

EDITED BY

MARIUSZ BOGUSZEWSKI, RAFAŁ POKRYWIŃSKI

Catholic Church
in selected African
countries
Historical-pastoral
perspective

**CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

Historical-pastoral perspective

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Mariusz Boguszewski, Rafał Pokrywiński

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INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church in Africa is the part of the universal Church that is developing very dynamically. The remarkable historical heritage, the proximity of the missionary period and the present situation overlap to form an interesting subject for pastoral research. The book contains a series of articles on the Catholic Church in Africa, presenting the ecclesial situation in selected countries from a historical-pastoral perspective, allowing one to become acquainted with places and data that would otherwise be difficult to access for the European and Polish reader. The articles have a similar structure: they begin with a historical introduction, usually concerning the history of the missions in a given country, and then proceed downward, presenting a more detailed history of the diocese or ecclesiastical province in question. This is not only a starting point, but also a reference to the patrimony of faith, which, even when the conditions of the Church have changed, remains a foundation and a constantly valid point of reference. This is followed by a description, often including statistical data from a particular ecclesiastical province or diocese, together with the pastoral structure: the various commissions and the implemented pastoral strategies. An overview of the pastoral commissions in operation, sometimes numbering more than a dozen different bodies, convinces of an in-depth analysis of the situation and work, not only intra-ecclesial, but also social (e.g. the Diocese of Mamfe in Malawi has 19 commissions: Biblical Apostolate, Liturgy, Family Life Apostolate, Finance, Men's Affairs, Women's Affairs, Education, Health Apostolate, Catholic Action and Prayer Group, Ecclesial Movements and New Communities,

Catechetical, Vocation, Social Welfare, Youth Apostolate, Justice and Peace, Inculturation, Dialogue, Social Communication, and Small Christian Community commission). Usually, the last part of the article is a presentation of contemporary threats and challenges facing a local Church, arising typically from religious, social, and political contexts. Those common repeated are: insufficient number of clergy, poverty, multi-ethnicity, corruption, persecution, religious syncretism.

This collection has a peculiar context of origin, which consists of the educational project of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University (UKSW) of Doctoral Studies in English for priests from various African countries implemented since 2016. The idea of the presence of students from Africa at UKSW is a response to numerous requests from representatives of African bishops and higher superiors to offer the possibility of studying theology in Poland. In addition to UKSW, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, where African students are also present, has responded positively. The argument for opening these two universities to students from Africa was also based on the need to improve the administration and the professorial staff in English and to adapt to the presence of new non-Polish students. An important point of reference is the countries of origin of the Africans. Most of these countries have suffered persecution or discrimination because of their faith or ethnicity.

Their presence and study is not only an opportunity for them to become acquainted with the theological heritage of Poland and the University itself, including that of Africa studies, but it is also an opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge about their own Churches, which this book is a testimony to. Most of the authors have served for several or more years in pastoral work as vicars, pastors or in various diocesan positions (e.g. Fr. Louis Mbuyeh - working in the curia, referent for vocations and schools, Fr. Polycarp Opio - diocesan youth chaplain). Some have already done their ecclesiastical studies in Italy (Fr. Alexander Dung, Fr. Constantine Rupiny). They are

currently studying various theological disciplines at UKSW, which also contributes to pastoral enrichment and formation.

In total, there are 16 articles on 8 African countries arranged according to a specific geographical key (Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Zimbabwe) and one article on the Church in Africa in general. The largest number of articles concerns Uganda, namely five. This is due to the large number of priests from this country. The collection opens with an article by Fr. Rafał Pokrywiński presenting the general situation of the Church in Africa, which is a kind of introduction to the subsequent studies. It presents, among others, the biblical perspective on Africa and the history of stages of evangelization. Fr. Alexander Dung describes the development of the Nigerian Archdiocese of Jos in historical, administrative and pastoral terms. Among other things, there is a list of successive diocesan bishops (since 1907) with brief descriptions of their pastoral activities. Fr. Bruno Naanlong Yenkwu, also from Nigeria, presented the situation of the Diocese of Shendam along with an interesting missionary and pastoral history of the entire region from which it was created in 2007. Fr. Louis Mbuyeh wrote about the Catholic Church in Cameroon. He particularly emphasized the evangelization breakthrough between the strictly missionary stage of development and the present regular pastoral work. It does not break with the past, but seeks appropriate methods of work corresponding to the contemporary situation, especially in the face of socio-political threats. Another article on Cameroon is by Fr. Marcel Kpudzeka. He undertook the task of presenting the ecclesiastical metropolis of Bamenda against the background of the whole country. There is a lot of historical and statistical data about the country and the province itself: the origins of the Catholic missions and a detailed presentation of the ecclesiastical structure with the numbers of priests and religious in each diocese of the metropolis. Fr. Tesfay Haileselassie Hailemariam described the situation of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia and his home diocese of Adigrat. Ethiopia has

a history of Christianity going back to the beginning and there are two liturgical rites (Ge'ez and Latin). The presentation of the inter-religious (Muslim-Orthodox-Catholic) charity OMCUCA, which takes care of orphans, is interesting. The list of articles on Uganda opens with Fr. Leonard Sanyu's text, which focuses on the apostolic journeys of the popes (Paul VI, John Paul II and Francis) to Uganda, which has always been linked to the commemoration of the first African martyrs canonized in the modern era. Fr. Constantine Rupiny presented the ecclesiastical metropolises of Gulu and Tororo. He emphasized the role of religious congregations (Combonian Fathers and Mill Hill Missionaries) in the evangelization of those regions. He also summarized the various dioceses and their pastoral challenges. Fr. Polycarp Opio focused on pastoral work in Uganda according to the criterion of action agents: bishops, priests and laity, as well as various commissions and pastoral groups. Fr. Kyeyune Vianney who comes from the capital describes the ecclesiastical metropolis of Kampala and its suffragans. Fr. Samuel Mugisa approaches the whole Church in Uganda in terms of pastoral factors that ensured the effectiveness of evangelization: good leadership, language activities, inclusion of indigenous people: tribal chiefs and catechists, founding local religious orders. He also analyzes contemporary threats. Another article that deals with the Church in Kenya is by Fr. Paul Makundi. It is devoted to the struggle of Church leaders (at the level of the episcopal conference) against the prevailing corruption in the country and the activities of the Iustitia et pax commission. Fr. Charles Michael Chipondo described the challenges facing the Church in Tanzania. He highlighted the Church's commitment to social issues as well as the challenges calling for a pastoral response in this field. Fr. Stephen Piyo dedicated his text to the situation of the Church in Malawi, particularly in the Diocese of Zomba. He pointed out many difficulties in the social functioning of the Church. Fr. Michael Chimwala, a compatriot of his, has taken up a similar issue and has extended it to the history of Christianization of his country. In the last article,

Fr. Aeron Kumusekere described the situation of the Church in Zimbabwe. He reflected on the need for inculturation in pastoral ministry.

Reading the above-mentioned articles should contribute to a Church-wide awareness. The universal Church has taken root in Africa and has already borne some fruits, not counting the enormous contribution at the very beginning of the growth of Christianity. We can get to know these fruits at the level of individual dioceses and metropolises. In fact, the Churches there carry out a thoughtful and intensified analysis of the pastoral situation by both referring to the historical heritage and meeting the challenges of modern times. This is done in a very distinctive African context. These studies are therefore of value because of the first-hand presentation of the situation of individual African countries and dioceses. They can also serve as a contribution to further theological and sociological analyses of the ecclesial situation of the Catholic Church in Africa and to propose solutions that can be used in other local Churches, including Poland.

Fr. Rafał Pokrywiński, Fr. Mariusz Boguszewski

RAFAŁ POKRYWIŃSKI¹

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AFRICA. A HISTORICAL AND PASTORAL OUTLINE

Abstract

Artykuł przedstawia Kościół katolickiego w Afryce w aspekcie historyczno-teologicznym oraz pastoralnym. Afryka występuje bardzo często w objawieniu biblijnym. Tam też dokonał się dynamiczny rozwój pierwotnego chrześcijaństwa, które bardzo mocno oddziało na cały Kościół i do dziś stanowi dziedzictwo teologiczne, monastyczne i pastoralne, do którego Afryka może się odnosić. XX wiek stał się przełomowym, jeśli chodzi o wzrost liczby wierzących w poszczególnych krajach afrykańskich i powstanie stabilnej struktury kościelnej. Perspektywa pastoralna Kościoła w Afryce obejmuje działania kościelne wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne. Pierwsze dotyczą form organizacyjnych, funkcjonowania w ramach Kościoła powszechnego, co znajduje swoje dowartościowanie w relacji zwrotnej w postaci wizyt papieskich i dokumentów kościelnych poświęconych Afryce, kwestii inkulturacji i sytuacji religijnej. Działania zewnętrzne Kościoła w Afryce sprowadzają się do tworzenia i reagowania na konkretną sytuację społeczno-polityczną i kulturowej danego kraju. Chodzi szczególnie o regiony objęte działaniami zbrojnymi, działalność na

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rzecz pojednania i promocji ludzkiej godności, zwalczanie korupcji i trybalizmu, reakcja na nierówności społeczne, działalność zdrowotną i edukacyjną.

Keywords: history of the Church, Catholic Church, Church in Africa, pastoral theology, Africa in the Bible

INTRODUCTION

Africa is one of the most dynamic centers of the Catholic Church, as 17% of all believers live there and this percentage is globally increasing at the fastest rate compared to other continents. As Jenkins states – the focus of Christianity is shifting to the South². Churches on this continent continue to grow strongly in many ways, counterbalancing the decline of the faith in Western Europe and North America. The Church in the various countries of Africa is historically relatively young, just as the countries themselves have recently become independent, although some of its communities legitimize their descent directly from the Early Church, which in her beginnings was characterized by a very dynamic development in the northern part of this continent. From the outset, Christianity in Africa has found particularly fertile ground³. This is not only due to historical and cultural circumstances, but also to theological ones,

² Cf. P. Jenkins, *Chrześcijaństwo przyszłości. Nadejście globalnej Christianitas*, Warszawa 2009. The author argues that in the first millennium the center of Christianity was the Middle East, then in the second millennium it moved to the West (Europe, North America) and now it is moving to the South (Africa and Latin America). According to him, the modern “typical” Christian is a woman in a Nigerian village or a favela dweller. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

³ A. Nocoń, *Męczennicy Afryki Północnej w Martyrologium Rzymskim*, „Vox Patrum” 72(2019), DOI: 10.31743/vp.4666, p. 49.

because Africa appears very often in biblical revelation and plays important roles. The leading figures of salvation history come from there or have their origins there. Africa contributed much to the universal Church in the era of the Church Fathers. In later times the situation was reversed and it was from Europe that missionaries came to preach the message of salvation in the Dark Continent. The Church in Africa is still struggling with many social and cultural problems due to the crisis of growth and underdevelopment in comparison to the rich countries. The interest in the Church in Africa stems not only from the dynamics of faith development in that region, but also from the phenomenon of migration of Africans to Europe. There is thus a mutual coupling between the universal Church and Africa which calls for a pastoral description of the African Church.

This paper does not constitute a detailed study of the vast subject of the Church in Africa, but is an attempt at an outline on the basis of the articles contained in this collection on the individual Churches in African countries or even on ecclesiastical provinces and dioceses. It therefore serves as an introduction and a scholarly summary. It therefore remains at the necessary level of generalization with all its consequences. The whole issue will be presented in the form of two perspectives: historical-theological and pastoral. The first two constitute the necessary context and concretization of the pastoral issues, which includes the descriptive and proscriptive layers of the contemporary situation, that is, its description and the challenges and difficulties to which it is necessary to respond.

A HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The presence of the faith and the Catholic Church in Africa can be divided historically into several periods, as John Paul II does in his exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*: early Christianity in Egypt and North Africa, the Portuguese missions of the 15th and 16th centuries,

and “the extraordinary missionary effort” of the 19th and 20th centuries⁴. These are intertwined with loss of influence due to Islamic invasion and other religious and political factors. This does not imply a complete annihilation of the faith during the intermittent periods, but only a recession of intensity in order to later begin with renewed vigor another era of evangelization. Africa has a great heritage of faith to which Catholicism can and should appeal at all times. It has never been merely the object of evangelization, but also its subject.

Africa in revelation and early Christianity

Africa is included in the history of salvation as a very important element. It is mentioned in various forms more than 1,417 times in the Bible⁵. They go back to the very beginning of the Old Testament. One of the rivers of Eden, the Pishon, and the land of Havilah were identified by some with the Nile and the present Sudan because of the presence of resources: gold, onyx and resin (Genesis 2:10-12). Various tribes residing in Africa are mentioned in Scripture, notably the Kushites on both sides of the Red Sea (descended from Kush, son of Ham, son of Noah), contemporary Sudan, and Ethiopia. On the pages of the Bible the Kingdom of Sheba is frequently mentioned. A constant point of reference is Egypt as a place of slavery of the Israelites, and later their exodus. African origins or connections can be traced to important figures in biblical history. Abraham’s maidservant Hagar was an Egyptian and was the only woman to receive a promise from God that her offspring would be very numerous⁶. Moses, whose probably only wife Zipporah was a Cushite, was born in Egypt. He,

⁴ John Paul II, *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Ecclesia in Africa”*, 1995, no. 30.

⁵ D.T. Adamo, *The portrayal of Africa and Africans in the book of Jeremiah*, „In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi” vol. 52 no. 1 Pretoria 2018, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2259>; Cf. D.T. Adamo, *Africa and the Africans in the Old Testament*, Christians University Press 1998.

⁶ D.T. Adamo, E.F. Eghwubare, *The African wife of Abraham (Gn 16:1-16; 21:8-21)*, OTE 18/3 (2005), p. 457.

under the influence of God's revelation, formed the people of Israel from many tribes and led them to the promised land. There the prophet Jeremiah spent his last days (Jer 43:1-13)⁷.

Jesus spent some part of his childhood in Africa⁸. Simon of Cyrene (now Libya) is mentioned in the Gospels as carrying the cross of Christ. The feast of Pentecost was attended by many people from those parts of Libya near Cyrene (Acts 2:10). The Cyrenians had a dispute with Stephen (Acts 6:9). In Antioch, prophets and teachers included Lucius the Cyrenian⁹ and Simon the Niger (Acts 13:1), whom many identify with Simon the Cyrenian. Cyrene itself was an important early Christian center because it is believed that St. Luke was bishop there¹⁰ and St. Mark, who was the first bishop of Alexandria according to the historian Eusebius of Caesarea, came from there. Among the apostles active in Africa, the Coptic Church additionally cites the mission of St. Thomas in the formation of Alexandrian Christianity. There, the famous catechetical school was founded by St. Clement and Origen. The bishops of Alexandria, one of the three ancient metropolitan capitals (later patriarchal) next to Rome and Antioch, were St. Athanasius and St. Cyril. The Patriarchate of Alexandria had jurisdiction over 108 bishoprics in North Africa. There held numerous synods (in the fourth century

⁷ Jeremiah refers 67 times in his book to the land of Cush or Egypt. He was saved by the Cushite Ebed-Melech from dying in the well where he had been thrown at the command of King Zedekiah (Jer. 38:7-13). Cf. *ibid*.

⁸ Adamo, Eghwubare, *The African wife of Abraham...*, op. cit., p. 455.

⁹ Cyrene was a very important ancient center because of its school of philosophy and as a port. It was the seat of Christian bishops beginning with St. Luke, according to tradition. Cf. *Cyrene, Libya* in: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrene,_Libya (accessed on 06.02.2021)

¹⁰ The Gospel of Luke may have been written there. Cf. B. Kumor, *Afryka. Kościół katolicki. Starożytność*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, ed. F. Gryglewicz et al., vol. 1., Lublin 1985, col. 139.

there were 11 of them)¹¹. In the deserts of Egypt developed a monastic movement, first as anachoreticism, and later cenobitism. St. Anthony the Hermit and St. Paul of Thebes lived there. Since the number of disciples of the anachorites was increasing, it was necessary to organize their life, which Pachomius did by writing the cenobitic rule¹². In the second century, a metropolitan capital developed in Carthage, to which more than 80 bishoprics were subordinate, where Tertullian (155-240), St. Cyprian (200-258) and St. Augustine (d. in 430), among others, lived and acted. Many synods were held in Carthage in 3rd–6th centuries; St. Cyprian alone assembled at least seven. Between the year 312 and 427, 56 synods were convened, 19 of which deliberated on matters of importance to West Africa as a whole and 20 for particular provinces¹³. By the 6th century, the number of African bishoprics is estimated at about 700.

At least three popes were of African descent. Their pontificates were full of very significant ecclesiastical events, and they were among the outstanding popes. The first African pope was Victor (189-199), who settled the matter of celebrating Easter. After him, at least two more popes came from the continent: Militius (311-314), during whose reign the Edict of Milan was issued, and Gelasius (492-496), who defined the dogma of original sin and the nature of the relationship of the two authorities, secular and spiritual.

In Acts (8:26-39) the conversion of an official of the Ethiopian queen Candace and his baptism by Philip the deacon is described. The empress's treasurer carried the faith in Christ deep into Africa. By the second century, Christianity existed in organized form in Thebes and Upper Egypt, from where it passed into Nubia and Ethiopia. In

¹¹ Cf. A. Żurek, *Synody wczesnochrześcijańskie*, in: *Synody Diecezji Tarnowskiej*, vol. 7, red. A. Żurek, J. Soprych, Kraków 2017, pp. 31–46. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15633/9788374387125.03>

¹² Z. Majcher, *Ewangelizacja Afryki*, „Seminare. Poszukiwania naukowo-pastoralne” 2001(17), p. 453.

¹³ Majcher, *Ewangelizacja Afryki...*, op. cit., p. 457.

Ethiopia, Christianity was historically confirmed from Frumentius of Axum, a bishop ordained by St. Athanasius of Alexandria. Frumentius was to tell Athanasius about the Christians who existed in the South but had no priests or bishops. Frumentius was the tutor of the future king Ezanus, who introduced Christianity as the state religion in his kingdom in the first half of the fourth century, thus preceding the Roman Empire¹⁴. Research on origins of Ethiopian Christianity is still ongoing, with new discoveries indicating the existence of an organized church structure as early as the 4th century¹⁵.

The First Church in Africa was characterized by a far-reaching ideological and cultural pluralism. This fostered the emergence of heresies and religious syncretism, which included the intellectually influential Monophysitism and the very aggressive Donatism. Heresies also contributed to the decline of Christianity in Africa. In addition, a bloody persecution began there in the early third century under Septimius Severus. A great many Christians were killed during the reign of Decius, who in 250 issued an edict ordering everyone to take part in pagan sacrifices. About 16,000 Christians were killed then¹⁶. The most persecuting edicts were issued by the emperor Diocletian (four in the years 303-304), during whose reign came the era of martyrs. He ordered the destruction of churches, burning of holy books and banned all Christian gatherings. He later demanded the imprisonment of priests and the offering of pagan sacrifices by all believers. Eusebius of Caesarea reports that 100 Christians were

¹⁴ F. Stopniak, *Etiopia. Dzieje chrześcijaństwa*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, ed. R. Łukaszyk et al., vol. 4, Lublin 1985, col. 1169.

¹⁵ In 2019, the ruins of an ancient basilica near Axum, which dates to the 4th century, were discovered. It is the oldest church in Africa and one of the oldest in the world. It must have been built or adapted for worship during the period of the Edict of Milan in 313. Cf. A. Lawler, *Church Unearthed in Ethiopia Rewrites the History of Christianity in Africa*, „Smithsonian Magazine” 10.12.2019 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/church-unearthed-ethiopia-rewrites-history-christianity-africa-180973740/> (accessed on 02.02.2021).

¹⁶ Kumor, *Afryka...*, op. cit., col. 140.

killed daily¹⁷. The Church in Africa in the fifth century experienced strong persecution from the Vandals, who formed a state dependent on Rome and introduced Arianism there. The final collapse of Christianity in North Africa was brought on by the Islamic invasion: in 642 Alexandria was captured, and in 698 Carthage fell, along with all of Proconsular Africa. Only Ethiopia resisted religious and political change.

