

# DARE

*Holy Trinity College Theological Journal*



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**Faith Seeking Understanding**

*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*



# **DARE**

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# SCOPE

DARE is a theological journal of Holy Trinity College, an elite school of theology for both laity and religious. It belongs to the Catholic University of Zimbabwe Faculty of theology Harare, Zimbabwe.

The word DARE is a Shona term, which refers to a meeting place for discussion and to some extent, a tribunal of ideas. Let the spelling not confuse you, the reader, with the English 'dare', which means to have courage to do something, or with the Latin verb 'dare' meaning to give.

As a pavilion for discussion, the journal's primary objective is to ensure dialogue by:

- Stimulating artistic, religious, cultural and social talents in writing.
- Promoting theological reflection.
- Providing an effective channel of communication between Holy Trinity College and the People of God.

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## **Editorial**

‘Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a *domestic church*, a church in the home as it were, where God is honored, his law is respected, prayer is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hopes, the problems and sufferings of everyone else.’ This message of the holy Pope John Paul II is ever actual in the current situation of the world. The last two publications of Dare constitute a perfect echo of that imperative, whereby the contemporary Christians are to authentically witness to their faith, in time and against time. The current Covid-19 situation in the world, as challenging as it is, can be seen, and is to be seen, as an opportunity for Christian families to rediscover and strengthen their vocation as domestic churches. There is need for Christians, therefore, to develop an ever close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, through a constant meditation of the Word of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The present Dare publication, ‘**Faith Seeking Understanding**’ (*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*), provides articles in various theological disciplines: Scriptures, Liturgy, Dogmatic, Moral, Church History, etc. It aims at facilitating and directing its readers into their particular areas of interest. **Faith Seeking Understanding** is a collection of theological reflections which serve the purpose of deepening of faith, via a clear comprehension of the Christian faith.

Thus, the first section of the journal offers topics on Sacred Scriptures. Christian faith is a ‘product’ of a long history handed over from one generation to the next. Within that tradition, the life and faith of specific scriptural characters has a lot to say to the contemporary Christians. So, an orthodox approach of those important biblical figures is necessary in the search for an unshakable Christian faith. These articles therefore are reflections on some of the critical issues which are found both in the Old and the New testaments.

The second section is about Sacred Liturgy. The articles reflect on how best Christian faithful can actively participate into the liturgical celebrations of the Church. Different from popular piety, Sacred Liturgy is a moment of encounter with God.

This edition also gives reflections on the Moral Teaching of the Church. In his article, Michael Kyalo (*SJ*) points out that the duty of the Church to work for the salvation of souls and its engaging concern to address the needs of the community of faith is quite pivotal. Majority of the Popes who governed the Church, especially after Vatican II, have vehemently attempted to address two globally touted issues that are a threat to humanity. The two issues are: the use of nuclear weapons and environmental conservation and protection. On the other hand, this section reflects on how Christians can deal with the phenomenon of abortion. The role of social media is pointed out in Vatican II's document *Inter Mirifica*. It says that "readers, viewers and listener of social media fully favor those presentations that are outstanding for their moral goodness, their knowledge and their artistic or technic merit."

Moreover, the role and importance of catechesis is also presented in this publication. The articles point out the place of catechesis in the evangelization mission of the Church. After all, the Church exists to evangelize. Givemore Mazhanje (*ofm*) argues that "true evangelization takes place when the Good News is proclaimed by the witnesses of life and by the word of life; these should include teaching the life, promises, the kingdom and mystery of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God." Catechesis is an educative formation of mind and will for action focused on the life of Jesus Christ.

The mystery of faith evolved within particular cultural environments throughout ages. In its last section, the journal briefly highlights important historical elements in the development of the Church in Zimbabwe. For the meantime, emphasis is put on dioceses of Chinhoyi, Mutare and Masvingo.

*Fides Quaerens Intellectum* offers in these articles a support to its readers; so that they may know the truth which makes people free. For saint Peter says in his first letter: "Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (1Pt 3: 14b-16a). Christians could not be able to explain their belief unless they have a sufficient enlightenment about what they believe in.

The Dare Editorial Board is grateful to all the contributors of this

current publication. Their efforts are highly appreciated. May they remain blessed by God the Father, the owner of this vineyard we are all privilege to work in. The Board's gratitude is towards the Holy Trinity College Administration for the unfailing support which make this Journal a success. Our thankfulness is directed to the Staff Advisor, Father Mark Chikuni (CSsR) for his constant and tireless follow up to make sure that the production process moves smoothly. The Editorial Board expresses its special heartfelt appreciation to the Dare Designer, Br Hugues Charlie Rakotondrainibe (ofm), for his wonderful work in the last four years. As he is leaving the college, the Dare Board implores God's blessing upon him, wishing him a fruitful ministry.

May God bless you all!

*Pax Et Bonum!*

**Gabriel Detigame, ofm.**  
*Chief Editor*

# ***SACRED SCRIPTURES***

## **CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES**

*Cowboy Mteto*

### **Introduction**

Judges is one of the historical books of the Bible. It narrates Israel's journey and the difficulties faced during the occupation of the land after the death of Joshua and before the rulership of kings. The nation went through ups and downs as shall be indicated in this article. There were a lot of challenges as they were trying to cope with a new world of different types of religions, cultures and political situations. This article is discussing these issues focusing on how Israel reacted to them and how these affected their relationship with Yahweh. The article is also looking at critical issues that include authorship, sources, dating, the role of women and the targeted audience.

### **The Book of Judges**

The book of Judges is a story, according to Lawrence Boadt, that tells the legends and the tribal life of Israelites in Palestine which lasted for two hundred years from 1250 BCE to about 1050 BCE.<sup>1</sup> The book covers the story of settlement of the Israelites in the Promised Land after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:1, 2:8), which David Hinson also places between 1200 BCE and 1050 BCE.<sup>2</sup> The book is also the history of Israel during the period of government by judges. Matthew Henry notices how God would raise leaders to occasionally deliver Israel from their enemies and oppressors; reform their state of religion; and administer justice to the people.<sup>3</sup> This is the period when Israel had no king as stated in several verses in the book (18:1; 19:1; 21:25). It is with this background that we explore this book to get an insight of some critical issues in the life of Israel during this period.

### **Dating, Authorship and Sources**

The book narrates the period between Joshua and Samuel, and because of this reason, Georg Fohrer says that the Talmudic tradition considers Samuel the author. He further says however this tradition is contradicted by a gradual growth of the book which can be traced to the

compilations of the first Deuteronomist materials and later additions.<sup>4</sup>

Most scholars have established that the Bible's Old Testament has been written from four major sources; the Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), Priestly (P) and Deuteronomist (D). Etienne Charpentier places (J) around 950 BCE during the time of King Solomon, and (E) in the Northern kingdom around 750 BCE after the United Kingdom of King David when we are seeing the split of Israel.<sup>5</sup> Hinson says the book of Judges is made up from a number of legends well known in the tribes of Israel, recorded in two separate groups, (J) and (E). He says these were later combined to an interpretation that displays a Deuteronomistic view, as the book's final version shows some thoughts of an author influenced by beliefs in the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>6</sup> According to Nancy Bowen's comment in "The Discipleship Study Bible", the book of Deuteronomy is linked to the account of King Josiah's major reform of Israel's institutions, which places the reforms to have taken place around 622 BCE. Although the book of Judges contains legends in the (J) and (E), the author could have been a later writer of the Deuteronomistic period or someone in a much later period influenced by the reforms of King Josiah, as shown in the arguments by the above scholars. Fohrer thinks the book might have been revised probably in the period of the Babylonian Exile.<sup>7</sup>

### **Audience**

Many theories have arisen as to who and why the author wrote the book recounting the stories of Judges. Edisio Sanchez, in "The Discipleship Study Bible", suggests that if the book was written by the beginning of the monarchical period, then what comes to fore is its pro-monarchical attitude. He says, to defeat the main enemies who are in this case the Philistines, Israel needed a strong leadership that would unite the nation, which could only be achieved by having a monarch government. As the book is thought to have been edited during Josiah's reforms, there is suggestion by Sanchez that the redaction was done to consolidate King Josiah's position and place him as a king who was faithful to God like King David. This would encourage Israel to keep God's precepts and rally behind their monarchs.

Hinson has a different view as he sees the book of Judges as targeted

at all the tribes of Israel who are not united at this time. He says the author is trying to explain why the land is not quickly coming into Israel's full control; it is because of Israel's disobedience to Yahweh and God is sending enemies to punish them. If they repent, God would then send a judge to deliver them. It is a message for obedience and faithfulness.<sup>8</sup> Anderson says the story of Judges is important in that it shows how Canaanite cultural conceptions have infiltrated Israelite culture but in time of crisis "Israel's strength is connected with a revival of a vigorous faith in Yahweh".<sup>9</sup> If the book is placed during Josiah's reformation, then it fits well with the intentions of the author to reform and unite Israel in line with Josiah's ideology.

### **The State of Religion**

Several authors agree that Israelites are no longer obedient to the precepts of God during this period. Sanchez notices how "Israel has sunk into covenant disobedience" as he compares the actions of Israel in the book of Joshua and the book of Judges. He notices that in Joshua the people have One God, are united, worship in one place and are obedient to God's precepts, while the opposite is happening in the book of Judges where there are many gods, scattered tribes, disobedience and many sanctuaries and alters. Israel do not seem to act as expected of the chosen people, just as pointed out by Henry that; although there are many believers among them and the tabernacle service attended to, their religious character does not meet the standards expected of them.<sup>10</sup>

Chapters 17 and 18 indicate Israel falling into idolatry. Micah who lives in the hill country of Ephraim has a metal idol god which he has received from his mother and hires a young Levite wonderer whom he appoints as his priest. The Danites, who by this time are still looking for a territory to settle in, visit Micah's shrine where they consult the Levite priest who purports to speak for God and promises them the success of their mission (18:1-6). Such actions are seen going against God's precepts, and are a breach of the covenant between Israel and Yahweh that they shall have no other god before Him (Ex.20:3).

Bernhard Anderson brings up a strong argument that might make us understand the bad religious actions of Israel. He notices that Israel

is moving into a territory with different groups of people of very strong religious beliefs where idolatry is a norm. Canaan is strong with Baal religion, Egypt has the Isis cult based on the worship of the god Osiris (Horus) and in Babylonia there is the Tammuz cult which dramatizes the relations between god Tammuz and goddess Ishtar. Anderson says this has encouraged a lot of borrowing back and forth amongst these religions as they have some similarities in man's relation to his natural and cosmic environment (139-420). In such situations Israel is found to fall in one way or another, for Boadt sees in the Israelites, the spirit of compromise with the local pagan culture of the land. This however brings them to sin, thereby bringing down the wrath of Yahweh.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Women in Judges**

Women have played different roles in the book of Judges. There is a display of heroism by women when Deborah becomes a woman judge and priestess alongside Barak where Israel romps to victory against Jabin's army. Sisera the commander of Jabin's army escapes but falls prey to Jael, a woman of Israel, who kills him with a tent peg, claiming total victory for Israel against the Canaanites (Judg.4:1-22).

Delilah is used by the Philistines as she is enticed to sell the secret of Samson's strength to them in Chapter 16. Samson is eventually killed and this displays an evil act performed by a woman. Jephthah's daughter is sacrificed by her father upon his promise to God and suffers a terrible death (11:34-40). A Levite offers his concubine to the tribe of Benjamin who rape her for the whole night until she dies. He cuts her corpse into twelve pieces that he sends to all the tribes of Israel in Judges 19. This is total disregard for human dignity performed upon a woman.

Men of the tribe of Benjamin are allowed to raid girl dancers at the festival at Shiloh and each take a wife for himself (Judg. 21). They abduct the women who they make their wives, probably largely against the women's wishes. Women in this case are treated as if they should have no right of choice. Although women are pictured as heroines in the early chapters of the book, we later notice a shift that displays women as assets that men can use to achieve their goals.



### **The Themes in Judges**

The people of Israel were torn between Yahweh and Baal. Anderson sees Israelites following their God Yahweh whom they look up to during military crisis times and Baal the god of the land to whom they turn for success in agriculture. They would then worship Yahweh and Baal side by side, bringing to themselves the guilt of idolatry. Apart from idolizing Baal, we have seen earlier how the Israelites themselves went against Yahweh by creating unsanctioned shrines and self-appointed priests like in the case of Micah. Sanchez sights two main themes in the book of Judges, which are idolatry and violence. Hinson sees this as the disobedience that cost Israel's firm and full control of the Promised Land as God would send enemies to punish them.<sup>12</sup>

On the issue of violence displayed in the book in Chapters 19-21, the nation is not united as tribes fight one another, where Benjamin is nearly put into extinction (20:40-48). Boadt points out the violent story of Abimelech in Judges 9 as another picture that shows tribes in open conflict with one another.<sup>13</sup> These sins would happen, but as long as Israel repented and cry to Yahweh, He would raise up men and women as deliverers for them. This, according to Sanchez, is a show that the grace of God is never overcome by any overwhelming presence of evil.

### **Other issues of debate**

The first chapter of Judges seems to suggest that Israel is still struggling to gain control of the Promised Land, after Joshua. This contradicts the common belief that Joshua had delivered the land and allotments done for all the tribes. Judges 1:1 shows Israel crying to Yahweh for a leader to go against the Canaanites. The Lord replies them appointing Judah as their leader in verse 2. Tom Meyer notices how Judah is taking over from Joshua just as Joshua took over from Moses. According to Meyer, this seems as if humans and not God are now taking centre stage. It is not clear at this stage the method used to determine the will of the Lord. Meyer suggests it could be by way of urim and thumim.<sup>14</sup> The whole chapter is an account of how Judah is leading an offensive in the drive to gain control of the land for the tribes. In some cases Israel would make a compromise and live amongst the inhabitants (1:32). The Ashrites were

later unable to come to the assistance of Deborah (Judg.5:17) because of this compromise. Meyer suggests the Ashrites could have possibly been reduced to farmhands by the Canaanites and would not heed to the call by Deborah.

The call of Gideon also brings to the fore the real situation that Israelites are not in full control. Gideon is found by the angel of the Lord thrashing his wheat hiding in a wine press (Judg.6:11-13). They are under oppression as Medianites would raid them and take their produce. Chapter 18 also mentions of Dan still looking for a territory to settle in, which means that by the time of the judges, Israel is still in the process of trying to take over the Promised Land. Apart from their shortcomings and the punishments from Yahweh, the Judges period shows Israelites not fully independent economically, politically and religiously.

### **Conclusion**

An exploration of the book of Judges has shown us some hidden detail pertaining to the real conquest of Canaan. It brings clarity on the position in which Joshua left things after his death. The Promised Land had not been fully realised.

The book has given us an insight of how the nation of Israel battled with economic, political and religious forces in their endeavour to fulfil God's will and promise. As a people trying to catch on their new religion of Yahweh, it was not easy for them to triumph against opposing forces, most of whom were well organised. They were up against well organised inhabitants who had their own strong religious practices and strong military power. It would not have been easy for them as refugees to just come and take over Canaan just like that. The process would need time; in which time, influence from the local people interfered and derailed their plan of occupying the Promised Land.

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<sup>1</sup> Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament (An Introduction)*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. 198

<sup>2</sup> Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament (An Introduction)*. 68

<sup>3</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Bible Commentary: Judges*. Google Application: googleplaystore. 2008. 1

<sup>4</sup> Fohrer, Georg. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SPCK Publishing, 1970. 206

- <sup>5</sup> Charpentier, Etienne. *How to Read the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press, 1981. 27
- <sup>6</sup> Hinson, David F. *The Books of the Old Testament (Old Testament Introduction 2)*. London: SCPK Publishing, 1992. 69
- <sup>7</sup> Fohrer, Georg. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SPCK Publishing, 1970. 229
- <sup>8</sup> Hinson, David F. *The Books of the Old Testament (Old Testament Introduction 2)*. 69
- <sup>9</sup> Anderson, Bernhard. *Understanding the Old Testament*. Eaglewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966. 115
- <sup>10</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Bible Commentary: Judges*. 1
- <sup>11</sup> Anderson, Bernhard W. *The Living World of The Old Testament (Third Edition)*. London: Longman, 1978. 199, 144
- <sup>12</sup> Hinson, David F. *The Books of the Old Testament (Old Testament Introduction 2)*. 69
- <sup>13</sup> Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament (An Introduction)*. 200
- <sup>14</sup> Meyer, Tom (Prof.). *The Book of Judges: A Verse By Verse Commentary*. Amazon.com (Sales Rank:680846), 2014. 46, 287

## CRITICAL ISSUES IN EXODUS

*Perpetua Mteto*

### **Introduction**

Israelites who have moved from Canaan to Egypt due to famine, multiply in great numbers. This poses a threat to Pharaoh who suppresses them into slavery. They cry out and God hears their cry. God reveals Himself to Moses as a burning bush and sends Moses to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, back to Canaan the land promised to their forefather Abraham.

In this essay I am going to look into the critical issues in the book of Exodus. This will include looking at its dating, historicity, authorship, sources, the targeted audience, Israel's state of religion, theological themes, women in Exodus and end with a conclusion.

### **Historicity and Dating**

There is on-going debate about the authenticity of the Exodus story. It has been largely viewed by the majority of people as historically true because of the fact that it is a biblical story. Scholars have a different opinion as John Collins says there is overwhelming consensus among scholars that the Exodus is a mythical story, as it does not describe accurately the historical events.<sup>1</sup> Anderson notices how the Passover is similar to the nomadic celebration traditionally practiced by shepherds even before Moses, where they would sacrifice a young animal, smear the blood on the entrance of the tents, to secure fertility of their flocks and drive away evil spirits. According to Anderson the Passover idea would then be something that did not originate with the Exodus, making the Exodus a compilation of different traditional stories which cannot be historically placed.<sup>2</sup> This is the reason why most scholars view it as a folk story as stated by Collins.

Nancy Bowen in her contribution on the book of Exodus in the Discipleship's study bible says some scholars argue that the Exodus took place approximately 1400s BCE but others put the date as late as the 1200s BCE. In this case the dating of the Exodus is in question according to the comment by Bowen. Bowen further states that the Pharaoh

mentioned in 1:8 is not identified, therefore dating cannot be accurate without fixing a known period to a Pharaoh. Bernhard Anderson puts the date in line with some Historians who believe that the Exodus began around the 18th dynasty when Ahmose 1 expelled the Hyksos from Egypt after their conquest. The Hyksos constituted Semites, Hittites and Hurrians. They were foreign rulers of Egypt and when Ahmose 1 took over some of the ruling class was driven out.<sup>3</sup> Anderson further explains that some Semites remained in Egypt together with the Hebrews who were also of a Semitic origin. The Hebrews only fell victim to the revival of Egypt during the 15th to the 13th century BCE, when Pharaohs needed cheap labor.<sup>4</sup> This historical narrative may be confirmation that a people called Israelites existed and were enslaved by Egypt at a known period although no Pharaoh is affixed to give the exact time as noticed by Bowen.

### **Authorship and Sources**

Traditionally the book of Exodus is attributed to Moses and thought to have been written around 1400 BCE. The view of Biblical scholars now is that Moses did not write or could not have written Exodus. David Hinson says that there are some discrepancies in the book of Exodus which some scholars use to support their argument that Moses did not write the Exodus. He notices that Moses took his wife and children to Egypt in Exodus 4:20 which is contrary to 18:2-3 where he is said to have left his wife and children at his father in law in Midian. This contradiction puts in doubt the authorship of the book by Moses who would not give different accounts about the movement of his family.<sup>5</sup>

Since the authorship of Moses is in question, Anderson says many scholars conclude that the story of the Exodus comes from two different sources, the Yahwist (J) and the Elohim (E). Anderson goes on to say that some Scholars evidence concludes that the narrative represents a blending of sources as written in Exodus 3:1 where the word God (Elohim) is used interchangeably with Lord (YHWH) indicating the combination of the (J) and (E) sources. One Author would not use two names interchangeably. Lawrence Boadt confirms that the older J and E traditions know of covenants made with Abraham (Gen 15) renewed with Isaac (Gen 26), renewed yet again with Jacob (Gen 28) and finally sealed with Moses

and the one on Mount Sinai (Ex 3 and 24). The authors could have put together information from these different sources making it a case that Moses could not have been the sole author, if at all he was involved.<sup>6</sup>

### **Audience**

It seems the book of Exodus is targeted at Israel throughout their whole life as we find the events in Exodus repeated over and over again even in the New Testament. Stephen the first Christian martyr recounts the Exodus to his fellow Jews stressing the point that they should not be swayed to follow other gods but Yahweh who has come in Christ (Acts 7:1-60). The Old Testament has the laws and precepts of God in Exodus expanded in Leviticus, Numbers and repeated in Deuteronomy where the authors stress the need to keep the laws of Yahweh; the blessings if the laws are kept and the curses where there is disobedience (Deut.27-28).

Anderson notes how the Exodus story remained relevant to the young generation of Deuteronomy when he cites a passage that deals with God's religious instructions. He refers to the passage as it reads; "When your son asks about the meaning and motive of obeying the commandments, the answer is to be given in recitation" of events that took place; past present and future. No Israelite was ever to forget the events of the Exodus.

Bowen connects the Exodus and its laws to the present-day situation. The salvation that humanity seeks today, is a response to God's gracious acts in the Exodus. She says this law has always followed gospel. This is true as scripture is one of the three pillars of the Church together with tradition and Magisterium. This therefore widens the target audience of the book of Exodus; the past, present and future.

### **Israel's State of religion during the Exodus**

The Bible tells us that Israelites dwelled in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years (Ex.12:40). This is a long period that would mean the possibility of the last generations not knowing the God of their forefather Abraham. Moses confirms this notion in Exodus 3:13-14. Here are a people who are being introduced to a new religion of Yahweh. In Egypt where they are coming from, they are subjected to the worship of Osiris

(Horus) of the Isis cult. During their desert journey, they encounter the Tammuz cult that has a lot in common with the Baal religion which is firm on idolatry. Israel is fighting against these strong forces to try and live up to the newly introduced religion of Yahweh. Boadt says Israel found themselves easily compromised to the local cultures and religions and began to serve Baal alongside Yahweh.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, their state of religion is falling short of the expectations of Yahweh.

Israelites show their weakness as early as the first major camp at Mount Sinai where they demand a molded idol god of a golden calf from Aaron (Exodus 32). This proves that the idea of Yahweh and the new religion would take time to sink in them.

### **Theological Themes**

The story in Chapters 3:1 – 4:17, tends to tell us who God is, what he does and his character. God reveals and identifies himself to Moses in a burning bush and converses direct with him. He reveals his divine name as “I AM” (3:13-14). The theophany is a theme in that God can reveal Himself to mankind. Revelation has always stood as a firm confirmation of God’s presents within the lives of humans. This is why, according to Gabriel Moran, God chose a group of people in whom He would reveal Himself in the word.<sup>8</sup>

The next theme is salvation. Boadt views the book of Exodus as a story that narrates the glorification of God who saves. He says although modern readers seem to think that these biblical stories are harsh, primitive, violent and warlike, in the world of the weak who have little protection and fewer rights, the God who fights and defend them is a God worth worshipping. God delivered Israel from slavery and brought them to Mount Sinai where He brought them into a covenant with Himself and lived amongst them in the tabernacle. Here God displays His saving power. The history of salvation continues from the time when God set Abraham apart for this purpose (Gen.12) up to this day where humanity is saved through Christ. Bowen connects the physical bondage of Israelites to the spiritual bondage humanity suffers today because of sin where humanity is seeking salvation through Christ.<sup>9</sup>

All humanity that suffers oppression looks forward to being liberated

one day. The liberation of the Israelites in the Exodus has inspired many freedom movements the world over. According to a comment in *The African Bible*, the Exodus is a book for Africans as they have undergone several forms of oppression due to colonialism. It says Exodus remains a key liberation theme for those that are still oppressed by modern pharaohs. It gives them the will to fight on relying on God who they view as the liberator, in their search for self-identity.<sup>10</sup>

Bowen sees the laws in Exodus as designed to structure covenant life. The laws are derived from family or clan ethos that control forms of broad behavior to develop a guideline based on community experience. Mary Fairchild in her article on God's Justice, also says the Exodus transformed the Jewish people and their religious ethical system, which Christianity and Islam have adopted at their core, making half the world profoundly shaped by the after effects of the Exodus.<sup>11</sup>

### **Women in Exodus**

In Exodus women play prominent roles. Shiphrah and Puah who are the Hebrew midwives disobey Pharaoh who instructs them to kill the male born babies of the Hebrews. Their action saves Moses who later becomes the leader of their salvation and freedom (Ex.1:15-21). Although Moses was her child Jechobed plays an important role as she places Moses in Ark of bulrushes adrift the Nile River. In some sense she is being used by God who has his plan for the chosen people (Ex.2:1-4). Miriam plays the shepherd of Moses until he is picked up by Pharaoh's daughter who becomes Moses savior and adopts him. Miriam is also included in the hierarchy that leads the Israelites out of Egypt from slavery and sings a song to the Lord (Ex. 15:20-21). Zipporah Moses's wife, daughter of Midianite priest Jethro, saves Moses from the anger of God by cutting her son's foreskin as a ritual to please God (Ex.4:24-26). The above mentioned women have played significant roles in the Exodus story in terms of Moses's life, but they are omitted from critical legal issues as only men are chosen to help Moses in leading the people. Women assist in the building and furnishing of the Tabernacle but only men are allowed into the Tent of meeting (Ex. 35:21-26). This shows a patriarchal bias of the Biblical communities. Women are treated as property and Exodus



20:17 supports this view.

### Conclusion

While the Exodus story may have its controversies, it has helped in shaping humanity as the events of the Exodus remain relevant today. Our ethics as humans are centered on the Ten Commandments which have become the backbone of all things that relate to God. The Christian world today is shaped by them. The Exodus is the most influential historical event of all time as the recorded events recur in the life of humans. From this exploration, there is show that humanity is still journeying to salvation, looking at all the troubles in the world. Like the Israelites who are looking up to God to save them, humanity is also looking up to God to save them both physically and spiritually today. Exodus remains relevant yesterday, today and tomorrow.

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<sup>2</sup> Anderson, Bernhard W. *The Living World of the Old Testament* 3rd Edition. London: The Longman Group Ltd, 1978. 62-3

<sup>3</sup> Birch, Bruce C; Blount, Brian K; Long, Thomas G; O'Day, Gail R; Towner, Sibley W. *The Discipleship Study Bible*. London: John Knox Press, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, Bernhard W. *The Living World of the Old Testament* 3rd Edition. 39-41

<sup>5</sup> Hinson, David F. *The books of the Old Testament Revised Edition*. London: SPCK Holy Trinity Church, 1992. 42

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, Bernhard W. *The Living World of the Old Testament* 3rd Edition. 173, 140

<sup>7</sup> Boadt Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. 199

<sup>8</sup> Moran, Gabriel. *Theology of Revelation*. Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd, 1967. 42

<sup>9</sup> Boadt Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament*. 73, 165

<sup>10</sup> Colacrai, Angelo; Victor Zinkurature. *The New African Bible*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Fairchild, Mary. *God's Justice*. <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-exodus-effect/> Accessed 09/16/2019.

## CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

*Gift Chinyadza, O. Carm.*

### **Introduction**

Genesis comes from the Hebrew ‘Bereshit’ which is translated to mean the beginning of something or formation of something. Genesis is that biblical book that gives an account of how the world came into being and the origin of all species. The book of Genesis is one of the books in the Hebrew bible that has raised critical questions in the world of biblical scholarship. These questions have led various biblical scholars to investigate and study the book of Genesis in its depths. Biblical scholars are not in agreement about these issues. The following piece of discussion seeks to discuss the critical issues in the book of Genesis considering what different scholars mention about those issues. The article will discuss the following issues: authorship, date, creation stories, historicity, theological themes, women in Genesis, flood narratives, Genesis and the Ancient Near Eastern Traditions, inconsistencies and many other issues that are going to follow.

### **Authorship**

The question who wrote the book of Genesis is one of the most crucial questions that has provoked many biblical scholars. Generally, traditionally it was believed that it was Moses who wrote the first five books of the Hebrew bible. However, this has been an issue of concern among biblical scholars since the position that Moses wrote the book of Genesis is not a convincing one. Ceresko in his book, “Introduction to the Old Testament” quotes Richard Simon questioning the idea that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch which includes the book of Genesis which is under scrutiny in this paper. He mentions that there are incongruities in the creation and the flood stories that are in Genesis. Looking at Genesis 1:26-27 and Genesis 2:4,7, he says that, “ We now understand that these differences in detail between the two creation accounts reflect two sources that have been woven together in these chapters.<sup>1</sup> The argument that Ceresko brings about in his analysis of the book of Genesis shows that this was not the work of one man or source, but two sources are at play. Whybray also affirms what Ceresko notes by saying that there is evidence of more than one source

used in the construction of the biblical narratives in the book of Genesis, there is a combination of two or more sources (14).

F J Sheed also argues that “Genesis is a compilation.”<sup>2</sup> Sheed is of this view because of the same reasons raised by Ceresko and Whybray which are lack of a consistent story that could have been written by one person that is Moses in this case. Therefore, from the above criticisms of the traditional view that Moses is the author of the book of Genesis and the whole of Pentateuch, it is clear that he is not. There are various sources at play which are trying to account for the beginning of a story of a people. Hence Moses cannot be attributed to be the author of Genesis. This will lead one to the documentary hypothesis by Welhausen which will be discussed on the critical issues on the creation and flood stories.

Moreover, the question of dating of the writing of the book of Genesis rises questions whether Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. Biblical scholars have proposed that considering the time Genesis could have been written, it cannot be Moses who can be said to be the author of such narrative. According to Sheed, the information that is in the Pentateuch was written years later after the time of Moses. Sheed possess crucial question in giving a critique of Moses’ authorship of Genesis, he asks, “what could Moses in the thirteenth century or the compiler in the sixth, know of the beginnings of the human race thirty thousand years or hundred years before?”. He goes on to mention that the compilation of the book of Genesis is believed by biblical scholars that it took place near the end of the Babylonian exile that is around 500BCE. Clifford and Murphy in the Jerome biblical commentary argue that “These stories have been written and edited for different generations...”. If this is the case, it would be impossible for Moses to have been the author of the book of Genesis because during this period, Moses was long dead and he couldn’t have survived all these generation as Murphy and Clifford puts it. Sheed does not deny that Moses plays a prominent role in the Pentateuch, but that does not mean that he is the author. Whybray N supports this by mentioning that the book of Genesis even talks about “persons who lived and events that took place before Moses was born”.<sup>3</sup> Rast W. E mentions that the composition of the book of Genesis did not take place in one moment but it was composed through stages and in different centuries.<sup>4</sup> Gunkel emphasizes the point that

what is written in the Pentateuch was passed to generations orally and it was not committed to writing for many centuries.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, considering the possible dates that the book of Genesis could have been committed to writing, Moses cannot be said to be the author of the book of Genesis.

### **Inconsistencies in some stories in Genesis**

Furthermore, another critical issue that has been raised on the book of Genesis is that there are two creation stories. The stories found in Genesis Chapter 1 and Genesis Chapter 2 talk of the same thing that is the origins of the universe but in a different manner. Whybray commenting on Genesis 2 mentions that, “It is evident that this narrative, which could stand by itself as a complete and independent story, has taken up themes and motifs quite different from those employed in Chapter 1”.<sup>6</sup> This takes us to the documentary hypothesis by J Wellhausen who argued that in the writing of the biblical narratives especially the books of the Law (Torah) there were four major sources that were at play which came from different traditions. These sources are ‘J- Yahwist/ Jehovist, E- Elohist, P- Priestly and the D- Deuteronomistic.’<sup>7</sup> These two stories of how things came to be show that there were not written by a single writer. Morgenstern discusses this issue of Genesis as it is commented by Shwally. He notes that Shwally observes that the conceptions of Yahweh in the two narratives are different. In Genesis 1 God is depicted as a transcendental being who creates all things by the word of mouth. In her words Morgenstern noted that, “The conception of a deity so transcendental and spiritual that he creates merely by uttering his divine fiat, “Let such and such be”. This for Morgenstern differs with the concept that is depicted in Genesis chapter 2 in which God is more of an anthropomorphic conception of God. Morgenstern continues to say that the story in Genesis 2, “is radically different from the conception of a deity makes and fashions things, some of them even in His own image” (171). Ceresko noted that in chapter 2 of Genesis, that it is the J source that depicts a God who is near to His creatures in their day to day living.<sup>8</sup> The two theological ideas brought in the two creation stories show that there are inconsistencies within the book of Genesis and which account can be taken to be the true one and the reliable one.

Moreover, biblical scholarship has also posed some questions on the

flood stories in Genesis. These stories leave a biblical scholar with divergent theologies. In Genesis there are two flood stories that are found in Genesis 6 and 7. Sheed notes that there is evidence of the works of two sources which are the J and E. These two sources left the stories unsettled at the end. In Genesis 6 Noah is said to have been instructed to “Of all living creatures you shall bring two of every kind in the ark...” (Genesis 6:19). In another account he is instructed to “Of every clean animal, take with you seven pairs...of the unclean animals, one pair...” (Genesis 7:2). These two accounts show the inconsistencies that are there, and this leads scholars to debate which one of these accounts is the reliable one.

### **Historicity**

Moreover, the historicity of the book of Genesis is also doubted. It is not clear whether what is in the book of Genesis depicts what actually happened in the beginning of time. It seems that the book of Genesis tells a story of trying to give an account of the beginning of the universe. If it is a historical story, one can ask the question who was there when the Genesis took place? Also, questions have been raised whether there are extra biblical materials that support the historicity of the book of Genesis. Most scholars tend to believe that the stories in the book of Genesis, especially the first part of it are more of mythical and sagas than historical stories. Morgenstern cements this by mentioning that, “... practically all scholars are agreed as to the dependence of the story in its principal details upon the great Babylonian creation myth”<sup>9</sup> This points to the fact that the Genesis story is based on a myth that was circulating in Babylon. McKenzie J L in his article “Myth and Old Testament” argues that, “It is not a tenable view that God in revealing Himself also revealed directly and in detail the truth about such things as creation and the fall of man; the very presence of so many mythical elements in their traditions is enough to eliminate such a view”<sup>10</sup>

The argument brought by McKenzie points to the idea that what is in the book of Genesis did not actually happen but there are myths told in a quest to try to communicate certain theological themes such as the fall of the human person and trying to explain why people die.

In addition to the above, however Thomas Horne seems to hold different

views with regards to the historicity of the book of Genesis. He believes that what is in the book of Genesis happened. According to Horne, “The style of these chapters, as indeed, of the whole book of Genesis, is strictly historical, and betrays no vestige whatever of allegorical or figurative description; this is so evident to anyone that reads with attention, as to need no proof”.<sup>11</sup>

However, Horne disputes the allegations laid against the book of Genesis that it is allegorical or that it is a myth by the way the first eleven chapters are written. For him, he tries to scrutinize the language that is used, and he argues that it is not language of an allegory or a myth. Looking at these two divergent views, one can argue that the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis cannot be taken as historical accounts as scholars like Morgenstern and McKenzie have put it. One can put the question that if it is a historical account, who was there who witnessed this taking place and are there archeological evidence that can be put forward to support this? Thus, although there are disagreements among biblical scholars, one can doubt the historicity of Genesis but that it is a story that is said to pass on a certain theological message.

### **Genesis and the Ancient Near Eastern writings and traditions**

Moving on looking at the biblical narratives in Genesis such as creation and flood stories one can note that some of them look the same with some of the Ancient Near Eastern stories and legends. This has led biblical scholars to question whether what is in the book of Genesis was unique to the stories of the Israelite people or they were borrowed. Scholars have argued for and against the influence of the creational stories from the ancient near Eastern traditions like the Egyptian and the Babylonian. Gunkel asserts that the creation stories in Genesis and the legend of Enuma Elish have slight things in common such that one cannot conclude that they were influenced by them. His argument is mainly based on the concept of God that is derived from Genesis and the Enuma Elish. Gunkel says in Genesis there is the idea of monotheism whilst the Enuma Elish conveys a polytheistic idea of God.<sup>12</sup>

However, B W Anderson postulates that there are two probabilities: the first one is that the fathers of Israel could have borrowed some traditions

from where they came from or from the Ancient Near Eastern Traditions. He noted that, “Probably the patriarchs brought with them from ... some of the traditions that were later transformed and incorporated into the religious epic now found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis”.<sup>13</sup> Anderson compares the stories and argues that there are formal similarities with the stories in Genesis. He compares them with, “From the first Dynasty of Babylonia comes the creation story known as the *Enuma Elish*, as well as the flood story preserved in the *Gilgamesh Epic*”. He goes on to compare the story of the ‘Tower of Babel’ in Genesis 11:1-9 with that of ‘Etemenanki’ in Babylon. The above scholarly evidence points to the fact that what is in the book of Genesis especially what is in the first eleven chapters could have been taken from the places where people like Abraham came from or travelled to. Another possibility is that what is in Genesis could have been influenced by the interactions of the Israelites and other nations and they could have copied the time when they were in Babylonian exile as other scholars put it. Thus, the uniqueness of Genesis is a critical issue in the world of biblical scholarship.

### **Women in Genesis**

Lastly this paper discusses issues about how women are presented in the book of Genesis. Some feministic scholars have challenged the way women are presented in Genesis. Phyllis Bird mentions that “The harlot was... she was in every period a figure of disrepute and shame (Genesis 34:31)... subjected to punishment and death (Genesis 38:24). But the harlot was tolerated in every period by men who incurred no legal penalties”.<sup>14</sup> This shows how women were treated in a patriarchal society that if they were caught harlotting, they were punished but the men they were caught with were not punished. This has caused dissention among scholars whether the bible creates an image that men are superior to women. In short Bird noted that, “These writings portray a man’s world”. Thus, there seems to be a bias against women in Genesis together with other examples in the Genesis stories.

