 Justice and Peace

The establishment of the relationship between justice and peace in Africa remains one of the core themes of the Synod. Closely related to each other, the synod notes that justice and peace contribute to the development of humanity in Africa.⁹³⁵ It underscored that action for justice and peace is a constitutive dimension of Jesus as well as a constitutive element of the Church. The “Church as the family of God in Africa can witness to Christ by promoting justice and peace on the Continent and throughout the world hence her witness must go along with unwavering dedication [on the part] of the people of God to the course of justice and solidarity”.⁹³⁶ The synod emphasised the role of the lay faithful in the realisation of this objective because of the public offices which they hold in society.

The synod noted the factors that militate against justice and peace in Africa. It addressed issues regarding injustice, corruption and civil strife in Africa, as well as the problems of lack of democracy, dictatorial government, freedom of speech, press freedom and the right to demonstrate in the defence of one’s rights. The synod underlined the necessity of “a serious reawakening of conscience linked to a firm determination of will in order to put into effect solutions which can no longer be put off.”⁹³⁷

Liberation from oppression and social injustice, and the transformation of human society are, in fact, categorical imperatives and a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel in Africa. This is achieved in a special way through the establishment of justice and peace commissions at every level of the ecclesiastical set-up. The primary aim is to expose the people to the human rights’ situation at the local level and encourage them to take action against unjust situations. Education helps to sensitise and inform both individuals and communities on social justice issues, so as to stimulate them toward a stronger sense of justice and peace at all levels.⁹³⁸ As a first step, an identification of the forms of operation must take place (diagnosis), because it would be unwise to promote justice at the national or state levels without first knowing the forms of operation present in the society and the causes of corruption which vitiate the social order. The inventory of the forms of operation and the fighting of corruption should proceed from the grassroots level upwards through the participation of Christians in all kinds of councils at village, parish, diocesan, national and international levels, in order to arrive at a satisfactory result. The

⁹³⁵ Cf. Langhorst P., *Kirche und Entwicklungspolitik*, 332.

⁹³⁶ EA 105.

⁹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 110

⁹³⁸ Mejia R., *Ecclesial Context for Establishing Justice and Peace*, AFER 30/4 (1988) 227.

closer the level is to the daily reality, the easier it will be to follow up this inventory with concrete actions for correcting the social maladies in Africa.

The issues of poor economic growth in Africa attracted heavy criticisms at the Synod. Linking this to bad governance, the Synod noted that economic problems in the continent “are compounded by the dishonesty of corrupt leaders who, in connivance with domestic or foreign private interests, divert national resources for their own profit and transfer public funds to private accounts in foreign lands.”⁹³⁹ It proceeded further by calling international bodies and people with interests in Africa and elsewhere to join forces in devising suitable legal ways of having the embezzled funds returned.

9.2.2.5 Means of Social Communication

The means of social communication was the last factor which the Synod called attention to. The theological point of departure of the discussion on the social means of communication was Christ himself, “who shares with those who believe in him the truth, the life and the love which he shares with his Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit.”⁹⁴⁰

Communication has presently become an important fact in modern society to the extent that it is the pivot on which all human and societal interaction rotates. The means of mass media is a privileged route by which the Church can fulfil her vocation of evangelisation. Through it, the Church in Africa can, in a broader manner, communicate the truth of the Gospel message, bring the cultures of the people and the Gospel to interact and influence each other, provide true and authentic information about the Church, dispel ignorance and misunderstanding, and foster dialogue.⁹⁴¹ It is incumbent on her to identify the means of communication that can effectively enhance her pastoral work. She can employ the service of print media, radio, videos, computers, telephones and television to enhance her pastoral activities. Apart from these modern means of communication, the Synod “stressed the continued importance of [African] means of social communication, such as proverbs and stories, singing and dancing, music and drama”.⁹⁴² Gongs and town cries can play key roles in villages or areas where other means cannot function efficiently.

Although the means of communication are an indispensable instrument in evangelisation, the Synod noted that, given the fact that “the media constitutes

⁹³⁹ EA 113.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., 112.

⁹⁴¹ Nwaigbo F., *Church as a Communion: An African Christian Perspective*, 392.

⁹⁴² Onaiyekan J. O., *The Church in Africa Today: Reflections on the African Synod*, in: *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, 211-219, 215.

a new culture that has its own language and its own values and counter-values, [...] the means of evangelisation has also to be evangelised” (*Message of the Synod, 46*). This is very important because of the undeniable fact that the media, in many cases, are not put to rightful use. Instead, they are used to poison the minds of people and to proliferate crime, violence, falsehood, and immorality.

9.3 A Case Study and Analysis of Umuahia Diocesan Synod

The Synod of the Catholic Diocese of Umuahia, which was convened at the diocesan spiritual year at Ozu-Abam seminary, took place from September 29th to October 4th, 1997. Entitled *Ecclesia in Umuahia: Building up Our Diocese as the Family of God Towards the Year 2000*, the synod was a follow-up of the continental synod for Africa on a diocesan level. While articulating his intention to summon the Synod in a pastoral council meeting in the diocese on 11th May, 1996, the bishop, L. I. Ugorji, specified that the diocesan synod would face the task of reflecting on the just-concluded synod for Africa, study its documents prayerfully and seek ways of concretely applying them to the diocese.

The announcement of the synod was followed by the formation of the planning committee that was to prepare the stage for the synod. The planning committee split up into five main departments according to the five sub-themes to be discussed at the synod. The topics included proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and the means of social communication. Each department was responsible for a theme. It was to formulate questionnaires relating to its topic, but with the focus on integral evangelisation in the diocese. In the sermon delivered at the opening mass for the Synod, the bishop underscored the relationship between the diocesan Synod and the African Synod and underlined the following objectives:

Our Diocesan Synod which begins today is a follow up to the ‘Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops’. [...] Since the end of the African Synod we have been trying to study its important teachings [...] We are coming together today for a diocesan Synod in order to renew our lives, transform our diocese into the family of God, penetrate our culture and customs with the spirit of the gospel, promote understanding between us and those around us [...] our separated Brethren as well as those who do not believe in Christ. We are also coming together to make ourselves more aware of our obligations as Christians to stand for justice and peace in our society

and to share the Good News with others by the effective use of the print and electronic media.⁹⁴³

In order to realise these objectives, the Synod of Umuahia diocese was divided into five broad groups. Each was meant to examine the five themes i.e. Proclamation, Inculturation, Dialogue, Justice and Peace and Mass Communication which were discussed at the African Synod.

9.3.1 Proclamation

Proclamation was the first topic discussed at the Synod. The Synod paid tribute to the efforts of the missionaries and the fruits of evangelisation in the pastoral mission of the Church in general and in the diocese of Umuahia in particular since the creation of the diocese in 1958. It appreciated the zeal with which the early missionaries and their successors confronted the problems that faced the spread of the Gospel in the diocese. The Synod underscored the new challenges of the Church in Umuahia, which demand resolute and relentless effort on the part of the clergy and the laity in the task of defending and propagating the faith in the diocese.