Modern missions

The second period of Christian missions in Africa and the development of the Catholic Church begins with the overseas expeditions of European countries, especially Portugal. During the Middle Ages there were missionary attempts by the Franciscans and other religious orders, but in general, apart from the bishopric of Marrakech, which survived until 1566¹⁸, did not leave behind any major centers. In the fifteenth century there were Portuguese and Spanish missions (1420-1800), which reached many places on the continent, although they mainly affected the coasts. The Portuguese took in the west coasts of Africa, and particularly Central Africa. Their most important areas were San Salvador, Mozambique, and Angola. They received from Pope Nicholas V the right of patronage (*ius patronatus*) over missionary centers¹⁹. The Congo region was ruled by the ruler Nzinga Mbemba, who in 1491 embraced the Catholic faith and chose as his baptismal name Alfonso in honor of King Alfonso V of Portugal. He thus earned the nickname “Black Constantine”²⁰.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ D. Olszewski, *Dzieje chrześcijaństwa w zarysie*, Kraków 1996, p. 151. The bishopric of Marrakech was the fruit of the mission of the first brothers of St. Francis, who suffered martyrdom in Morocco in 1200.

¹⁹ M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła Katolickiego. T. 2. Średniowiecze*, Warszawa 1989, p. 257.

²⁰ Cf. *Alfons I*, in: Wikipedia, [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfons_I_\(w%C5%82adca_Konga\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfons_I_(w%C5%82adca_Konga)) (accessed on 21.02.2021).

Other places of missionary activity were Mozambique, where the Jesuits resided (St. Francis Xavier was there in 1541). They managed to baptize King Inhambane of Tonga and the ruler of the Zambezi River, but Christianity there did not persist²¹. Madagascar was also a place of evangelization at that time, and an apostolic prefecture was organized there in 1640. The missionary period from the 15th to the 19th century did not cover larger areas of Africa. It was hindered by the offensive of Islam, political conflicts of European rulers, the harsh climate, which caused the rapid death of missionaries, and the low level of catechization of the baptized, due to which they quickly returned to their old beliefs. An important role in promoting the missionary idea and the formation of missions was played by the Congregation Propaganda Fide, created by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, which divided the world into 13 districts, designating one of them in Africa. Its purpose was to send to the missions clergy equipped with the appropriate spiritual and intellectual qualities. It established the Collegium Urbanum in Rome to train clergy for missionary work, developed the printing of catechisms in various languages for missionary purposes, and transferred jurisdiction over missionary lands²².

The third stage of embracing faith in Christ in Africa began in the 19th century and was organized in all countries. This included countries where Islam was predominant, such as Algeria, where an apostolic vicariate was established in 1843. The middle of the century witnessed the appearance in Africa of numerous priests from religious orders with a missionary charism, such as the Jesuits restored after the suppression, the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, the White

²¹ Majcher, *Ewangelizacja Afryki...*, op. cit., p. 463.

²² From 1626, there was the Polyglotta printing house, which used fonts from 23 alphabets. Upon their arrival in Madagascar, the missionaries published a catechism in Malagasy. In 1671, a Bible was published in Arabic (*Biblia Sacra Arabica*). Cf. M.A. Rostkowski, *Biblia Arabica. Inkulturacyjna działalność Kościoła w XVII wieku*, „Nurt SVD” 1(2017), p. 218.

Fathers, the Society for African Missions²³. In Europe itself, interest in Africa from a geographical and anthropological perspective grew enormously. The greatest fame through successive expeditions was achieved by the English missionary David Livingstone and Henry Stanley, who traveled through Africa on the occasion of the mission, making many geographical discoveries. Learning about the misery of the lives of African tribes and the exposure of slavery resulted in a great drive for aid, education, and culture, which brought Africans closer to Christianity. A particularly courageous crusade against slavery was led by Cardinal Lavigerie, founder of the White Fathers²⁴. Among other distinguished missionaries and fathers of the missions, we can mention: Father Daniel Comboni, founder of the Combonian Fathers of the Sacred Heart, who developed a plan for the salvation of Africa with Africa, that is, relying in the missions on the indigenous peoples, also as to the ecclesiastical hierarchy; Father Francis Libermann, the second founder of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit²⁵; or Bishop Joseph-Marie Dupont pioneer of the missions in Zambia, described by the locals as “fire”. Pope Gregory XVI erected Vicariates Apostolic for West Africa in Guinea, Central Africa in Sudan, East Africa in Zanzibar. The political arrangements of the Berlin Conference in 1885 supported Christian missions, which contributed to the penetration of the remotest corners of Africa. The first local priests in this phase of the missions were ordained in 1864 in Dakar, but the dynamic growth of African vocations did not occur until the twentieth century, which was strongly supported by Benedict XV with his encyclical *Maximum illud* (1919). During this period, the Catholic Church worked very hard in the missionary field in Africa, which resulted in a dynamic increase in the number of

²³ Majcher, *Ewangelizacja Afryki...*, op. cit., p. 467.

²⁴ S. Turbański, *Afryka. Kościół katolicki. Misje w Afryce*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, ed. F. Gryglewicz et al., vol. 1., Lublin 1985, col. 145.

²⁵ J. Różański, *Apologia Kościoła we współczesnej Afryce*, „Biblioteka Teologii Fundamentalnej” 7(2012), p. 23.

believers. At the beginning of the 20th century, Africa had 2.4 million Catholics, which accounted for 1.5% of its total population.

The support of the Holy See and the involvement of the local Churches played a significant part in the independence of the African countries, opening whole peoples to Christianity and developing the local hierarchy – in 1969 there were more than 100 local bishops and the first cardinal²⁶. For example, bishops in Madagascar condemned the violence during the bloody crackdown by France and supported independence tendencies. A group of Catholic activists proclaimed in the Congo in 1956 the Manifesto of *Conscience africaine*²⁷, which supported political emancipation in Africa. This attitude encouraged the development of Catholic missions in the newly created countries.

A PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

The history of Christianity in Africa has had a strong influence on the universal Church, which has been reciprocal, since the Church in Africa owes a great deal to European missionaries. Just as many centuries earlier European nations cultivated the memory of their fathers of faith, so individual African countries and even dioceses recall those who first brought Christ to them. A special bond between the contemporary faith and its roots is the cult of the martyrs. In the early days of Christianity in North Africa these were St. Cyprian, as well as Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas, and in the 19th century in Uganda Charles Lwanga and companions (22 martyrs). Great role is played, as in the whole Church, veneration of the Blessed Mother spread in

²⁶ Turbański, *Afryka...*, op. cit., col. 148.

²⁷ Różański, *Apologia Kościoła we współczesnej Afryce...*, op. cit., p. 24.

numerous shrines, especially in Ngome, where there allegedly were Marian apparitions in the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century²⁸.

Pastoral issues in the African Church can be divided into two categories: those concerning internal affairs and those in relation to the world. Although this division is not completely disjunctive especially in the field of interreligious matters, it somehow shows the ecclesiastical situation against the background of challenges. Besides, the second category is highly valued in the Church today, and in Africa it has an extra characteristics because of the specific political and cultural situation of the continent. The Church must know how to combine the historical heritage of faith with today's challenges.

The Church in Africa ad intra

The beginnings of the missions were modest and their success was due to the combination of several aspects: the proclamation of the gospel in the past and the sacrifice of the lives of the missionaries, the creation of local structures of the Church, the educational and medical mission. Missionary structures and centers grew and could be given ecclesiastical status: vicariates and dioceses. On the whole this process is not yet complete and in many places we are still dealing with the ongoing formation of ecclesiastical structures. Nevertheless, the local churches in Africa overwhelmingly have their own authorities and priests. In some churches there is a great number of vocations, but the need is still great, because usually there are only a few dozen priests for every several hundred thousand believers²⁹. The care of church

²⁸ The most famous African Marian apparitions took place in Ngome in the country of the Zulus. They were experienced by Sr. Reinolda May between 1955 and 1971. Mary appeared to her as the "Tabernacle of the Most High" and instructed her to build a church, which soon became a site of pilgrimage. The church authorities recognized the site as a "place of prayer." Cf. R.M. Foxon of Durban, K. Natal, *The History of Ngome*, <http://www.ngome.co.za/history> (accessed on 13.02.2021).

²⁹ Further articles in this collection by priests from specific countries and dioceses will provide detailed data.

structures is therefore a very important element of pastoral work. In many places seminaries need to be established and developed, and the education of the clergy itself is a serious organizational and scholastic challenge. Numerous local religious congregations have been established, such as the Brothers of Charles Lwanga³⁰ and the Sisters of Bannabikira³¹. The pastoral work is largely based on catechists who minister on the spot in the so-called outstations, to which priests commute from time to time. In some regions their number may exceed the number of parishes even twenty times. There is therefore a need to develop a network of catechetical centers and small communities. Local Churches have specific structures both at the national episcopal level and in the dioceses themselves. These vary according to needs and opportunities, but individual dioceses list the existence of commissions: biblical, liturgical, family, Catholic action, youth, catechetical, prayer groups, ecclesial movements, vocations, small groups, dialogue, social communication, justice and peace. All this testifies to the ongoing analysis of the current situation, on the basis of which pastoral plans are drawn up taking into account the needs of the Church and of society.

The Church in Africa shares poverty with the entire society, although she makes many efforts to overcome it by pointing to concrete economic, educational and mental causes. It often refers to the inadequate funds for day-to-day operations and the implementation of numerous pastoral and social programs. The lack of financial resources prevents the proper formation of clergy, catechists, and the work of various committees. On the other hand, the concern for the self-support of local churches is always present

³⁰ Congregation founded in 1927 in Uganda by Bishop Henry Steicher. Cf. *Zakony i zgromadzenia zakonne na świecie*, blog: <http://zakony-na-swiecie.blogspot.com/2014/08/bracia-sw-karola-lwangi.html> (accessed on 13.02.2021).

³¹ Cf. *Zakony i zgromadzenia zakonne na świecie*, blog: <http://zakony-na-swiecie.blogspot.com/2009/07/zakony-wedug-miejsca-zaozenia-afryka-m.html> (accessed on 13.02.2021).

in diocesan relationships. Even if there is missionary support coming from richer countries or international organizations, work must be done on the awareness of the faithful about the need to maintain basic structures autonomously. According to the Second Vatican Council, the autonomy of the local Church to function and to set down roots in the people and their culture is proof of the maturity of the ecclesial community³².

The Churches in Africa have become objects of great concern and appreciation by the universal Church and her representation in the form of the Holy See. Popes have made pilgrimages to Africa: in 1968 Paul VI visited Uganda, John Paul II visited Africa six times, Benedict XVI twice, and Francis once. The Church in Africa has become the subject of extended theological and pastoral reflection in the form of organized bishops' synods addressing African themes and published documents³³. Pope Paul VI wrote the letter *Africae Terrarum*. The post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* was signed by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Cameroon in 1995. In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI signed in Benin the post-synodal exhortation *Africae munus*. A mutual reflection and interaction between the African Churches and the universal Church takes place during the *ad limina apostolorum* visits of African bishops in Rome, where the bishops present the situation of their ecclesial communities and, together with the Pope, draw some more general actions and indications for the future.

What remains a distinctive feature of the Church in Africa is its presence among very numerous tribes. They speak many languages

³² Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* "Ad gentes divinitus", 1965, no. 15.

³³ Among the lower-ranking documents of the Holy See concerning Africa are: Letter: "Pastoral Care for African Traditional Religion" (1988); "Instrumentum laboris for the Synod of Bishops of Africa" (1993); "Elenchus finalis Propositionum Synodi pro Africa" (1994). Cf. E. Sakowicz, *Stolica Apostolska wobec tradycyjnej religii i kultury Afryki*, „Forum Politologiczne” vol. 13, p. 252.

and dialects. Missionaries have always shown great sensitivity and skill in learning new languages and using them in evangelization, even though the demands are great and the Church has not always been able to meet them. On a practical level, this means the difficulty of handling translations of Scripture and other religious texts, which have to be translated into many languages (in Nigeria alone there are supposed to be more than 500 dialects), and even more than 3000 in the whole of Africa³⁴. In this context, there is a much greater problem of inculturation in the missions: the dialogue between faith and culture, which means more than the ability to speak a certain language. In fact, the faith is not transmitted independently of the cultural context, but the transmission itself is already entangled in it. It involves moral issues, especially marriage, liturgy, leadership³⁵. Pope Paul VI affirmed that the African, in accepting Christianity, need not renounce himself³⁶. At this level, however, there are numerous theological difficulties in correctly understanding the intersection of faith and culture. A specific language has been developed to describe different concepts such as translation, accommodation, inculturation, acculturation, incarnation or contextualization³⁷. The general idea is to avoid two extremes in approaching mission. The first is not realizing the value of particular cultures and copying everything related to the faith in a Western way. Everything is then pagan and somehow diabolic. The second – more characteristic of

³⁴ E.L. Epstein, *Introduction in: The Language of African Literature*, ed. E. Epstein, R. Kole, Africa World Press 1998, pp. IX-X.

³⁵ S.G. Kurgat, *The theology of inculturation and the African church*, "International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology", vol. 1(5) September 2009, p. 91.

³⁶ Paul VI, *Motu proprio "Africa terrarum"*, Rome 1967, no. 14.

³⁷ The concept of culture and, therefore, of inculturation comes from cultural anthropology, but from there it has moved to missiology and has its place within it. The particular culture has the capacity to receive and transmit the universal faith because the Holy Spirit is at work in this process. A kind of incarnation of faith in culture takes place. Cf. J. Róžański, *Wokół koncepcji inkulturacji*, Warszawa 2007, pp. 4-5.

modern times – is the opposite situation, in which everything African is good, which enables the emergence of various kinds of religious syncretism³⁸. It must be remembered that culture in Africa, like culture in general, is strongly connected to religion, which does not only mean the influence of primitive religions. Christianity has been present in Africa for a long enough historical period that it must also be taken into account as an element of local culture.

The religious situation in Africa is necessarily a point of reference for the action of the Catholic Church there. It has specific characteristics due to its historical destiny and anthropological background. This affects the internal and external difficulties of the Church. In addition to Christianity we have to deal with the following religious groups: primitive religions (about 50% of Africans are still under their influence)³⁹, Islam, neo-traditional movements and Pentecostal groups⁴⁰. The Catholic Church considers new religious movements a major threat. A great religious challenge are the Pentecostal groups that are mushrooming. In 1970 they accounted for less than 5% of all Africans, now there are 12%, which is a huge increase. They originate from the so-called African-initiated churches (AIC). Taken together, they make up the second largest group of Christians. They preach a gospel of success, or easily draw the faithful away from the Catholic Church. They introduce numerous paraliturgical gatherings that dilute attendance at Catholic liturgies. Primitive religions are still firmly entrenched, which with poor catechesis lead to religious syncretisms. They also include neotraditional movements that combine traditional cults with a new social context. These are the so-called Afro-Christian churches, founded among others by Nehemia Tile, Francis Kassola, William Wade Harris (Harrism) and the most famous Simon Kimbangu (Kimbanguism). Religious syncretism leads

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Sakowicz, *Stolica Apostolska...*, op. cit., p. 248.

⁴⁰ Cf. L.S. Grillo, A. van Klinken and H.J. Ndzovu, *Religions in Africa. An Introduction*, Routledge 2019.

to the rejection of Catholic dogma and undermines the traditional teaching on marriage.

Relations with Islam are very difficult. They result from the imposition of Sharia law in many places with Islamic dominance, mixed marriages in which children are compulsorily brought up in this faith. Islamization in addition to marriages is also done deliberately by business activities requiring partners to change their faith. Islam in Africa is very dynamic, the number of followers is increasing so that by 2050 South of the Sahara it is expected to reach 35% of the population. Relations with Islam, because of its often political character, especially in the form of reformist, social and political movements, are also extremely tense, especially in Sudan and Nigeria (Boko Haram). Fundamentalist Islamic movements very often persecute Christians. Organizations monitoring the persecution of Christians point to the ever-increasing threat to believers in sub-Saharan Africa from Islam⁴¹.

The Church in Africa ad extra

The functioning of the Church in a given country is very much dependent on the political situation, which in African countries is very unstable. Armed conflicts, inter-tribal struggles, independence tendencies and the unhealed wounds of recent wars often erupt there. Pastoral work is most difficult in areas where there are open armed conflicts. At the moment, the following wars in Africa are in the news: Boko Haram militias in Nigeria (since 2009), which are particularly dangerous for Christians because they take them as representatives of Western civilization⁴², the war in the Central

⁴¹ Cf. Bordoni L., *13 Christians killed every day in the world because of their faith*, "Vatican News" 13.01.2021, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-01/report-open-doors-christians-persecuted.html> (accessed on 20.02.2021).

⁴² Boko Haram is an Islamist movement seeking to establish a state based on Sharia law. Unlike other ideologically close organizations such as ISIS or al-Qaeda, it is limited to its own country, Nigeria. It uses violence against the state as a means to

African Republic (since 2012), the military coup in Burundi (2015), the Congo (since 1998), the Arab Spring in Libya (2014), terrorist activities of the Lord's Resistance Army Rebellion (since 1987 mainly within Uganda), conflict in Mali (since 2012, renewed 2020), al-Shabaab terrorist activities in Somalia and civil war (since 1991), border conflict between Sudan and South Sudan (since 2012), struggle against Tigrayans in Ethiopia (2020), wars in Western Sahara (1975-1991, 2020)⁴³. In places where there are conflicts, the Church often remains the only stable institution where one can receive not only religious but also social help⁴⁴.

Recent or ongoing wars have led to many wounds between people living in particular countries. The Church in Africa herself has frequently experienced persecution, but she nevertheless takes strong action for peace and reconciliation. In particular, she condemns fratricidal fighting between tribes. She does this from the point of view of her prophetic mission, which is to point out injustice and its causes. This is also done in collaboration with the local authorities or even in opposition to them when they fail to fulfill their duties. In many dioceses and inter-diocesan structures there are Justice and Peace Committees (*Iustitia et Pax*), which facilitate reconciliation among people and prevent conflict. In African countries they form a well-developed network. Their activities are in the general field

achieve Wahhabi tawhid (unity of God). Initially (2003-2008), it was an isolationist and sectarian movement that later turned against Western education, which it accuses of corrupting the youth. Etymologically, Boko Haram means "Western education is a sin". Cf. J. Cambell, *Boko Haram: origins, challenges and responses*, Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, Policy Brief October 2014, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184795/5cf0ebc94fb36d66309681cda24664f9.pdf> (accessed on 21.02.2021).

⁴³ *Current Wars of Africa*, https://www.historyguy.com/wars_of_africa_current.html (accessed on 21.02.2021), Cf. J. Cilliers, *Violence in Africa. Trends, drivers and prospects to 2023*, Institute for Security Studies, August 2018, <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/ar-12.pdf> (accessed on 21.02.2021).

⁴⁴ Różański, *Apologia Kościoła we współczesnej Afryce...*, op. cit., p. 25.

of justice and peace, which manifests itself in the specific task of educating the local population in the rights and duties of citizenship, human dignity, the response to injustice by the authorities and the condemnation of violence⁴⁵. The role of the Church in Africa in the struggle for justice and peace was also delineated by Pope Benedict XVI in his exhortation *Africae munus*. According to this exhortation, the Church is at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace in the different planes of the African vision of life: protection of life, respect for creation and the ecosystem, good governance, migration and refugees, globalization and international aid⁴⁶.