In a nutshell one can note that there are many issues in Genesis that have been questioned by biblical scholars in dialogue in the above paper. The paper has looked at the critical issues that include women in Genesis,

creation stories, Genesis and the Ancient Near Eastern traditions, authorship of Genesis, its historicity and some notable inconsistencies in the Genesis stories. This is as discussed in the above piece of discussion.

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- <sup>3</sup> Whybray Norman R. *Introduction to The Pentateuch*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Michigan Cambridge, 1995. 2
- <sup>4</sup> Rast Walter E. *Tradition History and the Old Testament*. Fortress Press, New York, 1972. 4
- <sup>5</sup> Gunkel Hermann. *The Legends of Genesis*. The Open Court Publishing Co. New York, 1964. 25
- <sup>6</sup> Whybray Norman R. *Introduction to The Pentateuch*. 42
- <sup>7</sup> Wellhausen Julius. *Prolegomena to The History of Israel*. Translated from German By Sutherland Band Allan Menzies. Adam & Charles Black, Edinburgh 1885. 5
- <sup>8</sup> Ceresko Antony R. *Introduction to The Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. 70
- <sup>9</sup> Morgenstern Julian. *The Sources of the Creation Story--Genesis 1:1-2:4*. The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Apr., 1920), pp. 169-212. The University of Chicago Press: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/528125> Accessed: 21-10-2019
- <sup>10</sup> McKenzie, John L. "Myth and the Old Testament," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. 1959. 29
- <sup>11</sup> Horne, Thomas H. *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. 1970. 205
- <sup>12</sup> Gunkel Hermann. *The Legends of Genesis*. 41
- <sup>13</sup> Anderson Bernhard W. *The Living World of the Old Testament*. Longmans, Green and Co Ltd. London 1958. 20
- <sup>14</sup> Gottwald Norman (ed). *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. Orbis Books, New York 1983. 253, 272



## **COMMISSIONING OF THE TWELVE:AN ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 10:5-15.**

*Shelton Zimondi, O. Carm.*

### **Introduction**

Prior to Matthew 10:5-15 Jesus evidently executes his mission. The Matthean Jesus proclaims about the kingdom of heaven and heals many who are sick. He heals a leper, paralytic and the blind to mention but a few (Mat 8; 9). Hence, in chapter 10:5-15 Jesus sends his twelve disciples to further his mission. Hence, it is imperative that in this paper, I analyse the commission discourse as presented in Matthew 10:5-15 and ascertain how the disciples were to accomplish it. To achieve this aim, the work commences by looking at the term apostle as background information followed by an analysis of the passage. Thereafter, I will discuss what is in the primary texts and what the secondary literature say showing whether I agree or not to the facts highlighted therein giving justification for my position. Eventually, a conclusion will be drawn that Matthew's heightening moment in the mission discourse is his radical demand for simplicity. This simplicity would prove the value of their mission.

### **Background: Apostle**

The Matthean Jesus' commissioning of the twelve disciples not to the Gentiles nor Samaritan town but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel gives significance to what the term "twelve" means.<sup>1</sup> According to Eric Baker, the Matthean passage is the first one to associate the number twelve with the disciples and the house of Israel, which relates to the twelve tribes of Israel. In a synopsis, an apostle means to be sent. It refers to one with delegated power or authority and it would also give reference to an agent or a messenger.

The ancient Israelite tradition formally involved the use of agents or messengers (Prov 10:26; 13:17). In this respect, Craig Keener holds that such agency ultimately was endorsed a legal custom so persuasive that it was adopted by both Roman and Jewish laws especially in intermediary marriage-brokers and in betrothals.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that the agent or messenger would act on the pretext of the authority granted by and on

behalf of the sender or commissioner. For that reason, Keener would say that how one treats Jesus' agents or messengers (apostles) depicts how one treats Jesus himself. Furthermore, he asserts that "similarly mistreating people's envoys was the epitome of treachery warranting severe punishment" – God's representatives are not an exception. Therefore, Jesus' commissioning of the twelve disciples implies that the ones sent are to perform not their own duties but those that their master prescribes. In the context of Keener, this subsequently follows that those mistreating the twelve warrant severe punishment since the disciples represents Jesus. Jesus' disciples are his Apostles.

### **What is happening in Matthew 10:5-15?**

The passage presents Jesus sending out the twelve disciples on a mission. Their mission is to proclaim the Good News they have received from Jesus. They are to preach that the kingdom of heaven is imminent. However, the disciples are sent not to the Gentiles or Samaritans but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (v 6). They are instructed to preach as they travel. We also encounter Jesus instructing the twelve disciples on what to do and how to act along the journey. Jesus instructs them to do four things: to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demon (v 7). The Matthean Jesus gives his disciples radical demands not to carry any gold or silver or copper for their belts; not to carry a sack for the journey or a second tunic or sandals or staff (v 10). He also teaches them on how to deal with acceptance and rejection in their mission. In addition, he explains the consequences of those who either reject them or the Good News. Thus, Jesus points out clearly how both the ones sent and the recipients should act.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the Matthean Jesus projects the eschatological fate of those who reject the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. However, in the passage we meet Jesus and the twelve disciples as the characters.

### **The literary context of the passage**

Prior to the commissioning of the twelve Apostles, Jesus gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every infirmity (Mat 10:1). With immediacy, Matthew list those who have

received authority from Jesus. It is imperative to note that in Matthew chapters 8-9 the evangelist presents a powerful Jesus. He proves that Jesus is the son of David (Mat 9:27); one who heals people of their sicknesses. He is one with authority over unclean spirits – a miracle worker. Hence, in Matthew 10:1 Jesus seems to be sharing this power with his disciples. According to Daniel Harrington, the statement in chapter 10:1 that the disciples were to heal every disease and every illness connects well with Mat 9:35, which states that Jesus went around to all towns and villages proclaiming the gospel and healing every disease and every illness. As such, for him chapters 9:35-38 and 10:1-4 form an introduction to the mission discourse. In other words, the two passages prior to Matthew 10:5 introduces what unfolds in the passage under study.

Nevertheless, in the passage that follows after the mission discourse (10:5-15), Matthew presents Jesus foretelling and warning his disciples about the persecutions they are to encounter in their mission. He tells them that he sends them like sheep among wolves (v 16). Therefore, they are to meet with challenges and persecutions. Most interestingly, the post passage (10:16-25) may be seen as a second part of the mission discourse. Hence, in the second part of the mission discourse, Jesus categorically promises his disciples sufferings during the course of the mission and he explains to them that such trials and tribulations are ineluctably linked with following him.<sup>4</sup> By this Jesus shows that person and persecutions are inseparable. However, the Matthean Jesus gives the disciples two promises. First, that for the persecutions by kings and pagans the Holy Spirit will help them. Second, he promises them that amid the conflicts within the family and persecutions in the town, the Son of man would come (v 21-23). Accordingly, the literary context of the passage proves the interconnectiveness of the three passages.

### **Parallel passages**

Matthew 10:5-15 parallels with Mark 6:6-13 and Luke 9:1-6. This shows that there is information that Matthew got from Mark and where he parallels with Luke it shows that they both got it from Quelle source. But, there is some information unique to Matthew that he probably got from his special Matthean source referred to as “M” source. For example,

where Jesus say, “Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give” (v 8). Matthew seems to emphasise that as the disciples got the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and the power to heal free of charge, they are to do likewise – to share it generously. Also unique to Matthew is his charge for the disciples to go not into Gentiles and Samaritan territories but rather, to the lost sheep of Israel (v 5-6). Fundamentally, the expression “the lost sheep” refers not only to one group within Israel but rather to all Israel. The Matthean Jesus also stresses the proclamation of the immediacy of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew would have got this from “Q” source and adds the emphasis of the immanency of the kingdom. Looking at the parallel between Matthew’s passage and Mark 6:9, it is evident that the former is radical on what the disciples are to carry. He prohibits food-bag, spare tunic, sandals and a walking stick, among others. Contrariwise, the Markian Jesus permits the disciples to wear sandals; this is not found in Luke chapter 9:1-6.

While Mark and Luke state the mission of the disciples as to proclaim repentance and the kingdom of God respectively, they are to heal the sick and cure them. They are also given the power over the unclean spirits as Mark states (Mk 6:7). For Matthew, the disciples are commanded to perform five duties. Namely, to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons (v 8). Perhaps, Matthew outlines these instructions to establish continuity between Jesus’ deeds and those of his twelve disciples. The disciples of Jesus are to do as their master did, heal, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons.

As highlighted earlier on, Matthew’s passage parallels with Luke 9:1-6. However, it seems that Luke begins by showing the two tasks that the disciples are to carry, that is, to heal and preach. Thereafter, he reveals what the disciples are not required to carry for the journey. In contrast, Matthew has inverted the order of the two actions with the healing coming after the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Bazzana asserts that it is like this because Matthew interprets the cure as a sign of the incoming kingdom. While Mark and Luke demands that the disciples are to carry no money, Matthew choses to list that they are to carry no gold or silver or copper for their belts. Matthew also mentions the fate of those who rejects the disciples stating that it will be worse for them than

for Sodom and Gomorrah (v 15). On this note, perhaps Matthew wants to show the eschatological aspect of the mission entrusted to the disciples. Most probably, the Matthean Jesus gives his disciples such radical demands simply because he wants it that way since Matthew has evidently shown that Jesus is powerful and he is the Son of God, he is God. Hence, God has power do whatever he wills.

### **The primary texts**

The term Cynic comes from the Greek word *Kyon* which means “dog”. The word used to refer to a group of Greek ascetics. They were called “Dogs” probably because they were wandering around towns and villages preaching. The Cynics were an ascetic group of people who had a great degree of self-discipline. People who strived for simplicity of life. However, the letter of Crates, a Cynic to the Athenians seems to provide a background of the passage under scrutiny (Mat 10:5-15). Crates in his letter states that “...do not be angry whenever you are asked for a tribology by wise men. For you are giving back not what is yours but what is theirs. This implicitly connects with Matthew’s expression that “without cost you received; without cost you are to give” (v 8). Thus, Jesus instructs his disciples to be generous with the gifts he has endowed upon them. In other words, Crates’ letter suggests that what Matthew writes in this verse is not something unique. It was being practiced in some other religious tradition.

The Cynic, Diogenes’ letter to his father Hicetas have some tenants to furnish one’s understanding of Matthew’s passage. From Diogenes’ letter, one would learn that Cynics were a religious group whose members moved around preaching. Malherbe gives evidence that they carried a wallet and a staff in their hands. The letter also suggests that Cynics were

satisfied with little – they were not people of great wealth. As Diogenes writes to his father, he expresses his satisfaction with his way of life. Furthermore, Cynics were shameless and people of no repute. All these characteristics led them to be identified as messengers of the gods.

Nevertheless, Diogenes’ letter highlights that the sending of the disciples in Matthew 10:5-15 was not first of its kind. There were some groups like the Cynics who also moved around villages and towns preaching their religion. Again, probably just as happy or ready to be send as was Diogenes

likewise is with the disciples when they are being commissioned. Perhaps, this primary text tells us about why the twelve disciples are not to carry a spare tunic or anything else (v 9-10). Given that the Cynics were carrying a staff and a wallet, it is possible that Jesus wants to distinguish his disciples from other groups of wanderers. Indeed, such radical demand would help in distinguishing them from the other groups such as the Cynics and other fraud movements. Perhaps, the distinction would help people to know the true disciples against other wanderers.

However, the aspect of the shamelessness of the Cynics seems to point out to Jesus' instruction to leave any house or village that rejects them. The disciples are not to be ashamed of rejection but to leave and find another house to stay. On a different note, Jesus might have given his disciples such instructions as in the passage simply because that is what he wants from them, especially given who Jesus proves to be in the previous chapters of Matthew. The passages prior to Matthew 10:5-15 evidently portrayed Jesus as a divine and powerful man able to heal and perform miracles, among other things. Hence, with such authority he would do as he wish. The Cynics might have been going everywhere spreading their message. On the contrary, the Matthean Jesus brings a difference. He instructs his disciples not to go into pagan territory or Samaritan town but to where he wants thus, to the house of Israel (v 5-6). Finally, one would wonder whether there is a connection or not between Matthew's passage and the Cynics as presented in the primary text. There seem to be no direct connection but nevertheless the Cynic connection cannot be entirely ruled out.

### **The secondary texts**

Keener asserts that what makes Jesus to instruct his disciples not to go anywhere else besides to the lost sheep of the house of Israel is that the disciples are not yet ready to cross cultural boundaries. On this note, Keener might be right but one would wonder why Jesus does not equip his disciples enough to be able to cross cultural boundaries considering his divine power and authority as presented by Matthew earlier on in his gospel. It is imperative to note that the central point of this passage is the clarity that Jesus sends the twelve only to the house of Israel and not to the Gentiles or Samaritans, which mirrors accurately the view of the

first-century Judaism. Nevertheless, the passage under study would be seen as a temporary restriction in contrast with Matthew 28:16-20 where after Jesus resurrected commissions his disciples to all the nations –the great commission. According to Eric Baker, this view must be dismissed, actually it is tenable that the two commissions be understood as consistent commission discourses.

Harrington argues that Matthew’s thrust is on the continuity between the proclamation and Jesus’ deeds and those of the twelve. He posits that the disciples are to say what Jesus said and do what he did, that is, to preach the kingdom of heaven, heal, raise the dead, cleanse lepers and cast out demons. For Keener, the commission of the twelve replicates and extends Jesus’ own mission on preaching and healing. This is plausible because what Jesus instructs his disciples he does it. He requests nothing new. In respect of the simplicity of life, Matthew magnifies it by making a radical demand that disciples are to take nothing even sandals or a staff. On acceptance and rejection of those sent, Matthew highlights that the recipients of the gospel are Jews and as such though being Jew if one rejects the kingdom is to be regarded as a Gentile. Thus, there is an aspect of free-will. I tend to agree with Keener on this matter because Jesus clearly instructs that the preaching and healing be for the Jews (v 6). Therefore, by choosing not to accept the gospel is a choice not to be the intended audience.

Keener brings to light that other than the Cynics there were other ancient Mediterranean people who also preached in towns and villages and practiced asceticism as a purpose of discipline. Harrington affirms this idea highlighting that the ancient Mediterranean world spread their religious teachings through missionary travelling and he asserts that the Cynics were predominantly known by their ascetic life and their street-corner oratory. Keener states that Josephus indicates that the Essenes, one of the Jewish religious groups did not carry provisions when travelling. These assertions vividly show that the way of life that Jesus demands from his disciples is not something new. Nevertheless, what is unique is the Matthean Jesus’ radical stance of simplicity.

However, I would argue together with Harrington that Jesus’ instruction would furnish the recipients of his disciples with what to expect from them. That is, in view of how they would conduct themselves, what would

be their priorities, whether they would ask for a fee for the gospel or not and so on. I agree with Harrington that the missionary instruction in this passage would not help only those sent but also the recipients as well. If the Matthean Jesus would not be so radical on his demand for simplicity, possibly a challenge would emerge in identifying the difference between the twelve and other Jewish groups like the Essenes.

According to Keener, the Matthean Jesus does not only prohibits taking money but even acquiring any money while on duty. I think that Jesus' demand is not partial but for the entire mission. As such, no one would be expected to acquire any money or possess what has been prohibited otherwise it would distort the whole idea of Jesus' call for radical simplicity. Therefore, Jesus' demands would perhaps accentuate the holiness of the mission. This suggests that what is of paramount significance is not simplicity but the value attached to the practice. Interestingly, Keener argues that the disciples are supposed to evangelise the community from a fixed base. This point is plausible since the passage tells us that the disciples are to stay in a house or village until they leave (v 11-12). However, it is only when they face rejection that they are to leave. Subsequently, those who reject them will be treated as spiritual pagans, not merely Gentiles but worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. In case of rejection, the disciples are not to react violently but to leave their fate to the justice of God on the Day of Judgment. Thus, Matthew situates the mission to Israel in an eschatological horizon.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has vividly shown that the Matthean Jesus sends his disciples particularly to the house of Israel and not to Gentile territory or Samaritan town. Jesus instructs his disciples on how to deal with acceptance and rejection as they execute their mission. However, the Matthean Jesus' heightening moment in this mission discourse is his radical demand for simplicity. This simplicity would prove the value of their mission.

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<sup>1</sup> Baker, Eric. "Going only to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel: Matthew's Gospel Tradition." Proceedings EGL & MWBS 23 (2003)79-88.

<sup>2</sup> Keener, S Craig. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary*. New York: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing co., 2009.



- <sup>3</sup> Harrington, J Daniel. *The Gospel of Matthew: Sacra Pagina Series Volume 1*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991.
- <sup>4</sup> Bazzana, B. Giovanni. "Early Christian Missionaries as Physicians Healing and its Cultural Value in the Greco-Roman Context." *Novum Testamentum* 51 (2009) 232-251.
- <sup>5</sup> Malherbe, J. A, ed., "The Cynic Epistles." SBL SBS 12. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977, 76-77 & 98-99.

## ANALYSIS OF THE THE BEATITUDES IN MATTHEW 5:1-12

*Jean Benjamin Yavo Doffou, ofm.*

### **Introduction**

Since the 20th century, many methods and discoveries have been used to get the meaning of a particular biblical text. Among these methods are the historical critical methods; for example, the text criticism, the source criticism, the form criticism, the redaction criticism, the tradition criticism and the ideological criticism. All these approaches together with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls essentially, try to analyse the sacred Scriptures in order to uncover the hidden treasure. The analysis of a biblical text is therefore portrayed as a very important step towards a genuine interpretation of this text. It is in that sense that this essay will try to analyse the passage of the Beatitudes in the gospel according to Matthew, precisely in Matthew 5:1-12, thus seeking its correct interpretation. The method used for this analysis will follow four stages. First, a literary context of this passage will be presented. Second, one will see the similarities and differences between Matthew and Luke. The third part will deal with the background of the passage by looking at some primary texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls. At last, other articles, as second literature, will to shed more lights on this passage.

### **Literary Context**

Matthew at the beginning of chapter 5 puts before his reader a picture which consists of Jesus seated on a mountain, and teaching his disciples and the crowds who were around him. His teaching might be seen at first as “unrealistic” or a shocking reality, for it is essentially about the blessedness of states that are usually considered by many people as curse. In fact, Jesus is telling his audience that the poor in spirit (Matt 5:3), those who mourn (Matt 5:4), the meek (Matt 5:5), those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6), the merciful (Matt 5:7), those with clean heart (Matt 5:8), the peacemakers (Matt 5:9), the persecuted for the sake of righteousness or for his sake (cf. Matt 5:10-12), are blessed. What does that mean? And to whom is he really talking to? In this passage Matthew

mentioned the disciples and the crowds. To know the more about those crowds, the passage before is helpful.

In the passage before the one of the beatitudes, Jesus is ministering to a great multitude (cf. Matt 4: 23-25), coming ‘from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan (Matt 4: 25). There is also to notice that, this passage of Jesus’ ministry might be seen as a concluding section of the gospel. Hence, a new section begins with the beatitudes. This section is usually called the Sermon on the Mount. The word “sermon” confirms the following passages that are essentially teachings about laws and moral conducts. Consequently, one could see the beatitudes as a kind of introduction to these teachings or a brief summary of what will follow.

The text that follows immediately is the similes of Salt and Light (Matt 5: 13-16). Perhaps, the first significance of the beatitudes might be already seen in this passage, where those that are listening to Jesus are called ‘salt’ and ‘light’ of the earth, called in that way to be example for others (cf. Matt 5:16).

To convey his message, Jesus has repeated many words. There are essentially the words Μακάριοι that is ‘Blessed’ (cf. Matt 5: 3-11), ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν that is ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’ (cf. Matt 5: 3;10), δικαιοσύνην that is ‘righteousness’ (cf. Matt 5: 6;10), and ἐδίωξαν (persecuted) (cf. Matt 5: 11;12). Μακάριοι was used nine times but the other words just mentioned were used twice in different grammatical cases. It is therefore not surprising that this passage is called “beatitudes” a Latin derived word from blessed. Mark Powell said it well when he affirmed that the beatitudes are constituted in a poetic structure; hence it presupposes ‘Matthew’s readers to expect some pattern or consistency’.<sup>1</sup> He continues saying that:

many scholars also contend that Matt 5:3-10 should be subdivided into two stanzas with four lines a piece. Both 5:3-6 and 5:7-10 contain exactly thirty-six words (5:11-12 contains thirty-five), the protases of 5:6 and 5:10 both conclude with the word *dikaiosynē*, and 5:3-6 exhibits internal alliteration through the naming of groups that begin with the letter *p*: the poor (*ptōchoi*) in spirit, those who mourn (*penthountes*), the meek (*praeis*), and those who hunger (*peinantes*) and thirst for righteousness.

After a careful reading of the Beatitudes, one can notice like Powell that Matthew 5:3-10 and Matthew 5:11-12 are like two different units. In fact, eight beatitudes in vv 3-10 are all addressed in the third person and are held together by the redundant apodotes of the first and last in the series. Verses 11-12, on the other hand, are addressed in the second person and are distinguished from the preceding verses by length, meter, and use of the imperative mood.’ .

This having been presented, it is worth to recognize that this poetic structure is not only seen in the gospel according to Matthew, but also with the gospel of Luke.

### **Similarities and Differences with the Gospel according to Luke**

Among the synoptics, Luke and Matthew are the only ones to talk about the beatitudes. Maybe they took it from their common source Q. As a result, there are similarities in both gospels concerning their beatitudes (Luke 6: 20-26 and Matt 5:1-12). One might observe that ‘both versions of the beatitudes utilize the Greek word, *makarios*, as an introductory word for their sayings. In both Gospels, the beatitudes are addressed to the crowd (Matt. 5:1a; Luke 6:17) with special emphasis on Jesus’ disciples (Matt. 5:1b-2; Luke 6:20a)’. A translation of *makarios* is also given as «Oh the happiness of.»<sup>2</sup> and it points to ‘the happiness bestowed by God upon the one who lives within the kingdom and receives its blessings’.

Besides these similarities, there are some differences, or some changes that Matthew might have made. These changes express the concern or interest of Matthew.

First, He adds «in spirit» talking about the poor and talks of hungering and thirsting for righteousness, while Luke will refer only to the poor and those who hunger. The reason behind this addition is maybe ‘to spiritualize the understanding of poverty’ but also of hunger.

Second, in the Matthean beatitudes, there are five sayings that are not found in Luke. These include the meek (5:5) the merciful (5:7), the pure in heart (5:8), the peacemakers ( 5:9) and the persecuted (5:10). Perhaps Matthew uses all these expressions to put emphases on what he said before, especially the state of being poor.

Third, Matthew does not use the adverb of time *nun* (now), whereas

Luke uses it in 6:21. In addition, While Matthew addressed the blessed ones with the third person plural, Luke used the second person. Those two points might suggest the universality of the message of Matthew. That is to say, the beatitudes are not only for those that are listening to Jesus in his time but also for all those from all the nations who will be taught ‘what he has commanded’ (cf. Matt 28:20).

Fourth, Matthew uses the expression ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ (5: 3;10) but Luke talks of ‘kingdom of God’ (6:20). This difference could be explained by the context of the people to whom they were writing to. In fact, some Jews might have preferred avoiding to pronounce the name of God. Matthew might have changed ‘kingdom of God’ to ‘Kingdom of Heaven’. It is in the same line that Thomas Hoyt maybe meant that the difference is ‘the circumlocutionary tendency of the Jews’.

Finally, the beatitudes in Luke (6:24-26) are followed by four woes that are not in Matthew. Matthew might have omitted them since these woes ‘parallel the beatitudes and serve as antitheses to them’. One might say in other words that they are already expressed implicitly in the beatitudes already mentioned.

As Thomas Hoyt mentioned, all the differences concerning the form and the content of the beatitude in both gospels should lead to a critical analysis. And this analysis can begin by discovering different material from the time of the gospel of Matthew. By doing so, one will be able to read the gospel ‘against the background of the time’.<sup>3</sup>

### **Background of the Beatitudes**

The primary texts for the beatitudes from the Dead sea Scrolls point out that the beatitudes were like a style of writing that existed in the tradition of the Jews. It was a kind of literature, a poetic style used by the Jews to convey a message. Therefore, the beatitudes were not invented by Jesus. Other beatitudes existed. The beatitudes of Enoch serve as illustrations.<sup>4</sup>

The second element to note here is that there are the similarities of certain beatitudes of the time with the ones in Matthew. For example, 2 Enoch B 42: 13 says: ‘Blessed is he in whose mouth is mercy and gentleness’. This beatitude recalls the one of those that are merciful (Matt 5: 7). In that sense, according to Thomas Hoyt the beatitudes in the gospels ‘parallels

Jewish teachings, especially the Pirke Aboth 1:2, and II Enoch 70:11'. Even though it is not sure that 'Jesus was dependent on the Aboth, which is a compilation of sayings from the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.', there is to recognize that 'dependence could have been vice versa'.

The third aspect to highlight after visiting the primary sources is that, most of the beatitudes are about social justice. Nickelsburg and Stone say it clearly as they affirm that 'the beatitudes reflect the same concern for social justice observed in the Sibylline Oracles and the Epistle of Enoch'.

Accordingly, this will lead to say that 'care for the weak and needy in society and a concern for social justice form a sustained theme in the biblical and postbiblical teachings'. It is therefore not surprising to see the beatitudes used in the gospel of Matthew, which might be a contemporary literature with these texts.

Furthermore, not only the beatitudes are met in those biblical or postbiblical literature. There are the "woes". As a matter of fact, 1 Enoch 99: 11-16 tells of woes. These woes serve to point out certain sins that are a kind of 'reverse key to righteousness: avoiding these sins is a way to righteousness.

Moreover, from the Amidah that are Jewish prayers, one might observe that the Jews usually bless God in their prayer for all his deeds. These prayers are a kind of beatitudes, where they bless the Lord and recognize that it is He, who blesses his people Israel. From these ideas, one might assert that in the Matthean Beatitudes, for example 'Blessed are the meek' (Matt 5:5) should be understood as 'Blessed by God are the meek'. Thus, it is possible to say that God has the central role in the beatitudes.

At last, the *Sifre. A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of the Deuteronomy*, shows that all are called to imitate God who is the merciful and the righteous. Reuven Hammer translated it well when he wrote: 'As God is called righteous, *For the Lord is righteous, He loveth righteousness* (Ps. 11:7), so you too should be righteous. As God is called merciful, as it is said *For I am merciful* [...] so too should you be merciful'.<sup>5</sup> From the background discovered how then scholars interpret the passage of the beatitudes?

### **Lights from Secondary Literature**

The article of Domeris W.R. “Exegesis and Proclamation. “Blessed are You...” (Matthew 5:1-12)” serves here as the principal second literature meant to shed light on the Matthean Beatitudes. According to Domeris, concerning the Beatitudes, there is a ‘the tendency among preachers and teachers to emphasize their «spiritual» meaning at the expense of their literal intention as the opening proclamations of Jesus’ teaching on the Reign of God’. The beatitudes are instead ‘designed to be the reverse -statements which shock the readers/hearers by their radical challenge to the contemporary religio-political situation. It is in that sense very important to interpret the beatitudes from their context. In fact, one should know that the Sadducees or Pharisees believed that the

first in the kingdom of God would be the educated, the priests and teachers of the law (all males and middle to upper-class). The last in the kingdom would consequently be the poor and often oppressed «people of the land,» along with women and gentiles.

Accordingly, the beatitudes in Matthew constitute an answer or a response of Jesus to such teaching. That is why Jesus ‘proclaims the revolutionary nature of the Reign of God, which turns human standards upside-down’.

Coming to the meaning of each beatitude, Domeris precised that there are not supposed to be understood only in a spiritual sense, as there were traditionally understood; rather each of the beatitudes should also be taken in its literal sense. Hence, the poor in spirit of Matthew implies someone who ‘is both poor and lacking in spirit, that is, one who has been robbed of one’s material means and of one’s dignity. He puts it well as he describes the poor in spirit as ‘a collection of poor people, eyes dull with lack of emotion; people that are ‘poor and without spirit’ and thus ‘are the tired victims of a cruel society’. The same idea applies for all the beatitudes. With verse 4 of Matthew 5 for example, that says «Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted», it is not only a «spiritual» sense of mourning for one’s sins’. Here, it is instead talking about “real mourners of real deaths” who will be comforted by God for that reason.

Another example is the case of the meek. Traditionally it implies to be humble or self-effacing. However, in putting this sentence in its context one

remembers that 'here Jesus is quoting scripture, namely Psalm 37:1. And that, 'the Hebrew term used in the Psalm is *oni* and is one of the Hebrew words for the literal poor or oppressed'. As a result, the meek are literally the poor and oppressed.

Following this way of thinking, Domeris paraphrased the first four beatitudes as follows:

Blessed by God are those who are poor and stripped even of their spirit, for they will possess God's kingdom. Blessed by God are those for whom brutal death is a constant companion for God shall comfort them. Blessed by God are those who have been oppressed, for they shall inherit God's land. Blessed by God are those who hunger and thirst because there is no justice, for they will find justice.

This article of Domeris brings new light in the analysis of the beatitudes in the gospel of Matthew, for it helps to consider the literal meaning of the beatitudes that are most of the time neglected.

Domeris might be right when he invites the interpreter or the preacher about the beatitudes to consider both the literal and the spiritual meaning. In fact, the definition of the term poverty is not only about a spiritual aspect but a material aspect has to be considered as well. In that sense, Rosenfeld defines a poor man as 'someone who is in need for something. Hence, 'If he has everything he needs, he is not poor'. Moreover, with Francis Oborji, the Evangelical poverty is linked with 'the imitation of Jesus Christ who has freely come to deliver us from sin, from hatred, from death, and from our physical, moral and spiritual miseries'. Consequently, the 'Evangelical poverty belongs to the reign of the beatitudes: «One must leave everything to follow Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Like Domeris, Francis Oborji goes on to explain that one must not understand the beatitudes in the sense that those who will enter the kingdom of Heaven are only the poor. He expresses it by saying that:

not only the poor enter the kingdom of heaven, but even the poor; it is an implicit response to the haughtiness of the Pharisees.' A similar response to the Pharisees lies in Jesus' employment of Isaiah 61:1 (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18) to announce the messianic character of his mission; the good news is brought to the poor, who are not excluded from the kingdom .



## Conclusion

At the end of this essay, one can point out that the analysis of the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew, has led to discover that a genuine interpretation of this text should pay attention to the fact that the beatitudes were like a style of writing that existed in the tradition of the Jews even before Jesus. And that these texts that is to say the biblical and postbiblical teachings of this time, were generally about social justice. The poor and the needy were people to take care of. Hence, the beatitudes are not to be interpreted as having only spiritual meaning but also the literal meaning is to consider. The concern of Matthew was to show those who will inherit the kingdom of Heaven. Thus, he mentioned implicitly by this passage of the beatitudes that all people are called to enter Heaven; both poor and rich are called, depending on their openness to depend on God. These beatitudes constitute therefore a teaching for all believers to depend on God and to imitate him, in order to become for the world true examples, true ‘salt and light of the world’(cf. Matt 5: 13-16).

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<sup>1</sup> Powell, Mark Allan. “*Matthew’s Beatitudes: Reversals and Rewards of the Kingdom*”. The Catholic Biblical Quarterly. 58 (1996) 460-479.

<sup>2</sup> Hoyt, Thomas. “*The Poor/Rich. Theme in the Beatitudes*” Journal of Religious Thought. 31-41.

<sup>3</sup> Domeris, W.R. “*Exegesis and Proclamation. “Blessed are you...” (Matthew 5:1-12)*” Journal of Theology for Southern Africa. 67-76.

<sup>4</sup> Nickelsburg and Michael E.Stone, *Early Judaism. Text and Documents on Faith and Piety*. Revised Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Sifre. *A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of the Deuteronomy*. Trans. Reuven Hammar, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Oborji, Francis Anekwe. “*Poverty and the Mission-Charity Trend. A perspective from Matthew.*” International Review of Mission vol XCI. No. 360. 87-101.

**THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS:  
MATTHEW 25:1-13**  
*Adam Mukabva C.Ss.R*

The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 is one of the interesting ones which Jesus uses in speaking about the Kingdom of God in the Gospel according to Matthew. In the parable Jesus presented the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins to portray his message about the coming of the kingdom of heaven or the Parousia. The five wise bridesmaids are wise enough to carry extra oil for their lamps in anticipation of the delayed bridegroom and this worked for them. The foolish bridesmaids are foolish enough to the point of failing to recognise that their lamps might run out of oils before the arrival of the bridegroom.

There are three main characters in the passage. These are the bridegroom, the five wise bridesmaid and the five foolish bridesmaids. It is interesting to note here that different translations have different naming of the virgins, some says bridesmaid, some girls, while others use the word attendance. In addition, the text also addresses the bridegroom as the Lord (25:11). One can then speculate that the different translations to the ten virgins does not really change the understanding of the passage, but the addressing of the bridegroom as the Lord is interesting in the understanding the parable especially as it was meant to describe the kingdom of heaven.

The literary context of the parable the description of the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew devoted chapters 24 and 25 of his Gospel to parables describing the kingdom of heaven. According to Harrington, "The immediate context of the three parables (the good and the evil servant (24:45-51), the ten maidens (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-30)) is the eschatological discourse of Jesus in Matthew 24-25."<sup>1</sup> This means that, the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 falls into the eschatological discourse. Therefore, it seems quite reasonable to say that the main idea which is being portrayed by the parable of the ten virgins is that of being prepared at all times as far as the coming of the kingdom of heaven is concerned, since no one "knows neither the day nor the hour" (25:13).

Furthermore, Harrington considered even a broader context for the whole eschatological discourse. He notes that, "As part of Jesus' eschatological

discourse in chapters 24-25, the three parables are set between Jesus' woes against the scribes and Pharisees (chap 23) and the passion narrative (chaps 26-28)".<sup>2</sup> This is important in understanding why Matthew had to include the parable of the ten virgins here, as he conveys the message of the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Moreover, Harrington further brought out an important point that "The eschatological discourse prepares for the passion narrative in Matthew 26-28".<sup>3</sup> This means that the passage at hand cannot be read independent of this understanding, as doing so will situate it out of its literary context. Above all, Harrington beautifully puts across this understanding of the context that,

That the parables in Matt 24:45-25:30 should be taken as part of Matthew's polemic against the "synagogue across the street" is indicated by the literary context: the narrative context of the Gospel as a whole, the immediate context of the eschatological discourse, the "woes" against the scribes and Pharisees (chapter 23) and the passion narrative, and other parables in the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>

From this consideration, one can say that the parable of the ten virgins falls under the literary context of the eschatological sayings and it emphasizes the need to be prepared for its events, to those who were the audience of the Gospel.

The passage is preceded by a number of sayings and parables about the end of time, that is, the eschatology. Chapter 24:1-34 talks about the destruction of the temple and the signs of the end time. From 24:3, which says, "As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"", one can think it through that it seems the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying and were eager to understand more. In light of this context Matthew brought in a number of parables to explain how it was important to prepare for the coming of the kingdom of heaven rather than being anxious about when it was going to come.

The passage is followed by another parable, the parable of the talents, which falls in the same context that is the context of the eschatological discourse. This parable like the others which describes the coming of the

kingdom of heaven, seem to point to the fact that some will be excluded in the kingdom of heaven, taking into account verse 30, which says, “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”. The same idea is brought about in the parable of the ten virgins concerning those foolish servants who were denied entry into the banquet.

This parable only appears in Matthew. As it stands, it seems reasonable enough to say that Matthew got this parable from the source unique only to him. The source is commonly known as the M-Source. According to Harrington, the parable “has no parallels in Mark or Luke”.<sup>5</sup> Echoing the same sentiments, Waller noted that, “The second reason for pursuing a new exegesis of this parable is its problematic uniqueness! The whole parable appears only in Matthew, but verses of it are similar in content and language to other synoptic parables”.<sup>6</sup> From this point of view, one can then say that this parable is important to the understanding of Matthew’s view about the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

In addition, Waller pointed out a number of verses in this parable which can be said to have notable similarities with verses from other synoptic gospels. She noted that,

Vs 6, 10d and 11 resemble Luke 11:5-8, the parable of the Friend at the midnight. Matthew juxtaposes wise and foolish in another parable 7:24-27. Vs 12, the reply of the kyrios to the foolish virgins has several synoptic parallels (cf., Matt 24:42; Luke 13:25, 27). The theme of a marriage particularly with a feast is found in several parables and sayings attributed to Jesus. The Parousia theme has parallels throughout the Synoptics. V 13 has parallels in Matt 24:45-51; Luke 12:41-46. In short, the parable, while unique still seems to rely heavily on its Synoptic context, particularly thematic Q material.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, one can argue that these similarities and parallels shows that there is a link between this parable and other parables in the Gospels especially as they convey the same message of the Parousia.

Since there is no exact parallel passage in terms of details and content anywhere in other Synoptic Gospels, one cannot discuss anything about what changes Matthew introduced to the parable. Nevertheless, it is worthy speculating why Matthew alone has this parable in his Gospel. It is crucial

to think that, may be Matthew was addressing to a community which had problems concerning the end of time issues. In this regard, Matthew might have wanted his audience to be prepared for the eschatological coming of Jesus, rather than to be troubled about the time and date of it. This then then means that, his audience were called to stop worrying about the date and time of the Parousia and to focus on being fully prepared for it.

There are no given primary texts for the passage at hand, but a number of required secondary reading where provided. One of these secondary reading gives a historical background or context of the text at hand. According to Harrington,

The historical context suggests that Matthew wrote from "within Judaism," that is, as one of several voices responding to the crisis facing all Jews in the late first century. Judaism and Christianity were not yet perceived as different or rival religions, though the groundwork had been laid for the eventual parting of the ways. Thus, there was a continuity between the situations of the earthly Jesus around 30 and that of Matthew around 90. Just as Jesus taught "within Israel," so Matthew teaches "within Israel."<sup>8</sup>

One can then say that, this source brings the understanding that the parable of the ten virgins, just like the whole gospel according to Matthew should be read and understood in the context of the community to which Matthew was addressing, a community pre-dominantly Jewish but with people from other cultures possibly.