Without limiting proclamation/evangelisation to mere preaching, it recognised the acts that bring hope to the people in their poor social, economic and environmental conditions as reputable means of witnessing. It noted, without mincing words, that Christ is proclaimed when the faithful spread his message of salvation to people around them and when they bring hope to people who have despaired of life; when we bring joy, peace and love to people in sorrow, or immersed in tribal conflicts, or war, violence and hatred; when we bring justice to people who are denied their rights; when we bring knowledge to the ignorant and the confused; when we bring unity to divided families (*IL 8*).

The Synod underscored both explicit proclamation and actual preaching of the Word of God, and silent proclamation or proclamation through the witness of life. It noted the place of the family in nursing the faith in Christ. Hence, it recognised the fact of every baptised person being called to be an active and effective evangeliser. This drives home the point that evangelisation or proclamation is not only an exclusive duty of the clergy and religious but of all members of the Church. It declared further that to be a true and effective evangeliser, every Catholic in the diocese is called to on-going conversion, conviction and commitment to Christian life. Hence, each person should try to deepen his or her spiritual life through prayer, meditative study of the bible, regular reception of the sacraments and diligent practice of Christian virtues.

⁹⁴³ Ibid., 6-8.

Judging the role of the family in traditional African society as well as its value systems, the synod recognised the family as an “indispensable agent of evangelisation” and an essential place for nursing and preserving of the faith. After a thorough examination of these family values, the Synod recommended the following family codes:

1. praying together in the family, especially the rosary, at least once a day;
2. eating together at least once a day and dipping from one pot: a gesture which encourages a communion of love;
3. attending services together and receiving the sacraments regularly with family members;
4. getting together at least once a month and discussing family life and religious themes, as well as learning the catechism and talking about topics of current affairs;
5. sponsorship of worthwhile concepts like dignity of labour, fair judgement, justice, respect for age and life, personal responsibility and collective responsibility;
6. sponsorship of all aspects of life that promote the basic virtues of prudence, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, piety, religion, honesty etc;
7. the family should inflict punishment where and when necessary;
8. encouragement of the use of Igbo proverbs, idioms and folklore as a means of giving moral instruction to children;
9. Giving the children a broad physical, mental and religious education that is founded on strong moral upbringing and, if necessary, in Catholic institutions.

9.3.2 Inculturation

The statement that “there is a Christian way of being an Igbo and there is an Igbo way of being a Christian” which is brought about “when Christianity penetrates Igbo culture and Igbo culture is integrated into Christianity”⁹⁴⁴, is a fundamental truth and the motivating principle behind the process of inculturating of the Good News in native cultures.

⁹⁴⁴ Ugorji L. I., *Make Disciples of all Nations: Acts of the Second Synod of the Catholic Diocese of Umuahia* (September 29th – October 4th, 1997). Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1997, 51.

Recognising the fact that the Igbo people, like other Africans, are closely tied to their culture, the synod did not shy away from deliberating on being a Christian and practising the faith in this cultural context without one losing his cultural identity or betraying the Christian faith.

The Synod confronted the issues that face the Church in the practice of the faith. While extolling practices that are not at variance with Christian feelings and are in the service of the Gospel, the synod condemned practices that do not fit in with Christianity either by their nature or their modes of practice. Without rejecting these practices outright, the Synod called for their purification.

Poised to develop modalities for the practice of the faith in the diocese and in Igboland in general, the Synod recommended that:

1. What is good in our culture and in agreement with the Gospel of Jesus Christ should be integrated into the life of the Church;
2. What is bad and unacceptable in a Christian should to be dropped;
3. What is good, but contains some elements that need to be purified and replaced with Christian values should be upheld.⁹⁴⁵

From the point of view of the Igbo language, the synod called for the recognition of its suitability as a vehicle for the transmission and acquisition of Igbo culture. Igbo should also be accorded its proper place in the Church's liturgical celebrations, pious devotions and catechesis. Priests should master the Igbo language and employ Igbo proverbs, idioms and folklore in their homilies and catechesis.

On the promotion of Igbo arts and culture, the synod underlined the importance and use of native musical instruments in liturgical functions. It recommended that African art should be reflected in vestments, paintings, statues and ornaments in the Church. Other recommendations include the setting up of an Arts and Culture Commission in the diocese to promote Igbo culture. The traditional naming ceremony and infant baptism could be combined to take place in the Church within six weeks of birth.

On marriage ceremonies it was agreed that preparation for both the traditional wedding and Church marriage should go hand in hand, so that the latter can take place immediately after the former. The Church should continuously educate the people on the need to reduce expenses at traditional weddings and

⁹⁴⁵ Cf. No. 59.

Church marriages. Catechesis on marriage should be intensified in parishes with special reference to chastity, consanguinity, divorce, marital love, conjugal rights and duties, and natural family planning.

On death and burial, the Synod recommended strict enforcement of the diocesan decree on burial with special reference to not yielding to the excessive demands of interest groups. It condemned the practice of second burial, that is, *Ime ?kwukwu*, among the people because of its contradiction of Christian belief and practice. However, it was suggested that *Ime ?kwukwk* should be replaced by the month's mind and memorial services. Other cultural practices and celebrations condemned include: *Ila ?s?*, *Ekte Nsi*, *Igba izu*, *ije ul? nta*, *Ekpe*, etc. The problems of "Osu" and twins in the diocese should be studied by the Diocesan Commission on Inculturation with a view to making recommendations. Furthermore, cultural practices in which people considered guilty of some offence are stripped naked in pursuance of traditional sanctions, are condemned as offensive to human dignity.

9.3.3 Dialogue

As a diocese, Umuahia is located in a densely Protestant-dominated environment. The Synod found the Church left with no other option than seeking for means of enhancing ecumenical understanding (dialogue) and co-operation with other Christian denominations. A statistic of the Churches in and around the diocese indicates that there are at least 52 Christian denominations each competing for adherents. Recognising that dialogue is a conversation between persons and an inter-personal relationship aimed at mutual enrichment, the Synod call for authentic dialogue within the Church, and dialogue with other Christian denominations within the diocese dialogue with the Igbo (African) Traditional Religion base on the fact that both parties involved must be able to listen, observe, learn, speak, correct and be corrected.

9.3.3.1 Dialogue within the Church

To promote dialogue within the Church, the called-for openness, trust, love and mutual concern and such dialogue, should take place in the various fields of the Church, and should be fostered through constitutional organs such as the Board of Consultors, the Presbyteral Council, the Pastoral Council, Parish and Laity Councils as well as statutory bodies such as Christian Men Organisation (C.M.O.), Christian Women Organisation (C.W.O.) and Christian Youth Organisation (C.Y.O). Cordial relationships between the Knights of St. Mulumba (K.S.M.) and St. John (K.S.J.), and between the Charismatic Renewal

and the Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (C.B.I.U.) etc., are encouraged as means of fostering intra-ecclesial dialogue in the diocese.⁹⁴⁶

The Synod called for smooth relationships between the clergy and the laity. Hence, it advocated respect for limits of competence among Parish Priests, Parish Councils and Station Councils with regard to their powers, rights and duties.