The Church in Africa is widely involved in public life, becoming an agent of social change, especially in the face of the institutional weakness of the State: in cases of corruption, political chaos, poverty, disease and famine, ethnic rivalries and religious conflicts. African states are plagued by unstable or corrupt domestic politics. The clan structure of society serves to develop the scourge of so-called tribalism, i.e. supporting only members of one's own clan to the point of physical elimination of opposing clans. Episcopates speak out strongly against political and social abuses in this sphere, especially against corruption (Cameroon⁴⁷, Kenya⁴⁸). The Church in Africa is particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor, the youth and the moral decay of the family, which is reflected not only in short-term

⁴⁵ J. Różański, *Kościół katolicki w Czadzie wobec problemów gospodarczych, społecznych i politycznych kraju* „Forum Politologiczne” vol. 12(2011), p. 484.

⁴⁶ Cf. Benedict XVI, *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation „Africae munus”*, 2011.

⁴⁷ Cf. A. Okure, N. Bahati, *Act Against Corruption: A Project to mobilize Church leaders from Christian and Muslim communities to fight corruption and promote just governance in Cameroon*, “Africa Faith & Justice Network”, July 2019, <https://afjn.org/act-against-corruption-a-project-to-mobilize-church-leaders-from-christian-and-muslim-communities-to-fight-corruption-and-promote-just-governance-in-cameroon/> (accessed on 18.02.2021).

⁴⁸ *Kenyan Bishops launch a national anti-corruption campaign*, “Vatican News” 23.10.2019, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/news/2019-10/kenyan-bishops-launch-a-national-anti-corruption-campaign.html> (accessed on 18.02.2021).

relief actions, but also in long-term activities embodied in pastoral programs. Dioceses have specific pastoral strategies within which goals are developed and then implemented through specific tasks.

The Church calls for the prevention of social inequalities and points out the need to defend the poor. Undoubtedly, Church institutions both locally and internationally provide enormous material and other assistance in emergencies, natural disasters and wars, famine and all other needs. At every level there are organizations engaged in aid works not only in the sense of single gestures but of the whole charitable activity. The Church in Africa initiates many programs and projects.

Since the beginning of her presence (especially in the modern era) in Africa, the Church has fulfilled a huge role in the field of education and health. She established a huge network of schools, which are still in operation today and form the basis of education in many countries. The number of schools, especially elementary school, is counted in the thousands in some countries⁴⁹, covering all levels of education up to Catholic universities⁵⁰. Contemporary times bring new demands and Catholic education in Africa in the 21st century has transformed itself with the help of state subsidies, but it has lost some of its denominational character.

The second great field of social activity of the Church in Africa was aid to the sick. A network of hospitals and leprosaria was established as an organized form of assistance, in addition to which there was always immediate help. Church activities were also aimed

⁴⁹ For example, in Uganda, the Catholic Church runs 512 kindergartens for 44807 children, 3385 elementary school for 2249801 students, 559 secondary schools for 208540 students. Cf. A.M. Muwagga, G.M. Genza, R. Ssemulya, *School Leadership and Denominational Identity: The Case of Roman Catholic-Founded Schools in Uganda*, "American Journal of Educational Research", 2013, vol. 1, no. 8, p. 328.

⁵⁰ There are currently 11 Catholic universities and colleges in Africa. Cf. *Category:Catholic universities and colleges in Africa*, in: Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Catholic_universities_and_colleges_in_Africa (accessed on 18.02.2021).

at raising the level of health through the promotion of hygiene and various sanitary actions⁵¹. Until today there are numerous Catholic hospitals, which carry out the mission of healing the body as well as the spiritual impact. The ministry of healing skillfully involves local people, because it is culturally linked to the African activities of many healers.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the situation of the Catholic Church in Africa from a historical-theological and pastoral perspective. The first part showed the importance of the African heritage in the revelatory elements: from Genesis through the Cushite, Egypt, to the figures connected with Africa: Moses, Christ, the Cyrenaic, the treasurer of Queen Candace. Africa was one of the most important centers of the early Church in: Alexandria, Carthage and Ethiopia. Next, the stage of evangelization from the 15th century and the modern and contemporary missions were presented. These already consisted of missions to specific places and countries, the effects of which have survived to the present day. A great help was the activity of the Holy See in the form of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Individual countries and dioceses take pride in their own founding fathers, but there are persons of merit for larger regions, such as Cardinal Lavigerie, Fr. Comboni, Fr. Libermann. The peak of development of the Catholic Church in Africa was in the 20th century. In the second half there are already relatively stable ecclesiastical structures with local clergy. Relations with the universal Church have been intensely developed: Africa has been visited many times by popes, and many documents have been produced about the continent, especially the exhortations *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae munus*.

⁵¹ Róžański, *Apologia Kościoła we współczesnej Afryce...*, op. cit., s. 30.

The contemporary activities of the Church in Africa include an internal and an external plane. It is characterized by the continued stabilization of diocesan structures and systematic pastoral work and attempts to respond to emerging socio-political challenges. The difficulties are considerable: political instability, poverty, plurality of tribes and languages, other religions, but the Church is aware of them and is designing appropriate ad hoc and program-based activities: *Iustitia et pax* commissions, pastoral committees and commissions, charitable, educational and health activities. The Church in Africa has contributed a great deal to raise people's self-awareness of human rights and to remedy social inequalities. The African perspective should be more widely presented throughout the Church because of the value of its past achievements and its Christian heritage since its inception. Awareness of the difficulties faced by this Church should build solidarity with it and involvement in aid actions.

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THE ARCHDIOCESE OF JOS, NIGERIA: THE HISTORICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PASTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

Abstract

Tkanka wiary danego narodu zależy w dużej mierze od jego zaplecza kulturowego. Każdy system wierzeń jest pochodną matrycy kulturowej, co dotyczy również chrześcijaństwa. Aby zrozumieć jak jest ono postrzegane i praktykowane wśród Afrykańczyków, szczególnie w Nigerii, niezbędna jest podstawowa wiedza na temat chrześcijaństwa w Nigerii. W niniejszej pracy przyjrzymy się różnym etapom rozwoju wiary chrześcijańskiej w katolickiej archidiecezji Jos w Nigerii, biorąc pod uwagę tradycyjne wartości, które służyły jako środowisko dla rozwoju chrześcijaństwa. Czy Kościół nigeryjski

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może całkowicie oderwać się od swojego dziedzictwa kulturowego? Czy możliwe jest nowe podejście do ewangelizacji w Nigerii? Kim są główne podmioty decydujące o treści i realizacji podstawowych zasad chrześcijaństwa?

Keywords: culture, tradition, colonization, syncretism, inculturation, leadership, spirituality, slavery, ancestors, salvation

INTRODUCTION

The historical and pastoral developments of the Church in the Archdiocese of Jos are shrouded in mystery and human factor. Although the Church is a divine institution, Christ employed the human condition as a necessary factor to facilitate her growth. It is thus a mystery that has been made perceptible through the church leadership, structural organization and pastoral initiatives. Understanding and appreciating a people and their philosophy are indispensable factors for the growth of their faith. Speaking on the importance of the human dimension, O'Collins observed:

Before moving to God's self-disclosure in the biblical history that climaxed with the story of Jesus, what account should we give of human beings? Some reflections on the human condition would set the stage for what follows in this account of fundamental theology.²

This statement clearly demonstrates the point that faith needs a cultural application for it to succeed and to remain relevant. The general mentality that Catholicism means total uniformity is

² Gerald O'Collins SJ, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* (New York: Oxford University, 2013), 37.

erroneous. There must be a clear difference between the essence and the accidentals of the faith. Our world view must first be the reference point in accepting and understanding the faith. The incarnation itself is a fruit of inculturation. God putting himself into the human condition. As scripture says:

who though was in the form of God, did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, [...] (Phil 2:6-8).³

Unless the church takes her lead from her founder, Jesus Christ Himself, she may find herself exporting some irrelevant western culture, devoid of the essence of Christianity. Every culture carries within it the fear of a supreme. Perhaps, not in the context of Christianity, but in search for the meaning of life. However, in some quarters, inculturation has introduced to the church some elements of traditional religion. This is contrary to true worship, since it cast the glory on human liturgical actors rather than the invisible Divine person.⁴

Our task is to briefly outline some key elements, both general and unique, that have contributed to the growth of the faith in the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos, Nigeria. Since this work is mainly informative, a brief general background to the structural organization of the church in Jos shall be given. This work is essentially a reference material towards understanding the growth of the faith among the people of the Catholic Church in Jos, Nigeria. Our main resource material is

³ *The Greek – English Interlinear ESV New Testament, 28th Revised Edition* (The German Bible Society, 2018).

⁴ Kieran Flanagan, *Sociology and Liturgy: Re-Presentations of the Holy* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 44.

the annual publication, *Directory of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos*⁵ and other related curia documents.

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF NIGERIA

Geographically, the area under Jos canonical jurisdiction is located in Plateau State, central Nigeria. A little North of the two main rivers in Nigeria (Benue and Niger). Nigeria today has a population of over 202 million, with over 500 ethnicities. From a religious perspective, the country is more or less divided evenly between Christianity and Islam, though there are pockets of African Traditional worshippers. Although the north is predominantly Islam and the south by Christian, it is fair to state that in a cosmopolitan and pluralistic nation like Nigeria, communities are multifaceted. People move and live according to their aspirations and desires, ranging from educational, agricultural, social and economic considerations. Nigerian politics has a very strong religious biased inclination. This has also affected the relationship between the Church and State. Being a former British colony until 1960, the Christian faith has always being confused with the agents of slavery and domination. This explains where some quarters in the past continued to treat with suspicion any foreign religion or ideology. Little wonders the earlier attempts of evangelization in Nigeria failed in the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁵ *Catholic Archdiocese of Jos: Directory and Dairy* (Jos, Nigeria: 2019).

EARLY ENCOUNTER BETWEEN CHRISTINITY AND THE PEOPLE OF JOS

While churches in Europe could boast of having millennial celebrations, the church in Nigeria is fairly new. In fact, Catholicism in the whole of northern Nigeria came alive only in the 20th century. The spirit of the Christian faith started manifesting the fruit of evangelization long before the reforms of Vatican II (1962-1965). The declaration, “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy”,⁶ is only an emphasis on what has been there. The beginnings of what is now the Archdiocese of Jos can be traced to February 12, 1907. That was the day when the first three Catholic missionaries, Rev. Fathers Oswald Waller, Joseph Mauren and Ernest Belin of the Society of African Missions (SMA) arrived Shendam, south of Jos. This remained the only Catholic station northern Nigeria up to the 1930s. It should be noted that the various ethnic groups had some notion of a Supreme Being, though not in the fullest sense of the concept. There were elements of a belief in some Supreme Being expressed in their culture and tradition. The Church has also retained most of the names associated with God, since they do not contradict Christian belief. For example, the Berom of Jos refer to their Supreme Being as *Dagwi*, meaning, the Father of the Sun, which is the source of all life. Yet, they never worshipped the sun as a deity. Karl Rahner was thus right when he says: “The human intellect always presses beyond the immediate data perceived by the senses towards the fullness of meaning and truth in the Absolute”.⁷ From Shendam the

⁶ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), 14.

⁷ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 31.

Missionaries moved up north of Plateau and settled the Faith in Jos, with St. Theresa's Parish as the main mission station. Although other missionaries soon crossed the Niger and Benue rivers from the south to evangelize the people of the then Northern Region of Nigeria, the mission station in Shendam marked the real beginning of Catholicism in northern Nigeria.

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF EARLY JOS MISSION AREA

At that point, the natives were basically traditional worshippers, with shrine priests who interceded for the people's basic needs, such as rain and a good harvest, protections from sickness and other natural calamities. The people were well organized with their chiefs and kings who offered both executive and juridical services. They had their sets of customary practices of initiation to adulthood and marriages. Despite the many ethnic groups in this mission area, there was a common sense of religiosity and respect for tradition. Needless to say that formal education was that time the luxury of only a few from the southern part of the country, since Christianity and western education arrived late. It was from these humble beginnings that this mission area began witnessing rapid expansions in practically all the major spheres of human activities: religious, social and educational, spiritual and pastoral. The acceptance of Christianity with its rather new and strange ideologies on marriage and salvation, was simply a miracle. This shows the level of both civilization and organization of the natives. The importance of missionary effort was stressed by Lamin Sanneh in these words: "The degree to which Christianity became integrated into a particular culture was important for assessing the success of Christian preaching."⁸ But like any other

⁸ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2009), 42-43.

human civilization, there were moments of stiff oppositions. This was due to the lack of trust they people had on the so called western slaves traders and colonization, all being products of the western civilization. It is quite paradoxical that western civilization played both a negative and positive factors in the growth of Christianity in Nigeria. Today, it is still feared that the negative western culture of “freedom”, which is affecting some changes in the life of the Church, might lead to the destruction of the faith.

THE GROWTH AND EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH’S MISSION

In 1911, the Prefecture of North-eastern Nigeria, with the headquarters in Shendam was established. Later on the Mission centre was relocated to Jos in 1922, an area with a relatively suitable climatic condition for both the missionaries and the early British colonialists. The natural resources of Jos, such as tin ore and columbite, garnished with its pleasant weather, made it a place of choice for the British. This factor later played an important role in the expansions of modern infrastructures like the railway lines and electricity in Jos. Consequently, Jos became attractive to thousands (now millions) from different parts of Nigeria. The growing population became a platform for the introduction and growth of the new faith. The Jurisdiction was enlarged and called the Prefecture Apostolic of Northern Nigeria. This covered the territory north of the Rivers Nigeria and Benue, with Kano as its headquarters. Further SMA missionary activities in the North led to the division and thus the creation of the prefectures; Kaduna, Jos and Benue in 1934. The provinces of Plateau, Bauchi and Borno as well as parts of Adamawa came under Jos prefecture while the remaining part of the North went to Kaduna.

Other missionary groups that arrived from the 1930’s right to the time of political independence in 1960 included the Order of

St. Augustine (OSA) in Adamawa Region, and the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans Fathers (OP) in Sokoto. There was also an influx of female religions congregations. Noticeably among them were the Our Lady of Apostle Sister (OLA). Sisters of St. Louis (SSL) and the Mercy Sisters, who joined the missions at different times for the education of women.

ELEVATION OF JOS TO THE STATUS OF A DIOCESE AND AN ARCHDIOCESE

In 1953, Pope Pius XII, elevated the prefecture of Jos to the status of a Diocese. From that point many of the missions areas would eventually be raised to independent dioceses, such a Yola, Maiduguri, Jalingo, and much later Bauchi, Shendam and Pankshin. Following the high level of spiritual and structural growth, the diocese of Jos was raised to the status of an Archdiocese in 1994 by Pope John Paul II. To mark the centenary anniversary of the Catholic Church in Jos, on June 2, 2007, the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, created the Diocese of Shendam out of Jos; which was the first missionary contact point in this part of the world. In 2014, the central geo-political zone, part of which belonged to the Archdiocese of Jos and the Diocese of Shendam was raised to the status of a Diocese by Pope Francis, and named it Pankshin Diocese.

EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP IN JOS

The growth of the faith in Jos is like the parable of the mustard seed in Mark 4:30–32. While acknowledging the priceless effort of the laity, traditional chiefs, catechists and the general faithful, the success would have been much difficult without the commitment of the shepherds of the diocese, who stand as a symbol of unity of

the faith, the Bishops. In his letter to the Smyrneans, St. Ignatius emphasized the centrality of the Bishop unto whom the priests, deacons and the faithful must unreservedly respect and be faithfully obedient to. He places the Bishop as the direct representative of God (Christ).

See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is administered either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude of the people also be; even as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.⁹

It is in the light of the above statement that a summary of the Episcopate of the all the Bishops who governed the diocese of Jos will be considered.

THE BISHOP OF JOS FROM 1907–2020

The Earliest Leadership from 1907

1907 was the planting and germinating stage of the seed of faith in the diocese. As a young church without a clear episcopal jurisdiction. The early evangelizers and missionaries concentrated their energies in spreading the faith rather than administrative leadership. This was a period of building the faith. A moment of transition from paganism and African Traditional religion to accepting the new faith of Christianity. It was clear that among the first three missionaries of the Society of African Missions (SMA), Rev. Father Oswald Waller

⁹ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 8.

was in-charge of the delegation. Thus, though not a bishop, he was respected as the leader and promoter of the faith in Jos.

The Prefecture of Jos under Msgr. William Lumley 1934–1953

Although the Vatican created the Prefecture Apostolic of Northern Nigeria in 1911, the pastoral and administrative headquarters only moved to Jos in 1922. The real independent jurisdiction after the Northern prefecture was divided into three regions (Benue, Jos and Kaduna) took place on April 9, 1934. That was the first time Jos provincial area had a distinctive jurisdiction. Still not a diocese, it has all the elements of a diocese except a bishop. Msgr. William Lumley became the first Prefect from 1934–1953. He actually laid the foundations for the administrative structure that would lead to the elevation of Jos as a diocese in 1953.

The First Bishop of Jos, Rt. Rev. John Reddington (SMA) 1953–1975

The Vatican pronounced Jos a diocese on June 29, 1953, and appointed the Rt. Rev. John Reddington (SMA) as its first bishop. This was pronounced by Pope Pius XII. Bishop Reddington worked tremendously towards building the local church by promoting and training candidates for the priesthood. This distinctive characteristic of his was made evident in the ordination of the first indigenous priests, who would later become bishops to succeed the ex-patriates that were aging. The building of both the Minor and Major Seminaries in Jos were some of his major achievements. The majority of the educational institutions and hospitals were born during his episcopate. Such was his achievement that many of his priests became bishops. John Reddington requested for the episcopate ordination of the Gabriel Ganaka in 1973 as auxiliary bishop of Jos, who was to succeed him a year later. He willingly and gracefully retired to pave the room for an indigenous leadership. To promote the

local church, Bishop Reddington founded the first and only female religious congregation, the Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima (OLF) in 1965, named after the Patron Saint of the diocese, the name which he also gave the new Cathedral built in 1961. The first and old cathedral church of St. Theresa could no longer support the faithful due to growth in the faith.

Most Rev. Gabriel Gonsum Ganaka 1975–1999

The Rt. Rev. Gabriel Gonsum Ganaka took over the leadership of the Diocese of Jos in 1975 following the pronouncement by Pope Paul VI in October 5, 1974. He became the first indigenous Bishop of Jos, thus, paving a new perspective of looking at Christianity. It was no more a foreign religion with a foreign leadership, but a religion of a God who is also among us. The privilege for the natives to attain such an ecclesiastical position became the first reference point of visible inculturation. Like his predecessor, Bishop Ganaka continued the pastoral plant of building and uniting the different ethnic groups that made up Jos. He was a charismatic leader who would be revered by many even after his death in November 11, 1999. He placed Jos diocese on the national and global scenes. It was during his episcopate that Jos was elevated to the status of an Archdiocese by the Pope John II on March 26, 1994. One of his major achievements was the upgrading the educational and intellectual standard of his priests. Many were sent abroad on further studies. One of his famous quotes remains “a priest must be a gentleman, a saint and a scholar”. Such were his qualities that he became a reference point for many priests in years to come.

Msgr. Emmanuel Azuka Udeh 1999–2000

The protracted illness of Archbishop Gabriel Ganaka led to his death in November 1999. Following the church’s tradition which abhors a vacuum, to avoid any interregnum, Msgr. Emmanuel Azuka

Udeh was nominated as Diocesan Administrator. This was a short but very important transition period. He prepared the ground for the new Archbishop. The diocese could not understand how the great Bishop Ganaka would vanish. It seemed impossible to believe, as he was the first bishop to die while in office. With the longest episcopate for over 24 years, to say the Archdiocese of Jos was thrown into confusion after the death of Ganaka, was an understatement. Msgr. Emmanuel Udeh was left with the task of assuring the faithful by given hope and a sense of direction.