Likewise, Harrington further propounds that,

But as an interpretative principle it seems better to assume, unless there is evidence to the contrary that the Matthean Jesus deals with the problems of all Israel (of which the Jewish-Christian churches are part). So even before analysing the texts, it appears more reasonable to take the three parables in Matt 24:45-25:30 to refer to groups within Israel rather than to groups within the church.<sup>9</sup>

In light of this thought, one can say that, the parable of the ten virgins is better understood if one has a clear understanding of the groups and divisions among the Jewish people during the time of the composition of the gospel by Matthew.

The secondary literature provided tell a great deal of information

about this passage. It seems quite clear that they all agree that the parable is about the description of the coming of the kingdom of God or for others the Parousia. According to Duff,

The main difference between the wise and foolish is that while the foolish maidens accepted the invitation to be bridesmaids and to attend the wedding feast, they did not know that the invitation also involves a demand. The wise, on the other hand, knew that invitation and demand are always joined together. Whenever we accept an invitation there is simultaneously an expectation placed upon us concerning who we are and what we will do.<sup>10</sup>

This completely brings a new light to the understanding of the passage. The new insight here is that, the passage reminds all those who are invited to receive the Good News of the coming of the kingdom of heaven that they are not just invited, coupled with their invitation is the demand that one should be alert all the times and take responsibility to whatever task assigned to them.

In this understanding it is worthwhile to agree with Duff. The coming of the kingdom of heaven is not supposed to be a thing that all those who await for it sleep nor slumber as it demands total dedication and sacrifice of oneself. The foolish servants in the parable were not supposed to sleep without being fully prepared. When they sensed that the bridegroom is somewhat delaying and they are feeling sleepy they could have switched off their lamps and serve its oil or go out immediately to purchase some top up. Duff further pointed out that,

The news that the Kingdom of God is at hand is Good News to those who are prepared to obey the demand. The Kingdom of God comes like a thief in the night, like a flood, or like a bridegroom long delayed. So, for those who are not prepared the sudden announcement that the Kingdom is coming means frantic activity, scampering around, recognizing that their lamps are going out. But the fact is that once the Kingdom has come there is no time to prepare any more.<sup>11</sup>

In further agreement to this assertion, it can be said that, the need to prepare for the coming of the kingdom is an essential aspect that does need to be overemphasised to all those who receive the invitation to participate on the wedding of the bridegroom.

In attempting to answer the question about the meaning of this parable, Waller pointed out that, "Matthew seems to have imposed primitive Church anxiety over a delayed Parousia onto the parable, thus changing what appears to be the delay of the oil-less virgins in attending the marriage, into the delay of the bridegroom".<sup>12</sup> This seems to make sense given Duff analysis above. One can then understand that the five foolish virgins were those in Matthew's community who were anxious about the exact time and date of the Parousia.

Likewise, Waller further pinpointed that, "Jesus emphasize the urgency of the Kingdom. Indeed, the teaching; ' . . . the kingdom . . . is at hand . . . ' " also stresses this urgency, perhaps it is this urgency which informs the meaning of the parable of the ten Virgins".<sup>13</sup> A critical view of this idea shows that it agrees with what Duff suggested above that the coming of the kingdom of heaven is Good News only to those who are ready to obey the demand which comes with accepting its invitation.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, Waller also raised an important issue in a bid to understand well the parable. She argued that,

Matthew's interpretation of the parable contains a blatant contradiction of a teaching attributed to Jesus, the generosity of one who opens the door when it is knocked upon: . . . Ask, and it will be given you! Seek, you will find, knock and it will be opened to you (Matt 7:7 ...; Luke 11:5-8). In this light, it seems unlikely that the original parable might have included Kyrios' refusal to open the door... especially after the returning virgins requested entry (v 11).

This analysis also raises in new insight in one's mind. It is quite easy upon reading this parable to emphasize on the divisions that will happen on the Parousia, yet undermining the forgiving aspect of God especially for those who return to him upon mending their ways.

Additionally, it is worthwhile to agree with Waller at this point that surely Matthew edited the original parable and put information to fit his audience. One can say that, the kingdom of heaven should be inclusive rather than exclusive especially to those who sought it even when at one point they lack urgency in their way of life. There should be a leeway to allow even the late comers to enjoy the fruits of the kingdom.

According to Donfried, the parable at hand is subject to different

types of interpretations. He notes that, The story about the ten virgins in Matt 25:1-13 has been subject to the most varied interpretations. Jeremias believes that it originally stems from the historical Jesus;

Bornkamm views it as a formulation of the early church. Dodd categorizes this text as a parable; Bultmann as an allegory.<sup>15</sup>

This gives one the perspective that there is no definite way to truly interpret the parable. One can interpret it differently depending on their understanding of its background and the setting from which it is produced.

However, Donfried further argues that, "The most likely suggestion is that this story is an "allegory." This is underscored by the fact that the various elements in Matt 25:1-13 cohere not with each other but, in some detail, with a theological framework which appears to be outside the story itself".<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note that one is tempted to agree with Donfried as his theory and understanding is vital to the analysis of this passage. Again, here Donfried brought a new insight since all the way it has been taken for granted that this passage was apparently a parable and nothing else.

Donfried also pinpointed an important point about understanding the allegory of the ten virgins in the context of the fifth discourse in the gospel to which it is situated. He acclaims that, "In attempting to shed additional light upon Matt 25:1-13 in view of the context in Matthew 23-25, it is important to observe that this entire discourse is concerned with practicing (ποιέω) and keeping (τηρέω) that which has been commanded by Jesus".<sup>17</sup> This insight is of greater importance as far as understanding the passage at hand is concerned. One can speculate that, keeping and practising the commands of Jesus equates one with the wise virgins and it is necessary for those who look forward to the coming of the kingdom. It is also of greater value here to agree with Donfried here that the eschatological discourse which is a broader context of the passage at hand hinges on the practicing and keeping of all that Jesus commanded.

Moreover, Donfried draw a number of similarities between the themes of this passage and the others which appear in the same discourse. He noted that, "A number of themes found in the allegory of the virgins are paralleled in Matthew's fifth discourse" (Donfried 420). Among the themes he pointed out are: the division mortif, the coming of the master and the eschatological judgement (Donfried 420). This is an important way



of understanding the passage at hand since it cannot be clearly understood outside its context.

More so, Donfried propounds that, Matthew deals with the delay of the Parousia from at least two different angles: the warning to watchfulness (the end can come at any time) and the warning about preparedness (just because the end may not come during one's lifetime is no excuse for not being prepared). Matthew may have intended the allegory of the ten virgins to serve as an illustrative story dealing with this second area of concern.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed it seems clearly that Matthew inserted this passage into his gospel to arouse in his audience the sense of being prepared to the events of the Parousia. In light of this understanding one can clearly agree with Donfried's view in this paragraph.

In trying to situate the passage at hand in the context of the whole gospel, Donfried draw beautiful similarities between this passage and the Sermon on the Mount. He pointed out that,

In addition to the similar conceptual relationships about the "foolish" and the "wise," the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount shares an almost identical phrase with the allegory of the virgins. In Matt 7:23 we read, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers," and in Matt 25:12, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." While the wording is different, the content is the same.<sup>19</sup>

This view brings some new and interesting insights to mind. It is interesting to note that there is actually a same line of thought between the parable or allegory of the ten virgins and the Sermon on the Mount as both accounts deal with the understanding of those who will be admitted into the kingdom. In light of this understanding one can agree with Donfried's assessment here.

Above all, Donfried carried out an important synthesis of the parable of the ten virgins with the whole gospel of Matthew. He beautifully points out that,

Matthew uses this type of symbolic language to express to his congregation that not all who are invited (cf. Matt 7:21-23) will be present at the consummation of the marriage. Only those whose righteousness has exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20), only those who have practiced and performed the good deeds

(Matt 25:31-33), only those who have been obedient to the will of the Father (Matt 7:21), and, yes, only those who have sufficient oil (Matt 25:4) and the proper wedding garment (Matt 22:12) will be welcome at the final consummation of the wedding feast. That such a final decision will occur is suggested at a variety of points in Matthew's Gospel, such as in the allegory of the tares in the wheat (Matt 13:24-30), the allegory of the dragnet (Matt 13:47-50), and in the great judgment scene (Matt 25:31-46), to mention only a few such references.<sup>20</sup>

This synthesis can be regarded as the best in so far as the understanding of the parable of the ten virgins is concerned. With this one can easily see the unity of the whole gospel and the oneness of the message the gospel puts across. In this case therefore, one can agree with Donfried that the passage can be interpreted as an allegory to be understood in its relationship to the whole Gospel.

From the above discourse it can be said that, the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 is meant to describe the coming of the kingdom of heaven. The parable, according to the secondary sources provided, should be understood both in the eschatological

context to which it appears and also to the whole gospel which brings about the broader context to which it was composed.

<sup>1</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 291.

<sup>2</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25". American Theological Library Association Serials.. P. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25". American Theological Library Association Serials. p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 293.

<sup>5</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. "Polemical Parables in Matthew 24-25". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 294.

<sup>6</sup> Waller, Elizabeth. "The Parable of the Ten Virgins Matt 25:1-13". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Waller, Elizabeth. "The Parable of the Ten Virgins Matt 25:1-13". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 86.

<sup>8</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. P. 291.

<sup>9</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. P. 291.

- <sup>10</sup> Duff, J. Nancy. "Wise and Foolish Maidens Matthew 25:1-13". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 57.
- <sup>11</sup> Duff, J. Nancy. "Wise and Foolish Maidens Matthew 25:1-13". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 57.
- <sup>12</sup> Waller, Elizabeth. P. 101.
- <sup>13</sup> Waller, Elizabeth. P. 102.
- <sup>14</sup> Duff, J. Nancy. P. 57.
- <sup>15</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 415.
- <sup>16</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 418.
- <sup>17</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 420.
- <sup>18</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 421.
- <sup>19</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 422.
- <sup>20</sup> Donfried, K. Paul. "Allegory of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13) As a Summary of Matthean Theology". American Theological Library Association Serials. P. 426-27.

## **THE CHARACTER OF TABITHA IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

*Tanaka Topera, ofm*

### **Introduction**

When reading the ancient Israel narratives exposed in the Bible, one could arguably assert that women have been always putting up a low profile, or rather, forced to do so by the Law. In Genesis 18: 6, the great forefather of the Israelites, Abraham, after having received three visitors, is seen running to Sarah his wife, ordering her to “quick, three measures of bran flour! Knead it and make bread.” Sarah the woman, is not conversing directly with the good visitors, but Abraham the man is. It could also be concluded that women were at most, reduced to running daily house chores. In the New Testament, we are however learning of a disciple, Tabitha, a woman, who rather swims against the tide of what was, and is expected of women. This paper will critically analyse Tabitha, extracting lessons that could be learnt from her. It will also expose how women are being seen in ancient Israel and how she is diverting from this perception.

### **Definition of Terms**

The Oxford Dictionary defines alms as money, food, clothes or anything, that is given to the poor for their sustenance and well-being. Luke 6: 12-16 portrays a disciple as a follower of Jesus Christ, and in 10: 1-12, this disciple is to be also a dedicated follower of Jesus’ teachings, following his instructions to cure the sick and proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand for the people.

### **The name Tabitha**

In Acts 9: 36, the name Tabitha is translated to English, Dorcas. However, Tabitha is an Aramaic name which is related to the Hebrew word, zebi (zebiah) meaning a gazelle, the same as the translation - Dorcas, in Greek, Dorkas, which also means a gazelle<sup>1</sup>. It is noted that the word “gazelle” is used by the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term in Deuteronomy 12: 15, 2 Samuel : 18, and in the Songs of Songs 2: 9, 8: 14,2 for instance, in the metaphor of the beloved in Songs of Songs 2: 9, “my lover is like a

gazelle or a young stag.”

This metaphor of a gazelle in the Song of Songs 2: 9 is used to adore, probably the beauty and stature of the beloved who is gazing through the windows and peering through the lattices. One could relate this idea to Tabitha who was adored by the widows who were under her gaze-like care as put in Acts 9: 36-43.

### **Who is Tabitha and Who are the Widows?**

The short story of Tabitha is told in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts) 9: 36-43. In these few verses, Tabitha is said to be a woman disciple who lived in Joppa. It is also said, she was completely occupied with doing good deeds and alms giving, that is, giving to the less fortunate, the widows. Johnson asserts that her good works, notably, alms giving, articulated piety in Judaism.<sup>3</sup> It was during these days of her good deeds that she fell sick and eventually died. After washing her corpse, the other disciples call Peter who was nearby. He had just healed a man named Aeneas in Lydda. Peter was shown to the upper room where the corpse was being kept, and where the widows cried out to him, showing him the tunics and cloaks that Tabitha was making them while she breathed. Johnson also thinks that the widows’ weeping and showing of the clothes to Peter, was an indirect plea that their good sponsor be restored to life and to them.<sup>4</sup> The story goes on to say that Peter commanded the corpse to rise up, and it did. With Tabitha raised to life, word spread all over Joppa, and converts increased in number.

### **Women in the Ancient Israelite Community**

To better understand the gravity of Tabitha’s novelty actions, it is worth- noting, in depth, how women were perceived in ancient Israel, and what they were expected of in the Early Church. Genesis 1: 23 portrays Eve, a woman, as a helper rather than the initiator of a “work.” Paul, in his first letter to Timothy 2: 11-12, takes up Genesis 3: 1-7, verses which narrate the fall of Adam and Eve, and puts the heavy blame on the woman who was weak to resist the snake’s temptation, and unfortunately coaxed Adam into sin too. Thus, Paul forbade women to speak or teach in public, and his argument was based on the fact that man was created prior to the

woman, and that she was primarily responsible for original sin.<sup>5</sup> He therefore, expected women to be submissive to the domineering man, and not to interrupt his speeches, even with whispers, but to respectfully listen in a modest manner.<sup>6</sup> Like Roger Gryson, Ross Saunders shares the same views when he acknowledges that a woman's primary and most important place was the household, managing its budget and rearing children, shunning away from anything that would tarnish the husband's name, bearing in mind that her behaviour is a direct reflection of the dominant husband.<sup>7</sup> Women in ancient Israel were, therefore, expected to comply to these expectations and obey the rules in an expeditious manner. It is unusual that in Acts 9: 36-43, we have a woman, and not a man, who is a sponsor of a group of widows, providing for them in care and alms giving.

### **Tabitha's Good Deeds**

As mentioned before, Tabitha took up the responsibility of caring for a group of widows. This generous deed was usual in the Early Church, as well as in the Old Testament. 2 Kings 4: 1-7 narrates a story about a helpless widow who cried out to the prophet Elisha for help to settle her deceased husband's debt before her two children could be taken into servitude.

Prior to this, Elijah the prophet had also come across a widow whom he commanded to bring him food, as she replied in 1 Kings 17: 12, "as the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar, and a little oil in my jug...myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." Stories of widows are not the most pleasant ones, as widows are depicted as relying on the mercy of somebody, usually a male figure. The service of widows in the Early Church became an established project as evidenced in Acts 6: 1-6. However, this passage shows that there were abuses and negligence in this project. The result was the appointment of seven reputable man to jointly take up the task of caring for a group of Greek-speaking widows.

Tabitha, on the other hand, is said to have undertaken this task all by herself. Saunders would arguably assert that Tabitha was rather a forerunner of a group of women (not man, as in Acts 6: 1-6) who took care of the widows and orphans.<sup>8</sup> There is no evidence to the reasons behind her good deeds, but undoubtedly, Peter would have raised her to life for the sake of

the widows whom she took care of.<sup>9</sup> The impetus behind Tabitha's good work is questionable since this work was usually undertaken by men. Generally, Jewish women were not allowed to go into business which earned them money, and if they undertook works like washing or any housework, the wages were handed to a male sponsor, a husband, or a big brother (Saunders 19). Putting aside critical analysis, Tabitha remains the woman who was raised from death because of her noble good deeds and care for a group of widows.

### **Lessons that could be Learnt from Tabitha**

Looking at the character of Tabitha in Acts, one could easily pick out her generous acts towards the widows, and arguably conclude that we learn "to give" to those who are less fortunate, and it is true. We ought to give to the poor in any way possible, using our gifts, just like Tabitha used her gift of making tunics and cloaks for the poor widows. However, anybody could give. Just like any other good person could give, one could spare a one dollar note to give to a street urchin who extends a palm at the red robot, or help an old lady carry her bag to the bus station, or donate clothes to a village ravaged into shambles after a Cyclone *Idai* massacre. Tabitha went an extra mile in her generosity, and we could learn even more from her. She gave when it was not expected of her to give. She gave when the laws and norms did not tolerate somebody of her sex to give. One could easily give because the street urchin is already begging - when the condition is already suitable, but Tabitha gave when the condition was not favourable. As echoed in the paragraph on women in ancient Israel, the management of finance and the organisation of all charity activities in this patriarchal society were always entrusted to men, and not women.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Saunders asserts that Tabitha was stepping outside the role of women by taking up a task commissioned to men, that is, to look after widows, as put in Acts 6: 1-6.<sup>11</sup> As anybody could be a disciple, just like Tabitha was, she however went further to demonstrate with acts, a dedicated disciple of Christ and his teachings. Marginalisation, therefore, must not demolish a disciple's vigour to proclaim Christ message. Many exegetes conclude that Luke's interest in women, the poor and the marginalised people shows his universalism.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Tabitha the gazelle, though her story is shortly mentioned in Acts, is one of the role models of women disciples to the Gospel. She led by example. With her charitable deeds, she proclaimed the Gospel of Christ by taking up a challenging task of caring for a group of widows under the scrutiny of men. I would suggest that she had a source of help from a man or men, who may have chosen to be anonymous, or were simply not included deliberately in her story. However, it will remain blurry as to whether she was, on her own, financially stable that she could care for a group of widows, or she had background sponsors, possibly male.

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- <sup>1</sup> Johnson T, Luke. *The Acts of the Apostles: Sacra Pagina Series*. Vol 5. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992. P. 177
  - <sup>2</sup> Johnson T, Luke. *The Acts of the Apostles: Sacra Pagina Series*. Vol 5. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992
  - <sup>3</sup> Johnson T, Luke. *The Acts of the Apostles: Sacra Pagina Series*. Vol 5. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992
  - <sup>4</sup> Johnson T, Luke. *The Acts of the Apostles: Sacra Pagina Series*. Vol 5. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992. P. 178
  - <sup>5</sup> Gryson, Roger. *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1980. P. 6
  - <sup>6</sup> Gryson, Roger. *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1980. P. 6
  - <sup>7</sup> Saunders, Ross. *Outrageous Women Outrageous God: Women in the First Two Generations of Christianity*. Alexandria: E.J Dwyer Pty Ltd, 1996. P. 18
  - <sup>8</sup> Saunders, Ross. *Outrageous Women Outrageous God: Women in the First Two Generations of Christianity*. Alexandria: E.J Dwyer Pty Ltd, 1996. P. 106
  - <sup>9</sup> Saunders, Ross. *Outrageous Women Outrageous God: Women in the First Two Generations of Christianity*. Alexandria: E.J Dwyer Pty Ltd, 1996
  - <sup>10</sup> Saunders, Ross. *Outrageous Women Outrageous God: Women in the First Two Generations of Christianity*. Alexandria: E.J Dwyer Pty Ltd, 1996. P. 105
  - <sup>11</sup> Saunders, Ross. *Outrageous Women Outrageous God: Women in the First Two Generations of Christianity*. Alexandria: E.J Dwyer Pty Ltd, 1996. 106
  - <sup>12</sup> Seim K, Turid. *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts*. Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1994. P. 2



CRITICAL REVIEW OF MUSA W. DUBE'S ARTICLE ON MUSA W. DUBE,  
'TALITHA CUM HERMENEUTICS OF LIBERATION'

*Mark Chikuni*

In recent years various reading strategies of the bible have been proposed.<sup>1</sup> African women and their male counterparts have also gone in pursuit of a biblical approach that is authentic in their own contexts. Musa Dube outlines the ideas of some of the big names in this project. Although each of the scholars she examines has her own individual approach she attempts to show how they share the same vision, which she calls talitha cum. This article will explain how, inspired by Kimpa Vita, Dube and colleagues envision an African biblical hermeneutic. Their vision, which largely hinges on existing inculturation and liberationist methodologies will be appraised and criticised. In the final analysis, while commending the efforts of these African women biblical scholars, caution will be urged in areas of oversight.

Dube attributes the legacy of postcolonial African biblical interpretation to Kimpa Vita a woman who lived and operated in Congo 'within the colonial ideology and practice of domination of other cultures, lands, people and minds.'<sup>2</sup> She says in that context Vita, a complex character, challenged the colonial church and government. Vita did so by crisscrossing between her culture and the colonial religion and culture enabling her to confront them from within 're-writing and re-telling the Christian script in a colonial space' (p. 31). According to Dube, Vita was deemed a threat by the colonial structures and killed in 1706 but her spirit continues to live among African Biblical scholars.

Dube says Vita is the inspiration behind talitha cum, African biblical feminism. She defines talitha cum as 'the art of living in the resurrection space: the art of continually rising against the powers of death, namely patriarchy and colonialism' (p. 34). Talitha cum, explains Dube, is drawn from the Markan story in Mark 5:21-43. She says the women in this story, the woman with haemorrhage and Jairus' daughter, 'embody the liberatory energy and vision that empowers African women to live in the resurrection power from the ever unending death dealing oppressive forces that invade the continent and their lives' (p. 37). Put simply, talitha cum, is the struggle against international oppression, gender oppression and other social evils

which must give way to healing (p. 36).

Dube demonstrates *talitha cum* hermeneutics by examining the works of Mercy A. Oduyoye, Masenya Madipoane, Teresa Okure and her own works. As she put it, these women ‘stand in the legacy of Kimpa Vita’s resurrection – the power to resist and rise from death-dealing powers of oppression, suppression and exploitation; the art of insisting on life and quality of life’ (p. 42). She begins by examining the work of Oduyoye whom she praises for ‘her acknowledgement of the coexistence of multiple scriptures and her use of them’ (p. 37). Thus, Oduyoye is described as envisioning a gender inclusive Christology in which African stories and African women stories in particular are recognised besides the Hebrew and Christian stories. Oduyoye advocates for a Christology that ‘crosses boundaries of texts, cultures, gender and colonising Christian perspectives’ (p. 39).

Dube’s second model, Masenya Madipoane, writes in the context of ‘the historically exclusive, exploitative and oppressive context of apartheid South Africa’ (p. 39). She investigates what ideal womanhood entails for ‘an African-South African woman bible reader’ (p. 39). Madipoane’s *bosadi* hermeneutics attempts to bring the cultural text and the biblical text into conversation in order to produce an expanded canon which goes beyond the bible; a canon that ‘resists the colonial missionary dismissal of African cultures’ (p. 39). In other words, her concern is more with the community than the mere text.

Dube, citing herself as model, reiterates her postcolonial approach to biblical interpretation. Her agenda is to ‘decolonise the biblical text, its interpretations, its readers, its institutions, as well as seeking ways of re-reading texts in ways that are liberating’ (p. 40). Her ultimate goal is reconstructing the biblical text so as to give voice to marginalised African peoples, especially women. She hopes that by deconstructing the text it will be exposed as simply one important cultural text among many others in the world (p. 40). Dube’s approach extends to issues of HIV/AIDS. She isolates social injustice as the major driving force of HIV/AIDS (p. 41). In the face of this crisis, she says the highest vocation for biblical scholars is to become prophets of life. Her methodology inspired scholars such as Boyung Lee. Lee applies *talitha cum* to the account of the Exodus. She

challenges the traditional account as a story of liberation. Interpreting the story from the perspective of the Canaanites, she argues that the biblical text is not an account of liberation but a ‘reverence for centralised power,’ a narrative which perpetuates dominance through Israel’s appropriation of the land of Canaan.<sup>3</sup>

Dube also discusses Teresa Okure’s hermeneutics of life; that is, a way of reading the bible that takes into account the life situations of the readers. For Okure, ‘the story of the bible is about life and life holds the key to comprehending it’ (p. 41). Okure insists that the interpretation of the bible must promote life in all its fullness (John 10:10). Consequently, for her, any interpretation that lacks the ‘capacity to promote and support qualitative life’ is suspect and inauthentic (pp. 41-42).

From the foregoing, it is evident that *talitha cum* largely depends on inculturation and post-colonialism for its ideas. In fact, in analysing the trends in African Biblical hermeneutics, Justin Ukpong notes that the current trend which back dates to the 1990’s is dominated by liberation and inculturation methodologies.<sup>4</sup> The concern of such methodologies is to take the African readers of the bible and their context seriously. Inculturation, for instance, is roughly the ‘recognition that faith must become culture, if it is to be fully received and lived.’<sup>5</sup> That is, faith must be relevant to African peoples.

Such an approach has some obvious advantages.<sup>6</sup> However, there can also be serious challenges. Let us take for instance, Kimpa Vita’s spirit of inculturation inspired the founding of African Instituted Churches (AICs). Dube noted that the AICs not only helped to resist colonising tendencies inside and outside churches, but also empowered women as founders, leaders, prophets, and faith healers (pp. 33-34). In her view, inculturation as presented in this case gave a voice to African women making it possible for them to speak for the issues which oppress them both inside the colonial government and church perspectives. Indeed, others agree that the inculturating spirit in the AICs ‘encouraged women to re-read the Bible in liberating ways and act in various capacities as providers, counsellors, healers, and prophetesses to a range of sufferers and supplicants.’<sup>7</sup> However, this view runs the risk of glorifying the past and replacing the oppressive aspects of the Bible with oppressive aspects of African culture. Thus, this

view ignores the fact that inculturation as practiced in the AICs has also contributed to the subjugation of women especially through the practice of polygamy.<sup>8</sup>

Talitha cum also rests on the assumption that the bible promotes colonial and imperialist tendencies.<sup>9</sup> This approach, to some extent, seeks to go beyond the Western feminist approach which tends to focus on sexist and misogynistic elements of the bible.<sup>10</sup> The method insists that there is a close connection between colonialism and the Bible. While Western feminists see the sexist themes in the bible, African biblical scholars pursue what is culturally and politically liberating in scripture. For example, in interpreting Mark 5:21-43, Western feminists may focus on the role of female characters, their relationship to Jesus, and their characterisation in the light of gender issues.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, African biblical scholars might notice Jesus' stand against colonialism in this text or view the female characters metaphors for women in the formerly colonised countries that experience serious disease, such as HIV/AIDS.

Such a reading of the bible has the credit of bringing to light social issues of injustice. Regarding postcolonialism in general Davies says, 'by placing the colonial "other" at the centre of academic discourse, it has brought to the fore often neglected aspects of well-known texts and transformed our understanding of long familiar passages.'<sup>12</sup> In his review of Dube's postcolonial works, Togarasei praises 'her social engagement ... an attempt to take the Bible back to grass-roots level.'<sup>13</sup> Thus, issues to do with HIV/AIDS are tackled from the biblical perspective. Again the colonial legacy of social, racial, and gender inequalities that permeate African societies is challenged. Ukpong also hails such an approach as one that seeks to articulate the people's experience of their life in Christ.<sup>14</sup>

However, this methodology is prone to the same criticisms often levelled against other reader based methodologies of interpreting the bible. Davies, without necessarily agreeing, notes that

Postcolonial criticism has also enraged the discipline, for it has challenged the dominant interpretation of Western Scholars and destabilised received readings of the text. Not surprisingly, it has been viewed by some as a threat to the traditional interpretation of Scripture, for its adherence have subverted the comfortable academic

certainties of the past and questioned mainstream conclusions and the conventional patterns of biblical scholarship.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, there is an ongoing debate whether postcolonial biblical interpretation is justified in significantly departing from the traditional methods of biblical interpretation which are based on historical and literary analysis. The concern from the opposing side is

whether such an approach undermines the world of the biblical texts. Put simply, the question is: How far does *talitha cum* respect the objective reading methods which advocate neutral, non-ideological, non-political or disinterested reading? This is probably a question that needs more attention. The postcolonial approach is also prone to the criticism of essentialising culture or presenting it as a fixed and static reality. This was exactly the criticism of Vivek Chibber. In his book *Postcolonial Theory and the Scepter of Capital*, Chibber criticises the postcolonial theory for unwittingly reviving cultural essentialism and seeking to return non-Western peoples to orientalism.<sup>16</sup> He feels that the experiential gap between the West and the rest of the world is over-exaggerated.

In spite of the concern raised above, postcolonialism remains attractive as ‘the reading of the text offered by marginalised interpreters living in (or originating from) formerly colonised regions of the world.’<sup>17</sup> There is no doubt that there is need for a model of biblical interpretation that counters the colonial misinterpretation of the bible that resulted in the economic exploitation and cultural subjugation of African people. Sugirtharajah, the foremost advocate of this approach, says ‘colonialism dominates and determines the interest of the biblical texts, and we could reasonably describe the bible as a colonial document, though confessional and faith language often overlays and ignores the interconnecting postcolonial questions.’<sup>18</sup> Thus, there were some biased interpretations of both the bible and African cultures during the period of colonial dominance. Therefore, interpreting the biblical text from the context of an African who is socially and culturally dominated can be a positive thing. The vision to liberate the biblical text from its history of ideological abuse by the coloniser is hard to criticise.

In conclusion, *talitha cum* is overall a good project in as far as it seeks to give a voice to the Africans who were formerly marginalised both in the church and in the political and cultural space. The colonial

heritage shaped biblical perspectives and a new unique and relevant African woman's perspective is justified. Therefore, the task undertaken by Oduyoye, Madipoane, Dube and Okure and others to actively seek the marginalised African voices in the past and in the present and amplify is difficult to fault. Nevertheless, there is the risk of glorifying the African past and essentialising the African cultural experience. There is also a danger of neglecting the context of the biblical text and focusing entirely on social and political issues. Perhaps the success of the approach lies in balance and not reductionistic tendencies.

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<sup>1</sup> These include Feminist, Narrative and Liberationist readings of the bible.

<sup>2</sup> Musa W. Dube, 'Talitha Cum Hermeneutics of Liberation: Some African Women's Ways of Reading the Bible', in *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations*, ed. by Musa W. Dube, Andrew W. Mbuvi, Dora R. Mbuwayesango (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), pp. 29-44 (p. 29). Further references to this work are provided in parentheses in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Boyung Lee, 'When the Text is the Problem: A Postcolonial Approach to Biblical Pedagogy', *Religious Education*, 102 (1997), 44-61, (p. 46).

<sup>4</sup> Justin S. Ukpong, 'Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Directions', in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends*, ed. by Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube (Boston: Brill, 2000), pp. 11-28 (p. 12).

<sup>5</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1999), xi.

<sup>6</sup> In postcolonial biblical studies there are extensive arguments in favour of recognising African culture in the light of the colonial legacy against that culture.

<sup>7</sup> Bolaji Boteye, 'Local Relevance and Global Appeal: Nigerian Female Religious Leaders in London: Case Study/Prophetess Lizzy Adedamola a.k.a. Alhaja Jesu, Founder of Gospel Light Evangelical Ministry', in *Religion on the Move! New Dynamics of Religious Expansion in a Globalising World*, ed. by Afe Adogame and Shobana Shankar (Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 445-460 (p.451). See also Ayegboyan Deji and S. A. Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective*, (Lagos: Greater Heights Publications, 1997), pp. 39-40.

<sup>8</sup> S. A. Adewale, *The African Church Inc. 1901-1986: A Synthesis of Religion and Culture*, (Ibadan Olusheyi Press Limited, 1988), p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Western biblical feminists such as Reneta Weems, Phyllis Trible and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza have already argued that the bible is inherently patriarchal and misogynistic.

<sup>11</sup> Musa W. Dube, 'Talitha Cum! A Postcolonial Feminist & HIV/AIDS Reading of Mark 5:21- 43', in *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible*, ed. by Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro, (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), pp. 123-138 (p. 126).

<sup>12</sup> Eryl W. Davies, *Biblical Criticism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 104.

- <sup>13</sup> Lovemore Togarasei, 'Musa W. Dube and the Study of the Bible in Africa', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 34 (2008), 55-74, (p. 67).
- <sup>14</sup> Justin S. Ukpong, 'Reading the Bible in a Global Village: Issues and Challenges from African Readings', in *Reading the Bible in the Global Village: Cape Town* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 200), pp. 29-39 (p. 21).
- <sup>15</sup> Davies, p. 104.
- <sup>16</sup> Vivek Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Scepter of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2013)
- <sup>17</sup> Shane J. Wood, *The Alter-Imperial Paradigm: Empire Studies & the Book of Revelation* (Boston: Brill, 2015), p. 37.
- <sup>18</sup> As quoted in Wood, p. 37

## **THE MAJOUR THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK.**

*Farisayi Hwata*

### **Introduction**

The Gospel of Mark contains many themes; among these is the major theme of the identity of Jesus, following, the theme of discipleship takes centre stage. After calling his disciples to follow him, Jesus defines what discipleship will mean to those that follow him and the demands that come with discipleship. Although Mark portrays the disciples both in the negative and positive, the essay is not going to focus on the disciples but rather on discipleship. The theme of discipleship is linked to denying of self, taking up the cross and following Jesus. Simply put, discipleship in Mark's view is connected to suffering and service. The essay will give a brief background of the Gospel of Mark then explore Mark's model of discipleship and discipleship in the contemporary world.

### **The Gospel of Mark**

According to Achtemeier, The Gospel of Mark is believed by most scholars to be the earliest of the four New Testament Gospels. Thus, it was probably one of the sources used by the authors of the Gospels of Luke and Mathew.<sup>1</sup> Arguments surrounds the authorship of the Gospel of Mark but most authors have identified that early tradition point to Mark, whom they believe was a companion of Peter and that he wrote what he had heard Peter preach. Van Linden asserts that, when Mark wrote his Gospel in A.D 70, most of those who had been Jesus' first disciples were no longer present to lead the Christian community.<sup>2</sup> According to Best, Mark is writing in a post resurrection situation to Christians and perhaps also to unbelievers of his own period and in his own area which is almost certainly Rome just before or just after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

### **Call to Discipleship**

After Jesus, disciples are the most major characters in Mark's Gospel; they take centre stage for both the positive and the negative. For Mark, the disciples are those who respond to the call of Jesus. In the Gospel



of Mark, Jesus' first public ministry after calling people to repentance and faith is the call of the first disciples, these include, first, the call of Peter and his brother Andrew and James and John, the Sons of Zebedee (1:16-20); then the call of Levi (2:14); and the call of the twelve (3:13-19). While there may have been instances in which a person comes to Jesus and declares his wish to follow him, the distinctive characteristic of the call to discipleship in Mark's Gospel is that Jesus takes the initiative and calls people to follow him.<sup>4</sup>

Ho Ngo Lu Vien notes that Jesus' call demands immediate response as seen in the way the first disciples responded.<sup>5</sup> The called ones respond without delay by leaving their regular lives and adhering to Jesus without asking questions or having second thoughts. The disciples' immediate response points to the fact that the discipleship into which Jesus calls people calls for a break from one's previous way of life, like in the case of Peter and Andrew, James and John who left their fishing occupation to follow him.

Hooker contends that the description of their immediate response to the summons of Jesus conveys vividly the authority and power he exercises. According to him, Mark not only impresses his readers with the authority of Jesus, but reminds them that they too are called to obey the same command.<sup>6</sup> From the ordinary business they had been engaged in, the focus of their lives becomes Jesus. Worth noting is the fact that the disciples of Jesus also included women; the first witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were women who went on to spread the news to the other disciples.

Best points out that; Mark's Gospel is the gospel of "The Way". It is a way in which Jesus, the Lord goes and it is a way to which he calls his followers. Followers, is indeed the characteristic word which Jesus uses to men. "Follow me" is the challenge to those who would be his disciples (1:17, 20; 2:14), it is the call issued to the rich man who rejects it (10:21), of Bartimaeus it is said, he followed Jesus on the way (10:52).<sup>7</sup> Best contends that; the call "come after me" is a general command which specifically links discipleship to Jesus; it is a step to fall in behind Jesus and no other, in the way in which he is going.<sup>8</sup>

## **The Demands of Discipleship**

Most writers agree that in his Gospel, Mark has placed a great deal of the material he had dealing with discipleship into chapters 8-10. Here, we have a good portion of specific advice and instructions to the disciples of Jesus. Achtemeier points out that these three chapters have the first sustained indication that Jesus' fate is to be suffering. The three predictions of his passion are contained in this section (8:31; 9:30-32; 10:33-34).<sup>9</sup> Best notes that, the three chapters are cast in the form of a journey to Jerusalem<sup>10</sup> and according to Achtemeier, Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem (10:32) ought to be enough to alert us to the fact that a particular fate awaits those who follow a suffering leader.<sup>11</sup>

The third prediction contains the meaning and demands of discipleship as defined by Jesus. Best suggests that part of discipleship is acceptance of the strange idea that Jesus the Lord should die, and he points out that the disciples did not fully understand the death of Jesus and did not understand what his death meant to them. He explains that their failure is implicit since discipleship is defined as suffering and they have shown themselves unable to appreciate suffering as God's way.<sup>12</sup>

Achtemeier suggests that, if the prospect of suffering and death would cause one to pull back from devotion to Jesus (to be ashamed of him v 38), that person cannot become a disciple.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Jesus commands his disciples that whoever would want to come after him must deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow him (8:34).