9.3.3.2 Dialogue with Sister Churches

The Catholic Church in the diocese cares much about her relationship with other Christian bodies within her territory. It contributes its quota to seeing that the state wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N.) takes up concrete projects aimed at enhancing deeper understanding among the various denominations, the preservation of the faith, and its defence against the threat of Islam in the country. The Synod, however, scowled at the rising rate of suspicion, distrust, narrow-mindedness, bigotry, rivalry, and unhealthy criticism among the Christian Churches in the diocese. It urged C.A.N. to create a forum for prayer for Christian unity from 18th to 25th January every year and to cultivate a dialogue of deeds and ventures of common concern. The various confessions should also think of co-operating with each other in humanitarian services (mass transit, housing, health care, promotion of culture, organisation of music festivals, establishment of an Ecumenical Centre as well as peace and unity initiatives.

The Synod emphasised dialogue with the Anglican Church especially on the level of experts. This may take the form of ecumenical television and radio discussions, theological conferences, ecumenical seminars and meetings of leaders of Churches. Such dialogue will ensure:

1. mutual caring for one another;
2. zeal and commitment;
3. personal confidence and boldness in defending the faith;
4. the formation of vital Christian communities to create a greater sense of fraternity and solidarity;
5. effective use of the media for preaching the Good News;
6. visits to sick and aged members and

⁹⁴⁶ Cf. 85, 86, 91.

7. strong support of their denominations through the payment of tithes.

9.3.3.3 Dialogue with African Traditional Religion

Dialogue with African Traditional Religion (A.T.R.) received adequate attention. The discussion was anticipated by the delegates because of the problems that exist between the Christian faith and the traditional religion. The problems are not with the religions but with adherents who were formally traditional religionist but have now converted to Christianity. The Synod examined the factors that lead people into a conflict of religions and noted the following: lack of faith, superstitious belief, distress, search for supernatural favours, desire for power and wealth, selfishness, cultural influence, fear of the unknown, ignorance, anxiety and materialism. It was noted that dialogue between the Christian faith and A.T.R. will benefit both parties. Some aspects of the traditional religion that will be of benefit to Christians include: honesty of life and fair play, respect for human life, respect for marriage, fidelity, purity, veneration, respect for good living, truthfulness, fear of God's wrath, strong adherence to religious beliefs, extended family system, community development, use of proverbs, obedience, collective action and reasoning, sense of truth and justice, uprightness of life, respect for elders/ancestors and love of the family.⁹⁴⁷ ATR can learn more from Christianity: how to approach the true God, the person, Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, Christian love, civilisation associated with Christianity, intercession of the saints, truth, honesty, resurrection, heavenly reward, enlightenment, justice, and salvation through Jesus Christ.⁹⁴⁸

9.3.4 Justice and Peace

The bad socio-political situation of things in the diocese and its environs made discussion on justice and peace at the Synod very pertinent. In line with the efforts of the diocesan bishop to assuage the problems of the people, the Synod afforded opportunity for the entire diocese to discuss the problems facing the people and collectively seek for possible solutions to them. The Synod listed up the problems: abject poverty, disease, tragically worsening conditions of health services, widespread illiteracy, inter-village wars and conflicts, violation of fundamental human rights, bad government, economic mismanagement, corruption, wickedness of the heart of man, egoism, nepotism, tribalism, dictatorship and greed. The root of these problems are social, economic or moral, and the blatant disregard of justice and fair play in governmental administration, which may not exclude the Church sometimes. Hence, it

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 107.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

is commonly agreed that evangelisation must address the above fundamental social problems if it is to be integral. Consequently, it was outlined that:

I. The biological differences of male and female should not influence respect for any human being;

II. A true member of the Church must have his or her Christian philosophy regarding the poor, the weak and the marginalized, in accordance with the biblical dictum: “I have come to deliver them...” (Exodus 3:7-6);

III. Catholic families should take the lead in showing good example to peace movement, especially in those areas where border clashes are common;

IV. Catholics should speak out against government take-over of schools and private institutions without the fear of victimisation;

V. Catholic families should resist the temptation of allowing or sending their children or wards to go about hawking;

VI Workers, be they for Church or State, should be remunerated in respect to labour law.

9.3.5 On Means of Social Communication

The Synod underlined the importance of both traditional and modern means of social communication in its evangelising and pastoral programmes. It considered the degree of application and effectiveness of the means of social communication vis-à-vis the pastoral plan of the diocese today.

Traditional means of social communication comprise those that enhance internal and external (village–village) communication in traditional Igbo society. These communication means consist of the native gong, *Ekwe*, *Oti-nkpu* (town crier), *ikoro*, drum-beating, *?mu*, giving signs with flame, human messengers (*?kanu*), *ntu-ala* (gun-shots), blowing of trumpets, horns, use of songs, whistling, *Nzi-zi*, *inye mkpisi*, etc. (cf. PSA 167-169). In order to enhance personal communication in parishes, communities and stations, the need for treks by priests and religious is highly encouraged in the diocese.

The Synod paid tribute to the efficiency of such modern means of communication as the mass media (the broadcasting network, radio and television), the print media (newspapers, books, magazines, pastoral letters, news-letters, pamphlets, posters), videos, films and public address systems in the spreading of the Good News in the diocese of Umuahia. Regretting the minimal use of these effective means of communication in the diocese, the Synod extolled the

establishment of the diocesan newspaper “*LUMEN*” for its contributions so far in serving as a means of information, and formation, of the people on ecclesiastical as well as civil matters. The Synod, however, regretted the negative influences the modern means of communication have on the society through the transmission of the culture of violence, immorality, pornography, blue-films, etc.⁹⁴⁹ Consequently, the Synod emphasised the necessity to evangelise the mass media so that it can be effectively used for spreading the gospel. It also called upon those engaged in the means of social communication to utilise them for correct information and the dissemination of truth, justice and peace.

9.4 Evaluation

In its themes, sub-themes and contents, the Synod of the Catholic diocese of Umuahia took its bearing from the Synod for Africa. As an observer during the synod, I testify that there were sincere efforts made by the organisers to see to the success of the sessions. The synod experienced active participation on the parts of the participants, who on certain occasions kept late hours and sacrificed their recreations in order to complete the compounded programme. The atmosphere was serene and the participants enjoyed a commendable level of freedom to air their views on matters concerning evangelisation and pastoral works in the diocese and in Igboland in general. From the ways in which the papers were prepared and presented, as well as the way and zeal with which the attendants responded to the issues raised during the session, one could deduce the people’s readiness to embrace the challenges of the faith within and around the diocese.