Most. Rev. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama 2000–2019

Another important phase in the history of the Church in Jos took place in the year 2000, when Pope John Paul II, on April 14, 2000, appointed Bishop Ignatius Kaigama as the Archbishop of Jos. His arrival to Jos was received with mixed feelings, especially among the clergy, as many expected one of the indigenous diocesan priests to succeed the late Bishop Ganaka. This was to be a blessing in disguise. As a young, vibrant and determined leader, Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama took over the mantle of leadership in the spirit of fraternal charity. One of his earliest task was to see to the unification of fraternal love among the clergy. It was true, though embarrassing, that part of the clergy was divided along tribal affiliations. The love and tussle for power was beginning to sip into the presbyterate. The church was taking a more political, ethnic and earthly character, garnished by mutual suspicion of allegiance to cliques or “god-fatherism”. This element of human frailty was to come to an end, when from his first address to the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese, Bishop Kaigama stated in strong words, “I detest and abhor tribalism”. Such a statement must have been inspired by the Holy Spirit. It threw a new light of hope into a disintegrating clergy and diocese. In his neutral equality, Bishop Kaigama built the diocese into the home, where everyone felt loved and important. His unification process

was seen in the establishment of Annual Archdiocesan General Assembly. This was a platform that brought together the clergy and laity of the diocese to deliberate on diocesan, national and global issues to promote the growth of the faith. He was also strong in promoting the relationship between the two dominant religions in the state, Christianity and Islam. The inauguration of the Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace, Centre (DREP) on February, 2013 was a testimony to his mission. The education of the girl-child and women in general was a milestone stone in his episcopate. The creation of the Female Catechists Formation (FCFC) centre in Kwall to complement the already existing Catechetical Training institute (CTI) Shendam was timely. He creating more parishes than any of his predecessors. He was instrumental to the creation of the dioceses Bauchi in 2010, Pankshin in 2014 and Shendam in 2016. It was Bishop Kaigama who inaugurated the committee for the spiritual preparation and promotion of the cause for the beatification of Bishop Gabriel Ganaka, his predecessor. Like his predecessor, ongoing formation of priests became a priority. Priests were sent to study both within the country and abroad. This exposure gave rise to a spirit of openness and a better understanding of both the church and the world. In March 2019, Pope Francis pronounced and appointed him as the Coadjutor Archbishop and subsequently the Archbishop of the metropolitan see of Abuja, to succeed the retiring Cardinal John Onaiyekan. As part of his pastoral plan, the Archdiocese commenced the erection of a new Cathedral situated at Kwang village. Building through local contributions, it shall be called the Divine Mercy Cathedral (DMC).

**Present Archbishop of Jos,
Most Rev. Matthew Ishaya Audu, 2020**

Bishop Matthew Audu of the diocese of Lafia was appointed by Pope Francis to the metropolitan see of Jos on January 6, 2020 to succeed Kaigama who a few months prior had been appointed the

Archbishop of Abuja. Unfortunately, the Covid 19 pandemic played negative role in this transition and inauguration period. The new Archbishop was canonically installed on 31st March, 2020 in the Cathedral of our Lady of Fatima Jos, with just a handful of the faithful in the congregation, representing the clergy and the laity. However, the bishops of the six suffragan dioceses of the province were there. His early gestures in assisting and concentrating the diocesan energy towards those affected by the menace of Covid19 lockdown showed him to be a pastor that is human oriented like Pope Francis. May the Lord guide the episcopate of Archbishop Matthew Ishaya Audu.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND PASTORAL ORGANS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF JOS

There is an organized division of labour in the administrative organ of the diocese, with the Bishop assisted by two Vicars General and the Chancellor. Another key figure is the curia is the office of the finance Administrator. The Archdiocese of Jos has now six deaneries, with each having a Dean appointed by the Archbishop. These officers constitute the main consultative clerical body of the Archbishop, called Consultors. There are other organs such as the Pastoral Council which also serves as a deliberative and consultative forum to an extent.

The archdiocesan commissions

There are presently eight commissions in the Archdiocese. These are the various bodies saddled with the responsibility of looking into a specific aspects of the diocesan life, to response to, and to promote the interest of the church in the most effective way. In other words, they are an extension of the bishop's hand, a division of labour, since he cannot do it all by himself. These commissions cover almost the

totality of the life of the Archdiocese, by employing the expertise of both the clergy and laity in the spirit of collaborative ministry. A summary of the aims and objectives of each commission is given below.

Catechetical Commission: The Catechetical Commission focuses on the training of catechists and evangelists in the task of transmitting the faith. This commission seeks and promotes the spiritual and material wellbeing of the agents of evangelization. The church believes in nurturing the faith from infancy to maturity as contained in the Holy Scripture, Church Traditions, Church Magisterium and Papal Encyclicals. Guided by these, the commission hopes to deliver fruitfully its salvific mission to humanity. The training of Catechists is crucial, if the church must succeed. St. Paul reminds us thus:

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Rom 10:14-17).

The catechists are the first link in the journey from traditional religion to Christianity. This has informed the decision by the diocese in erecting both the Catechetical Training Institute, for the men, and the Female Catechist Formation Centre. Needless to say that without the catechists the work of the priests would be practically impossible, as they are the agents who minister to the hundreds of small Christians communities that are beyond the reach of the limited priests.

Communications Commission: This commission is the image maker of the diocese. Employing the services of both the clergy, seasoned and veteran journalists, it creates the bridge between that the secular and the spiritual. Guided by the Director of communications, it transmits and disseminates information within the Archdiocese and beyond. It helps to deliver the teachings of the Church and also to assist in transmitting by print and electronic media, the activities of the Church. Catholicism is full of symbols and action that need communication and explanation. Angelo Lameri was right in understanding and stressing the indispensability of communication in the liturgy and life of the Church.¹⁰ The central tool remains her monthly publication, 'The Word of Life Newspaper'. This department keeps the diocese updated with relevant church news from across the globe. In collaboration with the Catholic printing press at the Institute of Pastoral Affairs, the office helps coordinate Church activities through the Catholic Television of Nigeria with the office in the Chancery. This commission helps to sensitize the faithful, in collaboration with Justice and Peace Commission, in the events of crises or other natural calamities. Data processing and coverage of all major events in the church are under the custody of this commission.

Education Commission: This commissioned is saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and promoting the content and standard of all the institutions of learning in the archdiocese. Through education, the Church seeks to affirm human dignity, truth and justice. The aim is to inculcate the highest spiritual, moral, social and academic values in the lives pupils and students. While complimenting government effort, the spreading the gospel through education and the formation of all children through the principle of inclusive education remains paramount to the church. As promoters

¹⁰ Angelo Lameri, *Segni e Simboli: Riti e Misteri, Dimensione Comunicativa della Liturgia* (Milano: Paoline Editoriale Libri, 2012), 32-35.

of discipline and moral formation, the commission has to its credit, 8 primary and 8 secondary schools, and an Intra-diocesan Spiritual Year Centre in Kuru. It has 3 Houses of Formation for the religious, Minor Seminary, and Centre for Female Catechists at Kwall. College of Mary Immaculate, Zawan and St. Theresa Girls College, Jos have been added to the Archdiocesan fleet. These were among the many schools taken over the government in the 1970s.

Family Life Commission: This commission has the task of teaching and protecting the dignity of family life. It gives orientations on the core values of human life and fraternal love. Issues such as marriages and fraternal charity are promoted as against vices such as the modern trend in same sex unions, homosexuality, abortions and euthanasia. The function of the family as the domestic and the building block of the society remains the main focus of this commission.

Health Commission: The spiritual health as well as the physical health forms the complete person. The Catholic Archdiocese envisages this reality in through the provision of relief to those suffering from physical, social, spiritual and psychological illnesses. This is done with the spirit of Christian charity and solidarity. This aspect of the church's development reflects a deliberate attempt by the church to give succour, not only to the soul, but to enlighten the faithful on their responsibility in assisting those who suffer pain. Apart from the provision of hospital and clinics, the diocese has formed and collaborates with groups and institutions such as The Pioneers Total Abstinence, Catholic Action Committee on AIDS/Parish Action Committee on Aids, Orphans and Vulnerable Children and the Orphanage in Zawan. The Archdiocese operates OLA Hospitals, Jos and Zawan; Mandela Clinic Vom, Our Lady of Victory Rehabilitation Centre, Sabon Gidan Kanar, CBCS, Rantya and now a Pax Herbal Clinic, Tudun Wada, Jos.

Justice, Development and Peace/Caritas Commission:

This commission is responsible for the social development of the Church whose beneficiaries are not only Catholics nor Christians, but Muslims and peoples of other faiths. The vision is to promote justice, equality, human dignity and assist people to find fulfilment in life. The JDPC engages in human rights and legal aids, good governance, peace building, care for children, prison ministry, women empowerment programme, emergency preparedness and response training programme, and rural/urban water agricultural development. The organization is non-profit and is registered with Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria with the name “Social Justice and Human Development for peace Initiative” and is open to other partners whose vision is to seek a peaceful world. This commission has already stated conscientizing the faithful on the menace of Covid19 and has assisted some communities where there is yet any government presence.

Pastoral and Liturgical Commission: At the heart of the Church’s life and mission is the model of worship. Following the teachings of Jesus, His life and mandate, the Church demonstrates in visible actions the tenets of the Christian faith, in keeping to the essentials in every practical manner. This arm monitors and checks all liturgical activities in the Archdiocese. It collaborates with the universal Church on new areas or modifications and ensures that the traditional practice of Church worship is maintained at all levels in the Archdiocese. It organizes retreats for the various organizations and societies in the archdiocese, so as to interpret the mind of the church..

Youth Commission: The Archdiocese is not only concerned about the intellectual formation and the earthly achievements of her youths. The church in Jos is much more interested and involved in the moral formation of the youth. This commission deals with guiding

the youth on the path of faith even as they live with the challenges of secularism. It helps the youth to put their talents in the service of the church and humanity. The continuous formation of Catholic Youths extend from early ages up to adulthood. Knowing fully well they belong to a fragile group of people that need to be cared for, guided and tailored to reach their full potentials in life and to attain noble vocations. This ministry of the youths expands to groups like Zumuntan Yan Mata, CYON, NACC, Block Rosary, Cadet, YCS, etc.

MAJOR CHALLENGES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE

In spite of the many achievements recorded by the Archdiocese of Jos, it is nonetheless not without some major challenges.

Poverty: The majority of our faithful, like millions of other Nigerians, fall within the poverty line. This has made it impossible to accomplished certain projects in the Archdiocese. With the recent ideology of donor fatigue, it has become increasingly difficult for the diocese to source for funds from abroad. The maintenance of schools and hospitals has become a challenge. The over dependence on the faithful's offerings to maintain the church and the priests is producing a negative effect in some quarters. The church, under the social arm, can no longer provide the basic infrastructure such as culverts, clinics and affordable schools in rural communities. On the aspect of on-going formation, the diocese finds it difficult to send priests on further studies without external assistance. This sector is now majorly at the mercy of foreign sponsorship such as Aids to Church in Need, (ACN), CEI and other related bodies. The church has been forced to limit admission even to the priestly vocation due to the huge cost involved in the training and maintenance of seminarians.

Insecurity: This is one of the major problems faced by the Jos community. Geographically, Jos is situated between the Muslim North and the Christian South of Nigeria, thus, the diocese finds herself at the cross roads of both religious and political crises. This has had a tremendous set back on many communities leading to the destruction of thousands of lives and property. Churches, houses and communities have been abandoned. There are areas that are still inaccessible to the faithful for fear of being attacked. The impact of the terrorist groups such as the Boko Haram and the Fulani cattle breeder militia. It would be fair to say that the pluralistic nature of the ethnicity in Jos has also helped in making Jos prone to crises.

Syncretism: There are still pockets of the elements of syncretism recorded, especially in some rural areas. The faithful recourse to some traditional means of healing and divination for protection. Some fetish practices, with the hope of combating poverty, has also been recorded. Some rituals of initiations that might be contrary to Christian sentiments are also traceable. In some parts of the diocese, some tenets of traditional beliefs are so strong, that the Catholic faith is compromised. This should be expected of any new church. As Sanneh observed:

Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity was committed to monotheism, but unlike both of them, it makes translation the original medium of its scripture. And translation opened Christianity to secular influence as well as to the risk of polytheism. Christians adopted as their own the names of God of other people. The degree to which Christianity became integrated into a particular culture was important for assessing the success of Christian preaching.¹¹

¹¹ Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 42-43.

CONCLUSION

This write up did not cover the totality of the key players, especially the laity. Nevertheless, it gives a reference point in understanding the philosophy of the Church in Jos. The metropolitan Archdiocese of Jos remains strong despite the challenges. In its hundred years of existence, the church has in no small measure, impacted the lives of millions of people. This cuts across religious, political and ethnic divides. It is still the bridge builder of peace between the various religions and denominations in the country. While it shares the essential elements of the universal Church, the Archdiocese of Jos has never lost all her unique characteristics common to all peoples. As O'Collins observes:

“the human person is essentially symbolic. A being that is both material and spiritual and hence constantly expresses itself in symbolic acts. Human beings reveal themselves to others and to themselves when they perform properly human acts which are always symbolic: speaking, working, dressing, eating, love making, travelling, worshipping, falling ill and dying”.¹²

The church has made its impact on both the educational and medical phases of millions of Nigerians. With its diversity of cultures and the best climate in country, Jos remains opened to the world, little wonder then it is being referred to as *Jesus Our Saviour* (J.O.S).

¹² Gerard O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, 40.

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BRUNO NAANLONG YENKWO¹

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC MISSIONARY AND PASTORAL ACTIVITIES IN THE DIOCESE OF SHENDAM – NIGERIA

Abstract

Celem niniejszej pracy jest próba zbadania, w jaki sposób Kościół katolicki wypełniał swoją misję w Shendam w ciągu ostatnich 100 lat. W tym celu zostaną przywołane wybrane fakty historyczne, które pozwolą zrozumieć i spojrzeć na omawiany temat z szerszej perspektywy. Odwołanie się do historii jest narzędziem nie tylko do zrozumienia obecnej sytuacji Kościoła w Shendam, ale także do wskazania drogi ku przyszłości, innymi słowy, do próby odpowiedzi na pytanie, jak Kościół powinien żyć i służyć w nadchodzących czasach.

Keywords: Shendam, Diocese, Qua'an Pan, Church, mission, Bishop, laity, Gamai

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INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church in Shendam diocese inherited the mentality of the early western missionaries, which does almost everything for the church. This kind of situation created an atmosphere where the rest of the believers, especially the laity, assume a passive role because the priest can do everything, and they can simply follow without having to think for themselves. But this perspective is beginning to change with the creation of Shendam Diocese in 2007, with the laity assuming full responsibility in assisting the Church. It is also time for the church in Shendam diocese to examine critically the prevailing situation among its members and to know that what was considered to be only for the Bishop and the Clergy is now the common task of all Christians.

SHENDAM

Shendam is one of the many thousands of towns of Northern Nigeria, situated in the Lowlands of Plateau State, Nigeria. Shendam local government area is in Plateau South Senatorial District alongside Mikang, Langtang North, Langtang South, Qua'an Pan and Wase local government areas. The Local Government has an area of 2,477 km² and a population of 208,017 at the 2006 census. The local government area is bounded to the North by Pankshin and Mikan local government areas, to the south by Taraba and Nasarawa States, and to the west by Quan'an Pan local government area. Shendam local Government area is predominantly inhabited by the Gamai people². The Chief of Shendam is known as the Long Gamai,

² "Shendam", <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shendam> (accessed 31.1.2021); "History of the Church in Northern Nigeria", <https://sma.ie/history-of-the-church-in-northern-nigeria>. (accessed 31.1.2021).

a title that has been in existence far back into the shadows of past centuries, the first recorded long Gamai was in 1778 and that was before civilization and colonisation in Nigeria³. The Gamai land is fertile and well-watered and is the basis for the Goemai being an agricultural society.

It is also good to know that Shendam has a special place in the history of the Church in Nigeria: it is the very first Roman Catholic mission station established North of the Rivers Niger and Benue. This happened on 12.02.1907⁴.

FIRST MISSIONARIES IN SHENDAM

The beginnings of what is now the diocese of Shendam, can be traced to 12.02.1907 when Rev. Fathers Oswald Waller, born in Benwihhr in the region of Alsace in Eastern France on the 24.01.1866⁵. Waller was an experienced and a veteran missionary who spend the first six years of his priesthood (1882-98) in Egypt. There he had gained a great interest in Agriculture which was later to prove immensely useful in Northern Nigeria. In 1898 he was sent to Dahomey where he established a new mission in Abomey in 1902. This forty-year-old man was asked to lead the group to the North by Bishop Pellet because of his experience. He accepted the challenge

³ *Our traditional religion better than some religions – Miskoom Martin Mudu’utrie Shaldas, Long Gamai of Gamai*, “Punch Newspaper”, 04.08.2018, <https://punchng.com/our-traditional-religion-better-than-some-religions-miskoom-martin-muduutrie-shaldas-long-gamai-of-gamai/> (accessed 15.03.2019).

⁴ C.O. Edwards, *In the Beginning* (1906-1934), in: J.F. Jemkur & O. Udeozo (eds.), *The Light: 100 years of Catholicism in Jos Archdiocese, Nigeria*, Jos: Fab Educational Books, p. 51.

⁵ E.O. O’Connor, *SMA Missionaries of Northern Nigeria 1907-1934*, Ibadan: Intec Printers limited 2007, p. 4.

and began preparation immediately in the mid-1906⁶. Accompanying Fr. Waller were two much younger men. Joseph Mauren, from Maastricht in Holland, born on 20.01.1882 and join the seminary on the 01.10.1899 was ordained 12.06.1904⁷, he was only 24 years old and Ernest Belin who was born at Dinard in North Western France in 1881 and was ordained a Priest in 1906⁸. He had spent three years in Algeria before coming to Shendam⁹. All of them were priests of the Society of African Missions (SMA) who first arrived Shendam, their headquarters of which was in French city of Lyons, they were the first Catholic missionaries to establish a mission station North of the river Niger and Benue. This foundation was in Shendam in the then protectorate of Northern Nigeria. The mission station in Shendam marked the real beginning of Catholicism in Northern Nigeria. The instructions they had been given by Mgr. Paul Pellet, their superior General 1907-1914¹⁰ as they depart Lyons was: *Found a mission somewhere between the fifteenth degree North, the Cameroons, the right bank of the Benue and the left bank of the Niger*¹¹.

THE EXPANSION OF THE MISSION TERRITORY

The early beginning of the mission in Shendam was not easy task for the missionaries, it was so discouraging but they never get discouraged. The missionaries did not consider the mission as a waste

⁶ J.P. Walsh, *The Development and Consolidation of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Jos, 1907-1978* [M.A. thesis], University of Birmingham 1983, p. 26.

⁷ SMA ETAT 1950-1951, Archivio Missioni Africane, Rome, 2A32, p. 168.

⁸ E.O. O'Connor, *SMA Missionaries of Northern Nigeria 1907-1934*, op. cit., p. 8.

⁹ J.P. Walsh, *The Development and Consolidation...*, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁰ SMA ETAT 1950-1951, Archivio Missioni Africane, Rome 2A32, p. 4.

¹¹ J.P. Walsh, *The Growth of the Catholic Church in The Diocese of Jos 1907 – 1978: the contribution of the society of African Mission to Its Development*, Iperu-Remo: Ambassadors Publications 1993, p. 20.

of time despite the difficulties they encountered. Most of their time at the initial state was spend on tasks that have nothing to do with preaching the Gospel, but they were farming and herding sheep. They persevered in deep faith to witness to the Lord by their presence among the Gamai people. Despite the poor response in Shendam after the first Mass was said in Shendam on the 17.02.1909, Waller decided to open another mission on 17.03.1909 at Demshin (25 kilometres away) to be staffed by two newcomers, Adolphe Rouselet and Theophile Boulanger, whom he requested that they come to Shendam because of the mission. His appeals to Lyons to send both men and finance continue and resulted in Alphonse Schahl joining him in Shendam in December 1909 and George Fischer in January 1910. By 1910 Shendam had three other villages which were visited by the Priests from Shendam: *Shagan*, *Birbitt* and *Turignan*. In addition, Waller had visited the Bauchi Plateau in 1911 and also responded to appeals from Pankshin that year. Fr. Waller got a letter from Pankshin inviting him to establish a mission there¹². Fr. Waller goes to Bauchi province to look for a favourable place to establish a new mission¹³. Fr. Waller could make no promise to opening a mission in these places because of the shortage of priests for any new mission. This situation would continue for many years ahead but, eventually, when the Irish province of the SMA were given responsibility for the Northern territory in 1929 more priests were assigned¹⁴.