### ***Discipleship and Self Denial***

The first step in discipleship after responding to the call to follow Jesus according to Mark 8:34 is that of self-denial (Mk 8:34). Jesus commands his disciples that if they want to follow him, they have to deny themselves, take up the cross and follow. Self-denial means that one has to give up interests, possessions, career, and family among other things for the sake of Jesus Christ, to belong to him and be under his rule. It means spending yourself for the benefit of others; caregiving, visitations and sharing the Gospel. Denying self has an element of sacrifice and it takes commitment for one to sacrifice all for the sake of Christ. Even though Jesus knew what awaited him in Jerusalem, he did not abandon the journey because he was

committed to fulfilling his mission. In the garden of Gethsemane his plea to have the cup removed shows his fear but nevertheless he cries “Not my will but your will be done” (14:35-36) Ho Ngo Lu Vien asserts that, for Mark, there is no following after Jesus, no discipleship, without self-denial (qtd. in Schrage 140) He warns that, following Jesus is not a ticket to glory or exaltation, but rather a path of suffering and discipleship.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Discipleship and the Cross***

Wilkins asserts that, after Jesus rebuffs Peter’s attempt to impose his own way of thinking on the Messianic mission, he reveals one of the central principles of discipleship: a disciple must take up his own cross and follow Jesus.<sup>15</sup>

Similarly, Ho Ngo Lu Vien contends that, from the first prediction of his passion at Caesarea Philippi (8:27-33) onwards, the evangelist emphasizes the necessity of Jesus’ suffering and death, thus Mark affirms the place of the cross in the life of Jesus and all who belong to him. He points out that the cross is the key to understanding who Jesus is.<sup>16</sup>

Wilkins explains that,

In the first century, crucifixion was a feared form of execution used effectively by the Romans as one of the strongest kinds of deterrence against insurrection or rebellion. It was a dreadful way to die and condemned victims were often forced to take up and carry their own crossbar to the scene of crucifixion (15:20). The horror of the cross will be Jesus’ tragic fate but in what must have been to the disciples a shocking shift of emphasis, he uses the cross and crucifixion as an image of discipleship. Although the image is often understood by modern Christians as bearing up some personal hardships or life’s cruel fate, the cross has a much more profound significance: one must die to his or her own will and take up his or her cross as representation of God’s will.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, Ho Ngo Lu Vein submits that, for Mark “the cross is a key to understanding who Jesus is, and sums up the underlying meaning of what proclaiming God’s rule involves”. He explains that the Christ that Jesus is projecting is not the same as what his disciples expect. The Christ that Jesus wishes them to know is the one who is rejected, who suffers, who is maltreated and who dies.<sup>18</sup> In the same vein, Achitemeir points out that,

just as Jesus, the Lord of all, achieved lordship only through paradoxical paths of suffering and rejection, so those who follow him must carry that out in the same paradoxical way.<sup>19</sup> For Ho Ngo Lu Vein, discipleship in Mark's Gospel is affirming the place of the cross in the life of Jesus and all who follow him.<sup>20</sup> Harrington contends that, "without the cross, the portrayals of Jesus as wonder-worker and teacher are unbalanced and without a direct principle". The cross symbolizes what is most proper to the following of Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

### *Discipleship and Servanthood*

Servanthood is another important focal point of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark. In chapter 10:35-37 James and John wanted to know if they would sit on both sides with Jesus in glory, but when the other disciples had this they were not pleased with the brothers (10:41). Jesus responded by telling them that to be great you have to be a servant. "But it shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the son of man did come not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:43-45). Many can identify with the disciples in this regard; wanting to take centre stage, being in the front row, however, Jesus demonstrates, the way of the kingdom is not like that. To be a follower of Christ means you do like your Master.

Moreover, Mark portrays that true discipleship means you follow the steps of Jesus. In Philippians 2:5-7 Paul says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or self-conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourself, not looking at your own interest but each of you to the interest of others. In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset with Jesus Who, being in very nature God, [...] rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Phil. 2:5-7).

Wilkins warns that Jesus did not come as a potentate who expected groveling servants to cater to his every personal whim; he came as a servant to give his life to save those who were his subjects. He describes Jesus as a unique Master, who demands an equal type of discipleship from his followers and he encourages that, servanthood is to be a primary motivation for the discipleship community.<sup>22</sup> Best contends that the rule of

discipleship is Jesus. As Jesus was, so the disciples must be.<sup>23</sup>

According to Wilkins, servanthood is a concept not expected by the disciples and he says that, by comprehending the essence of Jesus' ministry as servanthood, the disciples will comprehend the essence of discipleship as servanthood, including their motivation, position, ambition, expectations and example.<sup>24</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien contends that Christ does not offer an earthly kingdom and he does not promise earthly gain for his disciples and that the idea of discipleship that Jesus wishes his followers to be shaped is one of selfless service.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Discipleship and Mission***

Tannehill points out that in 3:13 -19, Jesus selected the twelve for a special relationship and responsibility. The twelve receive their position by Jesus' own choice. This position involves being "with" Jesus in close association and sharing in the work of preaching and exorcism which Jesus himself has been doing (3:19).<sup>26</sup> After his resurrection Jesus commands his disciples to go into the whole world and preach the gospel (16:15). This shows that missionary work is at the heart of Jesus. It was his desire right from the start, to preach the good news of the kingdom of God.

### **Discipleship in the Contemporary world**

There is no major difference between discipleship in Mark's gospel and the contemporary world. The follower of Christ is still being called to deny self, take up the cross and follow. Harrington suggests that the Markan theme of discipleship has symbolic significance not only to Jesus' first companions but also for disciples today. He points out that Mark's gospel challenges us to reassess our lifestyle and take the steps necessary to restructure our lives in accord with God's will and to follow the example of Jesus, the suffering servant and the Son of God.<sup>27</sup>

The follower of Christ is still being called to take up the cross and follow Jesus and to participate in the mission of Christ. The call, "go ye therefore and preach the good news" (Mk 16:15) still applies to today's disciples as it did in the disciples of Mark. Today's disciple is still being called to a life of witnessing and witnessing may take the form of personal evangelism, ministering to the sick and needy, sharing resources through

giving and proclamation of the word among other things.

The Gospel of the Good News is being preached today more than ever, this is so because of the many resources that are available today for example, the use of technology has helped the Gospel to reach multitudes of people the world over at the click of a button. This means any Christian who is willing can share the Gospel anywhere any time. The times and environment may be different, but the demands of discipleship are still the same; come after me, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. Ho Ngo Lu Vien sums it up very well by submitting that, responding to the call of Jesus involves three elements; leaving one's previous way of life, imitating the life of Jesus and engaging in missionary work.<sup>28</sup>

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be noted that, although times and circumstances have changed, the demands of discipleship just as it was in the days of the apostles in Mark's gospel so it is today. Jesus is still calling men and women who are willing to follow him, men and women who have courage to forsake the luxuries of this world for the sake of Christ. Discipleship demands that one chooses Jesus over everything else including resources, time, interests and even family. Ho Ngo Lu Vien contends that; Jesus is both the basis for and the pattern of discipleship and that it is a response to and what Jesus stands for.<sup>29</sup> As the unique Master of his disciples, Jesus provides the only true paradigm of our discipleship.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Achitemeir, J. Paul, Mark. *Proclamation Commentaries: The New Testament Witnesses for preaching*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1975. P. 605.

<sup>2</sup> Van Linden, Philip. *The gospel according to Mark: Collegetown Bible Commentary*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1983. P. 25

<sup>3</sup> Best, Ernest. *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel According to Mark*. Edinburgh: T. T. Clark Ltd., 1986.P. 2

<sup>4</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. *Discipleship in Mark's Gospel and its Implications to Contemporary Religious Life*. 2012. P. 24

<sup>5</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. *Discipleship in Mark's Gospel and its Implications to Contemporary Religious Life*. 2012. P. 25

<sup>6</sup> Hooker, D. Morna. *The Gospel According to Mark: Black's New Testament Commentaries*. Gen.ed. Henry Chadwick. London: New York: Continuum, 1991. P. 59

<sup>7</sup> Best, Ernest. P. 5

<sup>8</sup> Best, Ernest. P. 8

<sup>9</sup> Achitemeir, J. Paul. P. 97

- <sup>10</sup> Best, Ernest. P. 6
- <sup>11</sup> Achitemeir, J. Paul. P. 97
- <sup>12</sup> Best, Ernest. P. 7
- <sup>13</sup> Achitemeir, J. Paul. P. 98
- <sup>14</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 58
- <sup>15</sup> Wilkins, J. Michael. *Unique Discipleship to a Unique Master: Discipleship in the Gospel According to Mark*. Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 8:3 (2004) 50-68. P. 60
- <sup>16</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 16
- <sup>17</sup> Wilkins, J. Michael. P. 60
- <sup>18</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 28
- <sup>19</sup> Achitemeir, J. Paul. P. 98
- <sup>20</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 28
- <sup>21</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. *What are they saying about Mark?* New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005. P. 597
- <sup>22</sup> Wilkins, J. Michael. P. 63-64
- <sup>23</sup> Best, Ernest. P. 8
- <sup>24</sup> Wilkins, J. Michael. P. 63
- <sup>25</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 28
- <sup>26</sup> Tannehill, C. Robert. *The Interpretation of Mark: Issues in Religion and Theology* 7. London: Fortress Press and SPCK, 1985. P. 144
- <sup>27</sup> Harrington, J. Daniel. P. 39
- <sup>28</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 28
- <sup>29</sup> Ho Ngo Lu Vien, James. P. 58
- <sup>30</sup> Wilkins, J. Michael. P. 64

# *LITURGY*



## SACRED LITURGY: A 'PLACE' OF ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Oscar Madzonganyika, C.Ss.R

Sacred liturgy is the pillar of the Christian faith because it unites the church from the past, present and future. Liturgy is embraced with three main forms that are essential in the catholic faith namely Eucharistic celebrations, celebration of other sacraments, and divine worship. In all these forms, liturgy becomes an important aspect to the church especially as an encounter with God and the people who are involved. This essay shall discuss the sacred liturgy and further give an analysis of how is it important as an encounter with God.

According to *Mediator Dei*, the Papal encyclical on sacred liturgy, by its very nature liturgy is “public worship which our redeemer as the head of the church renders to the father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its founder, and through him to the heavenly father”.<sup>1</sup> The word liturgy derives from a Greek word *Leitourgia* which means public service or the work of the people. In this case it is a combination of two words namely ‘*litos*’ which means people and ‘*ergon*’ which means work.

Sacred liturgy is the fundamental aspect in the Christian faith. It keeps us in touch with the past, present, and the future proclamation of our faith. It is a unique mark that distinguishes the believers and non-believers. It is traditional and historical in nature. It is dated back to the early church that gives taste of the beginning of the Christian faith, beliefs, ways and nature of worship. The tradition in liturgy itself helps the church to uphold the Christian teachings that are Christocentric and Theocentric through participating in the work of Christ who was sent by God to redeem humanity from sin.

The Vatican II insists that the word liturgy be used in the first understanding whereby it calls for a duty to fully participate in the public worship. The active and conscious participation<sup>2</sup> of the whole assembly is crucial as dynamic liturgical celebration. The teaching of the church concerning sacred liturgy from the Vatican II shade more light that the focus on liturgy

should not only rest on the ‘assembly’ of people but should see the ‘work of God’ being effective in the assembly itself. This balance in sacred liturgy helps the church to be lively and fruitful in all aspects of public worship.

At the centre of liturgy is the celebration of the Eucharist. This is regarded as the paschal mystery which signifies the continual redemptive power of Christ whenever the assembly celebrates the Eucharist. The liturgy also encompasses other special liturgical celebrations like Easter, sacraments of the church, and respectively other prayers that are crucial in the church like ‘the liturgy of the hours’.<sup>3</sup> Bringing all these aspects of liturgy together, this will then sum up the special gift of the church from God – the “Mystery of our Faith” which is the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ which is at work here and now in the church.<sup>4</sup>

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) takes us back to the Old Testament and inform us that the love of God to the Israelites was, was “but a prelude to the work of Christ the Lord in redeeming mankind and giving perfect glory to God”.<sup>5</sup> This coming of Christ in the New Testament fulfilled the love of God which was revealed in the Old Testament to the Israelites who represents God chosen people. The coming of Christ as human through the incarnation was clearly a divine revelation from God which invites us to participate in the divine worship which was given to us by God.<sup>6</sup>

The liturgical catechesis highlighted that liturgy in the New Testament was traced from the early church where the Christians were participating in the “work of God” (Jn. 17:4). It further states that liturgy was done by the small Christian communities whereby they could gather together during the “breaking of the bread” (Acts 2:42) and in that sense they were bringing the past into the present (the paschal mystery of Christ).

The sacred liturgy is the celebration of the presence of Christ. The constitution on the sacred liturgy puts it clear that liturgy is an “exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ”.<sup>7</sup> The story of redemption in which Christ accepted the will of the father to become the sacrificial victim on the cross clearly indicated that he performed the duty of a priest – to offer sacrifice. As a result of this, whenever the priests celebrate the Eucharist, they participate in God’s mission of outpouring of his love though the

person of Jesus Christ. In this case, liturgy can be seen as the Church's participation in the work of Christ, hence, this becomes our fundamental duty to work for the church.<sup>8</sup>

According to Schmidt and Power, "liturgy is an act in which there is a true communication between God and men and his fellow men".<sup>9</sup> This encounter is an expression of faith through the act of performing in public worship. Christian behaviour is then regarded as minimal in expressing our faith. The main issue then are the words and symbols of the liturgy which unites God and the people involved. In this case, expressing our faith signifies that we believe Christ who became human and dwelt among us. Through faith we become true believers in the outpouring of God's grace through Christ's death on the cross. Hence, faith enables us to participate in the sacred liturgy, and in this we encounter God by continuing the work of Jesus in the church.

Pope Francis, addressing the assembly of the Vatican congregation, said that liturgy is the encounter of people of God with the Lord that changes the heart. He insisted that liturgy is not something which is an idea, rather it is a reality. Pope Francis went on saying that, "liturgy is a living treasure that cannot be reduced to tastes, recipes and currents but must be welcomed with docility and promoted with love, as an irreplaceable nourishment for the organic growth of the People of God".<sup>10</sup> Liturgy is not something that is personal or idealistic but an "epiphany of ecclesial communion" which is real, therefore the prayers that are offered together will gather people as one real community rather than an ideal subject.<sup>11</sup> As Pope Francis highlighted that liturgy is not an idea but the reality, it is practical to say that people encounter God himself through participating in liturgy.

The Holy Father, Francis sees liturgy as a process of conversion. People then encounter God through conversion because in all the liturgical practices that they undertake, their main focus is to be more like Christ. It is difficult for someone to be converted without encountering the cause of conversion. Therefore, by following the life of Christ who is the cause for conversion, we become the partakers of his ongoing redemptive work in the church. This will then enable us to encounter God in everyday lives

when we take an active role in sacred liturgy.

Lukken strongly believed that faith is expressed in a more original and complex way in liturgy.<sup>12</sup> He further said that, “God gives himself completely to man and man abandon himself to God in Jesus through the Holy Spirit in the liturgical complex of words and symbols”.<sup>13</sup> Sacred liturgy then becomes a radical and unique encounter with God because it surpasses all the theological argument or intellectual expressions about our faith. It is in sacred liturgy that we experience God’s presence within us through the work handed over to us by Christ himself when he ascended into heaven. Hence, the Holy Spirit is at work in the people of God during liturgical expression. This brings the unity of the Triune God who is always present in the church whom we celebrate during public worship.

Cardinal Robert Sarah said that we encounter God ecclesially. He believed that our relationship with Christ comes through the Church which he founded for that same reason. To stress the human encounter of Christ in liturgy, he quoted Pope Benedict XVI, “It is in the Church that we discover Christ, that we know him as a living Person. She is ‘his Body.’” (General Audience, “The Ecclesial Nature of Liturgical Prayer”). This explains why liturgy is important as an encounter with God. Christ himself founded the church as his spouse so that the assembly may remain in constant communion with God through sacred liturgy. As parts of the body of Christ, it is important that the people encounter God through participating and fulfilling their roles in order to complete functions the whole body – the church.

Liturgy is important as an encounter with God because it is the word itself. The words that are uttered, the music that is sung, and the art that is in the liturgical expression clearly signifies the real presence of God. Through singing for example, the assembly summarises the scriptures and many people are attracted closer to God through liturgical music. Sacrosanctum Concilium pointed out that music and art should draw the minds of the people to see God prayerfully.<sup>14</sup> Liturgical music should lift up the heart of the faithful so that they can be closer to God. The structure of the churches (art) should also be constructed with the idea of liturgy in mind. The constitution on sacred liturgy stressed that the art in the church

should promote active participation, prayer and contemplation.<sup>15</sup> This draws the people closer to Christ which is a direct encounter with God through art and music.

In summary, sacred liturgy as public worship is something that unites the church together and draw people closer to God through Christ. The Eucharist as form of liturgy enables us to celebrate the Paschal mystery of Christ who is not an idea but really present whenever mass is celebrated. The liturgical year enables us to commemorate the whole mystery of Christ and so it is fundamental in carrying out the tradition which started in the early church. Other sacraments, divine office, music and arts also sums up our duty to participate in liturgy in order to be in constant communion with God. All these put together, they allow us to encounter God because our active participation will help us to see Christ's work and to complete it. This helps people to experience God's presence who became human through the person of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Mahlhlala, Joseph. Class lecture. Introduction to Liturgy. Holy Trinity College. Harare. 27 August 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium. December 4, 1963. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vatii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html) Accessed: 26 September 2019. (2 § 14)

<sup>3</sup> *Know the Words, Know the Meaning, Know the Mystery. Liturgical Catechesis* No. 1, December 2010. <http://archphila.org/Roman%20Missal/pdfs/What%20is%20the%20Sacred%20Liturgy.pdf> Accessed: 01 October 2019.

<sup>4</sup> *Know the Words, Know the Meaning, Know the Mystery. Liturgical Catechesis*. N\* 2.

<sup>5</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, 5 § 2

<sup>6</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium. SC 5 § 1.

<sup>7</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium. SC 7 § 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> Liturgical Catechesis. N\* 2.

<sup>9</sup> Schmidt, Herman and Power, David. *Liturgical Experience of Faith*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1973. P. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Gomes, R. *Vatican News: Liturgy is Encounter of People of God with the Lord That Brings Change of Heart*, 14 February 2019. P. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Gomes, R. *Vatican News: Liturgy is Encounter of People of God with the Lord That Brings Change of Heart*, 14 February 2019. P. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Schmidt, Herman and Power, David. P. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt, Herman and Power, David. P. 20.

<sup>14</sup> SC 112 § 1-4

<sup>15</sup> SC 124 § 3

## SACRED LITURGY AND POPULAR PIETY

*Tatenda Marunga, ofm.*

### **Introduction**

It is worth noting that Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety involves worship and expression of Christian faith but not all activities which have such characteristics qualify to be Sacred Liturgy. Hence, it is always a problem among many to make a distinction between Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety or Devotions. To this end, this paper aims to show the distinction between Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety. Again, in this paper we will explain how Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety are related. In order to achieve this, we shall start by give the background of Sacred Liturgy. Further, explain what Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety are at length. Then, we will explain how these two are related.

### **The Background of the Sacred Liturgy**

According to the New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, the word liturgy is currently used among Roman Catholics and some Episcopal and Protestant scholars to describe the public worship of the Church.<sup>1</sup> From its etymology the word comes from Greek word leitourgia which had secular meaning: denoted a work (ergon) undertaken on behalf of the people (*laos*).<sup>2</sup> Hence, public projects undertaken by an individual for the good of the community in sectors like education, entertainment or security would be called leiturgia. In addition, in Greek Old Testament (OT) the word liturgy was used to refer to divine worship and to the ministry of the levites.<sup>3</sup> The word liturgy was also used in the New Testament (NT). For instance, Hebrews 8:2 used the word to refer to the priestly work of Christ: Christ is called a minister (*leitourgos*) of the sanctuary. Again, Romans 15:16, Paul speaks of himself as a minister (*leitourgon*) of Christ Jesus among the Gentiles (Fink 740-741).

In Introduction to Catholic Liturgy, Peter Kreeft believed that, on the 1st century among Greek speaking Christians the word liturgy indicated both the ministry of the church officials and any act of divine worship.<sup>4</sup> But by 4th century in the Eastern Church the word was used to refer only to the celebration of the Eucharist. Again, it is believed that, for many

centuries in the Western Church the word liturgy fell out of use. Words like divine office, ecclesiastical office or sacred rites were used to denote worship services. In 18th century the word refers to cultic activities of the Church (35-39). This was confirmed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (Vat II) and in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

### **What is Sacred Liturgy**

It is worth noting that, the Vatican Council II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy offers several descriptions of liturgy. Each illuminates a different aspect of this most important activity of the Church. Firstly, the word is an outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church<sup>5</sup>. Secondly, the word is considered an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ that is, by the head and his members.<sup>6</sup> Hence, from liturgy grace is poured upon us and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God is achieved in the most efficacious possible way. So it is a summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, liturgy involves full and active participation in the celebrations of the Church which is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian Spirit (S.C.14). Further, liturgy comprises public, communal, ritual activities in which the sanctification of man is signified by signs perceptible to the sense and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs.<sup>8</sup>

Liturgy allows us to be drawn close to God's love. It is a means of seeking and finding perfect truth and love. Hence participating in liturgy is a response to Christ's presence in his Church. Liturgy is the official worship of the Church.<sup>9</sup> As a result of that, liturgy consist of the Seven Sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours. However, liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church<sup>10</sup> nor it is the only time when Christians offer worship to God. They are other Christian activities which are known as devotions or popular piety.

## **Popular Piety**

Popular piety, most often called devotions, refers to those prayers and rituals that may well enjoy great popularity, but are not a part of the official liturgy of the Church. Popular piety would include devotions to Christ, to the mother of God and the saints, and the recitation of the Rosary. Further, they are those cultic of a private or community nature which, in the context of the Christian faith, are inspired predominantly not by the sacred liturgy but by forms derived from a particular nation or people or from their cultures.<sup>11</sup> Blessed John Paul II in the Directory on Popular Piety and The Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines, gave particular attention to the subject of popular piety. He said that popular piety is simply “faith deeply rooted in a particular culture, immersed in the very fibre of hearts and ideas. Above all, it is generally shared by people at large who are then a people of God.”<sup>12</sup>

According to Paul VI in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, he argued that popular religiosity, of course, certainly has its limits such as if misguided it focuses on non-essentials. Moreover, popular piety may end up being exaggerated such that it will be imposed to others. Again, it is prone or subject to penetration by many distortions of religion and superstitions. Hence, it frequently remains at the level of forms of worship not involving a true acceptance by faith which leads to the creation of sects and endanger the true ecclesial community. However, if it is well oriented, above all by a pedagogy of evangelization, it is rich in values.<sup>13</sup> It entices people to have thirst for God. Again, the Directory stressed that, it makes people capable of generosity and sacrifice even to the point of heroism, when it is a question of manifesting belief. It involves an acute awareness of profound attributes of God: fatherhood, providence, loving and constant presence.<sup>14</sup> It engenders interior attitudes rarely observed to the same degree elsewhere: patience, the sense of the cross in daily life, detachment, openness to others, devotion.<sup>15</sup>

## **The Relationship between Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety**

In order to keep the appropriate distinction between devotions and Sacred Liturgy so that people will recognize that devotions should take their power from the liturgy, and lead people to the liturgy, in December



of 2001 the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued what is called the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines. In the Directory, Pope John Paul II deciphered that:

“The correct relationship between these two expressions of faith must be based on certain firm principles, the first of which recognizes that the liturgy is the centre of the Church's life and cannot be substituted by, or placed on a par with, any other form of religious expression. Moreover, it is important to reaffirm that popular religiosity, even if not always evident, naturally culminates in the celebration of the liturgy towards which it should ideally be oriented. This should be made clear through suitable catechesis.”<sup>16</sup>

Again, the Directory puts it clear that the liturgy always enjoys primacy in the prayer life of the Church as it states that, the faithful should be made conscious of the pre-eminence of the liturgy over any other possible form of legitimate Christian prayer.<sup>17</sup> Hence, the formation of priests and of the faithful give pre-eminence to liturgical prayer and to the liturgical year over any other form of devotion. However, this necessary pre-eminence is not to be interpreted in exclusive terms, nor in terms of opposition or marginalization.

It is worth noting that, devotions and liturgy constitute two different kinds of prayer, and that the two must always be kept distinct, keeping in mind that the liturgy always takes precedence in the life of any Catholic Christian community. This notion concurred with what the Directory propounded on when it says that,

“practices on the liturgy so as to differentiate their language, rhythm, course, and theological emphasis from those of the corresponding liturgical action, must be avoided, while any form of competition with or opposition to the liturgical actions, where such exists, must also be resolved. Thus, precedence must always be given to Sundays, Solemnities, and to the liturgical seasons and days”<sup>18</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In a nutshell, The Sacred Liturgy, as it is described by Sacrosanctum Concilium as the summit of the Church's life, can never be reduced to a

mere aesthetic reality. Neither can it be considered simply as a means to pedagogical or ecumenical ends. Before all else, the celebration of the sacred mysteries is an act of praise to the Triune God's sovereign majesty, and is willed by God Himself. The term "popular piety" designates those diverse cultic expressions of a private or community nature which, in the context of the Christian faith, are inspired predominantly not by the Sacred Liturgy but by forms deriving from a particular nation or people or from their culture. After having said this, Sacred Liturgy and Popular Piety are distinct activities in worshiping God. Hence, the correct relationship between these two expressions of faith must be based on certain firm principles, the first of which recognize that Liturgy is the center of Church's life and cannot be substituted by or placed on a par with any other forms of religious expression.

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<sup>1</sup>Fink, Peter E. *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990 pg 740

<sup>2</sup> Miller, John H. *The Nature and Definition of the Liturgy*. Washington D.C: Holy Cross College pg 20

<sup>3</sup> Fink, Peter E. pg 740

<sup>4</sup> Kreeft, Peter. *Introduction To Catholic Liturgy*. New York: Knight of Columbus Supreme Council, 2000.

<sup>5</sup>Second Vatican Council. *Vatican Council II: The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy. Sacrosanctum*

*Concilium*. Revised Edition. Vatican: Dominican Publication, 1988. Pg.2

<sup>6</sup>“Pg 7

<sup>7</sup> “Pg.10

<sup>8</sup> Pg 7

<sup>9</sup> Kreeft pg 48

<sup>10</sup> S.C p.g 9

<sup>11</sup> Directory pg. 9

<sup>12</sup> Directory pg.11

<sup>13</sup> Directory pg. 48, 13

<sup>14</sup> Pg.13

<sup>15</sup> Pg.14

<sup>16</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *Directory on Popular Piety and The Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*. Jorge A. Card. Medina Estévez. ed. Vatican City: 2001. Pg. 56

<sup>17</sup> “Pg.58

<sup>18</sup> “Pg.59

## **CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL OF ST PETER'S PARISH AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE EUCHARIST.**

*Maximose Dube.*

### **Introduction**

This chapter brings out views of the Christian faithful of St Peter's parish and their understanding of the Eucharist. It looks at how possible Christian families be helped to rediscover the effectiveness of the Eucharist in their live. Questionnaires that were distributed to guilds at St Peter's parish (Catholic Men's Association (C.M.A), St Anne and Hosi Yedenga guilds, and the Catholic Youth Association, which includes Sacred Heart of Jesus and St Mary guilds), and to non-Catholics brought out different responses. They responded on how they see the Eucharistic form of life in their own perspectives, challenges they are facing in trying to live a more Eucharistic life. Moreover, how they connect the Eucharist and their everyday life in their milieu. And also views no-Catholics around St Peter's community.

### **Catholic Families' views on Eucharist**

#### ***Catholic Men's Association (C.M.A)***

Mr. Karichi in responds to how possible Christian families or individual can be helped to rediscover the efficacy of the Eucharist said, "These days the faithful are not taking seriously the celebration of the Eucharist as compared to our time were we used to be taught and forced to follow the rubrics in Mass, where to kneel or stand. I remember when I was still young my parents used to force me to go to Mass and will be sitting in between them, where they stand or kneel, they were also forcing me to follow suit. They also loved to participate in Church choir. Mostly were going with me. At first, it was boring but at last, I started liking it, and could see a difference between myself and other young men around my area. Today it is different the faithful are not following gestures like kneeling or genuflecting during the celebration. Some will be dozing during Mass and by that, they are missing the steps that leads then to proper reverence of the Eucharist. This shows a lack of reverence to the Eucharist, if the faithful truly follow all the steps of Eucharistic celebration surely we are

amplified to raise our voices about the love of Christ.” He added on to say, “there is great need of proper catechesis to the Christian faithful so that we are able to know and understand the love of Christ which he is showing to us each and every time Mass is celebrated.”

Cementing on the chairperson’s points, Mr. Mudengezi said, “Some will be playing with their phones, some chatting or even commenting on the homily, at the end of Mass one goes out without gaining anything from the celebration.” He said, “The process of catechism today is lenient, catechists are too tolerant to catechumens, at the end of the process catechumens do not get anything, not even knowing why they kneel before the Blessed Sacrament.”

Mr. Dakwa pointed out that, “the faithful are not engaging themselves to practices like benediction.” He said, “These exercises can help the faithful to know and deepen their love for the Eucharist. Priests should teach the faithful on the doctrine of transubstantiation, especially on the feast day of Corpus Christi.” He added that during the procession of the feast of Corpus Christi day people will be talking, eating, and drinking, this shows lack of reverence to the Eucharist.”

Mr. Kalenjeka pointed out the major challenge that encounters us men is, “we men are too relaxed thinking that everything has to be done by women and children. We leave everything to them – participating in choir, taking readings.” Mr. Wenzeri in support of Mr. Dakwa and Mr. Kalenjeka’s points he said, “Devotions like Benediction or Holy hour few of us devote to those practice.”

### ***St Anne and HosiYedenga***

In response to the questions, what the Eucharistic shape of Christian life look like in their own setting and how Eucharist and everyday life are connected? “I cannot say I really know the significance of the Eucharist, but what I am convinced is that it is important,” said Mrs Munetsi. She added that, “the act of communion makes me feel connected to God, I feel empowered when I receive the Body and Blood of Christ.” She went on to say, “I wonder if some feel the same.” Hosi Yedenda guild they emphasized most on the challenges they face when they try to live a Eucharistic life. Mrs Jimu said, “You try to come for Mass earlier to have private prayers,

you come for Mass each day during the week, adorations you attend, but you get negative strokes from other people.” Another said in the line of the immediate idea said above, “some will gossip on you, saying are these still devotions or she is after the priest, or want to buy favors from the priest.” Some said this attitude from other faithful draws them back from participating fully in the celebration.

Another challenge that came out is of helping the poor, visiting the sick and some charity works. Gogo Musoni, said those who utter negative things on those who try to live a Eucharistic life, a life of love and service, disturb her. She said, “some will be teasing you calling you Musande (Saint) some will be saying mutenderi wafata (priest’s faithful).” “These negative strokes pull down and is discouraging,” she added.

Mrs Sithole said, “Especially us young women as we try by all means to partake in Church activities negative comments come out.

### ***Catholic Youth Association (C.Y.A)***

Ideas that came from the youth are that they need proper knowledge of the Eucharist. Yes, they believe that during Mass the bread and wine are changed to Body and Blood of Christ, but what it does to them they do not know or understand it. Martha said, “We receive the Body and Blood of Christ during Mass, but after that we still behave the same way no change in us,” and she posed a question, “Then where is the power of the Eucharist, yet it is supposed to enrich us, what really are we missing?” In response to that question, some said, “As young people who are eying for a better tomorrow, looking forward to marry or to be get married so we just go for Mass to be noticed or to look for a partner. So our coming to Mass is searching for a partner and showing of our fashion and gadgets.”

A point that came out from the youth is that most of them are afraid to participate in Liturgy like taking Readings in Mass, serving Mass or partaking in Church choir. Levy said, “Some of us do not know if its phobia or simply we do not want to participate in Liturgy, personally if I do at least something during Liturgy I feel edified. I will know that I have added something in me which I can share with my friends.” Admire said, I quote, “yes we are taught that the Eucharist is the real Body of Christ but we do not really understand it, the knowledge we got during

catechism is not enough to explain it to someone who wants to know about the Eucharist.” He continued by saying, “that is when we stammer after being asked about our faith.

The youth also have a challenge facing the Hosi Yedenga, of receiving negative strokes when trying to live a Eucharistic life. Prilete said, “as the chair I try to implement some of the devotions to the group, I arrange Masses for the guild just to keep ourselves focused as youths. But at the end you hear someone calling you fata (a priest), teasing you.” Mildret added by saying, “The problem with us youths we are shy of being Christians – helping the poor, visiting the sick are some of the attributes of a true follower of Christ. As was said by the last speaker we start calling each other names. This drives away us youth from performing works of charity.

### *Non-Catholics*

The researcher also had some interviews with non-Catholics. A lady known as Mai Finias who had been to several Catholic weddings and funerals and some of her relatives are Catholics said, “Catholics I have seen they sure not seem as though they believe in what they receive in their service. I have seen Catholics going forward to receive Chidyo (Communion), chewing gum, some waving at each other as they go forward. Even after receiving Chidyo, you see the person greeting people on the way to their place. Immediately they start talking, without even having a time of silent prayer. This shows that Catholics do not really take serious what they are receiving.” Mr Mukundwa uttered that “If I were a Catholic and truly believe that it is Christ present in the Eucharist I would really give reverence to the Eucharist. However, what surprises me is that, Catholic seem not to show respect to the Eucharist. I guess they do not really believe in it” he also added, “Catholics rarely speaks of their faith to non-Catholics.”

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND EVALUATIONS**

Having listened to the views of the faithful at St Peter’s during my research, I noticed that the faithful of St Peters community need proper catechesis for them to rediscover the effectiveness of the Eucharist in their lives. Of course, some they know what the Eucharist does when one participates fully in the celebration but are few. Most of them do not know how

to connect their everyday life and the Eucharist, what they are supposed to be doing after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. This is due to lack of proper teaching of the Church. Some come to Church just to be recognized or to show off and some just to find a place of belonging that if he or she dies will be buried as a Catholic, as responded by respondents.

Another thing I noticed, after receiving the Eucharist some of the faithful do not take their time to sit down and meditate, listening to Christ whom they received. Some immediately after receiving the Eucharist they straight away leave the Church.

I also gave the parish priest the opportunity to evaluate the Eucharistic life of his faithful. He started by saying, “the faithful at St Peter’s parish have what I can call ‘Demon Religion’ – yes the Church will be fully packed but very few really concentrate when during the Celebration. I asked him on how the faithful can be helped to rediscover the effectiveness of the Eucharist? He responded saying, “It is a process that takes time since the knowledge they have about the Eucharist is not that ‘rich’ and needs to be empowered.” He added by saying, “Yes, we have practices like Adoration, Holy Hour and we encourage people to visit the Blessed Sacrament often, but what really needs to be done is to teach the faithful to have faith in the Sacrament.”

He continued saying, “If we really believe that Christ becomes present during consecration and always present in the tabernacle, the faithful becomes acquainted with what he or she is receiving – Christ Himself. We need to believe that the Eucharist can change our lives when we really take it seriously.

Therefore, as *Christus Dominus* 14 emphasizes on catechetical instructions’ endorsement to the faithful, I as their shepherd have to take pains that catechetical instructions aimed to make faith, as lightened by teaching, an important, clear, and effective force in the lives of the faithful be imparted carefully to everyone at the parish.” He ended saying, “Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration and poor celebration weakens and destroys the faith.” He also quoted the document of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 11: “In order that the liturgy [Eucharist] may possess its full effectiveness, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds be attuned to their voices, and

that they cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain.” He said, “Therefore, there is need for proper teaching and not getting tired of imparting that knowledge to the faithful.

## CONCLUSION

What happens to us when we follow all the rites during the Eucharistic celebration? Mass has two main parts; Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist, there is also opening and closing rite. Opening rite ensures and prepares the faithful in the celebration. In the Liturgy of the Word, the faithful is nourished by the Word to go out and proclaim it to all. And at the table of Eucharist we gather together in remembrance of the love He showed to his friends when he washed their feet, giving them an example that they should be servants to others. At the table of Eucharist, we are invited to share together and also offer ourselves to others. This is in line with the Document of the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 10 that states; the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows.” All the powers and effects of the Eucharist to the faithful are endorsed during the celebration. It moves the faithful to make noise to all around them the love shared to them by Christ.

Benedict XVI in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* 94, share the same point in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 10 he said; “the Eucharist is at the root of every form of holiness, and each of us is called to the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit. This most holy mystery thus needs to be firmly believed, devoutly celebrated and intensely lived in the Church.” This calls for the faithful of St Peter’s to offer themselves in the celebration to rediscover the efficacy of the Eucharist in their day to day life. From the research it seems some do not know and some do know what happens to them when they give themselves totally to the celebration. That is why some will be chatting or playing with phones during Mass.

He went on to say “Jesus’ gift of himself in the sacrament which is the memorial of his passion tells us that the success of our lives is found in our participation in the Trinitarian life offered to us truly and definitively in him” (94). The pope is emphasizing on participating in the celebration in communion – as one family around the table, regardless the dichotomies



of cultures, tribes and languages amongst St Peter's parish community. Gathering together gives life on the faithful, we share together the Word and the Body and Blood of Christ that nourishes and strengthens us to witness his love. "The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love. The offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers and our solidarity with all men and women are essential aspects of that, spiritual worship, holy and pleasing to God (Romans 12:1), which transforms every aspect of our human existence, to the glory of God," he said. This aspect of communion where we gather in memorial of his death and resurrection brings us together in anticipation of his Second Coming. It sends us to the whole nation to proclaim his coming so that all including non-Catholic may believe and be saved.