The programme for the synod did not restrict itself to mere theoretical or theological issues like preaching or catechetics. It took note of practical or pastoral consequences of the teachings of the Church in the practical socio-political lives of the people received adequate attention. In short, the synod ended up with resolutions on practical options for the poor and marginalized in the society. Frowning on issue of gender discrimination, a common phenomenon not only in Igboland but also in the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa, the synod was unanimous in calling for the giving of equal rights and opportunities in education to male and female children in families. To fight the discrimination of women in the area of inheritance, people are encouraged to write their wills, share their wealth and completely document the same for future references. Unchristian practices meted to widows on the death of their husbands received outright condemnation by all male and female attendants of the synod.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 144.

The synod considered further options like helping the poor through the establishment of an endowment fund to be financially maintained by all members of the Church, and the establishment of a social welfare committee in each parish to take care of the needs of the poor. Other practical options include: intervention in situations of strife in the society, denouncing of injustice in Igbo society through the diocesan magazine (LUMEN), and denunciation of youth unemployment. Abuse of children such as street hawking, child labour, maltreatment of house helpers, abandonment of children by parents, depriving children of opportunities for education, enforcing early marriage on children and commercialisation of young girls⁹⁵⁰ was condemned as a social evil. Hence, parents were enjoined to take their responsibilities more seriously and control their children and wards to 'prevent others taking advantage' of them. In line with the recommendation for regular catechetics on child abuse, the synod recommended that a "family forum should be established in the Church where family problems are discussed, experiences shared and parents educated about their responsibilities towards their children."⁹⁵¹

Judging from the various stages the synod went through, it can be said that the preparation, execution and response of the delegates at the synod were commendable. This does not mean that the synod was not confronted with problems, especially with regard to the attitude of the Church towards cultural practices and festival practices within the diocese. A good example was the confusion witnessed during the discussions on whether *?kwukwu* should be condemned (banned) or not. The question should not be that of banning one given practice or another, but that of the ability of the Church to inculturate these practices or cultures. *?kwukwu* and other cultural practices which people frown on remain pastoral problems for the local Church, and such problems require corresponding solutions. *?kwukwu* is, and remains, a case for inculturation, because there is not situation or case in which the Gospel cannot find a home.

In spite of the above confusion, the diocesan synod of the Catholic Church in Umuahia was a success. Although the synod finally came to an end with an unanimously agreed final document, this success will be proven by the people's ability to implement the resolutions taken, especially with regard the aforementioned practical options. Conscientious efforts have to be made so that every member of the diocese is well informed of the areas in which the Church is directing her pastoral activities so that the Church will remain responsive to her call, to the needs of her members, and to all humanity.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid., 70.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid., 71.

CHAPTER TEN

10 Towards New Pastoral Practice and Action

This section brings us to the end of our task. The entire study commenced with an exact location of the geographical areas involved in the research, with investigations into their cultural, economic, and socio-political characteristics. They formed the background of our study on the methods adopted by the missionaries of the C.M.S. and R.C.M. churches in the evangelisation of the country. This work has noted how the missionary styles, especially the lack of proper dialogue and the existence of mutual antagonism between these missionary groups, has resulted in great problems in mutual understanding and tolerance in the present-day Church and in the practice of the faith in Igboland and in Nigeria in general. The issue of syncretism also has its root in this lack of dialogue. However, the philosophical and theological enquiry in this work into the meaning and place of dialogue in human life, human history, human science and human development has provided insights into the important place of dialogue in all activities of humankind, be they religious, political, social, etc.

Having noted these facts, we shall now proceed to give practical instances that will contribute to the nurturing and respecting of the culture of dialogue in the process of the Church's evangelisation, pastoral care and activities, as well as in the enhancement of effective dialogue with other "sister churches" both in Igbo territory and beyond. We shall also be giving attention to the question of dialogue with traditional religion.

10.1 Avoiding the Faults of the Past

Our exposition of the current situation of the Church in Nigeria is a call for the Church to turn over a new leaf and avoid the mistakes of the past. The disturbing issues of the misuse of power and authority in ecclesiastical circles are signs of the missionary legacies. The Catholic missionaries in the early part of the nineteenth to the latter part of the twentieth centuries undertook great missionary enterprises in Nigeria with the consciousness of unlimited power, power 'plenitudo'.⁹⁵² They came, not to learn from the wretched, benighted

⁹⁵² Cf. Ekwunife A., *The Image of the Priesthood in Contemporary Africa. The Nigerian Connection*, in L. N. Mbefo/E. M. Ezeogu (eds.) *The Clergy in Nigeria Today*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1994, 146-147. This power 'plenitudino' refers to the ensemble of forces-physical, moral, social, political, religious and economic which are said to reside in the will of the almighty God and the socio-political cum economic, humanitarian aspirations of the Western powers, which the missionaries and their allies are mandated to implement.

Africans-Nigerians-Igbo in particular, - but rather to bestow the riches of western British power on the people. The three sources of this unlimited power were: the bible, the sword and the plough.⁹⁵³

The Church in Nigeria is obliged to re-address the negative sides of the missionary activities in the council, as they are obliged to maintain the positive sides, especially their commitment to the course of the Gospel in spite of the most inhuman conditions under which they had to serve. It is not enough for the present-day Church to maintain the missionary approaches of the European missionaries as status quo in her efforts to minister to the people. She should live beyond the already-set standards and should, in the language of John XXIII, throw open the doors to let fresh air into the entire ecclesial system.

10.1.1 Promoting the Culture of Dialogue within the Local Churches

A critical and unprejudiced view of the Church in Igboland reveals the enormity of its authority-mindedness. In most cases, the leaders of the Church are so conscious of their positions and so sacralise this position that there is little or no room left for normal interaction among themselves, on the one hand, and between them and the lay faithful, on the other hand.

In concrete, this consciousness, which has permeated every fabric and hierarchical level of the Church in Igboland, has been identified as the major obstacle to smooth interaction between bishops and priests, as well as between bishops, priests and the laity. Surely, the ultimate consequence of this type of situation for the Church is drastic. To confront the problem more effectively, “Church leaders should accept the fact of social religious change, invent new forms of communication, rethink the concrete structures of authority, decentralise the exercise of power, redefine the concrete objectives of our vocation, help to discover new forms of religious freedom in order to reduce tension, foster unity and promote justice and peace in the local Church.”⁹⁵⁴ Bishops, priests, deacons and other office holders in the Church should do their best to respect the basic distinctions between *potestas* and *auctoritas* and realise that

⁹⁵³ Ibid., “The three instruments of this implementation are: the bible (representing the proclamation of the gospel message), the sword (representing the colonial power) and the plough (representing the economic ventures of both the colonial government, travellers, traders and the social work of the missionaries). With these instruments the early missionaries set out to conquer and subdue vast territories in Nigeria for Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. Their success especially in South Eastern Nigeria, was phenomenal”.

⁹⁵⁴ Mbachu H., *Inculturation Theology of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15: An Inspiration for the Igbo Church Today*. Frankfurt a. M., 1995, 367-368.

an excessive demonstration of power and position in the Church distorts the inner harmony of the Church. This however, does not mean that there are no occasions in which such powers can be legitimately exercised as *auctoritas*.