¹² *Mission Coutumier Shendam*, 16.06.1911, available in: Society of African Mission Archives, Cork, Ireland.

¹³ C.O. Edward, *In the beginning (1906-1934)*, op. cit., p. 68.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

THE FIRST CHURCH IN SHENDAM

The first chapel to be built for public worship in Shendam was opened on Easter Sunday, Sunday, 27.03.1910, and the Mass was celebrated by Fr. Waller. It was an act of faith to set about the building of a chapel, however small and simple, when the only worshipers were the freed slaves' children who were living in the mission. Unfortunately, this building had to be replaced within a few years with a new structure which was opened on 26.01.1917. This later building remained in use until the 1950's¹⁵.

By 1914, the missionaries began to see the fruit of their mission work. Fr. Connor Edward in his article noted that, there was a great rejoicing in the mission on 10.06.1914 when the first Christian marriage was solemnised in Shendam between one of the freed slave children, Pedro (Abgullah) and a local girl, Josephine, who was baptised, confirmed and made her first holy communion on that day, Fr. Schahl performed the wedding ceremony. The mission diary expressed the hopes of the missionaries: This is the first Christian family which the mission has. It is the accumulated fruit of seven years' work. We pray God this young family will be faithful to their promises of baptism and marriage, May He also give them numerous families which will multiply the children of the mission and the Church. And that he will allow this marriage to serve as an example to others and so we will have the consolation to see many Christian families around us¹⁶.

The Shendam Fathers did not lack faith and, slow and painful though their progress in their work was bearing fruit. They were absorbed in the life of the people at all levels and trusted God to bring the blessings in his own time. Reminiscing in later years, Schahl had

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

this to say about his time in Shendam: *I confess that life in Shendam was hard, but I was happy. Shendam was a true paradise for me*¹⁷.

EVANGELIZATION METHODS ADOPTED BY THE MISSIONARIES TO SHENDAM

The early missionaries upon their arrival to Shendam adopted some methods that effectively helped them to evangelize the people in this new mission area. Some of these methods include the following:

a. Education

The mission in Gamai land had little success until the school was established. The opening of schools was Lumley's method of conversion to Catholicism. The teachers and catechists posted to the schools knew well why they were there, so prayers, catechism and other religious activities were seriously taken. These schools were visited to supervised and encourage them in matters of religion. A Teachers Training Centre in Shendam in 1933 continued to produce teachers to meet the demands in the expansion of Primary schools.

According to the research work of B.F. Bawa, she said that:

Evangelization through schools was a common strategy which the mission adopted not only in Nigeria but in Africa owing to the movement restriction against certain types of evangelization¹⁸.

She further states that in Northern Nigeria, the demand for reading and writing skills gave that strategy an added importance which the Catholic Church was quick to utilize to the Maximum¹⁹.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 73.

¹⁸ Cf. B.F. BAWA, *The Growth of the Prefecture 1934-1954*, p. 99.

¹⁹ B.F. Bawa, *The Growth of the Prefecture 1934-1954*, in J.F. Jemkur & O. Ude-ozo (eds.), *The Light: 100 years of Catholicism in Jos Archdiocese, Nigeria*, Jos: Fab Educational Books, p. 99.

b. The Use of Local Language in Teaching the Faith

Out of necessity the French Fathers of SMA all spoke Gamai and Hausa only when they began to move to other areas. Even the early Irish SMA spoke Gamai and communicated well²⁰. Fr. Sirlinger was a gifted man – a builder, pastor and translator who worked in different missions: Shendam, Jos, Kaduna, Zaria, Zawan, Kagoro and Kwande until he left Nigeria in 1952. He translated the catechism into various local languages: He saw the need for Northern Indigenous religious publications as well as those in Hausa if the church were to have any impact on the older generation of Gamai. His hard work produced a Gamai grammar and Dictionary in 1936, which he used to produce Gamai Catechism in 1939 and the life of the Saints in 1941²¹. He also produced a Catechism on Catholic doctrine in Ngas in 1948, Gworok 1949, Catechism and Sunday Gospel in Birom 1950, Catholic Hymns in Hausa in 1952 and Catechism in Eggon²². And had the Sunday readings in Hausa printed. Many of his publications have laid the foundation for present literary and translation works in the tribes listed above²³.

c. Hospitals

The hospitals began to play active role in Lumley's evangelization. He was fortunate to have the assistance of OLA and St. Louis Sisters in Jos and Shendam to provide the services required. Priests were encouraged to open small dispensaries in their stations believing that this would establish friendship and understanding enough to pave way for evangelization²⁴. Fr. Monpoint opened a dispensary

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 115.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 115.

²² J.P. Walsh, *The Development and Consolidation...*, op. cit., p. 277.

²³ C.O. Edward, *In the beginning (1906-1934)*, op. cit., p. 82.

²⁴ B.F. Bawa, *The Growth of the Prefecture 1934-1954*, op. cit., p. 110.

in kwande one of the outstations of Shendam, where a mission had been opened in 1932. Fr. Sirlinger had even attended a course on Medical care in Kano in 1929 to improve the ability of the Clinic²⁵. The hospital was used to spread the church through concrete actions and in this way, the Sisters won many converts for the Church even though the medical treatment was not a precondition for conversion.

SHENDAM WAS CREATED A DIOCESE FROM JOS IN 2007

The Catholic diocese of Shendam was erected in June 2007 from the catholic Diocese of Jos and became the six Diocese of the province of Jos, Plateau State Nigeria with Bishop James Daman as the first Bishop. He (Bishop James Daman) died on January 12, 2015 and Bishop Philip Dung was appointed in 2017. Shendam Diocese is raised to the level of a diocese as a result of long year's presence and pastoral service in the area which is located in the southern part of Plateau state, north central Nigeria. Covering six local Government areas: Langtang south, Langtang North, Wase, Mikang, Quan'pan, and Shendam local Governments.

At the time of its creation in 2007, the New Diocese had a total land area of about 12,496 square kilometres with an estimated population of 980,810. In the region, the Catholics are the majority in the sense that their population is around 149,051 with members living in 24 parishes and one Chaplaincy. At the time of its creation as a diocese, there were 30 diocesan priests, 6 religious priests, around 7 religious sisters, 16 major seminarians, 29 minor Seminarians and 728 catechists who are actively involved in different kinds of pastoral

²⁵ *Mission Coutumier Shendam 1907-1949*, Archivio Missioni, Africane, 3 A 24, Roma 1935, tr. J.P. Walsh.

activities²⁶. Today, the result is impressive with the increase in vocation and the creation of parishes. The major ethnic groups are Pan, Gamai, Tarok, Tal, Piapung, Doka, Kanem, Muyong with a variety of minority ethnic communities.

ANALYSIS AND REALITY OF THE NEW DIOCESE

Presently the Diocese (statistics from the year 2019) has a total population of 1,498,799; catholic population 192,770; number of priests 49; female religious 11; male religious 3; major seminarians 48; minor seminarians 19 and number of parishes 29 with Bishop Philip Dung as the Bishop²⁷.

Geographical situation

At the creation of the diocese of Shendam the geography does not so much change, but there are a few aspects in the geographical position of our diocese which might have to be taken into consideration. The fact that Shendam had borders with Nasarawa, Jos and Taraba have had influence in the movement of people in the recent past, to get supplies. Most of its sons and daughters are working in Jos the state capital and therefore, only the farmers and the old people are remaining at home, it has also caused a flow, in both directions, ideas, pastoral approaches and religious music.

The population is not much compared to the state capital, most of the workers move to Jos for work, students only stay in Shendam for primary and secondary schools, most of them after the secondary school; they go to Jos for the higher institution. Thank God for

²⁶ Agenzia Fides, Africa, Nigeria: *The Pope Create Diocese of Shendam and appoint First Bishop*, 4/6/2017 www.fides.org. (accessed 30.03.2019).

²⁷ *Catholic Dioceses of Shendam 2019 Liturgical Calendar, Directory and Diary*, Jos: Pastoral Institute Press 2019, p. 10.

the new college of education that is owned by the catholic diocese of Shendam. Many students are now applying to study back home in the diocese.

Sociological situation in the Diocese

The variety of ethnic groups is a fact in the Diocese – poses a challenge from the point of view of languages. The liturgy is habitually celebrated in English and Hausa which is not yet the original local dialect of the people, some will prefer to listen to the word of God in their original mother tongue, but others will complain of seclusion. Presently, translations of the Christian prayers in the various local dialects are beginning to come up aside the one the early missionaries did. These varieties of cultures offer, nevertheless, a good opportunity for enrichment through the interaction of different cultures and having its own challenges which includes:

- a. Relationship among ethnic groups: At the church level no major conflict is apparent for now. The cultural pluralism which in itself is a diocesan wealth, but recently some politicians are using the people for their own selfish gain. Example of such is the just concluded election of March 2019, when some politicians tried using the people to cause confusion and that really brought some misunderstanding among members of the same church.
- b. Rural realities: The Diocese of Shendam is an agricultural diocese, all the seven local government are farming communities, they farm watermelons, Rice, Yam, corn, Millet and so many farm in vary large quantity and sells out to other states. The climate change is really affecting production in the area, some season the rains will be much while in other seasons it will be less, and it affect the farms.
- c. Another serious problem the rural farmers are encountering is the herdsmen invasion of their lands with their cows, so-

metimes the cows will destroy almost everything in the farm. Furthermore, there is the challenge of farm inputs, example some persons farm rice in 2015 and were waiting for the government harvester to come and harvest it for them, before the harvester finally arrived the rice got spoil in the farms.

- d. Education: In the past after the collection of the school by the government, the area has experienced a dramatic reduction in the number of students, the government schools sometimes go on strikes. At the creation of the Diocese of Shendam the diocese created school like the, Christ the King Collage (C.KC.C), Fatima Girls Secondary school and Oswald Waller College of education. With countless secondary and primary schools in most of the parishes in the diocese.
- e. Health: In most of the villages, many people have no access to primary health care due to lack of money, lack of transport as some of the roads are not accessible, scarcity of operative health centres and lack of medicines. In case of emergency, it is difficult to get the medical workers to attempt to the sick. Today the diocese has constructed a new medical health facility centre to cater for the sick.
- f. Urban realities: there is no big urban city in the diocese, most of the local government headquarters are now considered big cities, and there is movement of people from the villages to the local government headquarters which is becoming very crowded day by day. The Masses in the main local government headquarters are overcrowded with people and sometimes the priests find it difficult to attain to the need of all his parishioners because of the numbers.
- g. Family Structure: The community still maintains the traditional family institution, the clan system and extended family where the family members stay together in the same family compound.

Economic situation

A lot of our youth are still battling with the problem of unemployment, many have finished school but there is no work to do to take care of their basic need, some because of frustration join bad friends and commit all kinds of crime. There is no sufficient cash flow most especially during raining reason and food stuffs in the raining season are costly. We also experience famine occasionally when there is no rain and the farm product got spoilt on the farm at times.

Religious situation

In the catholic diocese of Shendam there are many religious groups, the Christians, Muslims and the African Traditional Worshipers. In the whole area of the diocese of Shendam it used to be only Catholic, *Ecwa*²⁸ and *Cocin*²⁹, but now we have many protestant and Pentecostal Churches, and arguments are arising every day among the members as to which church is superior to the other. The number of Catholic is growing seriously and almost every Saturday we have baptism in the different parishes.

At the inception of the diocese, it organized and restructured the diocesan Pastoral council beginning from the Zone, Parish, and the Diocese. We now have four female congregation: The 'New evangelization Sisters', the 'Franciscan Sisters', the 'Dominican Sisters' and the 'Fatima Sisters'. We also have a male religious congregation, the 'Claratians Missionaries'.

²⁸ ECWA – Evangelical Church of west African.

²⁹ COCIN – Church of Christ in Nigeria.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW DIOCESE

At the inception of the Diocese in 2007, the major preoccupation of the diocese was to set and put all structures for smooth running of the diocese, the name of the main office is ‘*Catholic Diocese of Shendam Secretariate*’ under which we have the office for social and pastoral affairs. The office was established with the mandate to coordinate and facilitate all pastoral, social and development activities of the Catholic Church in the Diocese. The overall goal and objective of this office is promoting “human integral development” which implies the development of people both materially and spiritually.

The Secretariat has two main wings (Departments) under it. One is the Pastoral Activities Coordinating wing, which deals with Pastoral activities of the Church in general. The other wing is the Social and development Coordination wing, which mainly deals with the Socio-economic and development promotion activities of the Church within the jurisdiction of Shendam Diocese.

The Pastoral Coordinating Office: The Pastoral Coordinating Office organizes all the pastoral activities in the Diocese and works in close collaboration with parish priests, religious men and women, catechists, youths, young catholic workers, and laity counsels. The Pastoral Office organizes training programs and on-going formations at the Diocesan level to different pastoral agents and groups in the Diocese. Particularly, some trainings and awareness programs are held in each parishes and zones where four to five parishes are grouped together for pastoral reasons. Besides, the young generation to grow in the faith, the pastoral office organizes conferences at the diocesan and parish level.

Justice and Peace: The department of pastoral activities coordination facilitates the coordination of social justice and peace promotion program activities of the Diocese through awareness raising training workshops on basic as well as specific human right issues based on

‘Catholic Social Teachings’. The program is aimed at bringing about an integral peace or implanting the culture of peace through promoting spirituality, true love, justice, peace, cooperation, solidarity and development for a meaningful social life in the diocesan communities. In addition to the above activities, the pastoral office co-opted some parish priests of the diocese to help in the promotion of conflict resolution and the peace and justice commission based on the Gospel values is working to create a harmonious situation in the society.

Education: The new Diocese still works in the field of education just like the early missionaries to eradicate illiteracy and create a good future for the society. The catholic Diocese of Shendam has a college of education now, many secondary and primary schools. The education office works in collaboration with different diocesan and religious men and women who are actively involved in the education of the younger generation at kindergarten, primary, secondary, and high school level. The education office serves as an intermediate between the different schools held by the Diocese, the government and with some sponsors who help the schools financially.

Youth ministry: Knowing that the youths are the future of the church, the Youth Commission invests a lot on the youth. Different kinds of formations and trainings are organized for them at the diocesan as well as at the zonal level. The commission facilitates meetings, experience sharing and festivals for the youth to consolidate their faith and lead them to be good Christian citizens. The commission organizes different kinds of competitions like games, sports, spiritual songs and questions and answers. The youth commission office monitors youth ministry activities and closely follows up their proper implementation in parishes.

Lay People Cooperation in pastoral activity: Each parish in the diocese is guide by the parish priest and the laity pastoral chairman. Laity council have different kind of tasks and responsibilities in the Diocese and parish. In the diocese and parish, we have different spiritual associations and the laity council work closely with the

different associations in the parish like the youth, women, and men associations etc. At the diocesan level, the laity council monitors and evaluates the different activities of each parish, visits the different parishes in the Diocese and fosters the good achievements. Hence, the laity council at the pastoral level organizes meetings for experience sharing between parishes in the Diocese. The pastoral coordinating office evaluates the activities of parish pastoral councils in the parishes and gives directions to be implemented.

Catechetical Unit: The Pastoral Coordinating Office closely works with catechists. In fact, catechetical ministry is one of the main agents of evangelization. The Diocese, with the close collaboration of the representatives of catechists, organise various kinds of trainings on different issues. Moreover, the Diocese prepares action plans for catechists and then evaluates the achievements of the goals. Catechists have also their association. This association helps them to organize themselves better for better pastoral work; they meet at the diocesan, deanery, and Parish level. They have annual retreat every year for one week likewise in all parishes they have parish retreat.

Bible Week: The Catechetical commission prepares bible week each year, and then diffuses it to all the parishes through booklet as a guide. Through this program, many have the opportunity to deepen their biblical knowledge. The topics are prepared by a bible expert (Exegete) in the Catholic Secretariat at Abuja to the entire Diocese and the diocesan coordinator shares it to the parishes. We do this bible week every year as a weeklong program and the people are always looking forward to the program.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE DIOCESE OF SHENDAM

The Diocese of Shendam has designed a strategic plan at the 2012 general Assembly to be implemented in the subsequent years. The Diocese has planned to pursue the implementation of the strategic goals in the plan. These goals include: Improving the ministry of Catechesis, promotion of lay ministries, ensuring effective communication system, empowering the faithful for self-reliance, expand the existence and evangelical work of the diocese, strengthen the various ministries of the church like youth ministry, family program and to strengthen the Justice and peace intervention.

The priests and laity are tasked to enhanced cooperation for an integral human development in the Diocese: Here the strategic objectives include, improving access to quality education, reduce vulnerability to disease and provide curative health services, and working hard to make the newly created outstations and pastoral areas functional.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this work, we mentioned the great effort of the early missionaries to Shendam, their great pastoral care, direction, sacrifices, animation and orientation, their humility and hard work not only greatly encouraged the parishioners but have also practically made them to be the true centre of unity and oneness, as well as point of reference among the entire community. It is true also that, during the time of the missionaries, the society was not as complicated as we have it today. Today, the challenges due to cultural and social changes caused by the impact of external cultures, globalization,

and individualism is affecting our society and the Diocese is also not left out.

To compliment this efforts of the early missionaries, proper and good cultural training should be taught right from the family to the wider society. Small Christian communities can be a better place to educate children to be well informed about the faith. Therefore, basic ecclesial communities should be formed in all our parishes and our people should be guided and motivated to pray and participate in the joy and sufferings of one another, sharing with the poor and the needy and fight the right of the oppressed and the dehumanised in the locality. The people need to be encouraged to create the new culture of honesty, trustworthiness, and accountability. This according to Lumen Gentium 31 would “*Sanctify the world from within like a leaven*” and thank God that today we can confidently say that a new consciousness is spreading slowly among the people of different religions on the need to get united with a view to promote peace, unity, and development in the Diocese. This write-up has not in any way claim to give a comprehensive and historical view of the Diocese but gives us just a brief history of the Catholic missionary and pastoral activities in the Diocese of Shendam-Nigeria.

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LOUIS MBUYEH¹

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: STRIDES AND PATHWAYS FOR EVANGELIZATION IN CAMEROON

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia aktualną sytuację Kościoła katolickiego w Kamerunie. Składają się na nią z jednej strony osiągnięcia, z drugiej zaś wyzwania ewangelizacyjne. Należy rozpocząć od krótkiej charakterystyki omawianego obszaru oraz przeglądu historycznych wydarzeń i przełomowych momentów. Szczegóły istotne dla rozwoju Kościoła zostaną przedstawione bardziej precyzyjnie, a główni bohaterowie scharakteryzowani. Większe znaczenie mają obecne wysiłki Kościoła w Kamerunie, który osiągnął dojrzałość, aby nadać właściwy charakter swemu posłannictwu. Chodzi tu o tak zwany „nowy sposób bycia Kościołem” lub, mówiąc prościej, o nową ewangelizację dla Afryki. W centrum uwagi znajduje się ewangeli-

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zacja Afryki przez Afrykańczyków lub *mutatis mutandis* Kamerunu przez Kameruńczyków. Ta nowa droga nie potępia poprzedniej czy „starej drogi”, ale pozostaje wdzięczna za pokorne, odważne i owocne początki, szukając jednocześnie sposobów odpowiedzi na współczesne wyzwania o wielorakim charakterze, począwszy od pluralizmu kulturowego, społecznego, politycznego, moralnego i religijnego, a skończywszy na sekularyzmie. Artykuł kreśli obraz historii radości i smutków, ofiar i wymiany darów, a także ciężkiej pracy, która musi trwać, aby ludzie mogli być uświęceni, a Bóg uwielbiony.