# ***CATECHESIS***

## CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION

*Givemore Mazhanje, ofm.*

### **Introduction**

The Church exists to evangelize. After his resurrection, Jesus mandated his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). Not only that but Jesus also sent the eleven to teach the people to observe whatever he had commanded them. Two aspects which are outstanding from the above reference are: ‘to make disciples’ and ‘to teach’. We can simply say to teach is the catechesis and to make disciples is evangelization. The Church consequently took this mandate from Christ, thus it became her vision and mission in the world. It is in this context therefore that this essay is focussing on the place of catechesis in evangelization. The main thrust here is to see the role played by catechesis in the whole work of spreading the gospel or the relationship which exist between the two. To make this possible this paper will begin by elaborating the key terms, this will be followed by various views from the Church teachings on the subject matter.

### **Clarifying Key Terms**

A vivid understanding of the terms: catechesis and evangelization, will help us to have a better explanation of the role which catechesis has in the work of evangelization. The word catechesis is from the Greek word *katēchein* which is used to signify teaching or instruction in the law of God.<sup>1</sup> The Church understands catechesis as “the education of children, young people and adults in the faith which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life”.<sup>2</sup> The General Directory for Catechesis holds catechesis as “the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many way”.<sup>3</sup> On the other side, evangelization is the “zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and his Church” (Catholic Dictionary). In the words of Pope Paul VI, “evangelizing means to bring

the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new”<sup>4</sup> In contemporary Christian understanding, evangelization is defined as the process by which a person is led to make a commitment to Christ, dedicate himself to a Christian way of life and become a vital member of the local Church.<sup>5</sup> Now we would want to see how these two concepts are related.

### **References to Catechesis and Evangelization in the Scriptures**

It is almost impossible to find clear references to catechesis and evangelization in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the Jews as the people of the covenant, had a strong concern with passing on the fundamental beliefs of faith from one generation to the next.<sup>6</sup> They could memorize and reflect on the sacred passages from the Hebrew Scriptures and out of these texts they could get the core principles of their beliefs.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish people relied on the law from the Torah based on the covenant tradition. This is what they could abide with and impart it into their children. In a way, this was their form of catechesis and evangelization.

In the New Testament, the idea of evangelization and catechesis are clearer. The nuances surrounding these concepts indicate that where evangelization can be found, catechesis will soon follow.<sup>8</sup> Already the term ‘Gospel’ rooted in Greek word *evangelion* meaning ‘Good News’ is applied to four distinctive books, suggests positive spiritual benefits to the believers.<sup>9</sup> At the end of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus mandates his disciples for a great mission to all the nations to evangelize, to teach and baptize the people. Jesus said: “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28: 18-20). The task of evangelization here is directed to “all nations and the catechetical dimension is also set: it is necessary to teach what Jesus has taught.

It can be observed that from the early years of the Christian Church, the dual roles of evangelizing and catechizing were being worked together without one being a handmaid of the other.<sup>10</sup>

### **Catechesis and Evangelization**

A point of departure here is what has already been established that the mission of the Church is to help people to have an encounter with Jesus Christ in their lives. The effort to achieve this mission is made possible through the process of evangelization of which catechesis and theology are constitutive dimensions.<sup>11</sup> As a primary focus, catechesis endeavours to educate people to know the love of God who calls them to partake in his mysteries. In the book: *Introduction to Catechesis* edited by Peter De Rosa, Christ is at the centre of all Christian teaching.<sup>12</sup> Catechesis endeavours to communicate the salvation which was brought by God the Father through Christ. History of salvation unveils how God loved his people and brought them to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>13</sup> It is the catechetical work which has a role to introduce to the people, the message of the love of God. By so doing one may see that it is impossible to do evangelization without catechesis.

Moreover, the third general assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1974 had evangelization as their main subject. The topic was “the proclamation of the gospel to the people of our time”.<sup>14</sup> In their reflections they realized that catechesis was at the centre of the whole work of evangelization. They went on to take note of Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

A means of evangelization that must not be neglected is that of catechetical instruction. The intelligence, especially that of children and young people, needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history.<sup>15</sup>

In a way, catechesis is regarded as a unique way of evangelization. For this reason, the Synod on Evangelization in 1977 addresses many facets of catechesis in order to find better ways of doing catechism. It is not surprising why Pope Paul VI commended at the end of the Synod that “this orderly study of the Christian mystery is what distinguishes catechesis itself from all other forms of presentation of the word of God”.<sup>16</sup>

### **Catechesis as a Stage in Evangelization**

It is by no means that catechesis can be juxtaposed with evangelization. There is therefore a strong association of catechetical work and the Church's pastoral and missionary activities. For this reason, the General Directory for Catechesis has it that "the Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to carry forth the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength the Good News may enter into the hearts of human beings and renew the human race."<sup>17</sup> In this way evangelization becomes a process through which the Church is inspired by the Spirit of God to go out to announce the Gospel of salvation. This process has catechesis at the centre. In *The Art of Catechesis*, Maureen Gallagher views catechesis as a way of helping people to understand the revelation of God in order that they may grow in faith.<sup>18</sup>

Evangelization calls for conversion of heart and mind and this is followed by Christian initiation which is done through catechesis. Through catechesis and sacraments of Christian initiation, evangelization opens the doors of Christian life and those converted to Christian life are incorporated into the community of believers.<sup>19</sup>

It is significant to note that catechesis has a substantial part in every part of the process of evangelization. During the stage of primary proclamation, those who are presented for catechesis need true conversion. This conversion is needed such that catechesis fulfils the crucial part of education in the faith.<sup>20</sup> The teaching which is done in catechesis educates the catechumen and nurtures them into the maturity from initial conversion.<sup>21</sup> During the stage of Christian initiation, catechesis is also a vital element owing to its closeness to the sacraments of initiation which include Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion. These are sacraments of faith as shown with the act of 'Profession of Faith' when Baptism is taking place.<sup>22</sup> Thus the faith which is called for by evangelization, it is inherent goal in the catechetical goals. In short therefore, catechesis has a place in laying the basis on which those who are evangelized are fully brought to the knowledge of their faith and are made partakers in the family of God.

## Catechesis and Evangelisation in the light of Vatican Council II

Previous to this council, the Church had a mission to go out to non-Christian regions in order to convert them and establish Church structures, schools and parishes. These efforts did not rather put emphasis at individual conversion to become disciples. Vatican Council II then took a new look at the mission of the Church. The conciliar decree *Ad Gentes* brought in the concept of evangelization not as a short term act but as a process that begins with proclamation catechesis and formation of communities. “The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization, and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root.”<sup>23</sup> A significant shift took place from being a mission to evangelization as the nature of the Church and its purpose.<sup>24</sup> Ten years after the *Ad Gentes*, Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* hinted that the Church exists in order to evangelise, that is, to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace.<sup>25</sup> As such, Vatican II unveiled a new dimension of evangelization which realized that “evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social.”<sup>26</sup>

True evangelization takes place when the Good News is proclaimed by the witnesses of life and by the word of life; these should include teaching the life, promises, the kingdom and mystery of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God.<sup>27</sup> Apparently, the name of Jesus, teaching, the life, and the kingdom are all subjects of catechesis. Pope Paul VI asserts that effective catechesis is therefore necessary in order to accomplish the work of evangelization. Thus it means that catechesis enables Christians to build up stronger relationship with Christ whom they follow.

Another Apostolic Exhortation which explains the relationship between catechesis and evangelization is Pope John Paul II’s *Catechesi Tradendae* published in 1979. In this document, Pope John Paul II describes evangelization as a rich, complex and dynamic reality, made up of essential elements having catechesis as one of the indispensable aspects; noting that catechesis is a remarkable one in the whole process of evangelization.<sup>28</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI in January 2013 signed a *motu proprio* known as *Fides per Doctrinam*. By this document he transferred the task of catechesis from the Congregation of the Clergy to the Pontifical Council for the New

Evangelization. The reason for this transfer was that the teachings of the later council was to given a responsibility to establish a connection of catechism ever more closely to the process of evangelization (*Fides per Doctrinum*). For Pope Benedict XVI, faith needs to be strengthened through teaching, so that it can enlighten the minds and hearts of believers (*Fides per Doctrinum*). The new Pontifical Council for evangelization had a task to care for catechism which is the relevant instrument of evangelization along with catechetical teaching in all its forms, in order to bring more organic and effective pastoral outreach. Therefore, catechism becomes a significant step in the daily life of the Church through announcing and communicating the Word of God in a way that is living and effective (*Fides per Doctrinum*). In this manner believers are trained and educated in Christ to build his body, the Church (*Fides per Doctrinam*). Thus Pope Benedict XVI views catechism as a tool for evangelization.

### Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that, the above assertion highlighted that the Church has evangelization as her mission and purpose; catechesis being one of the core elements in this mission. This being the case, the essay has noted how the Church understands catechesis and evangelization not as two separate activities but both are essential and closely connected elements. Their process is not a single day activity but an ongoing process. Catechesis is at the core of the Church's self-realization of her mission in the world; thus, leading the people to become true followers of Christ. So, there is no disunity or antagonism between catechesis and evangelization; these two integrate and complement each other. Catechesis is to be viable if at all evangelization is to be fruitful.

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<sup>1</sup> Obielosi 22

<sup>2</sup> Obielosi 22

<sup>3</sup> The General Directory for Catechesis. N\* 105. [www.intratext.com](http://www.intratext.com) > ENG0159. Accessed: 08 October 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. n\* 28

<sup>5</sup> Obielosi 23

<sup>6</sup> Crawford 2.

<sup>7</sup> Crawford 2.

<sup>8</sup> Crawford. P. 7.



- <sup>9</sup> Crawford. P. 3.
- <sup>10</sup> Crawford. P. 6.
- <sup>11</sup> Wuerl, Donald. *Catechesis and Theology in The Service of the New Evangelization*. P. 1.
- <sup>12</sup> De Rosa, Peter. *Introduction to Catechetics*. London: Geofferey Champman, 1968. P. 7.
- <sup>13</sup> De Rosa, Peter. *Introduction to Catechetics*. London: Geofferey Champman, 1968. P. 8.
- <sup>14</sup> Marthaler, L Berard. *Introducing The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994. P. 8.
- <sup>15</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. n\* 44.
- <sup>16</sup> Marthaler, L Berard. P. 9.
- <sup>17</sup> *The General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 46
- <sup>18</sup> Gallagher, Maureen. *The Art of Catechesis: What You Need to Be and to Do*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1998. P. 9.
- <sup>19</sup> *The General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 46
- <sup>20</sup> *The General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 62.
- <sup>21</sup> *The General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 62.
- <sup>22</sup> *The General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 65.
- <sup>23</sup> Vatican II (1965) *Ad Gentes Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*. P. 6.
- <sup>24</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. n\* 14.
- <sup>25</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. n\* 14.
- <sup>26</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. 29.
- <sup>27</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. 22
- <sup>28</sup> John Paul II. *Catechesi Tradendae*. N\* 18

## **CATECHESIS: DEEPENING AND MATURATION OF FAITH**

*Albert Phiri, CSSp*

### **Introduction**

In this paper, we will: Justify the position that Catechesis is meant for the deepening and maturation of faith. To demonstrate our points, we will use the biological analogy of growth in humans and plants to signify deepening and maturation of faith through catechesis. To achieve our goal, we will illustrate maturation and deepening of faith from the sacramental view; maturity in understanding and experience of Jesus as the core of catechesis; and then a call to conversion as a sign of vivid realisation of faith in the newly born. Finally, we will indicate through an evaluation and conclusion the whole sense of the paper on maturity as bearing fruits of faith like love, peace and a life of prayer.

### **Catechesis and Faith**

Sylvia Devillers wrote “catechesis is the term to be used for form of ecclesial action which leads both communities and individual member of the faith to maturity of faith”.<sup>1</sup> Catechesis, adds John Paul II, means evangelisation and teaching faith in Jesus to help maturation in the recipient.<sup>2</sup> It is an educative formation of mind and will for action focused on the life of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> However, since it involves faith, the Roman Pontiff indicates that there must be willing application of the self to what is learned, to signify transformation and liberation from idols.<sup>4</sup> It shows that catechesis is the responsibility of the Church; Also, there is a call for the recipient to willingly allow the process of maturation for growth;<sup>5</sup> simply to let go of sin or our ways for Jesus.

### **The Sacramental Point of View**

Maturation and deepening of faith is a life long journey of series of growth in a sense of development. As a matter of fact, we cannot talk about

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<sup>i</sup> By recipient the word is meant to signify the catechumens also known as neophytes. That is beginners or learners in faith (Wedig et al. 598). In this research, recipient or catechumens or beginners will be used interchangeably.

growth in humans (or germination for plants) before child birth. Equally, in faith, conception of life and birth is through the sacrament of baptism. Holy Mother Church in her teaching, she indicates that: formation in faith is a gradual process<sup>ii</sup>.<sup>6</sup> This catechetical process is the hub of deepening and maturation of faith by growth. According to Roberto recounts, the stages of baptismal catechumenate are a formation, which schools the recipient through post-baptismal catechesis and deeply immerses the beginners into the essence of faith through rites in the community of faith.<sup>7</sup> They are not mere rites but they confer the wisdom of faith by efficacious grace and instruction. The word “formation” indicates the element of building faith in the sense of deepening and maturation.

Baptism is the starting point of this life in Christ Jesus. By baptism, it's like catechesis itself is made flesh (incarnate) in the lives of the neophytes. For Christ's life is catechesis itself, thus by baptism the neophytes are configured to Christ.<sup>8</sup> Those baptised die to their old life of sin in the death of Christ and are raised in His resurrection to new life (Roman 6:3-4). Thus, baptism and Church's teaching office are intimately united.

Catechesis is like fertilization, the starting point of the human life in the womb. Thus, comparable to natural birth, Jesus says: one to be of the Church, the kingdom or of Christ, they ought to be born anew in water and the Holy Spirit (John 3:16). Those born through baptism acquire the DNA of faith. The Church as mother, by Baptism she gives birth to sons and daughters for God.<sup>9</sup> Thus: “through catechesis she feeds her children with her own faith and incorporates them as members into the ecclesial family. As a good mother she gives them the Gospel in all its authenticity and purity as appropriate food, culturally enriched and a response to the deepest aspirations of the human heart (GDC 79). Meaning, like a mother with children, the Church gives the beginners the ‘system of the faith’ and second she confers unto the beginner the ‘DNA of faith’ by regeneration in baptism.

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ii“For example” Pauley maintained “RCIA catechetical work is not monolithic, it changes, in each of the four periods of process: pre-catechumenate, catechumenate, purification and enlightenment, and mystagogy. In these four periods, each stage has a different end for the catechesis” (205).

The newly born needs comfort, medications, and nourishments and emotional support to strengthen his or her personhood. Those born of faith through catechesis are nourished and helped by the community of faith to grow and mature. The Roman Pontiff confirms this when he observed: Parents, families and the community of faith are a symbol of faith of the Church to their children and young ones, hence they ought to transmit the faith. That is through vivid shared experience and tangible practise, she helps: “children gradually to mature in their own faith” (*Lumen Fidei* 53). Thus, the process to give birth to child in faith needs the help of the sacraments, the faith of community given through catechesis but the Church as Mother. Then maturity and deepening of the faith follows.

### **Understanding and Encountering the Mystery of Christ**

According to Edmondson, the process of catechesis is designed to proficiently form the lives of the baptised into copies of Christ. The faith in which they were incorporated should mature through life experience.<sup>10</sup> It is not just learning articles of faith but gain personal growth in the sense of willing responsibility of their faith (GDC 67). This denotes the end of Christian initiation, whereby those incorporated into the faith need to be helped by grace and thus freely respond to the call of God through his word.<sup>11</sup> Taking the same analogy, when a human person is born in a family, he needs to learn the language and the culture of the society but also how to be independent in life. In faith, this is the willing and docile responsibility which is a call at the heart of catechesis to deepening and maturation of faith through catechesis.

In this event, catechesis is the language and the culture that the newly born Christians assimilate in the sense of understanding. This language is the saving events of Christ. That the neophytes may appreciate and get rooted in the saving works of Christ by overcoming sin, death and benefit from the opened graces of Jesus (Wallac 87). Meaning, Catechesis must help develop the depth of “understanding of the mystery of Christ”. Then change the neophytes through the working of the grace into new creatures “to think like Him, to judge like Him” (CT 20). By “new creature”: a newly born child in the process of maturation begins to eat solid food

and attempts to walk in the sense of exhibiting lived catechesis. Following that, catechesis “lays the foundation of the spiritual edifice of the Christian, nurtures the roots of his life of faith and enables him to receive more solid nourishment in the ordinary life of the Christian community” (GDC 67). Scriptures says as new creatures born in Christ: “we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3). By “walking” this is what is meant by deepening of faith through catechesis, which is Christ formed within the newly born (Gal 4:19). That is living lives inspired and governed by the content of faith learned. They move catechesis from the head to real life or rather transpose it from the books into their encounter with the world.

Furthermore, catechesis helps the neophytes to deeply discover their noble calling in Christ. That is they ought to love God above all things but also how to love him above all things as their “sublime vocation” (GDC 116). Analogously, it is like the gradual process on installing software in an iPhone or computer. These gadgets first receive special apps and also their internal system in order to install take time to identify the app, then after confirm it and stage by stage, accept the app. Equally, the newly born souls in faith need to undergo a gradual growth in faith, knowing what is acceptable and unacceptable in the eyes of God as their sublime vocation. That is they learn and act to give impact to the world through their state of life and in their own condition (Can. 204 §1, 208). They serve as light of the world and salt to it by disseminating it with seeds of holy virtues (LG 40) and prayer life in the sense of participation in the liturgy. For participation in the live of the church as the body of Christ is the vivid sign of maturation and deepening of faith (1 Corinthians 12; Roberto 15).

Uniquely, they ought to be men and women of prayer to signify their growth in the virtue of holiness. “When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. This climate is especially necessary when the catechumen and those to be catechized are confronted with the more demanding aspects of the Gospel and when they feel weak or when they discover the mysterious action of God in their lives” (GDC 85). Thus, in liturgy they learn to participate in the mystery of the person of Christ. It becomes their source of energy, nourishment and light in the process of maturation (Pauley 203).

By sharing in liturgy, they receive what catechesis promises.

### **Conversion: Transformation of Life**

The moving from their world into the world of faith is the transformation growth that is accompanied by conversion. Conversion of life styles that catechesis prompts the newly born is like the transformation of a seed into a fruitful plant. Scriptures says, unless a seed falls on the ground and dies it will only remains a seed or not produce fruits (John 12:24, 1 Corinthians 15:36). Implicitly, death inferred, symbolises conversion in their day to day life. Explicitly, the letter to the Colossians 3:5 illustrates that those converted to faith in Christ must undergo a death: “therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires and greed, which amounts to idolatry”. Unless this is experienced, the newly born neophyte will remain on the periphery of faith in an immature sense. Thus, those who have accepted to grow fruits in faith must put to death through conversion of life the deeds of sinful ways as new creatures in Jesus (Romans 8:12-13). For example, if a person was a drunkard or unchaste person they should move from being their old life to a new faith in Jesus. This is maturation of faith by deepening the substance of the learned and experienced faith into their lives.

Moreover, conversion in “faith involves a change of lives [metanoia] that is a profound transformation of mind and heart; it causes the believer to live that conversion” (GDC 55). For instance, in a society that is tribalistic or ethnocentric, the change of mind demands maturity in the sense of looking at the binding love of Jesus without favouritism (1 John 4:8, John 33-35). Hence begin to judging others beyond tribal confinement but with love in Jesus. Thus, the Church transmits the faith like sowing seeds, so as to inform and form the lives of catechumens (GDC 78). Taking further the analogy of a seed, this deepening and maturation of faith, the seeds need to shoot and then begin to grow and take roots (GDC 67). Like what happened to Saul on his way to Damascus, he was transformed from being Saul to Paul or rather from being a killer of Christians into a preacher of the Christian faith (Acts 9:1-19). We may also think of the woman Jesus forgave her sins and she thus loved God much (Luke 7:36-50). This is a sign of growth and maturity expected, to bear visible fruits of love of God

but shown in giving up old life for new life.

However, these fruits must last in the life of faith in the sense of persistence in doing and being good (John 15:16). Taking it from the call of the parable of the sower, maturity of the neophytes needs to depose themselves as good soil (GDC 15). Equally, catechesis helps them to be good soil for the seed of eternal life to shoot and grow but mature and bear manifold fruits. It is catechesis that removes rocks from the soil of their lives (Matthew 13:23, 20-21). For it may hinder the Word from achieving its eternal maturity. It also helps them not to leave seeds of solvation on the surface of the road, for the birds of sin or vices will pick them away. Similarly, they should take away any thorny bushes within them, for it may chock the faith (Matthew 13:18, 22). In the same way, catechesis serves to remind them to take note of the good soil in that even good soil may lose fertility after a long time (GDC 15). Thus, they should use the following: retreats and recollections to care for the soil of faith from time to time. Improve it through the sacrament of conversion and nourish it by the scriptures and divine communion in Eucharist. For in the Eucharist, faith finds nourishment and intimacy with Jesus (Lumen Fidei 44).

### **Evaluation and conclusion**

What we were saying is that, the aim of the teaching of catechesis is to lead the Christian to live lives like Jesus Christ. It invites the recipient to live lives that correspond to the DNA of the faith in Jesus. For faith is a personal encounter and commitment to Jesus, to think, judge and live like him (GDC 53). Unless this occurs in the whole life of the Christian, catechesis has not been deepened into maturity. Growth in faith is when those born in it develop virtues, morals, spiritual character and roots of conformity to the faith. Otherwise, catechesis ends up being lip service yet in truth empty of true depth (Isaiah 29:13-14).

The point is that, maturity means they ought to translate the Christian theories of faith into real life events. Initially, deepening the faith means they should discern the will of God in their interior disposition at all times in their lives. Then take part in the missionary task of the Church, thus baptised and send (Baptized and Sent). If they are married they should live

lives worth of a Christian union. Also execute their secular professions and other live duties with the light of faith (GDC 55). The point is that, the teaching of Christ and the life of Christ should then reflect in their own lives. For this reason, Victoria M. Tufano et al. say “the goal of initiation is not to ‘get the sacrament’ but to make disciples. If the pastoral practice of the infant baptism takes that goal seriously, it will look carefully to the pre-and post baptismal moments of the initiation process. Often overlooked in our practice is post-ritual formation” towards practical living of the faith.<sup>12</sup> This is maturity, when a child grows into a mature person; she or he takes duties and responsibilities at home, and so is the baptised sent.

In the light of spirituality, catechesis should bear mature human and spiritual fruits. This is the reason that, those affiliated to the faith will be recognised through the fruits of the Spirit they will produce in life (Matthew 7:16). Consequently, if this stage of fruits is not experienced by the believer or others, catechesis can be said to have been sterile. To show the demand of maturity through fruits Paul indicates that those who are in Christ Jesus must give out fruits of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22-23).

The point is that, “catechesis, should bear fruits in the full flowering of the life lived in genuine conformity to the way of Christ. This is what John Paul II intended by Christian maturity as the goal of catechesis” says James C. Pauley.<sup>13</sup> This is evident in the Book of Songs of Song, whereby the lover wishes to be more intimately close to his beloved. Each of the lover moves from her or his world of experience to the world of to other (3:1-15, 4:8-9). This retains the point of Christ: apart from me you cannot bear much fruit as branches of Jesus the Vine (John 15:5). This maturity is not only the work of catechesis, the content and the newly born but the help of God’s holy graces or his holy spirit.<sup>14</sup> To conclude, Christian maturation and deepening of faith is an encounter with Jesus through the sacraments and the depositum fidei. This is to move from faith on the periphery of the soul or immature faith to deepening in the soul and maturation of the faith received in practical live.

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<sup>1</sup> DeVillers Sylvia. *Lectionary-Based Catechesis for Children: A Catechist's Guide*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994. P. 19.



- <sup>2</sup> John Paul II. *Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time*. USA: Sophia Institute Press, 2014. n\* 20.
- <sup>3</sup> Abba C. Joe-Barth et al. *Special Pastoral Formation for Youths in Africa in the 21st Century: The Nigerian Perspective: with Extra Focus on the Socio-Anthropological, Ethical, Theological, Psychological, and Societal Problems of Today's Youngsters*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. P. 225.
- <sup>4</sup> Francis. *Encyclical Letter Lumen Fidei: To the Bishops Priests and Deacons Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on Faith*. N\* 13.
- <sup>5</sup> Darío Castrillón Hoyos. *Congregation for the Clergy: General Directory for Catechesis*. N\* 88.
- <sup>6</sup> Idem.
- <sup>7</sup> Roberto John. *Generations of Faith Resource Manual: Lifelong Faith Formation for the Whole Parish Community, Volume 1*. London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2005. P. 15.
- <sup>8</sup> Wedig E. Mark et al. *The Liturgy Documents, Volume Four: Supplemental Documents For Parish: Supplemental Documents for Parish Worship, Devotions, Formation and Catechesis*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2014. P. 598
- <sup>9</sup> Jensen M. Robin. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological*. Michigan: Baker Books, 2012. P. 58.
- <sup>10</sup> Edmondson Stephen. *Liturgical Theology Revisited: Open Table, Baptism, Church*. Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015. P. 58.
- <sup>11</sup> Farey Caroline et al. *The Pedagogy of God: It's Centrality in Catechesis and Catechist Formation*. Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2011. P. 95.
- <sup>12</sup> Victoria M. Tufano et al. *Catechesis and Mystagogy: Infant Baptism Liturgy*. Chicago: Training Publications, 1996. P. 55.
- <sup>13</sup> Pauley C. James. *Liturgical Catechesis in the 21st Century: A School of Discipleship*. Liturgy Training Publications, 2017. P. 20.
- <sup>14</sup> Farey Caroline et al. p. 39.

## **THE CONCEPT OF PERSON IN THEOLOGY AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Luke Rodney Thom, C.S.Sp*

### **Introduction**

Among the most prominent thoughts in Christian Theology is the theme of “person”. Though this term is commonly used by many people, it does not mean one and the same thing. From the Theological point of view, the understanding of person is different. It has most often been used in ascribing it to the members of Holy Trinity, thus, God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This paper aims at examining the concept person in Theology and its application on the Holy Spirit.

### **Examining the Concept “Person” in Theology**

The concept of person has been in the history of thought since time immemorial. For Cantalamessa, Augustine of Hippo notes that we use the term “person” for lack of a better word, so as to remain in total silence before God, knowing well, however, that it is inadequate for expressing a reality like the one revealed to us with the names Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

According to Max Muller, person means “the actual unique reality of a spiritual being, an undivided whole existing independently and not exchangeable with any other”.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Broderick points out that the person as a spiritual being is an individual and in Christian thought, this is one who responds to the promise and the precept that God freely addressed to him or her, and whereby man becomes a partaker of the living reality of God. Thus, “man as person is understood only through the knowledge of and the response to God. The person thus freely, by his own decision, determines his final reality, that of the union with God”.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Broderick understands that man is finite, localized in space and in his body. He is complex, subject to the laws of his nature but capable of responding spiritually to the precepts by which his final reality is determined. Thus, there is a conflict between man’s finite nature and spiritual capacity.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, because of his nature, he belongs to the world and related to nature, the setting in which he must act (Jn 17:15).

Also because of his nature, he is one with his “community”, for man is not self-sufficient, He is thus a “social” being, for again, he is not “an island” but works through the social order to achieve those goods that will preserve the spiritual lives of all other persons.<sup>5</sup> In this perspective, we see the Christian person as one with the hope of collective salvation of all other persons. This is the salvation through Christ, which the death of the lamb assured for the sheep whose lives were saved (Jn 15:13-17). Because of Christ, this salvation of all persons was made possible (Rom 5:12-19).

In the view of Karl Heinz Neufeld, Person is an analogical concept. In the Christian doctrine of God, it describes the three realities to which the divine substance or divine nature belongs equally but which are nevertheless to be distinguished according to the specific origin and specific mission of each.<sup>6</sup> Donnelly supports this idea when he claims that the Person of the Holy Spirit is the name given to the third person of the Most Holy Trinity who shares in the creative and salvific work of the Father and the Son. He echoes the Nicene and the Constantinopolitan Creeds of 325 and 381 AD and the pseudo Athanasian Creed of the 5th century that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the Blessed Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and Son, eternal and in every respect equal to the other two Divine Persons.<sup>7</sup> Neufeld further argues that the Biblical basis of this doctrine consists of explicit formula (Mat 28:19; 2 Cor 13:13) and the overall structure of the self-manifestation of Jesus Christ, who refers everything to the Father and announces the sending of the Spirit. It is not yet possible, however to speak of clear and binding doctrine of faith on the tri-personhood of God.<sup>8</sup>

History of Theology tells us though that Tertullian introduced the concept of person into Christian theology in order to illustrate the Christian idea of God (Trinity, Incarnation). Accordingly, “when the ecumenical councils of the historical mission of the Son and the Spirit in their relation to the Father, the term “person” won out against the then controversial Greek Equivalent “*prosopon*” and “*hypostasis*” especially in the documents of the popes”.<sup>9</sup> From a systematic reflection point of view, Broderick emphasizes that the connection between the three, Father, Son and Spirit, is evidently such that no one of the three is conceivable without the other, while on the other hand, each has such specific autonomy that it cannot be simply regarded as a mode or aspect of being. Thus “as far as the properties of

the three are concerned, the personhood of each divine person is realized in a different way that is determined by the position of that person in the entire structure of relations".<sup>10</sup> Here, the concept "person" denotes specific autonomy rather than being feature of another. C.E Gunton concurs with the above idea when he asserts that a person is defined in relation with other persons who are not only an extension of his own person, but who really constitute a distinct person in alterity, with whom one chooses to enter into relation in freedom. He argues, thus, "To think of a person is to think of relations; Father, Son and Spirit are the particular persons, they are by virtue of their relations with each other. That too enables us to understand what is meant by relation. A relation is first of all to be conceived as a way by which persons are mutually constituted, made what they are".<sup>11</sup>

### **Concept of Person applied to the Holy Spirit**

There exist distinct lines of proof in the Scripture that the Holy Spirit is a person.

#### ***All the Distinctive Marks of Personality are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible.***

The first evidence is that all the distinctive characteristics or marks of personality are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible and these include knowledge, feeling or emotion and will. According to Torrey, any entity that thinks and feels and wills is a person. When we say that the Holy Spirit is person, there are those that understand that we mean the Holy Spirit has hands, and feet and eyes and mouth but these are not characteristics of personality but of corporeity. We read in the scripture, thus, "God has given revelation through the Spirit, for the Spirit explores the depth of everything, even the depth of God but God has revealed them to us by the Holy Spirit. After all, is there anyone who knows the qualities of anyone except his own spirit, within him; and in the same way, nobody knows the qualities of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:10,11). Torrey argues then that "here knowledge is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. We are clearly taught that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence that illumines our minds to comprehend the truth but a being who himself knows the truth".<sup>12</sup>

Again, we read, thus, "but at work in all these is the one and the same

Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual (1 Cor 12:11). Torrey concludes that “here, will is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. We are clearly taught that the Holy Spirit is not the power that we get hold of and use according to our will but a person of sovereignty, who uses us according to His will”.<sup>13</sup> “And He that searches the hearts knows the mind of the spirit because he makes intercessions for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27). This passage implies that “mind is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated “mind” is a comprehensive word, including the ideas or thought, feeling and purpose, it is the same that is used in Romans 8:7 where we read that “the outlook of disordered human nature is opposed to God since it does not submit to God’s Law and indeed cannot, and those who live by natural inclination can never be pleasing to God”. So then, in this passage, we have all the distinctive marks of personality ascribed to the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>

According to Torrey, another point is that there is perhaps no passage in the whole Bible in which the personality of the Holy Spirit comes out more tenderly and touchingly than in Ephesians. “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God who has marked you with his seal, ready for the day when we shall be set free” (Eph 4: 30). Torrey tells us that grief is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not blind, impersonal, influence or power that comes into our lives to illuminate, sanctify and empower us, no. He is immeasurably more than that, He is the Holy person who comes to dwell in our hearts, one who sees clearly every act we perform, every word we speak, every thought we entertain, even the most fleeting fancy that is allowed to pass through our minds, and if there is anything in act, or word or deed that is impure [...] this infinitely Holy One is deeply grieved by it.<sup>15</sup>

In as far as the marks of the personality of the Holy Spirit is concerned, Raniero Cantalamessa supports the above ideas when he echoes St. Paul that we do not only have the fusion of the two fundamental actions of the Holy Spirit, one charismatic, the other sanctifying, nevertheless, we also have the prevailing of the conception of the Holy Spirit as action and Divine power, and as the beginning of the revelation of the Spirit as person.

Accordingly, “the Holy Spirit is not only an action but also an actor, that is, a principle endowed with will and intelligence who acts consciously and freely. We say that he teaches, bears witness, laments, intercedes, grieves,

that knows, that he has desires".<sup>16</sup> This implies too that the Holy Spirit is not simply an influence or some power of illumination that we can use but rather, a person with intelligence and will who act knowingly not blindly.

Cantalamesa further argues that if person means "to be in relationship" as even modern thought has finally come to admit, then the personal character of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is clear because the "relationship" that binds him to the Father and Jesus Christ is clear and distinct. According to him, "to deny any personal and distinctive character to the Pneuma, even in John and in Paul, means inevitably to open the door to the radical conclusion of those theologians who make the Trinity not the greatest innovations revealed by Christ in the Gospel but the biggest distortion of the Gospel, caused by contact with the Hellenistic world".<sup>17</sup> In other words, the relationship that exist between the Holy Spirit and the other two personalities of the Godhead implies that the Holy spirit is a person because He is able to relate. Since it is a characteristic of a person to relate, so does the Spirit with the other two in the Trinity. This means that the Holy Spirit is a person. The fact that the Holy Spirit is a person means that all the distinctive characteristics or marks of personality are ascribed to Him in the Bible and these include knowledge, feeling or emotion and will.

### ***Many Acts that only a Person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit***

Torrey notes that if we deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, the passage of the scripture become meaningless and absurd. He suggests a number of texts to justify his claims, thus, "as you are sons, God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His son crying Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6). Surely, "the Holy spirit is represented as crying out in the heart of the individual believer. Not merely a divine influence producing in our own hearts, who bears witness together with our spirits that we are sons of God".<sup>18</sup> The Holy Spirit is also presented as a leader and guide of the children of God, thus, "All who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14). This infers that He is not merely an influence that enables us to see the way that God would have on us go, nor merely the power that gives us strength to go that way, but a person who takes us by

the hand and gently leads us in the paths which God would have walk”<sup>19</sup>. That is to say, many acts that only a person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

***An Office is predicated of the Holy Spirit that can only be predicated of a Person***

This is yet another proof that the Holy Spirit is a Person. Torrey claims that our savior said in John that “ I shall ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can never accept since it never sees nor knows Him but you know him, because He is with you, He is in you” (John 14:16,17). Torrey then asks if it is possible that Jesus could have used such language as the other comforter who was coming to take His place was only an impersonal influence or power. He therefore points out that if it is possible that Jesus could have said as he did in John, thus “Still I am telling you the truth; it is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (Jn 16:7). We can deduct from this by asking, “was this divine comforter who was to be send simply an impersonal influence, or power? No, one Divine person was going; another person just as divine was coming to take His place”<sup>20</sup>. The fact is that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an impersonal influence as many acts that only a person can do are applied to Him too.

***A Treatment is predicated of the Holy Spirit that can only be predicated of a Person***

Scripture states, thus, “but they rebelled, and vexed the Holy Spirit; Then he became their enemy and himself waged war against them” (Is 63:10). Torrey holds that “we are told that the Holy Spirit is rebelled against and grieved (Eph 4:30). Accordingly, “only a person, and only a person of authority, can be rebelled against. Only a person can be grieved. You cannot grieve a mere influence or power”<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the Holy Spirit is a person and it is because of his fact that the treatment that is predicated of Him is that one which can only be established or grounded of a person. Again, we read that, “Peter said, Ananias, how can Satan so possessed you that you should lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land?”

(Acts 5:3). The situation here is that the Holy Spirit is represented as one who can be lied to. One cannot lie to anything but a person. In other words, for the fact that the Holy Spirit is called a person, many human qualities predicated of a person can as well be predicated of the Holy Spirit and such realities include grief.

There is no way one can talk of the Holy Spirit while ignoring such facts. Scripture also tells us regarding the sin of blasphemy, thus, “And so I tell you, every human sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And anyone who says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but no one who speaks against the Holy Spirit will be forgiven either in this world or in the next” (Mat 12:31, 32). This implies that “the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed against. It is impossible to blaspheme anything but a person. If the Holy Spirit is not person, it certainly cannot be a more serious and decisive sin to blaspheme Him than it is to blaspheme the Son of man, our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ Himself”.<sup>22</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The paper was an examination of the concept person in Theology and its application to the Holy Spirit. It argued that the concept person was introduced into Christian theology in order to illustrate the Christian idea of God and it is an analogical concept. In the Christian doctrine of God, it describes the three realities to which the divine substance or divine nature belongs equally but which are nevertheless to be distinguished according to the specific origin and specific mission of each. The paper also argued that among the applications of the term person to the Holy Spirit are that; all the distinctive marks of personality are ascribed to Him in the Scripture, many acts that only a person can perform are ascribed to the Holy Spirit and a treatment is predicated of the Holy Spirit that can only be predicated of a person.

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<sup>1</sup> Cantalamessa, Raniero, *The Mystery of Pentecost*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001. P. 56

<sup>2</sup> Broderick, Robert C. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1976. P 473.

<sup>3</sup> Broderick, Robert C. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1976.