The local Churches in Igboland and in Nigeria in general have to face up to the demands of the times. Much has to be done in order to create a dialogical atmosphere at all levels of the Church, no matter how painful or difficult it may be. There should be more emphasis on *communio* instead of office and power. This calls for humility, service, fraternal and intersubjective relationships and avoidance of the misuse of one's position in the Church. It is also a matter of translating teaching into practice, especially teaching on fraternal charity.

It has to be noted that any Church or institution that is not capable of dialoguing within itself cannot claim to possess the capacity to relate dialogically with its external partners. The realisation of a dialogical Church depends to a great extent on the clergy (hierarchy), because of the prestigious and influential positions they occupy among the people. Simply put, the 'lordly' Church leaders should begin to put into practice the true spirit of the 'adelphoi theology' [...] that has no place for uncritical 'Generals', 'Monsignori', 'Lordships', 'Graces', 'Excellencies', etc in the brotherhood and sisterhood of Christ. The same is true of some parish priests, who see themselves as "lords and masters" over all entrusted to their care. Statements like "don't you know that I am the person in-charge" and "by the time I finish dealing with you then you will know that I am the parish-priest" are almost becoming house-hold statements on the lips of many a priest. Should we mention cases of misuse of the pulpit as a place for scolding, insulting and attacking the faithful, instead of a place for the proclamation of the Good News of salvation? The new waves of anti-clericalism, and the exits from the Church, which are increasing in geometrical proportions in the local Churches in Igboland, have their roots in these unfortunate developments in the Church communities. They are signs of reactions from the lay faithful against the arrogance of many clergy in the Church. This situation is serious and it calls for redress and a change of attitude from a clerical-centred Church to the People of God. The new wave of anti-clericalism in the territory are a challenge to the Church to try dialogue instead of a top-down relationship. The Church should more critically 'read the writing of the wall' and interpret the people's reactions as expressions of disgust with the status quo.

The point stressed in this work is that dialogue is a basic quality of the human person. It is the responsibility of office holders as well as non-office holders to live it in words and actions. Every rational being should note that intimidation, hostility, or imposition of oneself on others neither does service to refined

human relationship nor to the mission of the Church to which every Christian is called. Consequently, office-holders should “learn and accept in practice to demythologise authority and to sacramentalise humanity [...]. Power is given for service and not for domination; the symbol of that power, the ‘crozier’ or staff, is given to gather the flock and not to knock or scatter them”.⁹⁵⁵ There is need for caution in these areas. In fact, there is need for new orientation in the Church. Church leaders should assume more the posture of the Good Shepherd who came to serve and not to be served.

10.1.2 Integral Formation of Seminarians in a Conducive-Dialogical Atmosphere

Seminaries and places of formation for religious life are power-houses of the local Church because they prepare future priests and religious for the various services and apostolate in the dioceses and religious congregations. The Apostolic Exhortation on the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Times *Pastores dabo vobis (PDV)* stresses the importance of seminary training for the local Church. The “formation of future priests [...] and lifelong assiduous care for their personal sanctification in the ministry, and for the constant updating of their pastoral commitment, is considered by the Church as one of the most demanding and important tasks for the future of the evangelisation of humanity.”⁹⁵⁶

Seminaries and religious houses have enormous tasks to accomplish in the formation of future ministers of the Church who will be competent to meet the demands and challenges of the present day. Gone should be the time when the emphasis was on spirituality, philosophy and theology alone. The system should be opened to human sciences. This calls for the reform or update of the seminary system and curricula to suit such challenges deriving from the prevalent ‘neo-pagan’ and secularised environment of our times, rising urbanisation, the impact of modernity and communications which complicate the situation, incursion of sects, new religious movements, anticlericalism, and secularism in society. These present new pastoral challenges of unparalleled proportions.⁹⁵⁷

The formation system should be made to provide a dialogical atmosphere to both trainers and candidates for the priesthood and religious life. It should be made more conducive for the human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and ongo-

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid., 370.

⁹⁵⁶ *Pastores dabo vobis* 2.

⁹⁵⁷ cf. *The Igbo Catholic Priest at the Threshold of the Third Millennium.: Self Examination, Challenges and Expectations. A Document Presented by the Onitsha and Owerri Ecclesiastical Provinces.* Enugu: Snaap Press, 1999, 18.

ing formation and growth of seminarians and aspirants. Integral formation is necessary so that seminarians can “cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realisation of self, but also with a view to the ministry.”⁹⁵⁸ Without this balance it would be impossible to bear the weight of pastoral responsibilities”.⁹⁵⁹ In practical term, seminarians and aspirants should be brought up to be “*distinguished and courteous* with others”.⁹⁶⁰ They must acquire habits of “distinction and courtesy in their way of speaking, their vocabulary, and their personal rapport. They have to overcome all bashfulness, timidity and sheepishness on the one hand, and on the other hand, brusqueness, aggressiveness, and excessive irony which may raise a barrier between them and others.”⁹⁶¹ In fact, future priests and religious need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word and to be genuine.⁹⁶²

The proprietors of the seminaries and religious houses (the diocesan bishops and superior Generals of religious congregations) have a lot to contribute in the training of seminarians and aspirants so that they are able to acquire the aforementioned virtues and avoid vices. In this respect, seminaries and other houses of formation should be well equipped with seasoned lecturers and facilitators, who are balanced emotionally and psychologically, and can relate with seminarians on a cordial, human and intersubjective basis. In our pluralistic and secularised society it is absolutely necessary that seminarians “learn how to dialogue with everyone: agnostic, atheist and believer; with the Catholic who lives in the past, and with the Catholic so anxious to “update” that he strays from the age-old path of the Church.”⁹⁶³

The team of formators should be capable of relating with seminarians in a friendly manner. They should be people with a certain specialist training for the onerous tasks they perform. Such specialist training would enhance their ability to impart a certain level of discipline to seminarians, in thought and in deed. They should be “qualified, suitable, and convinced persons [...] who will be able to transmit to students the authentic spiritual and academic values for their future ministry.”⁹⁶⁴ The way the formators interact with one another, and the way they interact with seminarians, should enable seminarians to learn how to

⁹⁵⁸ Pastores dabo vobis, 43.

⁹⁵⁹ Mroso A. J., *The Church in Africa and the New Evangelisation: A Theologico-Pastoral Study of the Orientations of John Paul II*. Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana 1995, 53.

⁹⁶⁰ Marcier M., *Integral Formation of Catholic Priests*, 123.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² Pastores dabo vobis, 43.

⁹⁶³ Maciel M., *Integral Formation of Priests*. New York: Alba House 1992, 122.