Keywords: Church/Christian, Faith/Faithful, Africa, Cameroon, Mission/Missionaries, Evangelization

INTRODUCTION

During one of the post resurrection appearances to his close disciples, Jesus gave them the mandate to go out and make disciples of every nation, to baptize and to teach the observance of the commandments (cf. Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:47; Jn 20:20-23). This divine command became a reality for the people of Cameroon towards the end of the second millennium. In spite of its seeming lateness, the presence of the Church in this part of the world has brought hope to those who were without it. Besides the grace and mercy of God that inspired and sustained this good work, the faith and love for mission in the early evangelizers deserves a special mention. One may also ask whether the to-be-evangelized natives were not without natural and cultural dispositions to make for a receptive attitude to the good news. In other words, is it not possible that there were already seeds of the gospel in the pre-Christian peoples of Cameroon thanks to which, at the reception of the gospel of Christ the seeds sprouted to bear abundant fruit. If yes, what remains to be

done today so that this good work may perfectly conform to the will of the Lord of mission? This article aims at reviewing the steps of the unfolding of the story of faith in Cameroon. From the early beginnings till the present times, a panorama of significant periods, events and persons that have kept the flame of faith glowing. Landmarks that have kept the flame glowing. It also pays a closer attention to the areas that still need the clear light of the gospel message which is central to the role of the Church and her evangelizing mission today. In one word, locating Cameroon on the globe, presenting a brief history of the faith, presenting the current day lights and shadows of the work of evangelization is central for the new evangelization and researchers that enhance it. A conclusion and final bibliography mark the end of the considerations.

Description of the Area

Cameroon is a coastal country of Africa, located at the hinge of the continent, and lies east of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered to the west by Nigeria, to the north by Chad, and to the east by the Central African Republic. To the south, it is surrounded by three countries, namely, the Republic of Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea.² It is a culturally diverse country with approximately 25,876,380 inhabitants.³ French and English are the two official languages spoken in the Francophone and Anglophone regions, respectively. Besides, the nearly 250 ethnic groups that make up the entire that the territory identify themselves not only by land, customs and traditions, but more so by their languages.⁴ With

² Cf. O.C. Ruppel, K.Ruppel-Schlichting, *Cameroon in a Nutshell-Human and Natural Environment, Historical Overview and Legal Setup*, in: C. R. Oliver, and Emmanuel D. K., (eds), *Environmental law and policy in Cameroon: Towards making Africa the tree of life*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Munich 2018, p. 51.

³ Cf. The World Bank, *Population, total-Cameroon* <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=CM> (accessed 03.02.21).

⁴ Cf. O.C. Ruppel, K.Ruppel-Schlichting, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

regard to relationship with foreigners, the Germans were the first colonial masters between 1884 and 1916. Britain and France took over from 1919 to 1960/61, but in separate regions in accordance with the joint annexation agreement in the post-German period.⁵ The post-independence and reunification of the country saw the maintenance of the colonial languages and colonial sub-cultures in the various regions of the country. Hence, Cameroon is linguistically referred to as a bilingual country.

A Brief Historical Survey

Recorded accounts of the presence of the Catholic Faith in Cameroon situate the event towards the end of the 19th century, with the official arrival of the German Pallotine missionaries. On the 18.03.1890, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith created the Apostolic Prefecture of Cameroon and appointed Msgr. Heinrich Vieter the Apostolic Prefect. Consequently, Heinrich, together with a team of companions took off from Germany and landed in Cameroon on the 25.10 same year. Their first mission was in a neighbourhood of the present day city of Edea named Marienberg. There, the missionaries erected a Shrine dedicated to Our Lady, Queen of the Apostles,⁶ thereby entrusting the new mission under the patronage to the Blessed Mother, who remained united heart and mind with the Apostles after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (cf. Acts 1:14). A great setback was the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 which, among others, led to the expulsion of the missionaries the country. The faith survived through the instrumentality of enthusiastic catechists and lay persons for a few

⁵ M. Cadwell, *Cameroon: colonial past and present frictions*, 31.01.2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-colonial-past-and-present-frictions/a-37344849> (accessed 15.01.2021).

⁶ Esua F. C., *Preface in: Engelbert, Mveng, Jean-Paul Messina (eds), The Church in Cameroon: 100 Years of Evangelization*, Conference Episcopale Nationale du Cameroun, Yaounde, 1990, pp. 27-33.

years till after the war, when new groups of missionaries came in to take on the task of evangelization. These missionaries comprised mainly of the Sacred Heart Missionaries and the Holy Ghost Fathers.⁷ The ensuing decades saw the influx of many other congregations of priests, consecrated men and women, who helped the faith to grow from strength to strength. In the present day English speaking part of Cameroon, the arrival of the Mill Hill Missionaries in 1922⁸ deserve a special mention. They worked for the training of the local clergy who became their close collaborators and, at the moment, have become the main evangelizers of their fellow nationals. The pastoral visits of Pope John Paul II (1985 and 1995) and of Pope Benedict XVI in 1997 gave added impetus to the growth of the Church in Cameroon.

Catholics constitute 38% of the entire population of the country⁹. At the moment, there are up to 26 dioceses in the entire Republic of Cameroon, spread across the five ecclesiastical provinces of Bamenda, Douala, Yaounde, Bertoua and Garoua. The Bishops who stand at the helm of the evangelization in these ecclesiastical circumscriptions count up to 30. Presently, only one bishop is a foreign missionary. The diocese of Kumbo, for example, has Bishop George Nkuo as her chief shepherd, closely assisted by 98 priests (in 37 parishes and other diocesan institutions), 253 members in the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life¹⁰.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Mill Hill Missions, *Where we Work*, <https://millhillmissionaries.com/where-we-work/> (accessed 05.02.2021).

⁹ Cf. Index Mundi, *Cameroon Religions*, <https://www.indexmundi.com/Cameroon/religions.html>, (accessed 03.02.2021).

¹⁰ Kumbo Diocese, *Pastoral Commissions at Diocesan Level*, <https://www.dioceseofkumbo.org/pastoral-commissions/>, (accessed 15.01.2021).

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY: CURRENT MISSIONARY ENDEAVOUR

The era of the foreign missionaries, principally Europeans has given way to the evangelization of Africa by Africans. This is very true of Cameroon, in spite of a few exceptional cases.¹¹ The centenary celebrations of the faith at national and local levels beginning in 1990, was a clear sign that the missionaries had, to a great extent, achieved their goal, namely, maturity in the faith and a self-ministering Church. The native clergy whose vocations the foreign missionaries had encouraged and nurtured to reach ordination, lived and worked together with their mentors as a way of effecting a smooth transition to the new era. Most of these priests became Bishops, Parish Priests and heads of institutions which were previously run by the Europeans. Pope John Paul II, on the growth of the Church in Africa beautifully wrote:

The fact that in the course of almost two centuries the number of African Catholics has grown quickly is an outstanding achievement by any standard. In particular, the building up of the Church on the Continent is confirmed by facts such as the noteworthy and rapid increase in the number of ecclesiastical circumscriptions, the growth of a native clergy, of seminarians and candidates for Institutes of Consecrated Life, and the steady increase in the network of catechists, whose contribution to the spread of the Gospel among the African peoples is well known. Finally, of fundamental importance is the high percentage of indigenous Bishops who now make up the Hierarchy on the Continent.¹²

¹¹ Some significant parts the North and Eastern regions still have a strong presence of foreign missionaries at the helm of pastoral ministry. It is there that one of the Bishops is a foreigner.

¹² John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Africa"*, no. 38, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html (accessed: 05.02.2021).

This shift brought along with it a novelty of the involvement of lay pastoral workers in the task of evangelization. In function with the ecclesiology shaped by the Second Vatican Council, this pastoral outlook is given the name of collaborative ministry, quite alive in many dioceses of Cameroon, especially in the five dioceses of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province.

The collaborative ministry style is clearly articulated a local document titled: *Pastoral Plan: Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province*. It aims at implementing the provisions of John Paul II's Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of his Holiness *Ecclesia in Africa*,¹³ fruit of the 1999 7th Catholic Convention for the dioceses in this region. With regard to structure and content, the Pastoral Plan targets the formation of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and Commissions.

The SCCs are smaller units of Christians of a particular Mission Station¹⁴ often dotted among non-Catholics in a given neighbourhood. Ideally, the SCCs meet weekly to share the word of God based on The Seven Steps of Gospel Sharing. They also discuss matters affecting their Christian calling, especially works of charity and pastoral affairs at that level. To encourage the functioning of these Christian meetings, some parish Sunday publications carry the slogan: "It is optional to belong to a Prayer Group, but it is not optional to belong to a Small Christian Community". The Commissions are the various services offered at all levels of the pastoral organigramme, deeply rooted in the Small Christian Communities. The basic criteria for membership is talent, interest, and election. The leaders are chosen

¹³ Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province, *Pastoral Plan: Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province* Arise Press, Bamenda, 2009, p. 1.

¹⁴ The basic structure of Centres of worship in my country is not parishes but mission stations, and in most places, a number of these stations (each identified by a church or its equivalent) make up a parish, the headquarters of which is a mission station as well, known as the Main Mission Station, and there the priest(s) reside.

in pairs to render services in the various areas of human life, for e.g., liturgy, health, education, social welfare, family life, etc.¹⁵

According to the spirituality of the *Pastoral Plan*, the involvement of lay men and women in pastoral action does not mean to downplay the role of ordained ministers. On the contrary, it is meant to facilitate it. Lay people can reach places priests would not be able to get into, and while there bring the good news with them. They are also able to minister to the people according to their gifts, for e.g., catechetical instruction, pastoral counselling, marriage preparation and marriage enrichment programmes, etc. The Pastoral Plan is operating for more than a decade now *ad experimentum* and will hopefully become the identical mark of pastoral action for the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province of Cameroon and beyond.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE CHURCH IN CAMEROON

In spite of the positive developments or achievements of the Church in Cameroon, a closer look into the situation of the country reveals a list of areas calling for attention. They are privilege areas for a new evangelization and a motive for pastoral action, albeit, some of them quite shocking.

Bribery and Corruption

‘Bribery’ refers to “the act of promising, giving, receiving, or agreeing to receive money or some other item with the corrupt aim

¹⁵ According to the *Pastoral Plan*, there are up to 19 different areas of human life which these services aim at attending to at their own level. Cf. Kumbo Diocese, *Pastoral Commissions at Diocesan Level*, <https://www.dioceseofkumbo.org/pastoral-commissions/>, (accessed 15.01.2021).

of influencing a public official in the discharge of his official duty.”¹⁶ Similarly, ‘corruption’ is “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.”¹⁷ Both situations are prevalent in Cameroon and very often go hand in glove. In the public sector, corruption damages government’s capacity to assume the discharge of services and the handling of poverty-related challenges. In the socio-economic sphere, it widens the social inequalities and class differences in an alarming manner.¹⁸ According Orock and Mbuago, the world bank reported in 2006 that 77% of firms operating in Cameroon undertook to make informal payments to public officials so as to facilitate their operation and 50.81% expected to give gifts to tax officials for similar benefits.¹⁹ These immorality of these seemingly good practices can only be measured by the far reaching consequences on the lives and business of the ordinary people. They will need to pay higher prices for the goods they consume or trade with. With its rippling effect, the end result is the widening of the gap between the poor and the rich. As a matter of fact, bribery and corruption is present in almost all the aspects of human life: social, economic, educational and health. Everyone needs to take responsibility rather than play the blame-game.²⁰ The Church cannot afford to be indifferent to this reality. To be prophetic and authentic to her mission, it is important for pastoral

¹⁶ *Bribery*, in: Augustyn A., et alii (eds), *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/bribery> (accessed 03.02.2021).

¹⁷ Transparency International, <https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption>, (accessed 03.02.2021).

¹⁸ Cf. R.T. Orock, T.O. Mbuagbo, *Why government should not collect taxes: grand corruption in government and citizens’ views on taxation in Cameroon*, “Review of African Political Economy”, vol 39, September 2012, 479-449, p. 486.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ Cf. A. Okure, N. Bahati, *A Victim Approach to End and Prevent Corruption in Institutions within the Diocese of Bafoussam in the Republic of Cameroon*, <http://www.missionariesofafrica.org/2019/09/act-against-corruption-a-project-to-mobilize-church-leaders-from-christian-and-muslim-communities-to-fight-corruption-and-promote-just-governance-in-cameroon/> (accessed: 04.02.2021).

workers to carry out proper diagnosis and offer solutions to this social problem, not only in the public and commercial places, but also inside the Church herself.

Tribalism

Tribalism is a popular term which includes forms of power struggle between ethnic groups and their minorities as well as tendencies of nepotism and all sorts of favouritism. Tribalism is another form of corruption already highlighted above. A casual example would include job opportunities and the conferral of some positions in public life where those who are already in power strategically and systematically offer little or no opportunities to those who do not come from their own backgrounds. It is like the time has come for them to have their own “brothers” and “sisters” or their own “sons” to share the national cake with them as it is fondly called. In their efforts to respond to this prevalent situation, the Bishops of Cameroon in their 14th plenary session made a wake-up call in these and similar words:

Each one is called to make an examination of conscience, ask him/herself the following questions: Am I not, in my thoughts, my words (in the family, work, in Church and in any other place), in my publications in social networks, in my interventions in the media and my daily behaviour, a promoter or an accomplice of tribal hatred in my country?²¹

²¹ M. Maina, “Am I a promoter, accomplice of tribal hatred?” *Cameroon Bishops Probe Amid Ethnic Rivalry*, <https://www.aciafrica.org/news/540/am-i-a-promoter-accomplice-of-tribal-hatred-cameroon-bishops-probe-amid-ethnic-rivalry>, (11.12.2019, accessed 15.01.2020).

Bilingualism

As mentioned earlier, there are two official languages used in Cameroon. One section of the country speaks English and the other speaks French. This linguistic diversity of official languages offer significant challenges for the social cohesion in the country, especially in the context of the present day socio-political crisis. Many feel strangers in their own fatherland, especially when services in public offices seem to linguistically marginalize one part of the reunited republic. This has also affected the area of education and legal procedures as can be seen from the 2016 strike action by the teachers and lawyers of the English speaking's region which unfortunately led to the current civil war in the country.

Persecution of Christians

Four some five years now, sentiments of marginalization have given rise to political rebellion within the English speaking part of Cameroon against the government which seems to promote more of the French sub-culture in the entire nation. The rebellion has deteriorated from public protests and peace keeping excesses to an arm conflict between the government military and the separatist fighters. Besides the normal war consequences, this tension offers a unique challenge to pastoral leadership in Cameroon. The Bishops are caught in the middle between appearing favouring the cause of liberation of the people they serve and the ruling government of the country. For example, on 16.04.2017, the Bishops of the English and close collaborators were sued to court for not causing the resumption of Catholic schools in their region, following the strike action of the separatist fighters.²² For their part, the separatist fighters have kidnapped most of these bishops and other priests and religious, with

²² Cf. Journal du Cameroun, *Anglophone protests: Catholic Archbishop, Bishops and Fathers dragged to court*, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-govt-targets-anglophone-bishops/> (accessed, 05.02.2021).

charges of seeming to favour the stand of the ruling government in their public speeches and homilies.²³

Apart from the kidnappings, the present conflict has led to the assassination of two priests and a seminarian, through direct and indirect use of fire arms.²⁴ About a year ago, Fr Anthony Lawir, the then Catholic Education Secretary of the Diocese of Kumbo got into serious problems as he drove from Kumbo towards Nkar along the Kumbo-Bamenda highway. At a spot between Sop and Yer, he was interrupted by heavily armed separatist fighters who nearly took life out of him for breaking the lockdown injunction. Thanks be to God his life was spared, but the same gunmen set fire on his car without even allowing him to fish out the valuable contents of the car.

Many priests, bishops, and pastoral workers, have had to miss attending to the faithful because of roadblocks and ghost town days. The situation, however so traumatizing, is an opportunity for the Church to stand for the truth, even at a great cost, for only the truth can set humans free (cf. Jn 8:32). The Church remains the voice of the voiceless and defender of the defenceless. Furthermore, while the war lasts, it is necessary for the Church to anticipate a post-war apostolate of healing and reconciliation of the many who will have been seriously affected and though living, are only partly living.

INCULTURATION

The transition from the era of the foreign missionaries to that of the local clergy goes with new opportunities for inculturation for the

²³ Cf. GGTN Africa, *Cameroon's kidnapped Catholic bishop released*, <https://africa.cgtn.com/2019/08/25/camerouns-kidnapped-catholic-bishop-released/> (accessed: 31.01.2021).

²⁴ Agenzia Fides, *Africa/Cameroon: A young seminarian killed in the English-speaking region*, http://www.fides.org/en/news/64929AFRICA_CAMEROON_A_young_seminarian_killed_in_the_English_speaking_region (accessed: 05.02.2021).

urgent task of inculturation. The missionaries brought the gospel to a culture quite alien to them and whose values were unknown. For this reason, there was the tendency to condemn some of the cultural practices that were in themselves not anti-Christian, even if seemingly anti-western. Nowadays, there is a serious call for a study of the cultures with the aim of discerning the patterns that harmonize with the gospel message. Pope John Paul underlines the opportunities of African cultures in the following words:

In African culture and tradition the role of the family is everywhere held to be fundamental. Open to this sense of the family, of love and respect for life, the African loves children, who are joyfully welcomed as gifts of God. *“The sons and daughters of Africa love life. It is precisely this love for life that leads them to give such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors. They believe intuitively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them. Is this not in some way a preparation for belief in the Communion of the Saints? The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life. They reject the idea that it can be destroyed, even when the so-called ‘progressive civilizations’ would like to lead them in this direction. And practices hostile to life are imposed on them by means of economic systems which serve the selfishness of the rich”*. Africans show their respect for human life until its natural end, and keep elderly parents and relatives within the family.²⁵

The native clergy and are blessed in many ways to study their cultures better from the backdrop of the theological formation received in seminaries and Catholic universities at home and abroad, so as to hasten the path to inculturation. This would help win more souls for Christ by lessening the antagonism between the defenders

²⁵ John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Ecclesia in Africa”*, no. 43, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html (accessed: 05.02.2021).

of Christian values and those who are so inclined to traditional customs. At the same time, authentic inculturation will have to avoid the pitfalls of religious syncretism and accommodation. Karl Grebe shares this conviction thus:

In many areas where the gospel has been proclaimed for many decades, the Church today is faced with the problem of syncretism...Some people do that consciously, especially certain intellectuals, who argue that all the religious practices of their forefathers were part of God's revelation to man and that Christianity has only added certain aspects to their traditional way of worship. Most people, however, slip into syncretism unconsciously. They worship God as Christians and do not intend to worship other deities or spirits. However, they find themselves confronted in everyday life with many problems and fears for which the "traditions of home" offer certain solutions through divination, sacrifices and charms, while the Christian leaders usually do not address these problems.²⁶

Sects and New Religious Movements

In recent years, the Church in Cameroon has faced a great deal of challenge from the growing number of sects and new religious movements. This does not only lead to a direct loss of great numbers Christians and prospective Christians, but a perpetration of evil acts in the name of church. It has also contributed in weakening a sense of Catholic Christian worship and para-liturgical activities²⁷.

²⁶ K. Grebe, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counselling*, Bamenda 1997, p. 25.

²⁷ P. Konings, *Religious Revival in the Roman Catholic Church and the Autochthony-Allochthony Conflict in Cameroon*, "Journal of International African Institute" 73 (2003) 1, p. 31.