- <sup>4</sup> Broderick, Robert C. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1976.
- <sup>5</sup> Broderick, Robert C. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1976.
- <sup>6</sup> Neufeld, Karl Heinz, *Person*, in WOLFGANG BEINERT & FRANCIS SCHUSSLER FIORENZA (eds.), *Handbook of Catholic Theology* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1995) 527-531.
- <sup>7</sup> Donnelly, M. J. "Holy Spirit" *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967. P. 96
- <sup>8</sup> Neufeld, Karl Heinz, 528.
- <sup>9</sup> Neufeld, Karl Heinz, 528.
- <sup>10</sup> Neufeld, Karl Heinz, 528..
- <sup>11</sup> Gunton, C. E. *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*. Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1999. P. 11.
- <sup>12</sup> Torrey, R. A. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007. P. 11
- <sup>13</sup> Torrey, R. A. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007.
- <sup>14</sup> Torrey. P. 12
- <sup>15</sup> Torrey. P. 15
- <sup>16</sup> Cantalamessa, Raniero. *The Mystery of Pentecost*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001. P. 53
- <sup>17</sup> Cantalamessa. P. 55
- <sup>18</sup> Torrey, R. A. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007. P. 17
- <sup>19</sup> Torrey. P. 18
- <sup>20</sup> Torrey. P. 20
- <sup>21</sup> Torrey. P. 20
- <sup>22</sup> Torrey. P. 21

## **GOD'S SELF-REVELATION: THE EXAMPLES OF MOSES AND PAUL**

*Annah Kembo*

### **Introduction**

God has revealed himself through words and actions. Through His creation, He revealed Himself, through His prophets and finally by sending His Son Jesus Christ who is the fullness of revelation. God appeared to certain individuals and spoke to them. He selects a few, reveals certain mysteries to them and then relies on them to tell others. He has the power to reveal Himself to each person individually but in some cases, He chooses a few who in turn reach out to all humanity. The Constitution *Dei Verbum* (DV) of the Second Vatican Council describes Revelation as the act by which God reveals himself personally to man.<sup>1</sup> The act of making the hidden known is referred to as revelation. This paper seeks to discuss how God revealed Himself to two particular personalities in the Bible. I will begin by defining God's revelation. I will then go on to discuss the personalities He revealed Himself to, then finally I will see if there are any similarities between those two personalities.

### **What is God's Revelation?**

In Christian Theology, revelation refers to a free manifestation of God of that which transcends the normal reach of human by reason alone. (Moran 26) Thus the word revelation denotes the action by which God communicates with His creatures. According to Gunton, revelation means, "to disclose, divulge or make known something previously hidden to the general public, often something that is both mysterious and important..."<sup>2</sup> The word itself calls us to think of how something is getting to be known. And when we think of God as a Being greater than any being, we come to a point where we wonder how are we to know Him since he is beyond human nature. The scripture is our key source of revelation. The nature of creation itself helps us to know God. For Dulles, God reveals himself to people through His created works.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, revelation is based on the fact that the universe is the self-expression of God's goodness and power. So, when we are trying to see how God reveals Himself to us, we

also prove his existence. In the Encyclopedia of Theology, it is stated that “The Old Testament affirms that man, by himself cannot know God. God is known only when he lets himself be known, when He decides to reveal Himself, Deut 4:32-34, because He has shown Himself to Israel, Ps 147:19”.<sup>4</sup> The divine plan of revelation is realized simultaneously “by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other”. (*Dei Verbum* 2) According to General Directory for Catechesis, “God, in His greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal Himself to the human person: He uses human events and words to communicate His plan; He does so progressively and in stages to draw even closer to man”.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in this form of revelation, God discloses Himself through both deeds and words in the course of human history. For instance; in the form of deeds, God freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. In words, God communicated His will through Moses and the other prophets.

God reveals Himself through creation and this also makes it possible for us to see God even in our daily life experiences. Paul said that, “God has given testimony of Himself to men in that he has shown kindness by providing them with rain from heaven, crops in their seasons and even provides them with food” (Acts 14:15-17). Revelation is something that all humanity has received, it reaches all people in all times and in every place. God’s revelation also includes His direct speech to various people such as prophets (2Peter1:20-21), the incarnation (Hebrews 1:1-2). The whole Bible, from the creation stories in Genesis to the book of Revelation we trace God’s ways of making Himself known by His people. He revealed Himself to Moses on the burning bush and when He became Man through His Son Jesus Christ. We would like to see how God revealed Himself in the Old Testament to Moses and in the New Testament to Paul. These are specific revelations which will help us understand how God was making Himself known in human history.

### **Moses**

God had prepared a place for His people Israel in the land of Egypt. Due to adverse conditions in their homeland of Canaan He migrated them to a new land at the invitation of Joseph, Gen. 46. He gave them great temporal prosperity during the lifetime of the first generation. However,

prosperity had given way to cruelty under the reign of Rameses I and II, and continued with Menephtah I, who “knew not Joseph.” (Exod. 1:8). It was their goal to keep the Israelites in a weakened condition, and they accomplished this through years of oppression and cruelty to the Israelites.

God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush and assured him that he had not forgotten the good things which He had promised to the children of Israel and was going to save them. Moses, however, ‘hid his face’ as an act of reverence towards God. He did not feel that he was worthy to be used of the LORD, and doubted his own ability to carry out God’s plan to deliver the people from the control of Pharaoh. God reassured Moses that He Himself would be responsible for delivering the nation.

God revealed Himself to Moses so as to redeem His people from slavery. He had to be known first by the one He was to send. He revealed His name to Moses. After he had agreed to lead the people of Israel towards the promised land Moses reached the foot of Mt Sinai where God revealed Himself again to Moses and God gave him the ten commandments. “Heavy clouds hung over the mountain, and steadily growing sound of the Shofar horn made the people shake and tremble with fear. Moses led the children of Israel out of the camp and placed them at the foot of Mount Sinai, which was all covered by smoke and was quaking, for God had descended upon it in fire”.<sup>6</sup> At this point it was no longer revelation to Moses alone but to Moses and all the people of Israel. After he met God in the mountain and brought the laws, the people of Israel were to live according to what they had seen and heard.

### **Saul / Paul**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that God revealed Himself also in New Testament through the birth of His Son who is the fullness of God’s revelation.<sup>7</sup> Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee in Jerusalem after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ swore to wipe out the new Christian Church called The Way. Acts 9:1 says he was “breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples.” Saul obtained letters from the high priest, authorizing him to arrest any followers of Jesus in the city of Damascus.

On the Road to Damascus, Saul was suddenly flashed by a light and he

fell to the ground and he heard a voice asking him why he was persecuting him. Saul asked, "Who are you, sir". The reply came "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting". When he stood up, he realized he had gone blind and for three days he neither ate or drank. The men with Saul did not see anything but only heard the voice (Acts 9:4-9). The men with Saul did not see the risen Jesus, but Saul did. This miraculous message was meant for one person only, Saul. The scales falling from Paul's eyes symbolized a spiritual transformation that allowed him to see the truth. Once he knew the truth about Jesus, he embraced the Gospel.

Meanwhile, Jesus appeared in a vision to a disciple in Damascus named Ananias and told him to go to Saul (Acts 9:11). Ananias was afraid because he knew Saul's reputation as a merciless persecutor of the church. Jesus repeated his command, explaining that Saul was his chosen instrument to deliver the Gospel to the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel. Ananias found Saul at Judas' house, praying for help. Ananias laid his hands upon Saul, telling him Jesus had sent him to restore his sight and that Saul might be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He arose and was baptized into the Christian faith. Saul ate, regained his strength, and stayed with the Damascus disciples three days. After his conversion, Saul changed his name to Paul (Acts 9: 17-22). He began preaching the Gospel of the Lord. In some ways, Paul's conversion was similar to Jesus' death and resurrection. Paul "died" to his past life of persecuting Christians and was "resurrected" to a new life as a zealous evangelist. In one moment of fear, enlightenment, and regret, Saul understood that Jesus was the true Messiah. Despite his previous beliefs as a Pharisee, he now knew the truth about God and was obligated to obey him.

### **Similarities between the two personalities**

Both were having a connection to where they were being sent. Moses once stayed in Egypt and had to run away after he had killed one Egyptian. Paul was well vested in Jewish culture and language because of his upbringing in Tarsus which made him familiar with the Greek language and culture, his training in Jewish theology helped him connect the Old Testament with the gospel, and as a skilled tentmaker he could support

himself. Moses was a skilled shepherd as he had worked for his father in law Jethro as a shepherd and that was going to make his call special as he was going to lead the people of Israel using the same skill of shepherding. For both the ability to be self-reliant in their professional skills made it easy for both to be apostles of God. God reveals himself to both using light and voice. Both Moses and Paul asked similar questions regarding whom they are talking to. For Moses it was God of Abraham and he was a God of history and for Paul it was Jesus the Son of God. Here we see the unfolding revelation of the Trinity. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit living in each individual.

These two persons were called by names as God revealed Himself to them. For both, doubt was a reality until signs were shown to them. For Moses the walking stick was changed to a snake and for Paul he was made to be blind and later scales were removed from his eyes and saw again. It is after they were both convinced that they went off to convince others with their teachings of faith. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Paul managed to say this with conviction because he had believed in God.

We see also that God reveals Himself to sinners and make them true instruments of His word. Moses killed an Egyptian and ran away but God followed him and gave him His mission. Same as Paul he was a killer, persecuting Christians but God converted him to a true apostle. Therefore, revelation of God leads a person to total submission and conversion of heart.

In one moment of fear, enlightenment, and regret, Saul understood that Jesus was the true Messiah and that he (Saul) had helped murder and imprison innocent people. Despite his previous beliefs as a Pharisee, he now knew the truth about God and was obligated to obey him. Paul's conversion proves that God can call and transform anyone he chooses, even the most hard-hearted.

### **Conclusion**

Revelation is the movement of God towards human person. He does so to be known. We can trace God's revelation from the Old Testament when He reveals Himself to Moses on the burning bush, to the patriarchs, to the prophets and finally ends with Jesus the Word become flesh, the

fullness of revelation. Through revelation in the Bible, God is known and He comes to be in relationship with the people. He reached out to them to restore lost relationship. Therefore, revelation helps humanity to know the existence of God as He communicates with some individuals whom we have discussed in this paper. Looking at the personalities discussed, we see that a person's past does not matter to God. He is more interested in a person's future and all humanity. Even though Saul had been one of Jesus' most cruel enemies, he became one of his closest friends. When God calls a person to a task, he equips that person for it. Paul received the Holy Spirit, along with the truth of the gospel so he could share it with others. Paul could not have achieved his remarkable accomplishments in his own strength. He was empowered by God. Same with Moses. This can also happen to any of us when we receive God's revelation. God truly reveals Himself as one who desires to communicate Himself, making the human person a participant in His divine nature<sup>8</sup> (CCC 51-52). In this way, God completes His plan of love.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dei Verbum* n\* 3.

<sup>2</sup> Gunton, Collin. *Revelation Towards a Christian Interpretation of God's Self-Revelation in Jesus Christ*. Oxford: University Press, 2016. P. 16

<sup>3</sup> Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. New York: Orbis Books, 1992. P 26.

<sup>4</sup> Rahner, Karl, *Encycopaedia of Theology*. Mumbai: St Paul's 2011. P. 1454

<sup>5</sup> *Dei Verbum* n\*42.

<sup>6</sup> Isaacs, Jacob. *Our People*. Kehot Publication Society 1946. P 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications, Africa, 1994. N\* 50-53

<sup>8</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications, Africa, 1994. n\* 51-52.

## THE COUNCILS OF NICAEA AND CONSTANTINOPLE I: A RESPONSE TO ARIANISM

*Gift Chinyadza, O. Carm.*

### **Introduction**

As ages passed by after the death of Christ Jesus, various questions started to be raised with regards to the nature of Jesus Christ. One of the major questions that emerged about the nature of Jesus Christ was whether he was human or divine. In a quest to answer such questions there are some who strayed from the teachings of the apostles and the orthodox teaching. It is out of such questions and controversies that the early Church Fathers had to define the faith of the Church through a formulated creeds. Such questions also included the unity of Christ and God the Father. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity began to be developed due to arising questions on the person of Jesus Christ and due to rise of unorthodox teachings which were termed heretical positions. Thus, it is plausible to state that the doctrine of the Trinity evolved out of Christology. One of the earliest heresies is Arianism which was suggested by Arius who questioned the divinity of Jesus Christ. Hence the purpose of the following piece of work is to expose the Arian heresy and to respond to it focusing on the responses that were given by the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople I. To achieve this, the paper will first define what a heresy is, secondly the paper will expose the Arian heresy and lastly the paper will respond to it considering the Councils of Nicaea of 325 AD and Constantinople I of 381 AD.

### **Heresy**

It is of paramount importance to acquaint ourselves with the term heresy so that one may be able to understand the rationale behind why Arianism was classified heretical. The term heresy has been defined differently and sometimes nebulously. According to Belloc some define loosely the term heresy as religious disputes of the past or bygone.<sup>1</sup> However, looking at this definition one can note that it is limited especially if we look at heresies that have taken place in the history of the Church as one can note that heresies continue to be a threat to the orthodox teaching of the Church.



Heresy can therefore be defined as a “dislocation of some complete and self-supporting scheme by the beginning of a novel or new denial of some essential part therein”.<sup>2</sup> Already from the definition proposed by Belloc, one can see that in some heresies there will be focus on a particular truth and not looking at it holistically, that is why he uses the term “dislocation”. It is also important to note at this point that some theological standpoints have been declared heretical because they over emphasized a certain part of truth at the expense or ignoring the other part or parts or aspect(s). This seems to be the case with Arianism which is under scrutiny. Arianism is considered a dislocation of the essential aspect of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and more specifically that Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity. Arianism considers one part of the truth leaving an unfulfilled empty space. Thus, having said this, it qualifies to be termed a heretical position.

### **Arianism**

Arianism is a heretical position that was championed by Arius and his followers such as Marcellus. It is a kind of subordinationism. Arius’ discourse was on the nature of Jesus Christ, thus raising questions on the whole doctrine of the Holy Trinity and Christology. The thought of Arius is seen mainly in his letter he wrote to Eusebius. In the letter Arius denied the divinity of Jesus Christ as he based some of his arguments from the scriptures. Part of the letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia in 318 reads:

... the Son is not unbegotten or a portion of the unbegotten in any manner or form any substratum...and before he was begotten or created or defined or established, he was not. For he was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we say, “The Son has beginning, but God is without beginning.”<sup>3</sup>

Looking at the letter of Arius one can note from the onset that Arius was teaching that Jesus Christ the Son of God was just a creature which cannot be equated to God who is eternal. His idea started from the monotheistic understanding of God that there is one God. Arius struggled in a quest to understand how we can talk of three in one God. According to Moltmann, Arius’ conception of God was that of “God as the simple, supreme substance which, by virtue of its indivisible unity, also represents

the ground of all being”.<sup>4</sup> It is from such a conception of God that Arius argued that God cannot share His substance with any other being. The Arians argued that Jesus was just a creation of the one God and if that is the case it means that Jesus Christ is temporal, mutable and subject to alteration. Hence, he is not part of the Godhead. It is important to note that the Arians based their arguments from some of the scriptural passages. Some of the scriptural passages include John 14:28 when Jesus says that God the Father was greater than him. Another scriptural reference they used to support their theses was Colossians 1:15 which talks of Jesus as the first born of all creation. The argument of the Arians basing on these scriptural texts implied that Jesus was just a creature and that he was inferior to God.<sup>5</sup> This would imply that Jesus belongs to the world of contingent beings just as we ourselves do.

In addition to the above the Arian teaching basing on the above, vehemently stated that Jesus was a perfect human being. In this sense the divinity of Jesus was put in question. Jesus was just like any other creature; hence not divine. According to the Arians, Jesus was perfect in the sense of being a reservoir of the Word. This was the understanding of the Arians on the gospel of John with regards to the issue of the Logos. It is because of that which dwelt in him that distinguished him from other creatures.<sup>6</sup> Arius maintained that Jesus Christ was adopted by God the Father as His son and that he remains subordinate to the Father. It is in this way that Arianism is a kind of subordinationism. Thus, Arius reduced Jesus Christ to a demigod which is a creature which was subject to change and suffering.<sup>7</sup>

The use of the term “creature” as used in the scriptures especially Colossians 1:15, it was understood by the Arians literally as meaning that something that is created cannot be at par with its creator. Thus, the Arians maintained the teaching that God is one, who is impassable, undivided, ineffable, whose substance cannot be shared with any other being or person otherwise it would imply a multiplication of deities. Hence the Son since he is a creature, he has a beginning according to Arianism. This can be seen in their slogan, “There was when He was not”<sup>8</sup> For Arius and his followers to say that Jesus was co-eternal with the Father according the orthodox teaching it would imply “two self-existent principles” and this

was a threat to monotheism.<sup>9</sup>

### **A response to Arianism focusing on the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople I**

Following a thorough deliberation, the Council of Nicaea of 325 AD decreed that Arianism was an unorthodox teaching. It is important to note from the onset that the Council of Nicaea was the first to respond to Arianism and that the Council of Constantinople I was a further re-affirmation of what was discussed at the Council of Nicaea. The Council of Nicaea following the tradition of the Fathers of the Church established that the “Son is one person of the Trinity, distinct as a person but of the same substance with the Father”.<sup>10</sup> He was generated or begotten, but this must be understood as a kind of eternal generation outside space and time. In this way Jesus must not be viewed as a creature or generated in a literal sense because human language is limited in expressing the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Hence since Jesus is eternally begotten, then He is divine and one person of the Triune God. According to William P. Loewe, the problem that Arius had was failing to recognize why Jesus is the Emmanuel.<sup>11</sup> It seems Arius failed to recognize that Jesus Christ is God who came to dwell among people and became like them. They didn’t consider that at some point in time there was an incarnation that took place. Loewe continues to mention that it is through the experience that Jesus the Nazarene was, “the one true God had been communicating, revealing, expressing God’s own self to them”.<sup>12</sup> Hence it is plausible for one to argue that Jesus was God himself who expressed the Godself to humanity. This is the reason why Nicaea maintained that Jesus was divine and as the Word that proceeded from the Father.

Further to the above, another term that was introduced in a quest to express the faith of the church on the divinity of the Son was homoousius which had its equivalent in Latin *consubstantialis*.<sup>13</sup> By considering this terminology the Council aimed at expressing what was meant in the Johanne literature. Thus, making the scriptures clear and avoiding misinterpretations of the scriptures by the Arians. The term *homoousius* clarified what the Church believed in and the tradition of the patristic Fathers that the Son was of the same substance with the Father. This does not mean

that the Son is the Father and it can be further explained in the words of Athanasius who explained what was meant to say that Jesus Christ was of the same substance (*homoousius*) with the Father. He said that,

It meant that whatever you could say about the Father, you could say about the Son and vice versa, except what is proper to being Father or to being Son. Thus, if you say that the Father is eternal, omnipotent, all wise, so also the Son. But if you can say that the Son is only begotten, you cannot say this of the Father. Being only begotten is proper to being Son.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, it is precise that Jesus Christ the Son of God was both human and divine not a mere creature as the Arians had contended. They only focused on one part of his nature not considering the other aspect of His divinity, that explains why their position is unorthodox. That explains the reason why the Council Fathers had to define the faith of the Church and they stated that, “ Jesus is God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial (*homoousion*) with the Father”.<sup>15</sup> This definition of who Christ is, which remains part of the creed today becomes concrete. Thus, Jesus Christ is of the same substance with the Father, hence he is divine.

Moving on, captivated by the asserted definition of the Council of Nicaea and the contribution of the Cappadocian Fathers cannot go unnoticed. They submitted a thesis before the Council of Constantinople I which was titled “Blessed Trinity”. This is because their contribution helped in coming up with a defense of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as it was reaffirmed at Constantinople I as they also elaborated on the issue of three divine persons who share the same substance. There was need for this since after the Council of Nicaea, Arianism continued, and some became semi-Arians. The Council affirmed the teaching of Nicaea, hence condemning the Arians and other heresies. The three Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus submitted their thesis which emphasized the unity of persons. This unity forms their substance and it comes from the relationship they have.<sup>16</sup> It is from their thesis that the Council of Constantinople adopted the term *hypostasis* which can be equated to the previous term that was used at Nicaea *ousia*<sup>17</sup>

Cyril in response to Nestorius is said to have argued saying that Jesus is “one incarnate nature of the divine *Logos*”.<sup>18</sup> In this way he explained that the *Logos* whilst it remained divine, it took our human nature. Thus, he summed this up as a “union in *hypostasis*”.<sup>19</sup>

Further to the above, after establishing well founded arguments on the Holy Trinity, the council of Constantinople established a creed and added some more statements to that of the Nicaea. This was after the Council dealt with Arianism and other heresies that included that of Nestorius and Apollinarianism. Therefore, the Council developed what is often called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. The Council avowed that Jesus was “born of the Virgin Mary and became man...was crucified under Pontius Pilate...and is seated at the right hand of the Father.” The divinity of the Holy Spirit was also declared that He is God as it was expressed that He is “the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.”<sup>20</sup> These words became part of the creed that the Church professes today on top of the Nicene creed.

### **Conclusin**

To conclude, the paper has defined what a heresy is. Secondly the paper has exposed the Arian heresy and lastly the paper has responded to it focusing the deliberations that took place during the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. Considering what has been discussed above, it is clear that Arius’ Christological and Trinitarian position flawed because it strayed from the teaching of the patristic fathers and the tradition of the Apostles. Arius only focused on one part of the truth and ignored the other part. Hence the Church intervened in and defined the true faith as it is evidenced from the creed. This is as mentioned in the above piece of discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> Belloc, Hilaire. *The Great Heresies*. London: The Catholic Book Club, 1968. P. 3

<sup>2</sup> Belloc, Hilaire. *The Great Heresies*. London: The Catholic Book Club, 1968 P. 4

<sup>3</sup> Lacugna Mowry, C. *God for Us: The Trinity and The Christian Life*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1991. P. 31

- <sup>4</sup> Moltmann Jurgen. *The Trinity and The Kingdom of God, The Doctrine of God*. Munich: SCM Press Ltd, 1981. P. 133
- <sup>5</sup> Kelly J, N, D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Fifth Edition. London: A. and C. Black Publishers Ltd, 1977. P. 230
- <sup>6</sup> Boff, Leonardo. *Trinity and Society*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005. P. 48
- <sup>7</sup> Rausch Thomas, P. *Who Is Jesus? An Introduction to Christology*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003. P. 155
- <sup>8</sup> Kelly J, N, D. 228
- <sup>9</sup> Kelly J, N, D. 228
- <sup>10</sup> Vidmar John, OP. *The Catholic Church Through the Ages*. Second Edition. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2014. P. 60
- <sup>11</sup> Loewe William, P. *Introduction to Christology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989. P. 194
- <sup>12</sup> Loewe William, P. *Introduction to Christology*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1989. P. 194
- <sup>13</sup> Goergen Donald. J. *The Jesus Of Christian History*. Volume 3. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992. P. 128
- <sup>14</sup> Loewe William, P. 194
- <sup>15</sup> Rausch Thomas, P. 156
- <sup>16</sup> Moltmann Jurgen. P. 137
- <sup>17</sup> Loewe William, P. 34
- <sup>18</sup> Rausch Thomas, P. 158
- <sup>19</sup> Rausch Thomas, P. 158
- <sup>20</sup> Vidmar John, OP. 60-61

***FUNDAMENTAL MORAL***

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF PAPAL TEACHINGS TO GLOBAL PEACE AN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

*Michael Kyalo*

### **Abstract**

The duty of the Church to save souls and its engaging concern to address the needs of the community of faith is quite pivotal. This fact is candidly communicated by Catholic Social Teaching vis-à-vis Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* which is a classic reverence. Pope Leo drafted the encyclical at a time when the world was experiencing a whirlwind of protests among the working class due to dilapidated working conditions, poor wages and a raptured social milieu. Given the situation, the Pope was compelled to address the above issues beginning with just salaries, owning private property, and what is expected of any State by its citizens and the rights of association and Christian fraternity.

### **Introduction**

Majority of the Popes who governed the Church after Vatican II have vehemently attempted to address two globally touted issues that are a threat to humanity. The two issues are: the use of nuclear weapons and environmental conservation and protection. To address the malaise, the Popes have consistently provided timely and relevant insights to mitigate the delicate and life threatening situation. As leaders of the Church, the Popes have engaged in responding to these issues because the Church is basically a sacrament of salvation that strives to make the Kingdom of God in the world both palpable and vivid as proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke 4: 18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year of acceptance to the Lord."<sup>1</sup> In this article am going to argue how the Popes after the Second Vatican Council have challenged the use of nuclear arms and strongly underscored the protection and conservation of the environment as a stepping stone to achieve global peace and human development. I begin with Pope John XIII.



## **The Papal Calling for Peace and the Condemnation of Nuclear Weapons**

### ***Pope John XIII***

After experiencing both First and Second World Wars, Pope John XIII developed a penchant for peace. His passion for peace was amplified in 1962 when he played a pivotal role in mitigating the Cuban Missile Crisis, “a confrontation between the United States and Soviet Union that was basically brewing to nuclear war. The Pope conveyed his message of peace through his timely encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.<sup>1</sup> For John XIII, human dignity was a *raison d’être*, as far as human life is concerned. The threshold of this encyclical was basically human rights and the duties attached to these rights. What are human rights? According to E. Kamaara and M. Kamaara, “Human rights refer to entitlements (rights and freedom) to which a person has a just and legal claim merely by virtue of his or her being. Human rights are not given to individuals by governments or by any other authority because they are natural.”<sup>2</sup>

The Ecumenical Trust of Justice and Peace in Kenya stresses that human rights: “...are God given and are therefore, inherent, inviolable, and inalienable. This means that you are born with them, they should not be violated nor should they be taken away from you. These rights are natural to our humanity because they enable us to live like human beings.”<sup>3</sup> For Laurenti Magesa, “human rights are principally the God given privileges which are believed to be enjoyed by them equally, solely by virtue of their being human without trait.”<sup>4</sup> Emile Francis Short comments that,

human rights deal with those claims or entitlements, which enable us as human beings to live our lives in dignity and give expression to our humanness. They speak to the human personality and its attributes. They are universally recognized as fundamental to the dignity of the individual. Indeed, the foundation of all results is the inherent worth and the dignity of the human being.<sup>5</sup>

These rights have to do with rights of the individual in the society, rights of individuals towards the State, rights of states towards each other and finally rights of both individuals and States within the entire world

community.

As stated by the Pope John XIII, “It was the duty of the State to preserve a balance, and not to be concerned about the rights of the group that the rights of another might be sacrificed.”<sup>6</sup> By human rights, the Pope was referring to the life and the means essential for its proper growth and development with regard to food, clothing shelter, medical care and education. Rights as such have ensuing duties. As social beings, humans have the obligation to contribute towards common good—those conditions that are necessary for people to grow and develop as human beings per se. Pope Leo also addressed himself to public authorities who are responsible for providing basic services like transport, communications, water, public health and housing. Such authorities bear the challenge of ensuring a healthy balance between competing rights and corresponding duties.

Pope John XIII extended his train of thought to touch on the issue of international relations, focusing on truth, justice, solidarity, and liberty. He addresses war and the deploring production of arms with its “vast outlay of intellectual and economic resources (n. 109).” The Pope argues that justice and humanity demand that the arms race should dwindle and come to a pounding halt, “weapon stockpiles reduced equally and simultaneously, and all nuclear weapons banned (n. 112).” In order to achieve this protracted common good, the Pope calls for a public authority with vested worldwide powers and the necessary means to achieve this good. According to John XIII, such an authority should never be imposed. Instead, it should be established and achieved within the tenets of dialogue.

While acknowledging the United Nations as a body that matches the standards of such a body, the Pope vehemently supports its Universal Declaration of Human Rights with high hopes that the UN will operate in a manner that is parallel to the ‘magnitude and nobility’ of its duties and commitments (n. 145). The Popes who came after John XIII with an exception of John I, whose papacy lasted for thirty-three days have strongly supported John XIII’s strong position against nuclear arms and the pronounced need for a genuine powerful political authority in the globe. Following the footsteps of John XIII, Pope Paul VI became a global protagonist of global peace.

### ***Pope Paul VI***

Pope Paul VI lounged his popular encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in 1967. In the encyclical, the Pope provides the roadmap of how peace can be achieved through what he calls integral human development, that is, an approach that focusses on the entire person and all persons yonder the boundaries. In an effort to achieve palpable development, the Pope lobbied for the following: economic support of the economically poor nations by the rich countries, equal trade relations and universal charity. The Pope was deeply convinced that genuine development of people en masse can be a stepping stone towards achieving lasting peace in the entire globe. As argued by the Pope, “Extreme disparity between nations in economic, social and educational levels provoke jealousy and discord, often putting peace in jeopardy (n. 76).”

In supporting the views of John XIII, Paul VI said: “Who can fail to see the need and importance of this gradually coming to the establishment of a world authority capable of taking effective action on the juridical political peace? (n. 78).” As soon as the encyclical was complete, Pope Paul established the famous and highly appreciated World Day of Peace which is celebrated each year on January 1st.<sup>7</sup> In his maiden speech, the Pope was not addressing himself to the Roman Catholic Church but to the entire population of the globe to always remember and celebrate the day at the beginning of each new year. In his move to strengthen support for the World Day of Peace, the Pope came up with ten bold themes. In 1977, the Pope is remembered to have said, “If You Want peace, Defend Life.” Here the Pope revisits the institutions and the various initiatives that championed for peace in the aftermath of World War II. However, the Pope was more concerned about developing global conflicts prompted by the threat of nuclear weapons, with the potential of massive destruction (n.5).

The Pope does not hesitate to articulate how the competition for creating more superior and sophisticated firearms consumes resources from institutions of learning, health, and civic structures. According to the Pope, “the policy of massive armaments is immediately called into question... with forthright boldness of our programme of the “arms race.” (n.15). For Paul VI, working for each person living on this planet. After Paul the VI, John Paul II was also a great supporter of global peace.

### ***John Paul II***

John Paul II supported the World Day of Peace with a myriad of corroborating writings within the parameters of peace. Some of these corroborating writings include: “Development and solidarity: Two Keys of Peace; Peace with God the Creator; Peace with All creation; If You Want Peace, Reach Out to the Poor: Women Teachers of Peace; Respect for Human Rights: The Secret of True Peace; No Peace Without Justice, No Justice Without Forgiveness; Do Not Be Overcome by Evil but Overcome Evil with Good.”<sup>8</sup>

In tandem with his encyclicals, John Paul II played a pivotal role towards the development of the Catholic Voice as far as war and peace are concerned. The Pope contributed a lot to the Catholic Social Teaching on the issue of non-violence, humanitarian intervention and forgiveness in the realm of international politics. John Paul II championed for interfaith dialogue and intermittently criticized narrow applications of the traditional “Just War Theory.”<sup>9</sup> A short while before the United States attacked Iraq in 2003, John Paul II’s speech addressed to diplomatic corps recognized by the Holy See was quite moving and insightful. The preamble of the speech was basically touching on the status quo of the world:

I have been personally struck by the feeling of fear, which often dwells in the hearts of our contemporaries. An insidious terrorism capable of striking at anytime and anywhere; the unresolved problem of the Middle East, with the Holy Land and Iraq; the turmoil disrupting South America, particularly Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela; the conflicts preventing numerous African countries from focusing on their development; the diseases spreading contagion and death; the grave problem of famine, especially in Africa; the irresponsible behavior contributing to the depletion of the planet’s resources: all these are so many plagues threatening the survival of humanity, the peace of individuals and the security of societies (n. 2).

In addition, the Pope said, “Yet everything can change (n.3).” Such a pronounced change gravitates around the multiplicity of political leaders.

The Pope enumerated some requirements to be fulfilled to salvage the human race from being obliterated from the face of the earth (n.3). The protracted list of requirements opens up with three main affirmations:

respect for life, respect for law and the duty of solidarity. As argued by the Pope, the enumeration of the conditions suggests that nationals and their leaders should cultivate a culture that challenges death, selfishness, a culture that says not to war mongering. “War is not always inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity...I say this as I think of those who still place their trust in nuclear weapons and of all-too-numerous conflicts which continue to hold hostage our brothers and sisters in humanity (n.4).” John Paul II was convinced that it is possible to transform and turn around our attitude towards war with good will and also to support others with the faithfulness of the Gospel to our commitments. Pope Benedict XVI developed further the views of John Paul II regarding global peace through his encyclical *Caritas in veritate*.

### ***Benedict XVI***

In his famous encyclical on social justice *Caritas in veritate*, Pope Benedict responds to a myriad of topics vis-à-vis economic issues. As indicated by the Pope, globalization and technology offer great opportunity for authentic human development—but also presents an overwhelming threat. The Pope goes ahead to argue that, human work based in charity and truth and expressed in justice, the common good and a consistent ethic of life can be pivotal in achieving their intended goals. In the encyclical, Benedict talks about peace-building within the parameters of technology. Benedict insists that, “Even peace can run the risk of being a technical product.” Although diplomatic efforts and strategies to address the main sources of terrorism are essential, the Pope suggests that these efforts be based on values rooted in the truth of human life: solidarity, mutual understanding and love (n.72). In his address to the World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict underscored the theme of authentic human development as a clear path that propels to peace. Concluding his message of peace, ‘Blessed Are the Peacemakers (2013),’ the Pope wrote: “It is alarming to see hotbeds of tension and conflict caused by growing instances of inequality between rich and poor by the prevalence of a selfish and individualistic mind set which also finds expression in an unregulated financial capitalism (n.1).”

In his first address to the World Day of Peace in 2006, ‘In Truth, Peace,’ Benedict spoke directly about nuclear weapons:

What can be said...about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of good will, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war, there would be no victors, only victims (n. 13).

Likewise, in his 2007 speech, ‘The Human Person, the Heart of Peace,’ the Pope argues:

Another disturbing issue is the desire recently shown by some States to acquire nuclear weapons. This has heightened even more the widespread climate of uncertainty and fear of a possible atomic catastrophe. We are brought back in time to the profound anxieties of the ‘cold war’ period... Unfortunately, threatening clouds continue to gather on humanity’s horizon. The way to ensure a future of peace for everyone is found not only in international accords for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also in the determined commitment to seek their reduction and definitive dismantling. May every attempt be made to arrive through negotiation at the attainment of these objectives! The fate of the whole human family is at stake! (n.15).

Like John Paul II, Pope Benedict also touched on issues related to nuclear war. He supports progressive disarmament and elimination of all nuclear weapons “whose presence alone threatens the life of the planet and the ongoing integral development of the present generation and of the generations yet to come (n.11).” For Benedict, the protection and conservation of the environment is everyone’s mandate, concern and responsibility to establish a peaceful and a harmonized world. Pope Francis too continues to challenge the world to work for lasting peace through the system of non-violence.

### *Pope Francis*

In his message to World Day of Peace in 2017, ‘Non-violence- A Style of Politics for Peace,’ the Pope condemns the world wars and the glaring threat of nuclear war. In his speech, Francis portrays present-day conflicts as a “horrifying world war bought piecemeal.” The Pope enumerates some of the horrors of war which include the following: terrorism, organized crime, unforeseen acts of violence, the abuses experienced by migrants

and victims of human trafficking; and the pollution of the environment. In conclusion, the Pope argues that violence is “not the cure of broken world and leads to the death of many people, “if not all” (n.2).

The Pope articulated the palpable and ubiquitous suffering and pain inflicted by war in his first message to World Day of Peace in 2014. The Pope underscores the emphasis of his papal predecessors on integral human development for each person as a blueprint for lasting peace. In support of this noble ideology, the Pope says, “I make my own the appeal of my predecessors for the non-proliferation of arms and for the disarmament of all parties, beginning with nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament (n. 7).” After challenging the deployment of nuclear weapons as a stumbling block and a major threat for peace in the globe, the Popes also championed for environmental conservation and minimal pollution as a conduit for global peace.

#### **THE PAPAL CALLING FOR REDUCTION OF POLLUTION, ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION**

Interestingly, Pope Francis is not the first Pope to raise concern over ecological degradation. In 1971, Paul the VI raised the issue in his apostolic letter, *Octodecimo Adveniens*, while celebrating the eighth anniversary of Pope Leo VIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (the encyclical often articulated as the first of modern Catholic Social Teaching). Most of the Popes after Pope Paul VI generally expressed great concern over environmental degradation and pollution.

#### ***Pope Paul VI:***

In his encyclical *Octogesima Aveniens* the Pope revisits the remarkable changes that occurred since Pope Leo’s encyclical (in 1891). Paul VI did this in order to expound on the teachings of his predecessors, in response to the new needs of a fast changing world. Some of the hard-core challenges that he responds to include urbanization, the new roles of women, racial and cultural discrimination, immigration and the unbalanced exploitation of the environment. His environmental reflections are quite plausible although not widely explored. According to the Pope,

...another transformation is making itself felt, one which is the

dramatic and unexpected consequence of human activity. Man is suddenly becoming aware that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature he risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace...but the human framework is no longer under man's control, thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable (n.21).

### ***JOHN PAUL II:***

In his 1990 message to World Day of Peace, the Pope spoke basically about environmental pollution and degradation. The Pope argues:

In our day, there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life (n.1)<sup>10</sup>

The Pope vehemently insists that the environment is a moral concern that draws attention to moral values in his address. After candid reflection about the goodness of creation in the Bible, John Paul II came up with vital elements that contribute to environmental degradation and pollution. Such elements include: the indiscriminate application of advances in science and technology, industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs...the burning of fossil fuels [and] unrestricted deforestation (n.6). According to the Pope, all these elements demonstrate a pronounced lack of respect for life (n. 7). In his mitigation to environmental conservation, John Paul II insists that "Respect for life, and above all for the dignity of the human person, is the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic industrial or scientific progress (n. 7)" The Pope re-echoes Vatican II's emphasis on the universal goal of created realities: "God destined the earth and all it contains for the use of every individual and all peoples."<sup>11</sup>

As the Pope suggests, such an idea requires a "more internationally coordinated approach to the management of the earth's goods (n.9)" in tandem with proper response by individual nations to establish tenable measures and in challenging structural forms of poverty. John Paul II focusses his



attention to any form of warfare as a gaping threat—especially chemical, bacteriological and biological warfare. The Pope concludes that, “any form of war on global scale would lead to incalculable ecological damage (n.12),” affecting human life and social structures, destroying crops and vegetation, and contaminating soil and water.