⁹⁶⁴ Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 29.

be sincerely interested in others, in their concerns and in what they think and say, in their dealings with their classmates and others. That is one of the reasons why the Second Vatican Council states clearly that formators and professors are to be chosen from among the best⁹⁶⁵ of our priests. They “should be keenly aware of the extent to which their mental outlook and conduct affects the formation of their students. Under the guidance of the rector, they should cultivate the closest harmony of spirit and action, and should form with one another and with the students such a family as corresponds to our divine Lord’s prayer: ‘that they may be one’.”⁹⁶⁶

Priestly or religious formation should eschew tensions in the seminary system because of their counter-productive effect on seminarians. Such a tensed environment provokes fear, anxiety, timidity and aggression among seminarians and they end up not being truly themselves all through their period of formation. The adverse effect becomes even more apparent after ordination. The new-ordained priest heaves a sigh of great relief because he has been freed from the “horrors” of the seminary system. Consequently, the ordination becomes for him a licence for aversion toward authority, for feeling of arrogance and superiority toward his fellow human beings and the entire apostolate he is ordained to minister to. To avert this development, seminarians should be trained not to see themselves as *segregatus a populo* (one separated from people) but as people being prepared for a special task with and for the people. It has to be pointed out that the *'segregatio a populo'* idea of the formation of priests hinders dialogue and can lead to arrogance if misconstrued. In fact, “there is nothing wrong with it in the sense that the pastor has a particular obligation in the Church that others do not have. On the other hand, a priest is not *'segregatus a populo'* in the sense of being removed from them, or *ipso facto* better than them.”⁹⁶⁷ A misunderstanding of this concept can make priests view themselves as lords and masters in the pastoral field, to the detriment of their apostolate and to the disadvantage of those they minister to. To view the priesthood as a separate mode of being apart from the rest of the Church makes the whole idea of priesthood absurd. The priest is both *segregatus ad populo* as well as ordained ‘for the people’ ‘in the world’. Moving to make all things new further renders the *segregatus a populo* view inept in our quest for a faith that is relevant. He is not above the community in power, his authority is spiritual and moral, exhibited in humility and service. As an animator, he should never deem himself as apart from the people. He is always in

⁹⁶⁵ OT 5.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Nwosu C.U., *Evangelization in Igboland. Evangelii Nuntiandi Applied to a Nigerian Ecclesiastical Province*. Munich-Kinshasa 1992, 360.

in their midst. In other words, he is close to them.⁹⁶⁸ To say the least, seminarians should be helped to understand that a priest is also a social being; he is a man who lives with others and lives for others by virtue of his call. He is not someone separated from others. In fact: a priest is someone “taken out of mankind and is appointed to act for men in their relations with God.”⁹⁶⁹ His ministry obliges him to be in constant contact with all kinds of people. Some will be kind to him, pleasant and open. Others will be crass, indifferent and almost impossible to deal with. Hence, the sooner he “learns to deal with everyone, respecting and loving them as they are the better. The deep motive for his universal acceptance of others must be the habit of seeing every person as a member of Christ’s Mystical Body, a brother or sister, a child of God destined for salvation”.⁹⁷⁰

The issue of the maintenance of teachers in the seminaries demands attention. Recognising that it is not an easy task to accompany prospective candidates to consecrated lives, the teaching and administrative staff should be adequately maintained so that they will be psychologically and materially well disposed for the onerous tasks they perform. They should be well salaried and provided with adequate working conditions and modern communication systems in their lecture rooms like computers with internet facilities, sound systems, including loud speakers and overhead projectors. In addition to these, the need for standard libraries and seasoned books (books on philosophy, theology and other human sciences) for a sound intellectual, social, psychological and emotional and growth of both for the teaching staff and the taught.

10.1.3 Bridging the Gap between Clergy and Laity

It is pertinent to draw attention again to the yawning gap between the clergy and the laity in Igboland as contradictory to the basic teachings of the Church. The Second Vatican Council, for instance, emphasises *communio* as the fundamental attribute of the People of God. It stipulates that there is multiplicity of ministry but, in spite of this, unity of mission in the Church. It goes further to specify what is meant by this, affirming that Christ entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power to the apostles and their successors. But “the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God.”⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ Heb. 5:1^a.

⁹⁷⁰ Maciel M., *Integral Formation of Catholic Priests*, 121-122.

⁹⁷¹ AA 2

That the Church in Nigeria, and in Igboland in particular, is clerical in all dimensions is an undeniable fact. Bishop G. Ochiagha calls for a check on the unhealthy tendency which leaves no room for healthy relationships in the Church community. In his words: “If we [Catholics] are to check the rising wave of anti-clericalism, a great deal remains to be done in declericalising our conception of the Church [...]. The clergy must find their proper place, the place where the fathers of Vatican put them, ‘the place of members’ servants.”⁹⁷²

The Church and her ministry in Igboland are clericalised, sacralised and hierarchalised to the extent that they discourage the “laity’s awareness and initiative to fulfil their vocation in the mission and ministry of the Church in the world.”⁹⁷³ Thomas H. Groome’s criticism of such ecclesiological structures can be of help in establishing a Church in Igboland that is both clerical and lay, and not only a clerical, sacralised and hierarchical Church. He argues that the clericalising of the ministry discourages the laity’s awareness and initiative in fulfilling their vocation in the ministry and mission of the Church in the world. It negates the rights and responsibilities that come with baptism, by literally taking them out of the hands of the Church as the whole community of Jesus’ disciples and assigning them to an elite caste, to be performed ‘for’ or ‘to’ the people. It de-empowers the laity. For the ordained, clericalism inhibits a priesthood of service modelled on Jesus. By encouraging priests to see themselves as the sole providers of ministry, a clericalised structure can be physically, emotionally, and structurally destructive of priests.

Sacralising the Church and her ministry give the impression that “the quest for holiness through Christian service is the exclusive preserve of a chosen, few and that priests are more favoured by God than the “laity”, who depend entirely on them for access to God’s grace and blessings. It, conversely, gives the ordained a ‘pedestralised self-understanding’ and an ‘exaggerated sense of their “power” apart from and independent of their faith community.’ This self-image leads priests to presume that they control people’s access to God rather than recognise that ‘God is always already present in the community through and with whom they are to minister’”.⁹⁷⁴ Hierarchalising of the ministry creates a ‘top-down’ model of ministry in which goods and services are solely in the hands of the hierarchy, and the people have no significant part in choosing their ministers, in holding them accountable, and in implementing their own

⁹⁷² Ochiagha G., *An Echo from the Past. Anti-clericalism Around the Corner*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1994, 30.