Islamization

Although Christianity enjoys majority of the country's percentage, Muslims count up to 24.4% of the nation's inhabitants.²⁸ These are concentrated mostly in the northern part of the country. Nevertheless, recent years have seen a rapid growth in the number of Muslims and the erection of mosques in most Cameroonian cities and villages. They have a strong and hidden agenda of overthrowing the Church by making everyone Muslim. They seem to be succeeding in a number of cases through business deals and inter-marriages. Backed by a certain convention in some parts of Africa, which holds that the woman's religion is that of the husband, Muslim boys prefer to have Christian girls for wives, since the act of such marriages goes with a switch of the wife's religion. The Church needs to intensify her catechetical endeavours so as to combat these attacks.

CONCLUSION

The gospel is centuries old but remains alive. In all the corners of the earth, she has an irreplaceable role to gain new grounds and or offer solutions to the new problems that arise. In the light of the foregoing discussion, the Catholic Church has been and remains the hope of Cameroonians in their search for true happiness. With the *Pastoral Plan* as a road map, stakeholders in the work of evangelization will achieve this goal to a great extent by responding to the current and future challenges. The continuous growth in the number of candidates in the seminaries and houses of religious formation is a cause to thank God, for He will always provide workers for His vineyard (cf. Matt 9:37). This article does not claim an exhaustive treatment of the past, present and the future outlook of mission for

²⁸ Cf. Index Mundi, *Cameroon Religions*, <https://www.indexmundi.com/Cameroon/religions.html>, (accessed 03.02.2021).

Cameroon. Rather, it serves to set the ball rolling in efforts towards a better way of making Christ known, loved and served in in this part of the globe.

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MARCEL KPUDZEKA¹

PASTORAL SITUATION OF THE CHURCH IN CAMEROON WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF BAMENDA

Abstract

Wiele się wydarzyło od czasu, gdy pierwsza grupa misjonarzy przyniosła wiarę katolicką do Kamerunu w 1890 roku. Chociaż katolicycy misjonarze nie byli pierwszymi, którzy postawili stopę na kameruńskiej ziemi, populacja katolików jest największa w tym kraju. Rozwój katolicyzmu przejawia się również w rosnącej liczbie miejscowych księży i zakonników, którzy stopniowo zastępują zagranicznych misjonarzy. Niniejszy artykuł jest prezentacją realiów duszpasterskich Kościoła w Kamerunie. Daje wgląd w wyzwania, przed którymi stoi Kościół, oraz przedstawia ludzi, struktury i plany duszpasterskie wprowadzone w celu sprostania tym wyzwaniom. Pokazuje, że pomimo złożoności i różnorodności kulturowej, Kościół w Kamerunie jest siłą jednoczącą. Artykuł napisany przez rodowitego Kameruńczyka i księdza przedstawia wewnętrzną perspektywę Kościoła.

Keywords: Church, Evangelization, Pastoral Plan, Cameroon

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INTRODUCTION

This article is aimed at presenting a general picture of the Catholic Church in Cameroon with a particular reference to the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda. A brief word about Cameroon would therefore be necessary. Shaped in the form of a triangle, Cameroon is a tropical country located on the coast of West Africa. Cameroon has a surface area of 475.442 square kilometres and a population of 26,404,953 people². Due to its strategic position at the crossroads between West and Central Africa, Cameroon is sometimes identified as Central African and at other times as West African. It borders Chad on the North and Northeast, the Central African Republic on the East, the Republic of Congo on the Southeast and South, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea on the South, the Gulf of Guinea on the Southwest and Nigeria on the West³.

To achieve its aim, this paper highlights the political, the cultural and the religious atmosphere of Cameroon. Then it looks at the beginnings of the Catholic Church, the present situation of the Church in Cameroon, and the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda with its pastoral plan. In all this, statistics are given where necessary. Finally, it considers some challenges common to all the Church provinces in Cameroon. The work ends with a conclusion and a bibliography.

² World Population Review, *Cameroon. Population*, in: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cameroon-population/>, (accessed 15.04.2020).

³ Encyclopedia.com, *The Catholic Church in Cameroon*, in: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/cameroon-catholic-church>, (accessed 01.04.2020).

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL SITUATION OF CAMEROON

What is officially known today as the Republic of Cameroon is a composite of two politically independent entities: La République du Cameroun that gained her independence from France on 1st January 1960; and British Southern Cameroons that gained her own independence from Britain on 1st October 1961. The two independent states came together after independence in 1961 to form a Federal Republic of Cameroon⁴ which has since then transformed through a United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. The people of the English speaking part of the country, who are in the minority, constantly complain of marginalization, assimilation or absorption⁵ – reason for the present political unrest in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon⁶. Before the English and the French occupation of Cameroon, it was a German colony annexed in 1884. The Germans lost control of Cameroon after their defeat in World War I. Since that time till independence, English and French sections of Cameroon had been administered by Britain and France respectively⁷.

⁴ The Commonwealth, *Cameroon: History*, in: <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/cameroon/history>, (accessed 07.04.2020).

⁵ Cf. A. Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited: North-South West Nexus 1858-1972*, Vol. 2, Bamenda 2014, p. 7.

⁶ Because of the unfortunate experience of marginalization, many voices in Anglophone Cameroon are advocating now for the two parts of the country to go their separate ways. The separatists referred to themselves as Ambazonians and their “country” Ambazonia. M. Tyler, *A Comprehensive History of Ambazonia from its Discovery to Independence and Annexation to Contemporary Issues*, Middleton 2019, pp. 35-45.

⁷ R. Nkwenti & J. Wassermann, *Historical Knowledge –Genre As It Relates to the Reunification of Cameroon in Selected Anglophone Cameroon History Textbooks*, “Yesterday&Today” 18 (2017), pp. 42-63.

Culturally, Cameroon is an amalgamation of peoples from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The over 26 million Cameroonians originate from 8 major ethnic groups as follows⁸: Cameroon Highlanders 31%; Equatorial Bantu 19%; Kirdi 11%; Fulani (Mbororo) 10%; North-western Bantu 8%; Eastern Nigrific 7%; other African groups 13%; Non – African less than 1%. In each of these major groups, there are still divisions into tribes and clans with divergent ways of life. Most of these tribes have their separate languages such that Cameroon is home to several languages. A Cameroonian linguist, Constantine Yuka, admits that Cameroon is a very complex linguistic entity that counts 286 indigenous languages⁹. Scholars differ on the exact number of languages spoken in Cameroon, but almost all suggest a number higher than 250. Apart from the local languages, English and French are also spoken; and they are the two official languages. Diversity is equally evident in the religious climate of the country.

THE RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE OF CAMEROON

Belief in God or the gods has always been an integral part of the life of the peoples of what is today known as Cameroon. They practised their traditional religions¹⁰ before contact with peoples from other lands. In addition to these traditional religions, other faith groups,

⁸ The statistics here is gotten from GCatholic.org, *Catholic Church in Republic of Cameroon (Cameroon)*, in: <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/country/CM.htm>, (accessed 01.04.2020).

⁹ C. Yuka, *Nominal Serialization in Cameroonian Pidgin*, “International Journal of Language Studies” 8 (2014), p. 15.

¹⁰ These indigenous religions are generally referred to as African Traditional Religion (ATR). There is an ongoing debate in Philosophy of Religion whether there is one African Traditional Religion or several African Traditional Religions. Our interest here however is that such religion(s) exist(s) in Cameroon.

particularly Christianity and Islam, have been introduced; and they have had devastating effects on the indigenous religions. Although the ancient faith of the peoples of Cameroon has survived till date, adherents of traditional religions are among the minority today. Per the February 2020 statistics, Christianity is the religion with the highest number of adherents. They are as follows¹¹: Roman Catholics 38.4%; Protestants 26.3%; Other Christians 4.5 %; Muslims 20.9%, animists 5.6%; and non-believers 3.2%¹². Let us now concentrate on the Catholic Church which is the focus of this article.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CAMEROON

The first Catholic missionaries to preach the word of God to the peoples of Cameroon were the German Pallotine Fathers led by Mgr. Heinrich Vieter. They first arrived Cameroon in 1890 and established the first mission station in Marienburg¹³. Prior to their arrival, Baptist missionaries, Pastor Joseph Merrick and Alfred Saker, were already evangelizing at the Cameroon coast since 1814¹⁴. Records have it that Cameroonians were generally receptive to the missions. But they welcomed missionaries more for their schools than for the religious message¹⁵. Catholic missions grow very rapidly that

¹¹ GCatholic.org, *Catholic Church in Republic of Cameroon...*, op. cit.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ A. Ndi, *Mill Hill Missionaries in Southern West Cameroon, 1922-1972: Prime Partners in Nation Building*, Nairobi 2005, p. 22.

¹⁴ Joseph Merrick was the very first missionary to Cameroon, and he started his work in Bimbia in 1814. He was later followed by Alfred Saker who worked between 1844 and 1876. J. Richard, *Church, State, and Society in Colonial Cameroon*, "International Journal of African Historical Studies" 13 (1980) 1, p. 7.

¹⁵ B. Sundkler & C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge 2004, p. 266.

mission stations were already established in Ikassa in 1906, Sasse in 1907, Bota 1908, Ossing and Shisong in 1912. These areas were to later become part of British Southern Cameroon. In areas that later became French Cameroon, missions were also opened up in Kribi and Edea in 1891, Douala 1898, Batanga 1900, Yaounde in 1901, Minlaba in 1907, Dschang in 1910 and Deido in Douala in 1913¹⁶. Other early missionaries who worked successively or simultaneously with the Pallotine Fathers where the Sacred Heart Fathers of the German Province, the French Holy Ghost Fathers, Saint Joseph Missionary Society (the Mill Hill Missionaries) and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. These focused in different parts of the country.

With passage of time, apostolic prefectures and Apostolic Vicariates were created throughout the country. From the Prefecture Apostolic of Kamerun created in 1890, we had the following developments: the Prefecture Apostolic of Adamawa was created in 1914. In 1922 the Prefecture of Kamerun became a Vicariate. The Prefecture Apostolic of Buea in 1923; Younde became a Vicariate in 1935; Douala a Prefecture Apostolic in 1931; Garoua in 1947; and Doumé became a Vicariate in 1949. Yaoundé became an Archdiocese in 1955.

The independence and reunification of the two parts of Cameroon to form a Federation in 1961 equally brought significant changes for the Church. In that very year, a Cameroonian, Jean Baptiste Zoa, became the first indigenous Archbishop of Yaoundé¹⁷. In the same year in Anglophone Cameroon, also, two priests were ordained in Buea that had by then become a Diocese – Fr. Paul Verdzekov and Fr. Pius Suh Awa. The two later became the Bishops of Bamenda (also in Anglophone Cameroon) and Buea respectively¹⁸. The two were the first Anglophones to head Dioceses. By the time he died on

¹⁶ A. Ndi, *Mill Hill Missionaries...*, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁷ M. Jumbam, *My Conversion Journey with Christian Cardinal Tumi*, Bamenda 2015, p. 103.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

26.01.2010, Paul Verdzekov was already an Archbishop of Bamenda that became a Metropolitan See on 18.03.1982. In 1988, a man from Nso', Christian Wiyghan Tumi who was a priest of Bamenda before he became the Bishop of Yagoua in the North of Cameroon, and then Archbishop of Garoua, was created a Cardinal by Pope John Paul II. He remains the only Cardinal Cameroon has ever had. Having had this small bit of history, it is appropriate to proceed to look at the present situation of the Church.

PRESENT PICTURE OF THE CHURCH IN CAMEROON

The Catholic Church in Cameroon as of now is comprised of 26 Dioceses and Archdioceses spread over 5 Ecclesiastical Provinces as illustrated in the table¹⁹ below:

Ecclesiastical Province	Metropolitan See (Archdiocese)	Episcopal Sees (Dioceses)
Bamenda	Bamenda	Buea, Kumba, Kumbo, Mamfe.
Bertoua	Bertoua	Batouri, Doumé-Abong'Mbong and Yokaduma.
Douala	Douala	Bafang, Bafoussam, Edéa, Nkongsamba.
Garoua	Garoua	Moura-Mokolo, Ngaoundéré, Yagoua.
Yaoundé	Yaoundé	Bafia, Ebolowa, Kribi, Mbalmayo, Obala, Sangmélima.

All put together, there are 34 Bishops and Archbishops in Cameroon, one of whom is a Cardinal. Concerning special Churches

¹⁹ GCatholic.org, *Catholic Church in Republic of Cameroon...*, op. cit.

in Cameroon, each of the 26 Dioceses/Archdioceses has at least a Cathedral Church. Sangmélima has two Cathedrals, and in addition to their Cathedrals, the dioceses of Buea and Doumé-Abong'Mbong have each a Co-Cathedral. This brings us to a total of 27 Cathedrals and 2 Co-Cathedrals. It may also be of interest to note that Moura-Mokolo has an old Cathedral. Besides the Cathedrals, there is, as well, a Basilica of Mary Queen of Apostles found in the Archdiocese of Yaoundé²⁰. The Church in Cameroon is in communion with the universal Church.

Cameroon has enjoyed good diplomatic relationships with the Vatican from 1966 till date. Two popes have made 3 apostolic journeys to Cameroon. John Paul II first visited Cameroon from 10-14.08.1985. Then again in 1995 from 14-16.09. It was during this second visit that he signed his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, in Yaoundé on 14.09.1995. Benedict XVI followed this path and made his own apostolic journey to Cameroon from 17-20.03.2009. The relationship with the Vatican and the entire Church has influenced the organization of pastoral work in Cameroon as can be seen in the Church Province of Bamenda.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE OF BAMENDA AND ITS PASTORAL PLAN

The Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda is coterminous with the two regions of Cameroon that are English speaking: the Northwest and the Southwest regions. This Ecclesiastical Province is made up of 5 Dioceses, namely: Archdiocese of Bamenda made up of 45 parishes, and the Dioceses of Buea made up of 23 parishes, Kumbo with 37 parishes, Mamfe with 25 parishes, and Kumba with 22 parishes. There is good cooperation among these dioceses which is evident in

²⁰ GCatholic.org, *Catholic Church in Republic of Cameroon...*, op. cit.

the pastoral plan (Bamenda Provincial Pastoral Plan) they share in common. The plan contains structures of evangelization.

Structures of evangelization in the Bamenda Provincial pastoral plan

This pastoral plan has Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as its basic units. A small Christian community is made up of a few families²¹ within the same neighbourhood that come together regularly, at least once a week, to share the word of God²², to pray, and to deepen their Christianity by living out the Christian values²³. A number of small Christian communities make up a mission station, a number of mission stations make up a parish, a number of parishes make up a deanery, and a number of deaneries make up a diocese.

The *raison d'être* of the pastoral plan is to get every Christian involved in the work of evangelization. It consists of pastoral commissions (themes drawn from *Ecclesia in Africa*) that take care of every aspect of evangelization and human life. There are in all 19 commissions: Biblical Apostolate, Liturgy, Family Life Apostolate, Finance, Men's Affairs, Women's Affairs, Education, Health Apostolate, Catholic Action and Prayer Group, Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, Catechetical, Vocation, Social Welfare, Youth Apostolate, Justice and Peace, Inculturation, Dialogue, Social Communication, and Small Christian Community commission²⁴. Besides structures, the plan also includes agents of evangelization.

²¹ E. Chimombo et al. (eds), *Strengthening the Growth of Small Christian Communities in Africa*, Nairobi 2017, p. 28.

²² R. Baawobr, *God's Word for Christian Communities*, Nairobi 2013, p. 7.

²³ J. Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God*, Nairobi 2012, p. 67.

²⁴ Mamfe Diocese, *The Diocesan Pastoral Formation Team*, in: <http://www.mamfe-diocese.net/religious-organization-pastoral-formationteam>, (accessed 15.04.2020).

Agents of Evangelization in the Bamenda Provincial pastoral plan

Agents of Evangelization refer to those involved in bringing the Gospel message to bear fruits in every strata of human society. The Bamenda Provincial Pastoral Plan identifies two types of agents – persons and institutions.

Persons include bishops, priests, the religious and the lay faithful actively involved in spreading the Gospel message. The Church Province of Bamenda, as of now, has 7 bishops. There is 1 bishop in the diocese of Kumbo; there are 2 bishops in Bamenda, that is, the Archbishop and an emeritus bishop. The diocese of Mamfe is vacant, but it has an emeritus bishop. The Archbishop of Bamenda helps in Mamfe as the Apostolic Administrator. The diocese of Kumba has 1 bishop; and the diocese of Buea has an emeritus in addition to the local ordinary.

Statistics as of 2017 shows that there are the following number of priests, religious, and seminarians in the various Dioceses:

Diocese	Total number of Priests	Diocesan Priests	Religious Priests	Lay Religious Men	Lay Religious Women	Number of Semi-narians
Bamenda	174	103	71	171	238	117
Buea	78	60	18	43	113	75
Kumba	44	36	8	10	12	44
Kumbo	101	63	38	83	203	67
Mamfe	74	63	11	13	15	70

Lay people are involved as catechists, teachers in Catholic schools, medical personnel in our health institutions or members of various lay apostolate groups that are found in the Dioceses. Apart from persons, there are also institutions which provide religious and moral formation of the people.

In this Church Province, Catholic institutions equally exist which serve as agents of evangelization. In addition to basic institutions like

the family and the parish communities, there are primary, secondary and high schools, vocational training centres; health centres and hospitals, and the Catholic University of Cameroon (CATUC) Bamenda which is jointly owned by the 5 Dioceses of the Province. There are two provincial minor seminaries (Bishop Rogan's Minor seminary situated in Buea, and St Aloysius' Minor seminary in Kitiwum – Kumbo), and two provincial major seminaries (St John Paul II Major seminary Bachuo Ntai – Mamfe, and St Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary – Bambui, Bamenda). This pastoral plan was envisaged as an effective organ of evangelization amidst challenging situations.

CHALLENGES OF THE CHURCH IN CAMEROON

As indicated above, Cameroon is a country with diverse cultures. Cultural diversity is a blessing, and at the same time, a huge pastoral challenge. A pastoral worker in any of the Dioceses will always have to deal with different cultures and languages. Harmonizing pastoral work thus becomes a real difficulty. Occasionally, intertribal conflicts erupt and pastoral work suffers in consequence.

Another challenge to evangelization is double-dealing; by this we mean the persistence of some baptized Christians in partaking of activities of the African Traditional Religions that are not in consonance with Christianity²⁵. Moreover, insufficiency of pastoral agents remains a major setback. Even though the number of indigenous priests is fast growing, many communities still go for months without Holy Mass and the Sacraments for lack of priests.

Meagre financial resources are yet a serious pastoral problem for the Church in Cameroon. Christians are unable to generate sufficient

²⁵ K. Grebe, W. Fon, *African Traditional Religion and Christian Counseling*, Bamenda 1997, p. 36.

funds for pastoral endeavours; none of the Dioceses is financially self-sufficient. As a result, many pastoral initiatives get stifled. In some Dioceses, institutions such as schools and hospitals are understaffed, and the few workers who are employed are sometimes underpaid.

The major challenge, however, that evangelization in the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda in particular has been going through now for four years counting is the socio-political unrest in the English speaking part of Cameroon. Since 2016, the Anglophone crisis reached a point where many Anglophone voices are advocating for an independent nation²⁶. Government brutality in handling the situation occasioned the formation of militia groups by Anglophone separatists to fight against the police and the army. The war has caused the destruction of homes and in some cases entire villages; property loss; schools have not been functioning normally with the result that many children of school-going age are at home; some families are internally displaced or living as refugees in neighbouring Nigeria. This state of affairs has greatly interrupted pastoral work. Priests and even bishops have been kidnapped on their way to do pastoral work, some priests have been killed, and some parishes are temporally closed.