The Pope concludes by underscoring the duties of individuals, nations and international community to search for peace and help restore a balanced ecological milieu (n.15). John Paul II revisited this ideal concern during his 1999 World Day of Peace message on human rights. Upon realizing the possible damage to land and sea, flora and fauna, the Pope argues that the “world’s present and future depend on the safeguarding of creation, because of the endless, interdependence between human beings and the environment.”<sup>12</sup>

### ***BENEDICT XVI***

Pope Benedict XVI has been candidly vocal on ecological instability and pollution. His commitment to ecological protection and conservation is evident in his address to the United Nations Summit in 2009 about climate change and also in his popularly known encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009 and his message of peace to the World Day of Peace in 2010). The Pope appealed to the United Nations Summit to preserve and protect the environment as a precious gift from God. As indicated by the Pope, “... the economic and social costs of using up shared resources must be recognized with transparency and borne by these who incur them, and not by other peoples or future generations.”<sup>13</sup> Benedict suggested the following as critical stepping stones towards achieving global environmental conservation and protection: team work (to the leaders of the world), respecting the law, promoting solidarity and also paying attention to the regions of the world that are not economically endowed.

In his encyclical, the Pope candidly states that, “there is a pressings moral need for renewal solidarity especially in relationships between developing countries and those that are highly industrialized (n. 49).” The Pope argues that the way humans relate with the environment is concomitant to the way in which they relate with themselves. Such an approach draws attention to deeper reflection on the way in which modern societies are

organized and structured.

According to Benedict XVI, a large section of the modern world has been largely infiltrated by consumerism and hedonism. In addition to the responsibility of leaders to the environment, the Pope insisted that the Church too has the responsibility over the environment. Benedict the XVI said, “The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. By so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction (n. 51).”

In his address to World Day of Peace in 2010, Benedict raised the following question: “can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities of climate change, desertification, the deterioration and loss of productivity in vast agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and aquifers, the loss of biodiversity, the increase of natural catastrophes and deforestation of equatorial and tropical regions?”<sup>14</sup> As indicated by the Pope, the growing phenomenon of “environmental refugees,” and endless conflicts over natural products is propelled by lack of proper environmental care and protection. For the Pope, humanity is subject to what he calls “a complex set of moral crises,” that is, a deep sense of independence and a particular way of living that is less sophisticated, a way of life that calls for integrational solidarity and collective responsibility.

In tandem, Pope Benedict developed a repertoire of responses that would be pivotal in promoting proper human development and simultaneously take good care of environment: “a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion of sharing of the common good, on responsibility, on a realization of our need for a changed life-style and on prudence (n. 9).” Such innovations include technological and scientific research that propels to venturing and exploiting solar energy, management of forests, strengthening the linkage between combating climate change and overcoming poverty’ (n.10) and progressive tutorials on how to achieve and maintain peace. The arduous task of engaging in environmental conservation/protection and reduced pollution calls for a global approach (n.11).

Like John Paul II, Benedict also touched on issues related to nuclear war. He supports progressive disarmament and elimination of all nuclear

weapons “whose presence alone threatens the life of the planet and the ongoing integral development of the present generation and of the generations yet to come (n. 11) For Benedict, the protection and conservation of the environment is everyone’s duty and responsibility towards establishing a peaceful and a green world.

***Pope Francis:***

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*,’ Pope Francis argues vehemently that the world (our common home) is like a biological sister sharing the same mother with the rest of the flora and fauna. A loving mother who extends her hands with rare tenderness to embrace all indiscriminately. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through your Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, who produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.”<sup>15</sup> According to Pope Francis, the allegorical sister is currently writhing in pain because of immeasurable harm. Humanity persists in a restless depletion of resources which God endowed her with since the foundations of the universe. Human beings are restless in operating like self-proclaimed Lords and masters possessing intrinsic claims to violate her gifts nonchalantly. Such violence which is candidly visible in our hearts, propelled by sin, is also noticeable in the environmental destruction facing soil, water, and air in various spheres of life. “This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22).<sup>16</sup>

In the encyclical, the Pope is appealing to people of all walks of life that is every person living on this planet, to all men and women of good will to engage in dialogue about our common home (n. 3). The prelude of the encyclical embodies a catalogue of themes that dominate the encyclical. Such themes include the close link between the poorest of the poor and the delicate planet, the conviction that everything in the world is closely connected and the inevitable commitment of the international and local policy (n.16). Pope Francis totally supports the idea that global warming is a phenomenon that is particularly fuelled by human activity. As indicated by Pope Francis, “Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in

our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades (n. 25).”

Further-more, the Pope talks about the value of water (both quality and quantity, the dwindling of biodiversity, the fragmentation of the society and the diminishing quality of life and global in equality (nn. 27-52). The Pope cites disappointment with the poor political responses to such threats to our common home, expressing that “the most that one can expect is superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern for the environment” (n.54).

In his effort to give a more comprehensive response, Pope Francis draws stamina from the Scripture. He begins by shedding light on creation narratives by affirming that humans have a pronounced responsibility to take good care of the earth (n.66, 77). This brings in the idea of stewardship. Considering the concept of stewardship, we find that God is the creator of everything. Consequently, the Pope proclaims every human individual to be a responsible steward of creation. For B. Mondin, “man is created in the image of God among other reasons, by mandate received from his creator to subject and dominate the earth. In execution of this mandate, every human being reflects the same action of the creator of the universe.”<sup>17</sup>

The idea of human beings as stewards is palpable in both the New and the Old Testaments as well as in the parables of Jesus (Lk12: 15-21; 18: 18-30; 19: 11-17). As stewards we are supposed to take care of creation and make sure that it bears good fruits. Biblically speaking, stewardship in this case is geared towards human life in general. Underscoring a similar train of thought, Pope Francis argues that, “Everything is linked together. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to sincere love for our fellow human beings and unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of the society” (n.19).

After concluding his discourse on the human origins of ecological challenges, mainly the dominance of technocratic approach (nn.106-114), Francis argues in support of an “integral ecology,” conforming that we are facing a common crisis that is both social cum environmental. Strategies for a plausible solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the marginalized, downtrodden and coming up with proper structures and policies to ensure environmental protection and

conservation (n. 139). Both common good and intergenerational solidarity are quintessential, “since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us (n. 159).”

Pope Francis does not hesitate to revisit the “paths of dialogues” that can be pivotal in helping us to escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us (n.163). Such destructions seemingly occur internationally hence creating problems/challenges that can only be addressed adequately through international response. Following the footsteps of his contemporaries, Francis argues in support of the “urgent need of a true world political authority (n. 175).” The Pope advocates for both national and local dialogues as major stepping stones towards the emancipation of diverse groups in their struggle to address pertinent challenges.

Pope Francis also champions for dialogue between politics and economics. According to Pope Francis, “...today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life (n.189).” The Pope critically addresses the problem of greed with regard to the maximization of profits. As the Pope indicated, where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythm of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention. Moreover, biodiversity is considered at most a deposit of economic resources available for exploration, with no serious thought for the real value of things, their significance for persons and cultures, or the concerns and needs of the poor (n.190).

The other form of dialogue that the Pope states as quintessential is the dialogue between politics and economics. In view of common good today, there looms a dire need for politics and economics to engage in to a genuine dialogue about the source of life (n.189). Lastly, the Pope recommends dialogue between religion and science. As argued by the Pope, majority of the people who inhabit the planet profess to be believers in one way or the other. This fact should propel the various religions to dialogue among themselves with the goal of galvanizing nature, protecting the poorest of the poor and establishing networks of respect and mutual fraternity. On the other hand, dialogue among the various sciences is likewise quintessential. Otherwise there is a likelihood of these fields to enclose themselves in their

own language while specialization points to a particular isolation and the absolutism of its own field of knowledge (n. 201).

In the final chapter of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis is challenging human beings to transform their minds and ways of doing things. Although many things are bound to change human beings are obliged to initiate this radical change and transformation for the betterment of the world. As indicated by the Pope, "...we lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone (n. 202)." The last chapter of *Laudato Si'* is quite informative, inspiring, insightful, challenging, spiritually moving and profound. The chapter serves as an awakening call for prayerful reflection and commitment to real action. In this very chapter, the Pope raises hard questions with regard to consumerism. The Pope proposes basic education in this regard based on environmental care, protection and conservation. The Pope also provides a variety of examples that can be useful in our ways of living, behaving and relating with the environment around us. An ethos of living that reflects a generous and timely creativity that has the capacity to bring out the best from people's lives. As far as the Pope is concerned, both political and Church institutions have a critical role to play as far as far as creating consciousness about environmental conservation and protection is concerned. A life that is blended with a tinge of simplicity, happiness, witnessing and contemplation is pivotal towards taking good care of the earth as our "common home."

### **Conclusion**

A spot check on Papal contributions towards global peace and environmental conservation gives a clear indication that the two main life threatening issues are nuclear arms and environmental pollution. Both nuclear arms and environmental pollution are deleterious because they bear the capacity to obliterate humanity from the face of the globe. As bona fide inhabitants of the universe, all human beings are called to mitigate the threat posed by nuclear arms and environmental pollution. These two towering challenges can be overcome through solidarity, dialogue and collaboration among the different nationals and nationalities of the world. Second, the pronounced duty to work for peace and to take good care of

the earth as “our common home” is a gospel value that is also shrouded by a cluster of pending challenges and difficulties. However, as individuals and together as a society it is possible to do a comprehensive analysis of our political, social economic settings and come up with strategies that can be instrumental in achieving peace, reducing pollution and come up with formidable policies on environmental protection and conservation. As the famous adage holds, “Where there is the will there is the way.” Each one of us is capable of reflecting and borrowing a leaf from Pope Francis’s prayer at the end of his encyclical: “Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey upon it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction...”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

<sup>2</sup> Eunice Kamaara and Mary Kamaara, *Abortion & HIV/AIDS: A Human Perspective*, African Ecclesial Review, No. 1 &2 (March-June 2005), 48.

<sup>3</sup> “*Ecumenical Trust for Justice and Peace, You Are Your Rights*,” Nairobi: The Ecumenical Trust, 1998, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Laurenti Magesa, “*Some Practical Ethical Considerations for the Promotion of Human Dignity in Africa*,” African Christian Studies, No. 2 (June 1987), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Emile F. Short, “*Human Rights and Religion; The Christian Perspective*,” in *Conflict: What Has Religion to do With It? An African-European Dialogue*, (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 2004), 95.

<sup>6</sup> Walsh Michael and Daves Brian, *Proclaiming Justice and Peace: Documents From John XXIII to John Paul II*, London: Collin’s Liturgical Publications, 1984, XIV.

<sup>7</sup> ‘*Message of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, for the Observance of a Day of Peace*’ (1 January 1968).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

<sup>9</sup> Drew Christiansen, “*Catholic Peacemaking, 1991-2005: The Legacy of Pope John Paul II*,” The Review of Faith and International Affairs, 4 (2006), 21-18.

<sup>10</sup> John Paul, “*Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All Creation*” (1 January 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 69.

<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, “*Respect for Human Rights: The Secret of True Peace*” (1 January 1999), n. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Benedict XVI, “*Video statement to the Un Summit on Climate Change*” (24 September 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Benedict XIV, “*If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*,” (1 January 2019), n. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Canticum of the Creatures*, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, New York-London-Manila, 1999, 113-114.

<sup>16</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si,’ On the Care of Our Common Home*, (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2015), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Battista, Mondin. *Philosophical Anthropology*, (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1985), 189.

## **MORAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO CURB ABORTION PRACTICES IN THYOLO**

*Rodney Thom C.S.S.P.*

### **Introduction**

The paper discusses ways of curbing abortion practices in Thyolo District in Malawi. It achieves this by giving proposals and moral recommendations that may help curb abortion in Thyolo.<sup>i</sup> It points out that the Church, government and the society should play a big role in protecting the life of the unborn babies. Therefore, different organs in the society ought to play a role in curbing abortion and bring it to an end eventually. One thing to note is that elimination of abortion cannot be achieved unless the causes that induce women to seek abortion are addressed.

### **Post Abortion healing Plan**

It has been a trend for some women to abort more than once in their lifetime in Thyolo, yet abortion is undesirable practice and a tragedy to a society in Thyolo as evidenced by the physical, psychological and social complications that it brings along. Henceforth, victims of abortion in the district should be helped to recover from the traumatic experience. In this case, pastoral counselling and psychological therapy may help to give them some hope.

### **Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy**

This may be offered at least to all parties involved who are the most wounded due to abortion more especially the woman. Going to the sacrament of penance to seek forgiveness from God is also helpful. Such a process is helpful to the victim as it eases pressure and heal her both spiritually and psychologically. Having been healed, the victim may end up becoming an advocate against abortion and help promote pro-life groups in the area.

### **Mass Media**

This is arguably one of the fastest means of spreading information

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<sup>i</sup> Moral recommendations are virtuous proposals aimed at the best course of action.



in as far as the value of human life is concerned. Through educating the people, the media informs the general public in sensitizing them on the evil of abortion through its three cornerstones, thus informing, educating and entertaining. Televisions, radios, newspapers, among others play a major role in these matters. In helping to curb and stop abortion, the media in Thyolo should design programmes that educate people on the dangers of abortion practices, thus beginning from individual level, family and society at large. Every citizen ought to be involved for the problem associated with abortion does not affect only the mother and the unborn baby but also all members of the society. Hence, the media should educate the people about safe motherhood, abortion issues and post abortion care to save many lives. Influential as media is, its reporters should be conscious of what they report in promoting the good values in society rather than just be interested in profit making without considering how their reporting impacts on the society.

The Church recognises the role that the social media plays if properly used and of how they are of great importance to the people. In line with Vatican II document, *Inter Mirifica* [on the Media of Social Communication], we echo and suggest that “readers, viewers and listener of social media fully favour those presentations that are outstanding for their moral goodness, their knowledge and their artistic or technic merit”.<sup>1</sup> Programmes that do not conform to good moral standards, like those supporting abortion in Thyolo, are not worthy listening to or viewing as they deform human conscience and lead to moral decay in the society. Henceforth, the moral responsibility for good use of social media falls on all people involved right away from production to distribution. As the document puts it, all those involved in social media affairs ought to lead people to doing good by informing them what is morally upright, and this includes the preservation of the life of unborn babies. Additionally, in an effort to ensure a healthy community, public authorities, through censorship of programmes, are obliged to ensure that “special care be taken to safeguard young people from printed matter and performances which may be harmful at their age”.<sup>2</sup>

Though abortion is illegal in Malawi, the pro-choice groups use the media in advancing their agenda on contraceptives while disregarding good

values like safeguarding human life. The Non -Governmental Organizations also have a propaganda of reducing population growth and often use the media to achieve that goal. We therefore recommend that the main interest of the media should not just be profit made through advertisements that degrade human life and dignity while compromising the right to life of the unborn babies. Human life is more precious than the money they make. Furthermore, reporters should be pro-life to ensure the promotion of human life and dignity. Church radios and Televisions should speak for the right to life of the weakest and defenceless human beings namely the unborn babies.

### **The Role of the Church and other Religious Leaders**

Religious leaders in Thyolo society are well known to be very close to their followers even more than politicians who make laws. As a result, they easily become aware of most of the problems that their people encounter. The Clergy and leaders of other denominations, religious men and women all have the duty and moral responsibility to teach the faithful on the immorality of abortion and how this practice impacts negatively on human dignity. They can achieve this in their pastoral activities by teaching and instructing the faithful on abortion issues. In the light of the Church's teaching, the faithful should learn that "the child in her mother's womb is a human life which must be protected. Abortion, which is destructive of an innocent unborn child is contrary to God's will, for the value and dignity of human life must be protected from conception to natural death".<sup>3</sup> It is the responsibility of the Church to remind the faithful that every human life has inherent value.

Since the problem of abortion poses a big challenge to the Church's stand on the sanctity of human life, all the pastoral agents must unanimously speak in defence of human life and dignity. They can achieve this goal by including sex education in the catechetical syllabus so that the faithful may learn that sex is a gift from God ordered towards procreation. This understanding may help curb the number of abortions. We also recommend that the Church creates a platform where the small Christian communities become the initial places for moral values. Church groups in schools like

Young Christian Students should discuss more topics related to human sexuality under the guidance from proper animation to raise an awareness on the immorality of abortion. The facilitation of Home-Based Care and Counselling centres for all people in Thyolo may also help provide a platform where people may learn about the evil of abortion.

Moreover, the victims of abortion should be given proper pastoral care. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus*, Benedict XVI urges the Church in Africa to support and care for the victims of abortion and those contemplating of it, thus, “the Church in Africa and neighbouring islands must be committed to offering help and support women and couples tempted to seek abortion while remaining close to those who have had this tragic experience and helping them grow in respect for human life”.<sup>4</sup> In the light of this, we recommend that the Church continues to care and support the victims of abortion. Women who have aborted before should be supported so that they may not repeat the experience.

### **Medical Professionals**

Medical practitioners ought to be in the forefront in sensitizing people about the effects of abortion rather than serving their own interests by procuring abortion. Their duty is to protect life, not to destroy it. Therefore, “the carrying out of abortion diminishes all parties in their humanity, the woman, the physician and other accomplices. To be a human person is to have for a goal to achieve the fullness of human development”.<sup>5</sup> Medical practitioners should follow their conscience and respect human life, otherwise, they live most of their life in regret having participated in taking away human life. We recommend that doctors in Thyolo provide a conducive environment for human life and respect it by respecting the ethics of “Hippocratic Oath” which stipulates that “Nor will I give a woman a pessary to procure abortion”.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that doctors should promote human dignity by not cooperating in taking away life of the unborn babies and this will ensure the continuity of the society.

### **Responsible Parenthood and Proper Education**

Lack of proper parenting skills was noted to be among the leading

causes of abortion in Thyolo. We recommend that sex education be taught formally in schools and informally by parents and elders to their children. This may help curb early and unplanned pregnancies that come as a result of poor parenting skills. Parents should be open enough to their children about their sexual life and the dangers of procuring abortion. For a long time, it has been a taboo for parents to discuss sexual intercourse with their children and this is why parents opt to send their daughters for initiation ceremonies where they learn some immoral acts like Kusasa Fumbi [sexual cleansing] which sometimes leads to unplanned pregnancies and contraction of Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Moreover, children often receive information about sex from friends, magazines and the internet. In most cases, such information is not supervised hence misleading. They end up engaging in sexual behaviour which results in early pregnancies. Henceforth, sexual education can surely lead to an awareness on the dangers of abortion and women can be equipped with skills and knowledge on how to handle their sexuality. They can learn that abortion is never a solution to unplanned pregnancies.

### **Government Laws**

Abortion is illegal in Malawi except in cases where the life of the mother is in danger. Though this is case, there have been hot debates among law makers on whether to legalize abortion or not. The pro-choice group in Malawi continues to advocate for women's right to choose whether to keep the baby or not. In the light of the Church's teaching against abortion, we argue in support of the assertion that "to be valid, law must be derived from sound principles such as respect for human life".<sup>7</sup> That is to say, law makers who are the representatives of the people should ensure that any laws that they make should conform to objective norms of justice and such laws should aim at the common good rather than those that favour the strong in the society only. This is achievable through dialogue between the Church and government.

In the light of *Gaudium et Spes* "government exists in the realization of the common good, thus to help bring those conditions of social life by which individual, families and groups can achieve their own fulfilment in

a relatively thorough and ready way, for instance the preservation of life”.<sup>8</sup> We recommend that every law that sabotages the right of the innocent and the defenceless babies should not be tolerated. Abortion, being immoral and evil as it is, every law that the authorities make in Thyolo, thus from the district assembly to national level, should follow morality. Law makers are obliged to speak for the defenceless members of the society namely the unborn babies regarding their fundamental right to life. Every law that contradicts the moral norms like the preservation of human life should be opposed because it never respects the dignity of human person.

Government has a major role in protecting and defending human life from all forms of injuries and injustices and ensure that the right to life is certain. Government must support pregnant women in whatever way possible up until they safely deliver. Providing antenatal Care is among them. The laws in Malawi, where Thyolo is, should be reasonable to achieve this, government should put in place structures that promote human life and dignity through its various ministries like that of Health and Education. They should include sexual education in primary and secondary curriculum and such syllabus should include moral issues like abortion, family planning and their side effects on humanity. Government should invest more in humanity courses like “Life Skills” where students learn how to cope with their sexual life. For a long time in Malawi, government focused more on Empirical sciences while ignoring humanity courses. Through such courses, many people will be made aware of their sexuality and moral issues in general. Additionally, we propose that the Government of Malawi takes a firm stand against Non-Governmental Organizations that advocate for abortion with a view of the campaign against population boom. Instead, government should dialogue with them to channel their money into poverty eradication programmes and the fight against various diseases.

Abortion is illegal in Malawi except when the foetus puts the life of the woman in danger. Though this is the case, most women in Thyolo seek and access abortion from private clinics and traditional healers. We propose that government enforces the already existing law that forbids abortion and ensure that law breakers face punishment so that others may learn.

### **Conscience Formation**

Every normal human person has the capacity to do good. As such he or she can undoubtedly judge that some acts are right while others are wrong. Formation of conscience in people is one of the ways of addressing the problem of abortion in Thyolo. A well-informed conscience in the light of Scripture respects the sacredness of human life in its various stages of development, thus, right away from conception. Such a person will surely respond to natural law principle as the Church teaches, thus, “deep within his conscience, man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. its voice calling him to love and do what is good and avoid evil...for man has in his heart a law inscribed by God...his conscience is man’s most secrete core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depth”.<sup>9</sup> We suggest therefore that everyone involved with the process of human life in the district form his or her conscience properly in conformity with the divine truth. Consequently, knowledgeable people like pastoral agents should help people form their conscience. One way of helping them can be by giving them catechesis on the inviolability of human life to help in their conscience formation. The formation of conscience begins from the early stage of human development and as such, both family and the community are obliged to ensure that their children are supported to grow with the culture of preserving life.

### **The Virtue of Chastity and Abstinence**

Some people think that being chaste in a relationship denotes ignorance and stupidity, but this is not true. In the understanding of Wachira, chastity means “a joyous affirmation of someone who is determined to live a life of self-giving, free from any form of self-centred slavery. it requires sexual self-control in thought, words, actions, the expression of affection for other persons in modest ways that avoid sexual arousal in thought, word and deed”.<sup>10</sup> Chastity is not only limited to desisting from sexual practices, but it is to do with one’s confidence about the self. Certainly, there is a need for education on chastity whereby people in Thyolo may learn how to relate healthily with the opposite sex and this may help bring a positive attitude.

They may acquire knowledge on how to control themselves and be chaste.

### **Catechesis on Theology of the Body**

People in Thyolo should be prepared to appreciate God's gift of sexuality to humanity through catechesis on human sexuality. As noted in chapter two, human beings are privileged in the order of creation because they are made in the image of God. Scripture stipulates that sex is meant for married people, thus, sex outside marriage is condemned.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, young people in Thyolo should be helped to grow into full maturity and be helped understand that sex as a gift from God is meant for the married couples. Scripture says, "that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."<sup>12</sup> Various experts ought to work collaboratively to arrive at a goal where everyone in Thyolo realizes that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit received from God and they do not belong to themselves.<sup>13</sup> Everyone should desist from acts that profane the body.

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* [On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World], John Paul II states that in addition to the family's role of helping the young people preparing for their future roles, the society and the Church should also take part. Looking at the changes in the modern times, he claims that, "many negative phenomena which are today noted with regret in family life derive from the fact that, in the new situations, young people not only lose sight of the correct hierarchy of values but, since they no longer have certain criteria of behavior, they do not know how to face and deal with the new difficulties".<sup>14</sup> If young people are well prepared for their future roles, there will not be cases of a man refusing responsibility for a pregnancy or a woman seeking an abortion because good ground may have already been laid.

### **Dialogue between Theologians and Medical Practitioners**

Modern theologians and medical professionals hold opposing views regarding the beginning of human life and the use of contraceptives. While most theologians believe that life begins at conception, most medical practitioners hold the view that human life begins at a later stage than that. We recommend that there should be continuous dialogue between

them so that they may find a middle way. This may not just be applicable in Thyolo but countrywide.

### Conclusion

This chapter discussed proposals and recommendations that can be used to curb abortion practices in Thyolo. Among others, it argued that the responsibility to defend life of the defenceless unborn babies belongs to everybody in Thyolo District. Henceforth, the Government of Malawi should promote and make laws that aim at the preservation and promotion of human life and dignity. They are also to ensure that they accommodate human sexuality courses in their curriculum so that young people may learn how to handle their sexuality and know the dangers of abortion. The Church ought to speak in defence of human life and dignity through her teachings while the family, being the primary school of moral values, should informally educate their children about sexuality by being open to them about the topic. Medical professionals should adhere to their call values of preserving human life, not destroying it. Furthermore, the youth should be encouraged to live a life of chastity and abstinence and wait until they are mature enough and ready for marriage. Mass media should educate and inform the general public in sensitizing them on the dangers of abortion.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul VI. *Inter Mirifica. Decree on the Media of Social Communications*. Rome: St. Publications, 1963. No.9

<sup>2</sup> Paul VI. *Inter Mirifica. Decree on the Media of Social Communications*. Rome: St. Publications, 1963 p.12

<sup>3</sup> Benedict XVI. *Apostolic Exhortation: Africae Munus*. Benin: Word Media SVD, 2011 no. 70

<sup>4</sup> Benedict XVI. *Apostolic Exhortation: Africae Munus*. Benin: Word Media SVD, 2011 no 70

<sup>5</sup> Flynn Eileen P. *Issues in Health Care Ethics*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 2000 p.37

<sup>6</sup> Flynn Eileen P. *Issues in Health Care Ethics*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 2000 p37

<sup>7</sup> Flynn Eileen P. *Issues in Health Care Ethics*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 2000 p31

<sup>8</sup> *Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral Teaching on the Church in the Modern World*, in Council II. ed. Austin Flannery. Bombay: St. Paul Press, 1995 no.74

<sup>9</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 1994 p. 1777

<sup>10</sup> Wachira R. N. *On Life and Love, What Parents should Know*. Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2000 p.115

<sup>11</sup> Wansbrough, Henry, ed. *The New Jerusalem Bible*. Standard ed. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1985 cf. Mt 15:19.



- <sup>12</sup> Wansbrough, Henry, ed. *The New Jerusalem Bible*. Standard ed. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1985 cf. Gen 2:24.
- <sup>13</sup> Wansbrough, Henry, ed. *The New Jerusalem Bible*. Standard ed. London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1985 cf. 1 Cor 6:19
- <sup>14</sup> John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio: Apostolic Exhortation on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*. Rome, November 22, 1981 p.66

# ***MISSIOLOGY***

## **WHY DID THE CHURCH SPREAD SO QUICKLY IN THE FIRST-THREE CENTURIES OF ITS EXISTENCE?**

*Elizabeth Zimhunga*

The Christian church has been the most powerful, religious, social and intellectual institution in the history of western civilization. However, the Christian Church only began as a small, lower class group of followers in a remote part of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> The initial centre of Christianity was in Jerusalem where Jesus had been crucified, raised from the dead and where the Pentecost experience had occurred.<sup>2</sup> These were possibly 20 to 100 people who had been followers of Jesus who continued to believe in him after his death. The expansion of the church was highly unlikely to succeed.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel was preached in Asia, Europe and in Africa by the apostles.<sup>4</sup> Over the course of 300 years, the religion grew, despite many obstacles, to about 5% of the population of the Roman Empire becoming a world religion commanding the respect of the highest echelons of Roman society and government.<sup>5</sup> St Irenaeus in 220 declared that “the Church is spread throughout the world, even to the ends of the earth”.<sup>6</sup> This essay therefore, presents the reasons why the Church spread so quickly in the first three centuries of its existence.

According to Chadwick “Practical application of charity was probably the most potent single cause of Christian success”.<sup>7</sup> Paul made collections for the poor in Jerusalem from the Greek Christians in Asia Minor. The pagans neglected their needy whilst the Christians helped the suffering people for example, in the middle of the third century, during the pestilence in North Africa, the pagans deserted the sick and dying while Christians tenderly nursed the sick and cleared the dead bodies.<sup>8</sup> Care for the poor, widows and orphans, social action in times of calamity like earthquakes or war and care for those condemned to labour in the mines were major preoccupations of the church. Hospitality to travellers was a special act of charity with the bishop providing such hospitality especially for travelling missionaries. The Christian community rendered to poor brethren provision for their burial. Later, the churches in Rome and Carthage began to acquire burial grounds for their members which were later called “catacombs”.<sup>9</sup> This strong social aspect led to the spread of the church.

The Church was especially successful among women. It was through the wives that it penetrated the upper classes of society in the first instance.<sup>10</sup> Women were termed slaves and had no legal rights with their mental endowment being termed inferior. Marriage was a loose bond but Christians believed in the equality of men and women before God, and found in the New Testament commands that husbands should treat their wives as Christ manifested for his church with love (Ephesians 5:6, 1 Peter 3:7).<sup>11</sup> Divorce was forbidden absolutely<sup>12</sup> hence Christian teaching about the sanctity of marriage offered a powerful safeguard to married women. This overall resulted in the church spreading quickly.

When Christianity appeared there was moral deprivation in the Roman Empire. Childhood was not viewed as important, only boys were regarded as valuable in the parents' eyes. In the pagan religion, stealing was a virtue in the boy child and children were fighting machines in battles. Christianity however, brought a moral teaching that opposed these with the teaching of Christ which elevated childhood "whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18: 4-5)

Christianity elevated the status of slaves since it preached that all men were created in God's image (Genesis 1: 26). Several emancipated slaves rose to be bishops for example Callistus of Rome in the 3rd century.<sup>13</sup> Whereas under Roman law, slaves could not contract a legal marriage, the Church regarded marriages between slaves as free and indissoluble.<sup>14</sup> At the dawn of the Church, there were a huge number of slaves in the Roman Empire and these were not regarded as persons but as things. However, Paul had taught on freedom of individuals saying "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The Church, on the occasion of the slave's conversion to Christianity, brought the slave and his master to brotherly equality.<sup>15</sup> This led to the church growing in numbers as once relegated persons managed to attain freedom and equal status for themselves.

When Christianity started the Roman Empire was already established and was universal. The Romans had converted the Palestinian territory into a province. As a result many nations unknown to each other were brought into contact. This contact between nations facilitated the spread

of Christianity as missionaries, merchants and tradesmen moved about with great freedom and with no fear of being rejected because of their nationality.<sup>16</sup> Other agents of the spread of the faith were travellers like slaves or Christians deported for their faith.<sup>17</sup> To connect all parts of this vast territory, great highways were built for the rapid movement of armies. This vast system of roads bound together the different parts of the empire and the Mediterranean Sea formed a great water-way on which travel was fast and safe enabling contact between the different parts of the empire.<sup>18</sup> All the factors made rapid dissemination of the gospel easy. The apostles could move along these stone roads with ease and so these roads became highways for gospel messengers (Hurst 26). It is clear that Christianity found facilities for its spread in the Roman Empire namely universal peace, uniform language and ideas and rapid and safe communication (Duchsene 13). This led to the efficient movement of the gospel and the faith as a whole leading to the quick spread of the early Church.

Foreign faiths were forbidden in Roman dominions with existing religions being tolerated in conquered provinces. However, the old ban on foreign faiths was revived with the coming of the Christian faith. Christians were accused of disobedience and would be blamed for all calamities (for example defeat in war, natural disasters) (Hurst 33). This led to growing dissension towards the Christians resulting in many accounts of persecution and martyrdom.

The course of Christianity was marked by persecutions and martyrdoms. The book Acts of the Apostles has many accounts of persecution of early Christians (Acts 7:54-60, Acts 12:1-5, Acts 14:19-20). Persecutions occurred in the first and second centuries but in the third they increased in violence. This resulted in exaltation of passive martyrdom. The Christians were happy to voluntarily share in the experience of Jesus, the founder of the faith who had been executed (Lautorette 135). The heroic fortitude with which the early Christians met punishment or torture even death rather than denying their faith inspired admiration and respect and also belief in the truth of their religion. The martyrs frequently showed signs of intense joy in their sufferings. This brought many to embrace the Christian religion (Gilmartin 61). The persecutions that the Christians were subjected to could have dealt a fatal blow to a young church but the

opposite actually happened. The persecutions awoke the whole Roman Empire to the teachings and practices of Christianity (Vidmar) and thus the church spread.

The wars that resulted in the founding of the Roman Empire resulted in the intermingling of individuals (slaves and freed men) and thus their original religions were weakened. These had been separated from their hereditary origins hence they welcomed the fellowship afforded by the Christian church and the security which the faith promised for the afterlife (Lautorette 163). The first churches were established in the large cities. Christianity spread among the pagans in the country from the cities and these converts in the country attended church in the city (Kuiper 19). The disintegration of existing cultures made it less difficult to resist the new faith (Lautorette 163).

There were frequent changes in the imperial rule with new methods and strategies for Christian repression and persecution adopted constantly. Despite the risk of persecution, the Christian Church grew in numbers. Resultantly there were many exiles but the Christians would carry their faith and way of life to their new homes thus the Church spread to many areas (Hurst 36).

The church had a powerful and coherent structure. It instilled in its members loyalty and solidarity which proved important in the struggle for existence (Lautorette 164). The earliest churches were simply private houses that were gradually converted inside as the congregations grew (Chadwick, 55). These churches in cities were initially loosely connected with each other. They however started to amalgamate as the number of members increased steadily and by the year 200 they were one compact whole (Kuiper 21). With this emerged the different terms presbyter, bishop, diocese, diocesan bishop and episcopal. Around the year 110, the Antioch church had a bishop by the name Ignatius and Smyrna had Polycarp. They both had been disciples of the apostles (Kuiper 20).

The church managed to attract people of all races and classes compared to Judaism hence Christianity glorified in its appeal to individuals of all races and classes. The ignorant could also grasp Christian teachings because they were simple. It received the respect of the learned to which it offered what the rival philosophies could not. Christianity was for both

male and female. The rival religions present at the time were primarily for men. Christianity was a place for both the rich and the poor. Because of all this inclusiveness, it took in the most groups and strata of society and thus the church managed to grow and spread (Latourette 164).

The church refused to compromise on what it deemed essential and central doctrines. The need to break from old customs and moral practices gave the adherents a conviction which became a source of strength against persecution and of zeal in acquiring converts thus the church managed to grow and spread (Lautorette 165). During this time, most of the Christians were converts from paganism who embraced the Christian religion. They embraced it with sincere conviction of its truth. They led pure and holy lives and practised these virtues little known among gentiles namely charity, meekness, humility, chastity and temperance. Hence their lives became more eloquent than words in preaching the truth of their religion and recommending it to unbelievers (Gilmartin 58).

The Jewish roots of the church helped it in its growth. Hebrew Scriptures offered the sanctity of a long historical development. In Hellenist Judaism, Christianity found communities prepared for its message (Lautorette 166). The Messianic prophecies contained in the Old Testament pointed to Christ and were fulfilled by his coming (Gilmartin 61). The incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus were emphasized remarkably and thus managed to attract many converts leading to the growth and the spread of the church (Lautorette 166).

The power of working miracles possessed by the early Christian preachers was a very powerful means of propagating the Christian religion. Christ had promised this power to his apostles before he ascended into heaven (Acts 1:8). The early preachers used the power given to them in healing the sick, raising the dead to life amongst other acts (Acts 2:43, Acts 3:7-11). Such miracles sealed their heavenly mission and were a very strong argument for Christianity. This showed that the Christian God was more powerful than all the others. Those who came to believe that abandoned their old gods and converted to Christianity adding to the numbers in the Church (Latuorette 167). The occurrence of demons in the Graeco-Roman world was huge. Christianity had scored many instances of success in expelling evil spirits. The manifestation of the gifts of the

Holy Spirit appeared under various forms namely miraculous cures, visions amongst others. Prophecy and the gift of tongues were the most remarkable manifestations (Duchsene 33). This way the church attracted lots of people (Latourete 167).

To pagans, the current polytheism had many weaknesses and thus the grandeur and antiquity of Christian monotheism attracted them (Lautorette 170). Christianity proclaimed monotheism and following the Christian God meant abandoning all the others. This way, all the other religions were destroyed, resulting in the promotion of Christianity and the subsequent growth of the church (Erhman 29).

The internal organization of the Church was very simple. Baptism administered in Jesus's name was how the converts were admitted. They celebrated a common daily meal, the Eucharist, which was the sign and bond of their corporate life (Duchsene 17). This simplicity made it easier for people to convert to the Christian faith and resulted in the spread of the Church.

Three great Christian schools emerged in the Roman Empire by the middle of the second century. The most important was the one at Alexandria. There were other minor schools as well. It is at these schools that the doctrinal and literary development of Christianity occurred. These became important in that they were rallying points for the defense of the Christian faith and for the planning for Christian work. These proved to be instrumental in strengthening and spreading of the Church (Hurst 58).

### **Conclusion**

As shown by the above discourse, the Church managed to grow and spread throughout the Roman Empire in the first three centuries of its existence. Interestingly, I have concluded that the spread of the Church was not as a result of large evangelical drives and gatherings but was because the lives that the Christians themselves lived witnessed to the message of the faith and thus created interest and intrigue in the non-believers leading to their conversion. I am also convinced that a very significant factor in the spread of the Church in this crucial period in the history of the Church, was the initial energy imparted at Pentecost to the disciples and those present which enabled all the factors mentioned above and others to



launch and sustain the life and remarkable spread of The Church. Finally, the Holy Spirit did guide the Church in these formative years against the many odds that it faced as a young and new organization and I believe it is the reason it is still alive in the present day.