⁹⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁴ Cf. Groome Th. H., *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education & Pastoral Ministry*. NY: HarperSanFrancisco 1991, 321.

charisma for service through a Christian community. It instigate at best a paternalistic style of ministry – for the people – or at worst an autocratic one – over the people. Rather than encouraging people in their ministry, a top-down model maintains them in dependence.⁹⁷⁵

The point being emphasised here is that the Church in Igboland should endeavour to divest herself of her clerical, sacral and hierarchical complex. She should explore the depths of the *communio ecclesiology* of the Second Vatican Council. That the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church focused attention on “People of God” (LG 2) before other forms of belonging to the Church, should bring home the fact that the hierarchy does not supersede the People of God, but forms part of this people. The 37th article of this document calls on pastors not to give up encouraging the activities of the laity in building up the Church. The acceptance of this conciliar statement and its factual application in the life of the Church in Nigeria will go a long way in involving every member of the Church in the Church’s mission. It will bring about a change in the mentality that the Church is “*uka fada*” (the Fathers’s Church)⁹⁷⁶ to “*uka ndi nke Chineke*” (the Church of the people of God). The understanding of the Church as “*uka ndi nke Chineke*” will enable the faithful to appreciate their dignity, place and roles in the fulfilment of the mission of the Church and bridge the gap between the clergy and laity. This same point was stressed by a leading member of the laity council of Nigeria when he recalled that “since the advent of Vatican II, emphasis has shifted from cleric centred Church to all-embracing Church, where the lay persons are ‘both seen and heard’. The era of ‘father’s church’ and passive dormant laity who serve only as church interpreters and catechists is gone. [...] The laity has been called upon to take an active part in the salvific mission of the Church, to permeate and perfect the temporal order in the field of marriage, family life, education, social-economic-political affairs etc, as salt of the earth and light of the world.”⁹⁷⁷

Priests should show increasing interest in the vocation and activities of the laity associations in the Church. They should respect the laity who are also called to participate in the mission of the Church through baptism and confirmation.⁹⁷⁸ The point was made in one of the symposia organised by the Spiritans International School of Theology (SIST) on *The Clergy in Nigeria Today* that

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁶ Ozigbo Ikenga R. A., *Roman Catholicism in Southern Nigeria 1885-1931. A Study in Colonial Evangelism*. Onitsha: Etukokwu Pub. Ltd. 1988, 229.

⁹⁷⁷ Chukwu F. A., *The significant of Laity week*, in: LUMEN. Feb. 1998 edition. Vol. 2 No. 02, page 14.

⁹⁷⁸ Cf. Hemmerle K., *Gerufen und verschenkt. Theologischer Versuch einer geistlichen Ortsbestimmung des Priesters*. Leipzig 1986, 138.

one of the reasons for the non co-operation of some priests with the laity is because many priests do not quite understand the role of the laity and the laity council in the new dispensation in the Church.⁹⁷⁹ The problem is not that priests are unaware of the role of the laity, as the above statement suggests, but that they are unaware of the irreconcilable gap between both parties. The laity, too, has also contributed to the gap between the clergy and lay persons in the Church. Some still live in the past and have the false image or understanding of the Church. Some are so attached with their old fantasies about expatriate priests (missionaries) that they often find it difficult to recognise the competence of indigenous clergy or co-operate with them. There are also some people, especially the rich class, who feel that everybody in the parish community, beginning with the parish priest should be their servants because of their riches or socio-political status everybody.

We have to stress that the gap between clergy and laity in Nigeria, and especially in Igboland, cannot yield any desirable dividend for the Church. The clergy should not see the laity as rivals; neither are the laity to see the clergy as such. It is clear from recent happenings that some anti-clerical tendencies in the Igbo Church - like lack of respect, insults, character assassinations, vilification and brutal manhandling (or murdering) of clerics, which are reaching an alarming proportion - can be traced back to the distance between both parties. There have been cases where such ugly incidence can be traced back to some (not all!) members of diocesan or parish councils. There is need for dialogue, respect and understanding in the relationships between the clergy and the laity in the Church. It has to be noted that it is only in a situation of mutual relationship and understanding between every member of the Church, clergy and non-clergy, as well as the relationship and understanding between members of the Church and non-members of the Church, that the mission of the Church in Igboland will be relevant to the people.

The criticism here made against clericalism, hierarcalism or sacralism does not mean a promotion of anticlericalism, etc. However, it is a fact that there will never be anticlericalism if there is no clericalism. The point is that the Church should try to strike a balance between both currents, following the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The practice of the early Church provides us with the solution. Emphasis should be on the *communio* aspect of the People of God as the principle that directs the Church's activities and interactions among the People of God in the fulfilment of the mission and ministry of the Church. She has to borrow a leaf from the dialogical and consultative elements in the Igbo traditional extended family, system as well as the social system, in which

⁹⁷⁹ Dodo D. D., The Priest in Nigeria, a Layman's Perspective, in: L. N. Mbefo/E.M. Ezeogu (eds.) The Clergy in Nigeria Today. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 1992, 31-48, 39.

every member of the family or community is accommodated, respected, and protected.

10.1.4 The Lay Associations

Lay associations refer to groups like the Laity Council, Catholic Men Organisation (C.M.O.), Catholic Women Organisation (C.W.O.) and the Catholic Youths' Organisation of Nigeria (C.Y.O.N.), etc., which embrace and coordinate the activities of the laity in the Church in the course of the promotion of the Church's mission. The groups, which embrace all lay faithful, conduct periodical activities (meetings, conferences, symposia, projects etc.) on national, provincial, diocesan and parish levels as well as on the level of the basic communities.

By the nature of their functions, these associations constitute an essential organ of the Church's existence, sustenance and evangelisation. They contribute enormously in building up the Church in Igboland and assist in the running of parishes, building of presbyteries and the maintenance of priests. They are important organs of evangelisation, especially through the creation of awareness of the duties of the lay person in the defence of faith.

Characteristic of the lay organisations is the manner by which they conduct themselves, and organise and discharge their activities. The laity organisations operate on the level of intersubjective relationships. Every member is accorded his or her rights and position within the groups. Unlike the hierarchy, which is sometimes authority/power oriented, the laity organisations are purely democratic and open to dialogue. The members' rights are protected in the group. Problems are settled after due deliberation and casting of votes, and elections are conducted according to the provisions of their constitution.

10.1.5 The Lay Apostolate

By lay apostolate I refer here to pious organisations that help in one way or another in ministering to the faith through their various spiritual, catechetical and caritative activities. These organisations range from the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine (C.C.D.), Legion of Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Jude's Society, St. Anthony's Guild, Blue Army, etc, to biblical/prayer groups like the Catholic Biblical Instructors Union (C.B.I.U.)/Catholic Biblical Movement (C.B.M.), Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (C.C.R.M.), etc. They function primarily for the personal sanctification of their members and for the exercise of apostolate within the areas where they operate, and beyond. Through their various activities they contribute enormously in consolidating the faith and as effective organs of

evangelisation through teaching of catechism, bible study/sharing, as well as caritative activities like helping the poor and defending their course, visiting the sick and afflicted, uniting broken families and fostering as well as bringing back fallen Christians to the faith.

They do not start by condemning their audience, but approach them with respect. They extend their services to everyone without discriminating whether the person belongs to the Church or to another. During bible-sharing with non-Catholics or non-believers, for example, they do not start by condemning their audience, but approach them with respect. The Church in Igboland has much to learn from the way these associations relate to each other. The Church's hierarchy should learn to relate to every one of the Church's member as "brother" and "sister", as practised by these lay associations. Understanding each other as "brother" and "sister" should transcend lip service, rather, it should be demonstrated through actions, love and concern towards the other.

10.2 Ecumenical Dialogue

Dialogue between the Church and other sister Churches has been a headline issue in the mission of the Church since the Second Vatican Council. Its importance, as we have seen in the course of this work, has been stressed in the various writings of the Church, and has also found eloquent echoes in the various activities of the Church in recent times.