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- <sup>1</sup> Ehrman B. D. *From Jesus to Constantine – A history of early Christianity*. North Carolina: The Teaching Company, 2004. P. 8.
  - <sup>2</sup> Lautorette K.S. *A History of the Expansion of Christianity I: The first Five Centuries: to 500 AD*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971
  - <sup>3</sup> Chadwick H. *The Early Church*. London: Penguin Books, 1993. P. 54.
  - <sup>4</sup> Gilmartin T. *Manual of Church History*. Maynooth St Patrick's College, 1926. P. 51.
  - <sup>5</sup> Ehrman B. D. p. 28.
  - <sup>6</sup> Gilmartin T. p. 52.
  - <sup>7</sup> Chadwick H. p. 56.
  - <sup>8</sup> Hurst J. F. *Short history of the early church*. New York, Chautauqua Press, 1886. <https://ia800702.us.archive.org/31/items/shorthistory00hurs/shorthistory00hurs.pdf> Accessed online 29 July 2019
  - <sup>9</sup> Chadwick H. p. 56.
  - <sup>10</sup> Chadwick H. p. 58.
  - <sup>11</sup> Van Voorst R. E. *Readings in Christianity*. Stamford: Cengage Learning. 2015. P. 66.
  - <sup>12</sup> Duschene L. *Early History of The Christian Church: From its foundation to the end of the fifth century*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1924. P. 33.
  - <sup>13</sup> Handl A. Bishop Callistus I. of Rome (217?–222?): A Martyr or a Confessor? *Journal of ancient Christianity* (2014) 18(3): 390
  - <sup>14</sup> Chadwick H. p. 60.
  - <sup>15</sup> Hurst J. F. p. 40. Van Voorst R. E. p. 60.
  - <sup>16</sup> Gilmartin T. p. 58.
  - <sup>17</sup> Lautorette K.S. p. 117.
  - <sup>18</sup> Duschene L. *Early History of The Christian Church: From its foundation to the end of the fifth century*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1924. P. 11.

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE WORK  
OF THE MISSIONARIES ON THE ZIMBABWEAN  
CHURCH IN VIEW OF SELF-RELIANCE:  
A CASE OF ST KILIAN'S MISSION IN RUSAPE.**

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**Recommendations on the Local Church on Self-Reliance**

**Introduction**

This write-up will make recommendations of methods that can be used to promote self-reliance at St Kilian's. The examination of the current situation of the Church and environment at the mission shall be the key bases for discussions and suggestions. The recommendations shall be open-ended meaning they will also broadly look at the ways the local church can tackle the question of self-reliance.

**Recommendations**

***Catechesis***

Several Catholic theologians have argued catechesis to be the key pastoral method for the promotion of self-reliance in the Church. Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, stressed the role of catechesis in the life of the Church. He says, "The more the Church, whether on the local or universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community."<sup>1</sup> For St Kilian's thus catechesis may help in the education of the people on their role and duty in the Church. Since catechesis is crucial to the transformation of attitudes and formation of behaviours the local Church at St Kilian's can benefit from it and move from a dependency syndrome to them understanding their own role in the local Church and have to take care of its needs. Catechesis then can improve the quality of the faith of the locals which would imply a growth of their sense of belonging and improvement in their support both spiritually and materially for the Church.

### ***Collaboration***

Collaboration is another element that can be noted to be a step in the right direction in the fight towards a self-reliant Church in the developing world. Collaboration can mean the inclusion of the parishioners in the administration of the local Church thereby exposing them to the daily demands and administrative issues that require finance thereby fighting mistrust and the feeling of being passengers in a one-man band run by the priest. To counter this, empowerment of the parish council is one way towards self-reliance were the priest can help empower the parish executive by exposing them to workshops and joint meetings with those from a parish ranking above them financially for the exchange of ideas and their formation for action.

### ***Fundraising Committee***

Formation of fundraising committees has been noted to be an ideal initiative especially for Churches in the developing world. In the catholic Churches in Zimbabwe this is an aspect that most have accepted. Ennie Chiramba in her article Working towards self-reliance, notes that, “Fundraising committees have been established in various parishes to develop, expand or improve on the existing income generating ideas or projects currently underway.”<sup>2</sup> In her article she asks fundamental questions on the ability of Catholics to donate, pledge and give to the Church. With the aid of catechesis this can be argued to be possible for Catholics especially in Zimbabwe who had been used to receiving handouts but besides this they remained hospitable and charitable people. This means if they are catechised well indeed, they can support the Church. Formation of a fundraising committee can indeed help the people at St Kilian’s to examine their financial situation and look at ways to develop and raise more income for the Church without directly burdening the people through high levies they cannot afford.

Fundraising committees have been echoed to be the voice of the Church to the people in issues of finance. This has been supported by those who feel that it is indeed not the role of the priest to be week in week out talking about finance or raising funds at the neglect of his chief function of proclaiming the word of God. Thus, the implementation of a finance

committee at St Kilian's may ease the burden of the priest, giving him space to concentrate on the pastoral priestly duties with little stress from financial issues. Fundraising committees help the people to also know of their financial obligations to the Church twisting them from the receiving syndrome to full participation in financial issues. Chiramba asks, "Could it be that we are now free from the dependency syndrome where we always receive and giving little in return.<sup>3</sup> The synod on the Church in Africa, *Africae Munus* goes in the same lines encouraging the Church in Africa to take control of their future by making strides to be self-reliant as they cannot depend forever on the aid from missionaries. Therefore, the fundraising committee at St Kilian's will have the duty to teach and initiate self-reliance where people can learn to contribute wholeheartedly things of quality including their time and participation in fundraising events. These can include poultry and animal husbandry projects where the people can avail their labour for success of the projects. Since St Kilian's has a boarding facility, high school they can have a market for their produces, thus, there is room for income generating projects.

### ***Catholic Schools and Institutes***

In the Action Plan for implementing the 2nd Africa Synod 2011-2015, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) pointed to Catholic Schools having a huge role in the fight towards self-reliance of the Church in Zimbabwe. The ZCBC in the above document proposed to, "train school's management in resource mobilisation for school's infrastructural development and procurement of learning and teaching material".<sup>4</sup> It is unfortunate to note that in interviews at St Kilian's it could be noted that the school administration still feels vulnerable and under-resourced to be able to be self-reliant. However, one can note the Catholic institutes and schools, St Kilian's High School included to be well resourced to be able to self-sustain their very selves and to even learn to plough back to the local Church. Ways to achieve this task could include the training of both the administrative, teaching and non-teaching staff on resource utilization and safeguarding along with participation in evaluations and maintenance projects ensuring participation in taking care of what was built by the missionaries and suggesting ways to develop further the institution. Exchange initiatives

with other Church run institutes as well as government institutes can also help open doors of ideas for growth for St Kilian's without disregarding the Church's structures. The education of the students on self-reliance can also be the way to go for it is the educational formative years that can help form the young's attitudes of giving and sharing which is a crucial element for the modern Zimbabwean Catholic Church.

The education sensitization on self-reliance is one element that cannot be nailed enough for it is key for the local Church's growth and sustainability in Zimbabwe. In the Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference stresses the need for raising awareness in all structures the importance of education on self-reliance.<sup>5</sup> The educational institutes of the Catholic Church may be key here in educating the people. In this line therefore as a way of ploughing back to the Church, the schools, that is, St Kilian's High and Primary school may mobilize themselves in collaboration with the Parish Priest to engage in a program to educate the local Catholics under St Kilian's on self-reliance and even where possible education on self-sustenance projects.

### ***Vocational training***

Youth empowerment is one area that can be used to work towards self-reliance for the Church of St Kilian's. This can be done through vocational training programmes for the youth, thus, empowering them to be able to work for themselves and be able to also support the local Church. In their synopsis, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference draws the attention of the readers on the youth, they say, "Like young people, children are a gift of God to humanity and they must be the object of particular concern on the part of their families, the Church, society and governments."<sup>6</sup> The same indeed can be said about the youth and the Church surely has a role to help them through orientation towards the future and as such vocational training is one way that can help both the youth of St Kilian's to be able to work for themselves and also to work for the Church and support the Church. St Kilian's having in the early years had a vocational training school this is one thing that can be looked at in the hope of re-establishing one in the light of self-reliance.

### ***Initiation of the laity in the mission of the Church***

Emphasis and a re-orientation of the role of the laity at St Kilian's is another way that the Church at St Kilians can move towards self-reliance. The former Bishop of the Diocese of Lilongwe, Bishop Kalilombe is one of the African Bishops who emphasized the need for a self-ministering, self-supporting and self-propagating Church in Africa.<sup>7</sup> For his vision to be fulfilled he called for the full participation of the laity through meeting in small groups to discuss the areas of improvement and development required in the Church. Stealing from his idea one can argue this to be the way to go for the people of St Kilian's where they can form small groups for discussions on self-reliance, examining the ways they think would lead them to self-reliance. Bishop Kalilombe called these small groups Miphakati (Small Christian Communities),<sup>8</sup> and in the Zimbabwean Church these could be seen in line with the sections though this will be an overstatement as sections are huge than what Bishop Kalilombe meant. Moreover, these small Christian communities can also be used in the behaviour change programmes on self-reliance which are important for the people of St Kilian's to move from the dependency syndrome to that of participation and being active members. This is in line with Pope John Paul II's affirmation that, "evangelization should be undertaken more and more by members of the same local church".<sup>9</sup> Thus in the same line with this and with the idea of Bishop Kalilombe, the laity of St Kilian's are thus, a principle element in the drive towards self-reliance.

### ***Dialogue***

Since the question of funds has been noted to be one area that has led to issues in most parishes in the developing world dialogue can be seen as a way out. An African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far go with others". This proverb can be helpful in relation to the question of self-reliance as it emphasizes the importance of cooperation for the achievement of things one cannot do alone. Self-reliance is not a feat that can be achieved only by sermons or books but a collection of methods including dialogue and education amongst others. At St Kilian's therefore one may suggest that dialogue may be the way to go in the quest for behaviour change or encouragement for one has to

note that surely the people of St Kilian's have been doing all they can to support the Church but more seems to be required for the Church at St Kilian's to achieve self-reliance.

### Conclusion

This write-up exposed several ways that can be implemented at St Kilian's and generally by Missions and Parishes in Zimbabwe in attempts to reach self-reliance. It has to be noted that these are not absolutes but methods that may help in one situation or another and different situations may require different methods. This paper also managed to expose the distance the Church in Zimbabwe still has to cover before reaching the goal of self-reliance.

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechesi Tradendae* 15

<sup>2</sup> Chiramba, Ennie. *Working towards self-reliance in our parishes*. <https://relzim.org/news/working-towards-self-reliance-in-our-parishes/>

<sup>3</sup> Chiramba, Ennie. *Working towards self-reliance in our parishes*. <https://relzim.org/news/working-towards-self-reliance-in-our-parishes/>. P. 1

<sup>4</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 25

<sup>6</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 26

<sup>7</sup> Likhucha, Steven, Alfred. *Biography of Bishop Patrick Kalilombe. Missionaries of Africa*. <https://www.ecmmw.org/new/2012/09/25/biography-of-bishop-patrick-kalilombe-missionaries-of-africa-m-aft/> P. 1

<sup>8</sup> Likhucha, Steven, Alfred. P. 1

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II. *Slavorum Apostoli*. June 2, 1985. N\* 19

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHINHOYI**

*Underson Musina, O. Carm*

### **Introduction**

This essay aims to give an intelligent and informative brief history of the diocese of Chinhoyi. The history will be traced from the establishment of the Sinoia Mission by the Jesuits and the eventually establishment of the Prefecture of Sinoia. Challenges which were faced by the Church especially during the liberation war are also going to be discussed. Finally, the establishment of Chinhoyi as a diocese and the developments up to the present day are going to be outlined.

### **Sinoia Mission**

According to Baur, the Zambezi Mission which was created on 7 February 1879 resulted in the creation of different Vicariates and Prefectures such as Bulawayo, Fort Victoria, Wankie and Umtali. These eventually became dioceses with Salisbury being a metropolitan see (314). There was a large number of German Jesuits in Salisbury and they requested that they have their own area 'in order to focus their efforts and give identity to the support they knew would come from Germany'.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in 1957 the Jesuits of the East Germany province took over the Sinoia Mission. The area had only one mission, Marymount. Within a space of few years they evangelised the area and built missions such as Makonde (1964), Banket (1970) and Hurungwe (1970) and Sinoia Mission remained part of the Archdiocese of Salisbury.<sup>2</sup>

### **Prefecture of Sinoia (22/02/1974- 05/01/1986)**

The mission continued to develop by 1974 it had seven mission stations and seven 'town' parishes.<sup>3</sup> On 22 February 1974, the Mission was raised to a status of a Prefecture Apostolic with Monsignor Helmut Reckter S.J who has been the superior of the mission as Prefect Apostolic.<sup>4</sup> Kutama Mission and St Kizito Parish which were part of Archdiocese of Salisbury (Harare) were added to the prefecture in 1974.<sup>5</sup> In 1982 the name of the Prefecture was changed from Sinoia to Chinhoyi.<sup>6</sup>



### **Sinoia Church during the Liberation war**

The war of liberation affected the Church greatly. ‘The Church was attacked by both the Rhodesian Front and the Liberation Forces’.<sup>7</sup> Some Jesuits were killed during the war including Fr Richert and Br Lission were killed at St Rupert’s Mission on 22 June 1978. Fr Pieper SJ was also murdered in Kangaire Mission, on 26 December 1978.<sup>8</sup> When the war was intense priests and religious had to leave missions and parishes. Missions such as Marymount and St Rupert’s were destroyed and only restored after independence. The racial segregation policies of the colonial government also affected the spread of Catholicism in Sinoia. The Church brought a farm near Alaska which was meant to be a training centre for the youth. This was a European area and they objected having Africans in the area. As a result the farm was sold in 1969.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the war and racial policies were a hindrance in the development of infrastructure and spread of Catholicism.

### **Diocese of Chinhoyi (1986 to present)**

On 5 January 1986, the prefecture was raised to a status of a diocese with Helmut Recter S.J as its first bishop (Directory 49). He led the diocese until his death on 10 March 2004. Bishop Recter was succeeded by Bishop Dieter Scholz S.J who was consecrated on 2 September 2006 (49). He later resigned on 17 February 2016. The third bishop of Chinhoyi, Raymond Mupandasekwa was ordained on 7 April 2018 (49).

The diocese covers nine civil districts. In Mashonaland West province it covers Zvimba, Makonde, Hurungwe, Kariba (East of Sanyati river) and in Mashonaland Central it covers Centenary, Mount Darwin, Guruve, Mbire and Rushinga (North of Mazowe river). The Diocese covers an area of 56 000 square kilometres with a population of 2 000 000 of which 100000 are Catholics (ZCBC Directory 49). The diocese is divided into three deaneries Eastern, Central and Western. Most of the people in the diocese are Shona people of the Zezuru and Korekore dialects. The diocese has twenty-two parishes/missions.<sup>10</sup> The diocese has Saints Francis Xavier and Kizito as its patron saints. Chinhoyi is a suffragan see of Harare metropolitan (Directory 8).

### **Development of the Diocesan Clergy**

The Jesuits were concerned with the development of the local clergy in the mission. The first priest to be ordained for Sinoia (Chinhoyi) was Fr Ignatius Chidavaenzi, ordained 14 August 1971. After him a number of young men joined the seminary but before the end of the war (1980) they all had left.<sup>11</sup> For Hipler S.J, this moment was a disappointment time for the Prefecture, not to have a new priest (a second one) for thirteen years. It was only in 1984 that a pair was ordained.<sup>12</sup> Today, there is a rapid increase in the number of the diocesan clergy to the extent that twenty parishes/ missions out of twenty-two are in the care of the diocesan clergy. Permanent deacons were introduced in the Prefecture and the first set (Revs Makumbi and Kaocha) were ordained on 20 September 1979. The permanent diaconate ministry was abandoned when Chinhoyi became a diocese in 1986.<sup>13</sup>

### **Religious Congregations**

The Jesuits are left with two missions St Rupert's, Makonde and Sacred Heart, Banket. They also run schools in these mentioned missions and a hospital in Makonde. The Jesuits played an important role in the development of missions and parishes. Their presence and evangelisation efforts created a path toward the development of an indigenous Church.<sup>14</sup> The Church in Chinhoyi now is to a certain extent self-propagating and self-sufficient.<sup>15</sup>

The Marist Brothers run St Francis Xavier, Kutama College. There are six female religious congregations namely; International Medical Association (IMA), Little Children of Our Blessed Lady (LCBL), Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM), Sisters of Charity (SC) (Directory 65-68). In 1992 a local congregation was started in Chinhoyi called Society of Our Lady of Africa (SOLA) with a mission of youth evangelisation. These active religious serve the needs of the diocese in areas such as pastoral work, health, education and social work. In 2003 an indigenous monastic congregation, Sisters of Jesus of Nazareth (SJN) laid a foundation in the diocese (Directory 228).

## Social Development

The church in Chinhoyi is involved in the social development of its area. The diocese has 4 hospitals and 12 schools.<sup>16</sup> The Jesuits when they started the mission were not only concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people but also social needs.<sup>17</sup> Five hospitals were built and Kutama Hospital was handed over to the government in 2013. Many schools were constructed and most of them were handed over to the government and rural councils upon the attainment of independence in 1980. Schools which handed over include St Rita now Matoranjera, St Ignatius now Obva and St Peter Claver now Matoranhembe.<sup>18</sup> According to Kugwa, 'it was through schools that the Church itself became known to the people. Schools paved a way for the establishment of most centres and outstations'.<sup>19</sup> Thus, schools were the foundation which laid the local Church. There is also a Vocational Training Centre which was started by the Jesuits in 1978 and handed over to the diocese in 2003.<sup>20</sup> The schools aim at evangelisation and providing a holistic education guided by the gospel values.<sup>21</sup> The diocese through Caritas and Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJP) focuses on food security, water and sanitation and human rights.

## Conclusion

Despite the challenges in self-reliance and economic situation in the country Diocese of Chinhoyi is making strides in fulfilling the mission of evangelisation. This is witnessed by increase in number of Catholics, new parishes, out stations and schools being opened.

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<sup>1</sup> Hipler, Georg. *The Diocese of Chinhoyi: The Contribution of the German Jesuits*. Harare: Jesuit Publications, 2006. P.3

<sup>2</sup> Chakawa, Joshua. 'The Tragedy of German Jesuits Working in Chinhoyi Diocese During Zimbabwe's War of Liberation.' *The Dyke* Vol 5.2 (2011) 6-24.

<sup>3</sup> Hipler, Georg. *The Diocese of Chinhoyi: The Contribution of the German Jesuits*. Harare: Jesuit Publications, 2006. P.3

<sup>4</sup> 100 Years (1879-1979): Centenary of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Gwelo (Gweru): Mambo Press, 1979. P. 48

<sup>5</sup> Hipler, Georg. *The Diocese of Chinhoyi: The Contribution of the German Jesuits*. Harare: Jesuit Publications, 2006. P. 12

<sup>6</sup> Chakawa, Joshua. P. 8

<sup>7</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 29

<sup>8</sup> Chakawa, Joshua. P. 13

- <sup>9</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 29
- <sup>10</sup> Chakawa, Joshua. P. 8
- <sup>11</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 50
- <sup>12</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 50
- <sup>13</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 53
- <sup>14</sup> 100 Years (1879-1979): Centenary of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Gwelo (Gweru): Mambo Press, 1979. P. 64
- <sup>15</sup> Kugwa, Alphonse (ed). *Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC): Golden Jubilee 1969-2019*. Harare: ZCBC Social Communications, 2019. P. 83
- <sup>16</sup> Kugwa, Alphonse (ed). P. 66
- <sup>17</sup> 100 Years (1879-1979): Centenary of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Gwelo (Gweru): Mambo Press, 1979. P. 65
- <sup>18</sup> Hipler, Georg. P. 16
- <sup>19</sup> Kugwa, Alphonse. P. 63
- <sup>20</sup> Kugwa, Alphonse (ed). P. 17
- <sup>21</sup> Kugwa, Alphonse (ed). P. 63

## **MUTARE DIOCESE'S HISTORY OF EVANGELIZATION**

*Marvellous Murungu, O. Carm.*

### **Introduction**

The nineteenth century and twentieth centuries have witnessed a tremendous exodus of Christian missionaries from the western world into Zimbabwe. Christianity particularly the Catholic Church has been presented to the African in foreign garbs such that Africans have perceived their own culture as archaic or primitive. However, many and varied religious missionary groups came to Zimbabwe to “indigenize the Church hence there has been an ongoing ecclesial development in spheres of self-sustaining, self-ministering and self-propagating among the Manyika Catholic Church”.<sup>1</sup> This essay seeks to give a brief history of the evangelization of the now known suffragan of Mutare under the reign of his Lordship Rt. Rev Bishop Paul Horan O.Carm. The scope of this history of evangelization commence from the first German Marianhill missionaries who worked from 1908-1930 and established the first mission in Mutare at Triashill mission. Mutare was then erected as a Prefecture Apostolic and confided to the Irish Carmelites on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1953. Donald Lamont was appointed as Vicariate Prefecture on 6 February 1953 and later became a bishop of the Diocese in 1957. In 1957, the known Prefecture Apostolic of Mutare became a diocese. Bishop Lamont worked in Mutare since it was a prefecture and resigned in 1981. He was succeeded by Alexio Muchabaiwa from 5 November 1981 who reigned until the resignation of 28 May 2016. It is worth noting that it is with the same effect that Bishop Paul Horan resumed office and was appointed the successor as the Bishop of Mutare.

### **Description of Mutare Diocese**

It is estimated that presently this diocese covers an area of 32 202 square kilometres with a catholic population of around 119 500 from the total population of 1 675 000. According to ecclesial jurisdiction the diocese of Mutare is divided into four Deaneries namely Makoni, Marange, Mutare and Chimanimani. It is in this area that the Manyika-Shona people

have settled since the 18th century AD. The dialects in this diocese are Chimanyika, Chindau, Chisena and urban inter-ethnic mixing.

### **The Call for Missionaries in Black Africa by then Rhodesia**

After the aftermath of the second world war, there was a shortage of Catholic priests working in Black Africa particularly Zimbabwe. Bishop of Salisbury, namely his Lordship Chichester invited missionary groups to work by then Rhodesia modern day Zimbabwe. Many groups accepted this invitation including the Irish Carmelites. Prior to their arrival many religious groups worked in this region including the Jesuits, the Marian Hills Missionaries (1896-1929), the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (1910-1977) and the Dominican Sisters (1926-1976; 1990-2019). In the time Carmelites arrived several missions were established that include Triashill, Monte Casino, St Benedict and St Barbaras, St Killians and Mount Mellary. Three Carmelites first came in 1946 namely, Luke Flynn, Donald Lamont and A. Coorbert followed by seven more Carmelites between 1947-1949. Many missions were entrusted to the Carmelites. By 1953, the Carmelites began to build missions and the first mission was Teresa of Avila. Fr. Tone Clare recalls in an interview that “we arrived safely in our new home”. Both New York province and Australia worked in missions.<sup>2</sup>

In Contrast, the building of missions was done under unfavourable conditions. Some places were inaccessible because they were no roads. The means of transport by then was motorbikes and cattle-carts. In rain seasons the roads would become impossible to travel because of the absence of bridges. Despite the inaccessibility of some areas because of poor road networking in the 1950s there was establishment of 9 new missions that included Avila, St Antony, Saint Simon Stock Rusape, St Joseph Sakubva, Regina Coeli, St Andrew Corsini, St Columbus Honde Valley and St Therese which served as a teacher training school.<sup>3</sup>

### **Education and Hospitals**

In the 1960s three more missions were established that include St Michaels Tanda. Furthermore, the missionaries felt it was not enough to offer religious instruction to adults alone. As a result, schools were established like Kriste Mambo High school and Mount Carmel to become

the working arms of the mission stations in evangelization. They were considered by the missionaries the most effective means of evangelization. The approach was even approved by Rome, and missiologists of the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, the Carmelites worked hand in hand with the local people to build schools, and this was in the form of moulding bricks by the local. On the other hand, the missionaries would provide other materials including the responsibility to ensure that they were teachers to tutor the pupils<sup>4</sup> “Local catholic men who had received education were initially employed as teachers. Their roles were indistinguishable since they were catechists too”.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, not only did the missionaries minister to the spiritual needs of the people in the diocese of Mutare. They engaged themselves in the physical health of the people. In the first days of missionary activity among the Manyika people, there was very minimum, if not, no medical, no medical service for rural people by the government. Hence, the missions were the first agency to bring Western medical facilities to the rural folk.<sup>6</sup> The Manyika people had their own understanding of the causes and treatment of an illness. Beyond the physical cause of an illness, “the Manyika believed that there was a superhuman force behind. Sometimes this was diagnosed as ngozi (avenging spirit) or mudzimu (spirit ancestor)”.<sup>7</sup> Given that conception, they built hospitals at Mount Melleray, St Barbara’s Triashill. St Andrew’s Marange, St Michael’s Tanda, Regina Coeli and St Peter’s Chisumbanje. It is at these same hospitals that nursing colleges were established. Fr, McGrath concurring with the same sentiments makes a distinction between the Carmelite society’s missionary aim and social service: “establishing medical missions was for us part of the social service we offered. Our aim was to establish a local church. But for a local church to be established, its members have to be healthy”.<sup>8</sup>

### **Political Unrest**

However, things changed, in the 1970s because it was a time of political unrest. The unilateral declaration of independence by Rhodesia in 1965 led to sanctions between Rhodesia and the European. In addition, there was civil unrest and that led to the war of liberation. The missionaries in

Mutare find themselves in the middle of these tensions. Some Carmelites were shot because they failed to report the presence of freedom fighters in their missions. They were alleged to help the freedom fighters to fight against the whites since they provided medical provisions for those wounded. To the extent that some missionaries because of fear of their lives they returned to their respective countries of origin.<sup>9</sup>

### **Revitalization of the Church in Mutare**

Nevertheless, when Zimbabwe gained independence the missionaries came back although the numbers were depleted because of the liberation struggle. In 1983 priests from the Killaloe diocese came to evangelize again. It is with this ambition that the Carmelites started to recruit the native clergy both for the diocese and for the Order. The first two Carmelite to be ordained post-Independence in 1994 were Conrad Mutizamhepo and Constantine Masarira. Seven diocesan priests including Fr Thomas Saina and Fr. Chikwara were ordained post-independence. This shows that there was an increase of the clergy in the local Church. Since then the Diocese priests and Carmelites have been growing.<sup>10</sup>

It is also worth noting that, the missionaries' number have decreased since the diocese has experienced a tremendous growth in the number of local clergies ordained after independence and has become self-sustaining. It is estimated that by 2016 that they were 59 priests both religious and diocesan (Catholic Directory). In addition, the diocese has witnessed an in-flux number of sisters that have been consecrated to religious life, a sum of 129 in the year of 2017. Apart from the given data, the parishes in the diocese sum up to 28 which shows an enormous success of the missionary work in Manicaland. In addition, numerous and a countable number of schools and hospitals have been built too, to cater for the welfare of the masses in Mutare diocese.

Given that it is plausible to conclude that the missionaries did a tremendous work to the evangelization of the diocese of Mutare. Although they encountered difficulties during the course of their missionary activity. Presently, it has a catholic population of around 119 500 from the total population of 1 675 000 which reflect the impact of evangelization in Mutare.



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- <sup>1</sup> Mariseni Leigh. *The Achievements of Irish Carmelites In Mutare Diocese From 1946-1996*. Catholic University of Zimbabwe: Chishawasha Seminary. 31 March 2014. P. 6
- <sup>2</sup> Tindal P.E.N., *A history of Central Africa, Rhodesia*: Longman, 1983. P. 41
- <sup>3</sup> Gallagher L., *The Catholic Church in Manicaland 1896-1996*, Mutare Diocese. 2003. P. 23
- <sup>4</sup> Chipato J, Mapanzure M., “*Come follow Me*”: Rujeko, Mutare Diocese Periodical, 1951-1993. P. 19
- <sup>5</sup> Mariseni Leigh. P. 18
- <sup>6</sup> Peadan W., *Missionary Attitudes to Shona Culture 1890-1923*. Salisbury: Rhodesian Printers, 1927. P. 18
- <sup>7</sup> Peadan W., *Missionary Attitudes to Shona Culture 1890-1923*. Salisbury: Rhodesian Printers, 1927. P. 15
- <sup>8</sup> McGrath J., *Interview at the Priory*. Mutare, 8 December 2013
- <sup>9</sup> Tindal P.E.N. P. 41
- <sup>10</sup> McGrath J., *Interview at the Priory*. Mutare, 8 December 2013. P. 65

## **HISTORICAL FACTS OF THE DIOCESE OF MASVINGO**

*Shelton Zimondi, O. Carm.*

### **Introduction**

The Catholic Church in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) has its commencement in the Zambezi Mission which was assigned to the Society of Jesus affectionately known as the Jesuits by Rome on 7 February 1879 (The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe). Among their first establishments of missions was Driefontein Mission called Guta by the local people. Guta is Afrikaans meaning three fountains named after the initial site prior to its move in 1908 to where the mission is presently located (Driefontein Mission). The Bethlehem Mission Society (SMB) from Switzerland also known as the Bethlehem fathers were the second after the Jesuits to evangelise in Fort Victoria (now Masvingo). The First Swiss Bethlehem fathers arrived in Southern Rhodesia in October 1938 after an invitation by Bishop Aston Chichester, SJ who was in charge of the Vicariate of Salisbury (now Harare). They were entrusted to the area which was separated from the Apostolic Vicariate of Salisbury to become the Apostolic Prefecture of Fort Victoria from which Gwelo (now Gweru) diocese was formed in 1955 after the establishment of the hierarchy in Zimbabwe on the 1st of January (SMB Zimbabwe). A part of it was then separated to erect the Diocese of Masvingo in 1999. Hence, the historical facts of the two dioceses of Gweru and Masvingo are intertwined.

### **The Evangelisation of “Masvingo Diocese” Before Separation**

During the early missionary endeavour, after establishing Chishawasha mission the Jesuits went on to establish another mission at Driefontein in Fort Victoria (Masvingo) in 1904. Driefontein was a farm located fifty miles north of Fort Victoria. Rev. Richard Sykes, Prefect Apostolic of the Zambezi Mission purchased this farm for the purposes of starting a mission (Driefontein Mission). Sykes bought it from an Afrikaner convert, Jan Engelbrecht in 1904 and this place was locally known as “Guta”, three fountains in Afrikaans (Driefontein Mission). According to the Article

entitled, “Driefontein Mission – A Tribute in Memorium”, work on the mission commenced with Fr. Emil Schmitz (1870-1953) aided by Frs. Lindner and Hornig and other Jesuits in 1906. They built a huge Church with distinctive orange coloured brickwork which was completed in 1912. By this time the Jesuits had established two more missions. Namely, Gokomere in 1909 and St Joseph’s Mission in 1912 (Driefontein Mission).

According to C.J.M. Zvobgo, the inception of Gokomere, the then Mzondo mission in 1909 was a second attempt after abandonment of mission by the Jesuits in March 1900. The Jesuits had abandoned the mission due to health deterioration of Frs. Casset and Stempfel who were working at the mission. When Fr. Apel and the two Jesuit brothers re-opened the mission in 1909 they renamed Mzondo mission to Gokomere mission.<sup>1</sup> Jesuits contributed immensely in teaching and building of many schools. The schools constructed included; Gokomere, Matova, Gambiza, Makamure and Rutanga, to mention but a few.<sup>2</sup> At Gokomere, they built a school-chapel huge enough to accommodate 400 people which was opened on Easter Sunday of 1912.<sup>3</sup> The Jesuits spread the faith rapidly such that they opened St Joseph’s, the Holy Cross and Silveira missions respectively. They managed to establish five missions from 1906 to 1934.

At Driefontein, the Jesuits opened a training school for native teachers and catechists but unfortunately it was closed after two years due to lack of funds (Driefontein Mission). Nevertheless, after realising the English Jesuits’ lack of sufficient resources, Bishop Aston Chichester, SJ in charge of the Vicariate of Salisbury looked for assistance from other Catholic orders (Driefontein Mission). The Bethlehem Mission Society of Switzerland responded positively to the bishop’s call. For the SMB, this was their second missionary area after Manchuria China.<sup>4</sup> They were assigned to evangelise in Fort Victoria. As such, the Bethlehem fathers assumed responsibility for some of the existing missions and they founded many others. Subsequently, in 1947, the Jesuits handed over all the missionary work to the SMB.<sup>5</sup> One of the Swiss fathers, Haene became the first bishop of Gwelo. He founded the Sisters of the Infant Jesus for African sisters (SJI) in 1950 who then served in the area (Driefontein Mission). However, among those who served at various times in Fort Victoria Prefecture were the German Dominican

Sisters, SJI, and Precious Blood Sisters. These were mainly involved in assisting the Jesuits and the Bethlehem fathers in the ministries of evangelism, teaching and medical missions. The SMB contributed greatly to the spiritual and infrastructure building. They established and run Mambo Press, opened schools, vocational centres, teachers' colleges and hospitals. Furthermore, they served as priests in parishes, spiritual guides to schools, religious communities, among others (SMB Zimbabwe).

### **Historical facts of Masvingo Diocese after separation**

Masvingo diocese is the fruit of the separation from the diocese of Gweru in 1999. It is a suffragan diocese located South-East of Zimbabwe, which covers about 27 037 square miles (David Cheney). This diocese covers eight civil districts. Namely; Gutu, Beitbridge, Bikita, Mwenezi, Chivi, Chiredzi, Masvingo and Zaka. It is under the Patronage of Saint Mary Queen of peace whose feast day is on 22 August (Dioceses). The first episcopate of the then new diocese of Masvingo was Rt. Rev. Michael Dixon Bhasera. He was appointed bishop of this diocese on 9 February 1999 and eventually installed on 24 April 1999 (Dioceses). Prior to the creation of the diocese of Masvingo, Bhasera was the bishop of Gokwe diocese. He had worked on the foundation of Gokwe diocese from 1991 until his new appointment as the bishop of the diocese of Masvingo. The diocese's affiliated bishops are the current bishop of the diocese, Bhasera and Rudolf Nyandoro who was appointed the bishop of Gokwe on 28 January 2017 and the late bishop of Gweru diocese, Xavier Johnsai Munyongani (Catholic – hierarchy). Masvingo diocese falls under the Metropolitan see of Bulawayo together with the dioceses of Gweru and Hwange. The Bulawayo Metropolitan Archbishop is Alex Kaliyanil.

### **Masvingo Diocese Statistical Data**

According to “the Catholic – hierarchy document”, the diocese of Masvingo began in 1999 with about 102 000 Catholics out of a population of about 1 863 650, thus, 8.6% of the total population. The Church grew over the years such that by 2016 the diocese had 229 676 Catholics out of a total population of about 1 886 249. Thus, after seven years Catholics grew up

to 12.2 %. Upon inception, the diocese had twenty-seven diocesan priests and sixteen religious priests who belonged to the SMB. Comprehensively, the diocese had a total of twenty-six male religious (10 brothers and 16 priests) and 132 female religious (The Catholic – hierarchy). However, by 2016 there was an increase in the number of local priests (diocesan) to forty-six and a reduction of religious priests (Bethlehem fathers) to one. The male and female religious reduced to four and eighty-six respectively. Masvingo diocese begun with fourteen parishes but by the year 2016, the parishes had increased to twenty-five. At the present-day, Masvingo diocese is left with no missionary or male religious order or congregation. Nevertheless, there are three female religious congregations involved in the diocese. These are; the SJI, Little Company of the Blessed Lady (LCBL) and the Holy Cross Sisters.

### **Conclusion**

The Jesuit and the Swiss Bethlehem fathers evangelised the region of Masvingo. Initially, they collaborated with the German Dominican Sisters and then later on with other minor female congregations. After the Jesuits handed over responsibility to the SMB, no other male religious worked in this mission area to the present day. Both the Jesuits and SMB contributed a lot to the diocese. They promoted building of schools, teachers' colleges, hospitals, parishes and vocational centres, among others. In a synopsis, their three momentous aspects of missionary work in Masvingo suffragan diocese were preaching, medical missions and education.

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<sup>1</sup> Zvobgo, J. M. *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986. P. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Zvobgo, J. M. *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986. P. 69-70.

<sup>3</sup> Zvobgo, J. M. *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> Zvobgo, J. M. *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Zvobgo, J. M. *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe 1890-1939*. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986.



## *Dare Style Sheet*

In Text Format

**1. Text:** New Times Roman, size 12

**2. Paragraphs:** Paragraphs should be separated by a single line space or by the use of 8 spaces indent.

**3. Subheadings:** should be in bold text, not underlined, and not numbered.

**4. Footnotes** in text come after the full stop, not before.

e.g. Paul VI was the last Pope to wear the tiara to date. (Footnote)

Not

Paul VI was the last Pope to wear the tiara to date (footnote).

**Endnotes:**

**1. For a book:**

Neyrey, Jerome H. *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2004.), 27.

**2. For a translation:**

Cicero. *De Officiis*. Trans. Walter Miller. (London: Heinemann, 1951.) 109.

**3. For an article in a journal:**

Downing, F. Gerard. "The Ambiguity of 'the Pharisee and the Toll-Collector' (Luke 18:9-14) in the Greco-Roman World of Late Antiquity." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992) 80-99.

**4. For an online source:**

King, Peter. "Peter Abelard". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. First Published Tue 3 Aug 2004; substantive revision Tue 9 Nov 2010. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/Abelard/> Accessed: 5 Oct 2016.

**5. For a source already quoted:**

Surname of Author, Title of source (shortened), page number: Neyrey, *Render to God*, 29.

**Note for HTC students**

Please note that the Dare style sheet differs from the HTC Style sheet on the following:

i. The name of publisher, its location and the year of publication are all put in brackets







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