Ecumenical dialogue is of paramount importance in Igboland in particular because of the increasing number of Christian denominations, African independent Churches, Pentecostal movements and sects that are in the territory. The same is also the case on the national level. Although efforts are already in progress, under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (C.A.N.), to address the problems of the past and to enhance mutual relationship and understanding as well as prevent the situation of proselytism, character assassination and arrogance among these Churches, "fruitful exchanges in terms of understanding and awareness of what each believes are wanting."⁹⁸⁰ The lack of mutual understanding among the Churches has given rise to a lack of charity and humility which has characterised the denominations: they are more pre-occupied with winning over of converts. This situation has given rise to mutual disrespect, suspicion, dishonesty and ignorance among these churches.⁹⁸¹

⁹⁸⁰ Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (ed.) Church in Nigeria: Family of God on Mission (Lineamenta for the First National Pastoral Congress. Lagos: Sovereign Ventures Lagos 1999, 118.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

For ecumenism to be meaningful in Nigeria there is need for humility, mutual confession of guilt and mutual pardon by all Christian Churches in Nigeria. It has to be recognised that every Church has contributed in one way or another to the problem of hostile relationships between the various churches in the country as a result of the political, social, economic and religious climates that prevailed during the missionary era. Bishop L. I. Ugorji's recommendation in this regard should be considered with the seriousness which the situation requires: According to him, fostering unity would be "striving after interior conversion of heart and embracing a life-style rooted in holiness and charity by coming closer to Christ [...] we shall become painfully aware of the contradictions in our lives. How can we continue proclaiming fidelity to the word of the Lord and yet continue to live contrary to his will on Christian unity (cf. Jn. 17, 21)? How can we continue to preach love and unity and yet mutually cherish prejudice and hostilities against one another? How can we continue to preach forgiveness to each other? These contradictions between what we proclaim as Christians and what we do are scandalous, bewildering and confusing to non-Christian. They impede the spread of the Gospel."⁹⁸²

Apart from periodical meetings,⁹⁸³ seminars and intervention in political affairs, the C.A.N. has much to do in the area of translating its objectives into the realities of inter-subjective relationships between Christians of different confessions in Igboland. It should embark on common projects and on "ecumenical cooperation".⁹⁸⁴ The areas of ecumenical services/worships and interchange of visits should be encouraged at all levels of the Church.

10.3 Interreligious Dialogue

Interreligious dialogue, which is the dialogue between the Catholic Church and non-Christian religion, is of great necessity in Nigeria. It is necessary because of the experience of conflicts in the living of the Christian faith and in the people's loyalty to the traditional religions and customs which govern their life.

The Church should learn to respect the traditional religion and its practices, even if some of these practices do not agree with the models of the Christian faith. The same respect is required from the adherents of the traditional religion. It should be borne in mind that there will never be a successful dialogue if

⁹⁸² Ugorji L. I., *That They May Be One: Anglicans and Roman Catholics Overcoming their Divisions*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd. 2000, 52.

⁹⁸³ CAN association meets periodically and organise seminars to discuss the basis differences and areas of similarity among the various churches. It is also an important mouthpiece for Christians to check the activities and policies of the government (national, state or local) in matters that affect the faith.

⁹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

the parties concerned are not ready to listen to each other or tolerate each other. The Igbo Church should learn to appreciate the riches of Igbo tradition and culture. We have already enumerated some traditional and cultural values that can be of benefit to the faith in the first part of this work. If there is really an African way of being a Christian and a Christian way of being African, the cultural values of Africa should be considered as of paramount importance in the practice of Christianity in Igboland.

The Church authorities should bear in mind that sanctions and the punishments of defaulters, which are the attitude in almost every diocese in Igboland, are not solutions to the problems of syncretism in Igboland. People's frequent visits to these places indicate that the Church has not done her homework very well. These remain the challenges of inculturation.

11 CONCLUSION

Without prejudice to the contents of this work, one of the joyful facts about the Church in Nigeria is that it has come to stay. Her growth and achievements since her less-than-two-hundred-years establishment are due to the assiduous effort, courage and deep sense of sacrifice of all who have taken part in the process of evangelisation in the country. These include the missionaries of the early 19th century, the redeemed slaves from whom the initiative to have the presence of missionaries stemmed, the natives, who co-operated with the programme of the missionaries, and above all to the local clergy, religious and laity, who have taken up the tasks of getting the faith deeply rooted in the people's lives and in their practice of the faith.

The major problem facing the Church in Nigeria, and in Igboland in particular, can be summed up as lack of dialogue. Having reviewed the various strides which the Church has undergone, we emphasise the fact that dialogue remains an imperative in the Church's evangelising and pastoral mission. Dialogue is a fundamental option, an option that should be accorded prime consideration. This implies inter-subjective relationships, respect, patience, mutual understanding and the ability to listen to the opinion of one's partner, as well as for the Church turning her back on the factors or ideologies that hinder her efforts in building itself up a community and a family the people of God. The following declaration by the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, after their meetings in February 2002, on commitment, reconciliation and dialogue highlights the point we are stressing in the course of this work..

The Church as family of God not only suffers wounds in its body, but sometimes its members cause wounds to one another and to the larger society. [...] we affirm the need for personal conversion. We urge all Christians to that conversion of hearts, minds, and attitudes to the way of Jesus, to the gospel values that he lived and died for. Without interior renewal and conversion, nothing can be achieved.

We call on all Nigerians to shun violence and imbibe a culture of dialogue and non-violence. We reaffirm the indispensable role of the Justice, Development, and Peace Commissions/Committees (JDPC) at the parish, diocesan, provincial and national levels. These Commissions/Committees are not simply another group or society in the Church but are to oversee and take leadership responsibility in the struggle to heal the wounds of the nation.

In accord with the Social Teaching of the Church, we encourage Catholics to enter the difficult world of politics. Through the Justice,

Development and Peace Commissions/Committees and the Catholic Social Forum (CSF) the Church will provide political education and formation both for candidates vying for office and the electorate.

Catechesis in parishes should include the Church's teaching on the social dimension of sin and grace, and on how Catholics should be agents of healing and reconciliation, standing for non-violent action for justice and peace.

The Church will continue and intensify its efforts to complement the programmes of government in providing health care, education and other social services. The Church commits itself to establishing centres of vocational, functional education that will lead to gainful employment. [...]. We remind all God's people, and the laity in particular, that they are to be salt of the earth and light of the world. All Catholics must be seen to be part and parcel of the healing process of the nation. The Church will continue to set an example for the nation by renewed efforts to follow the example of Jesus by preaching the good news to the poor (cf. Lk. 4:18), and looking after those who are most neglected.⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸⁵ Excerpt from the Communiqué issued at the end of the First Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) for the Year 2002, held at the Pope John Paul II Catholic Centre, Abuja, from 18th to 22nd February 2002 in the first-full week of the Lenten season

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