CONCLUSION

This paper, it is hoped, has given a gist of the situation of the Catholic Church in Cameroon, particularly in the Church Province of Bamenda. Because of the cultural diversity, trends that cut across

²⁶ Bamenda Provincial Episcopal Conference, *Memorandum from Cameroonian Bishops to President Paul Biya – December 2016*, in: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://mission-universelle.catholique.fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/01/BAMENDA-PROVINCIAL-EPISCOPAL-CONFERENCE.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwionZnpi-boAhXktYsKHQafAGYQFjAKegQIBBAB&usg=AOvVaw1np4pYNujGFhckh0kl-X8W>, (accessed 15.04.2020).

the whole country are rare to find. The political history of the country further complicates an already complex situation. However, there have been efforts by the Church in Cameroon to work as one despite differences among the peoples of Cameroon. The article of Mgr. Andrew Nkea: *The Catholic Church in Cameroon and the Reunification of Cameroon*²⁷ makes an affirmation of the Church's effort to work as one. Hence, an understanding of one Ecclesiastical Province would give an idea of the situation of the Church in the whole country. We hope that the presentation of pastoral work in the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda will be useful for that purpose.

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²⁷ A. NKEA, *The Catholic In Cameroon and the Reunification of Cameroon*, in: <http://www.mamfediocese.net/religious-organization-the-church-and-the-reunification-of-cameroon>, (accessed 15.04.2020).

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TESFAY HAILESELASSIE HAILEMARIAM¹

**THE SITUATION
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ETHIOPIA
AND IN ADIGRAT DIOCESE**

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia ogólną sytuację Kościoła katolickiego w Etiopii, koncentrując się głównie na aktualnej sytuacji i działalności diecezji katolickiej Adigrat. Na wstępie zawiera krótką historię i położenie kraju, ukazuje tło historyczne oraz historię obecności chrześcijaństwa i islamu w tym kraju, a w szczególności powstanie Kościoła katolickiego wraz z przyjęciem dwóch obrządków (ge'ez i łacińskiego) z jednej strony oraz jego osiągnięcia i wyzwania ewangelizacyjne z drugiej. W dalszej części artykułu przedstawiono istotne szczegóły dotyczące relacji Kościoła katolickiego z władzami państwowymi oraz jego wielki wpływ społeczny poprzez działalność duszpasterską, która stanowi istotny sens i świadectwo istnienia Kościoła. W artykule uwzględniono również trzy religijne (prawosław-

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ne, muzułmańskie i katolickie) organizacje charytatywne działające na terenie diecezji.

Keywords: Adigrat Diocese, Catholic Church, Ethiopia

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the horn of Africa and the most populous landlocked country in the world and the second-most populous nation on the African continent after Nigeria with a total area of 1,104,300 (426,400 sq. mi) km². It's population according to the census year 2007 was 85 million but after that two times postponed and the current population according to the worldometers current estimation is approximately 114,963,588². 62.8% of the populations are Christians (Orthodox 43.5%, Protestant 18.6%, and Catholic 0.7%) and Christians are predominant in the North. All the Southern part of the country have Muslim majorities with 33.9% of the populations. In the South also contains considerable number of traditional religions 2.7%, and others 0.6%³.

Ethiopia has a long history and is the country formerly known in the West by the name Abyssinia. Then, later on, precisely because of the influence of Christianity, it became known under the name Ethiopia (today's Eritrea and Ethiopia)⁴. There are more than 84 tribes with their own languages, cultures and customs in the country.

² Worldometers.info, *African Countries by population (2020)*, in: <https://www.worldometers.info/population/countries-in-africa-by-population/>, [accessed 05.04.2020].

³ Selamta.net, *Christianity in Ethiopia*, in: <http://www.selamta.net/religion.htm> (05.26.2018), [accessed 05.04.2020].

⁴ Y. Beyene, *Justin De Jacobis: The Art of Dialogue*, "Vincentiana" 44 (2000) 6, p. 469.

Ethiopia has a different history with the other African countries. This is because, not only non-colonized country, but also, and above all, by having its:

1. Unique and peculiar alphabet,
2. Numbers,
3. Calendar: the New Year begins in September; has 13 months: 12 months has each 30 days and, between the end of the old and the beginning of the New Year, there are 5 days and 6 days in leap year (every 4th year) called “Pagumiene” which is considered as the 13th and last month of the year; counting of the time – starts with sun rise one and ends with the sunset twelve.

Ethiopia is the country well-known for its connection with the “Queen Sheba” who visited King Solomon with her gifts (1 Kings. 10: 1-29), came back pregnant and gave birth to King Menelik the first. Judaism entered Ethiopia with the Queen of Sheba, later on with Jewish exiles and, merchants from Yemen and Egypt⁵.

The main purpose of this paper is to present the general situation of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, particularly the situation and activities of the Adigrat diocese Catholic Church in Ethiopia. The time of Evangelization in Ethiopia has different history and as well as the Catholic Church also has a deep historical roots in the country. This paper will include the history of Christianity, Islam and Catholic Church in Ethiopian. Furthermore, it will present the current situation of Catholic Church as well as the situation and activities of the Adigrat Catholic diocese.

⁵ S.T. Habtemariam, *Two Slave Brothers Birthed Africa's Oldest State Church: The history of the Axum Empire and Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church*, in: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/2018/may/africa-christianity-axum-empire-ethiopian-orthodox-tewahedo.html>, (17.05.2018), [accessed 05.04.2020]. And also A.H.M. Jones & E. Monroe, *A History of Ethiopia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1965, pp. 10-21.

This paper will help us to have the real image of Ethiopia, to see and understand the real situation of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia including the situation and activities of the diocese of Adigrat Catholic Church.

EVANGELIZATION IN ETHIOPIA

According to the traditional sources paganism as well as Judaism were practiced side by side in Ethiopia before the introduction of Christianity. And therefore, in Ethiopia had already been an organized religion before Christianity.

In the Acts 8: 26-40, it is said that: “Philip baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch”. So, according to Ethiopians, there are different legends: Some people believed that Philip returned back to his country and evangelized; Some also believed that St. Matthew evangelized; Others say the Apostle Thomas did. There are also oral and written traditions shows that early church fathers Mark, Mathew and Bartholomew preached⁶.

But, it is difficult to know the exact time, how, by whom and when Christianity entered into Ethiopia. Ethiopia does not evangelized in a well-organized way. By any means, we don't have any written documents which can show us the establishment of Christianity in the first century except the book of Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40. According to the written documents, Christianity well established and organized in the first half of the fourth century by two brothers, Frumentius and Aedesius who came from Tyre (modern Lebanon). After that, King Ezana converted to Christianity and officially announced Christianity as a state religion. So, Ethiopia is one of the

⁶ D.H. Moore, *Christianity in Ethiopia*, “Church History” 5 (1936) 3, p. 271.

earliest supports of Christianity, and second nation after Armenia to adopt Christianity as a state religion⁷.

THE PRESENCE OF MUSLIMS IN ETHIOPIA

The matters of immigrants were as old as the history of man. The Bible tells us how Jacob with his family fled to Egypt to avoid famine (Gen. 45:16-47:12). The Gospel also tells us how the Holy Family fled/migrated to Egypt, in the African continent, to rescue the Child Jesus from Herod (Mt. 2: 13-18). At the same time Muslim welcomed by Ethiopians in the seventh century. Ethiopia, the reign of Negus (King) was the first country to experience Islam as a nation in Africa. As N. Mohammed notes:

In Islamic history and tradition, Ethiopia (Abyssinia or Al-Habasha) is known as the “Haven of the First Migration or Hijra”. For Muslim, Ethiopia is synonymous with freedom from persecution and emancipation from fear. Ethiopia was a land where its king, was a person renowned for justice and in whose land human rights were cherished⁸.

As Jesus Christ the Child was secured in Egypt, Muslims also got freedom and security in the country of Ethiopia. African continent is and has to be proud of one thing. Because Africa was the place of freedom, security, equality, justice, peace and so on. For these the Holy Bible and the first migrants of the Islam are the testimony.

The first relationship of Ethiopia with the infant power of Muslim were friendly. But the rise of Islam was the turning-point in the history

⁷ Cf. A.H.M. Jones & E. Monroe, *A History of Ethiopia*, op. cit., pp. 10-21

⁸ N. Mohammed, *The Haven of the First Hijra (Migration): an African nation is the Muslims first refuge*, In *Ethiopian Muslims History*, in: <http://www.selamta.net/ethiopian%20muslims%20history.htm>, (05.01.2013), [accessed: 07.04.2020].

of Ethiopia. In 636 the Arab armies occupied Palestine and Syria, in 640-642 they occupied Egypt. Henceforth the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia was cut off from the Christian Empire of Rome. From this time the history of Ethiopia is plunged into the deepest obscurity, and this time is called 'the dark time of Ethiopia'. In the first half of the 16th century, Ahmed Gran invaded Ethiopia, in 1541, the Portuguese 400 soldiers arrived for help and in 1543 the Muslims lost the battle. This victory was decisive for all times, as far as Muslim domination of Ethiopia is concerned; never again did a foreigner conquer an outpost of Christianity in Ethiopia until the present time⁹.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is the largest pre-colonial Christian Church in Africa. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church, the mission to Abyssinia (today's Eritrea and Ethiopia) was entrusted to Jesuit, and they were able to convert the people of Abyssinia. Even the king Susenyos first converted to Catholic and officially announced Catholic Christianity as a state religion. And his reign was the best known as the brief period in Ethiopian history when Catholic Christianity became the official religion. The saddest thing, all ended in a complete failure that the Roman Catholic faith which was established and witnessed in Ethiopia from around the first half of XV century to 1632¹⁰.

The failure is partly to Ethiopian own form of Christianity, and partly due to the Jesuits' use of violent force against those who would not embrace the European culture based faith and their failure to appreciate the Ethiopian Church's tradition. To touch the Christianity

⁹ Cf., A.H.M. Jones & E. Monroe, *A History of Ethiopia*, op. cit., pp. 44-53.

¹⁰ Cf.: J. Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, Nairobi: Paulines Publ. Africa 1998, p. 160; A.H.M. Jones & E. Monroe, *A History of Ethiopia*, op. cit., pp. 88-107.

of Ethiopia was to touch their identity, meaningful life, in short their everything. If they had anything of value it was the particular model of Church they had. This was never understood by the foreign missionaries. So, they remained unsuccessful and fruitless in their re-uniting the Ethiopian Christianity to the European Christianity.

After many attempts to re-establish the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, Pope Gregory XVI appointed St. Justin de Jacobis with his companions Fr. L. Montuori and Fr. G. Sapeto (St. Vincentians/Lazarists) and arrived in the country, on October 29th, 1839¹¹. These missionaries did not head off to an African country to evangelize the pagan, but they came to a Christian country to unite the Christians of the African country Ethiopia (today's Eritrea and Ethiopia) with the Christians of Europe. Even if it was very difficult and challenging time for the missionaries to enter into Ethiopia, they appeared with the special strategies and systems, and able to organize the Catholic Church in Ethiopia (today's Eritrea and Ethiopia) very well and re-established the Catholic faith sustainably, even though it is minority in population, is influential through it's activities and structures in the country at the moment.

THE RITES OF ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Justin de Jacobis planned from the very beginning to establish the Ethiopian Catholic Church with its local traditions and cultural contexts. He recognized the Ethiopian social life and Church traditions as a great heritage. For instance: Church feasts, fasting, rituals, Church music, liturgical year and calendar, festivals, divine

¹¹ K. O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient phoenix: A History of the Vicariate of Abyssinia (Rev. as one Book)*, Addis Ababa: United Printers 2002, pp. 2-5.

worship, vestments, monastic life and priestly discipline, language, icons, Church structure, theology, et cetera¹².

After a century the Second Vatican Council followed on these line and they declared:

The Catholic church values highly the institutions of the Eastern churches, their liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions and their ordering to Christian life. For in those churches, which are distinguished by their venerable antiquity, there is clearly evident the tradition which has come from the apostles through the Fathers and which is part of the divinity revealed, undivided heritage of the Universal Church. This holy, ecumenical synod, therefore, has a special care for the Eastern Churches, which are living witnesses of these traditions, and wishes them to flourish and to fulfil with new apostolic strength the task entrusted to them (OE. 1).

When St. Justin de Jacobis established the seminary in Adwa, he opened it with the Ethiopian rite without replacing or mixing with the Latin rite. He allowed the priests who converted to Catholic to continue like they were practicing in the Orthodox Church. To say bravely, St. Justin acknowledged the Ethiopian mode of Christianity and Rites. For these purpose, St. Justin studied very well the traditions, cultures and languages (Amharic, the national language, Tigrigna the local language of the area, and Ge'ez the liturgical language) of Ethiopia¹³.

Next to St. Justin de Jacobis, the Italian Capuchin missionary Mgr. Guglielmo Massaia (later Cardinal), appointed as the Vicar Apostolic of Oromo to work in the Southern part of Ethiopia in 1846¹⁴. During that time St. Justin was already familiar with the cultures and customs of the country, but, when we compare Cardinal

¹² A. Abraha, *Saint Justin De Jacobis: His Missionary Methodology in Eritrea and Ethiopia*, Nairobi: Paulines publications Africa 1995, p. 89 and p. 104.

¹³ A. Abraha, *Saint Justin De Jacobis...*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁴ K. O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient phoenix...*, op. cit., p. 26.

Massaia with St. Justin de Jacobis, had a different apostolic attitude, approach and ideas. His ideal stand was totally to westernize and Latinize Ethiopia¹⁵.

Cardinal Massaia was not happy by the attitude and traditional stand of St. Justin de Jacobis. Unlike him, he was not ready to orient himself to the Christian tradition of Ethiopia to which he came as St. Justin did. However, he favored to establish the westernized and Latinized Catholic Church of Ethiopia¹⁶. Therefore, by this reason the Catholic Church in Ethiopia has two rites.

In Ethiopia, the Catholic liturgy is celebrated both in the Ge'ez (or Ethiopian) rite and Latin rite. Ge'ez is an ancient language from the period of Christianity accepted in the country. Later on it became the liturgical language otherwise it would be phased out, and is observed with pride as a sign of the ancientness and rootedness of the faith in Ethiopia. Much like Latin in the west, many lay people do not understand the language, so most parts of liturgy, for instance, readings, homily and so on are in local languages¹⁷. And also, nowadays the missal is translating into local languages.

Therefore, due to the two fundamental attitudes of the missionaries, two different rites are founded in Ethiopia. One is in the area, where St. Justin de Jacobis evangelized, orientated to the Ethiopian culture, which is called Ethiopian (Ge'ez) rite. And one is in the area, where Cardinal Massaia evangelized, which is called Roman (Latin) rite. These two Rites exist side by side and celebrated by both priests who are ordained in Ge'ez rite and Latin rite.

¹⁵ A. Abraha, *Saint Justin De Jacobis...*, op. cit., p. 99.

¹⁶ E.C. Suttner, *Orthodoxy and Catholicism in Ethiopia: The Challenge of Inculturation*, "Missionalia" 23 (1995), p. 120.

¹⁷ T.M. Landy, *Ethiopian Catholic Church: Roots run deep for Ge'ez rite Catholics in Ethiopia*, in: <https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/ethiopia/worship>, [accessed: 30.03.2018].

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT

Since King Ezana officially announced Christianity as a state religion in the first half of the fourth century in Ethiopia, the state/government and the Orthodox Church had a strong connection. And from its beginning as an official religion until the end of 1974, Christianity depends on the key figure in its expansion and consolidation. There were made a statements: “Church and state are one’ and ‘there is no state without church, and there is no church without state”¹⁸. We can understand from these statements that there was no clear distinction between Church and state; and there was a strong relationship between Church and state.

Ethiopian constitution of 1994 preserves, in article 11, the code of separation between the state and religion. In addition no religion shall be considered as official and that the state shall not interfere in religious matters nor will any religious denomination interfere in state affairs. Article 27 acknowledges the freedom of conscience and religion of all Ethiopian citizens, including the freedom, “either individually or in community with others, in public or in private, to manifest one’s religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching” (section 1). The constitution also asserts the individual’s right to disseminate their beliefs and to convert to another faith, as well as the right of parents to educate their children in the religion they practise (sections 4 and 5)¹⁹.

Catholic Church, after witnessing for around one hundred years and failing in the 17th century, had suffered and faced a lot of

¹⁸ H.M. Larebo, *Journal Article: the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and politics in the twentieth century: part I*, “Northeast African Studies” 9 (1987) 3, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ethiopian Constitution*, in: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/Ethiopian_Constitution.html, [accessed: 22.04.2020].

challenges in Ethiopia. This is because, one the missionaries were not able to appreciate the Ethiopian Church tradition and then they want to westernize the Ethiopian Church tradition, and on the other hand, between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church exists a kind of disagreement that is not expressed in public; and they had unlimited power to attack or spell the foreigners due to the great connection of the state and Orthodox Church.

Consequently, the government of Ethiopia does not recognize the Catholic Church as religious and does not give a clear legal position of the Church in the country. In this sense, Ethiopian government prefers to recognize the Catholic Church as an NGO in order to be able to limit its existence, only in the social projects. This does not only limit the activities of the church, but also makes it difficult the entrance of the missionaries in the country, given that the work permit is granted in the base of the projects and not in accordance with the church 's need in pastoral and missionary activities, and with a lot of problematic criteria²⁰.

ETHIOPIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AT PRESENT TIME

The Catholic Church of Ethiopia currently has one Archdiocese and 12 Dioceses with two rites Namely: Addis Ababa diocese (Ge'ez rite) which is a Metropolitan Diocese which has, Eparchy of Bahir Dar-Dessie (Ge'ez rite), Eparchy of Adigrat (Ge'ez rite), Eparchy of Emdibir (Ge'ez rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Hawassa (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Harar (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Meki (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Nekemte (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Soddo (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Gambella (Latin

²⁰ Catholic Church and its challenges in Ethiopia, <https://www.consolata.org/new/index.php/92-missione/i-nostri-dicono/10518-catholic-church-and-its-challenges-in-ethiopia>, [accessed:13.04.2020].

rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Jimma-Bonga (Latin rite), Apostolic Vicariate of Hosanna (Latin rite), and Apostolic Prefecture of Robe (Latin rite) as its Suffragan Dioceses²¹.

The Catholic Church is known as an NGO by the Ethiopian government, and forced to invest all its resources in the sectors of education, health, human promotion, social rehabilitation, and so on. The pastoral work and the evangelization process of the Church are guaranteed only when the foreign missionaries are involved in these sectors of human promotion²². This also gives a great negative impact on the Ethiopian Catholic Church.

It is worth remarking that the Missionaries were using resources from their relatives, friends and Christians from their home country for their survival, daily activities and also to get more people to be attracted to the Catholic Church. They were distributing out clothes, furniture and sometimes money (even after mass) in order to coax many people to the Catholic Church. This helped them to have many converts, but they did not compromise the quality of the teaching that they had to impart to them. However, in general the spirit of self-sustainability was not introduced in most of the newly converted Catholic Christians. They created the dependency mentality in most of the Local Catholic Churches. Other people would join the Church just to benefit the material support and not really to be good and real followers of Jesus Christ.

Nowadays in one parish the people narrate that once a time they collect money and brought it to the white priest then he refuses to accept by explaining to them that they are poor people and he does not need money from them. Yes, they are poor people, but they are living the same economic situation with the Orthodox Christians. The Ethiopian Orthodox Christians cover by themselves whatever their parish needs from them and the necessities of their priests without

²¹ ECS, *Ethiopian Catholic Church Directory*, Addis Ababa, 2017, p. 369.

²² *Ibidem*.

any foreign assistance. And that reason helps to conclude saying the Missionaries did not plant the spirit of self-reliance in most of the newly converted Catholic Christians. For sure, this creates a wrong image of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia as a powerful economic institution with a lot of foreign assistance, which guarantees its existence in the country. Though, this image leads the Catholics, all clergy and many lay people, to a state of risky economic dependence.

Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS)

Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS) was established in 1965 and got its first organizational structure in 1971. ECS is the executive organ of the Catholic Ethiopian Bishops Conference (CBEC) coordinating the pastoral Activities commission (PAC) and the social and development commission (ECC-SDCO) activities. ECS is a nonprofit able organization that works as a national coordination, facilitation and representation office to the entire social and development activities of the church. It works in collaboration with thirteen dioceses. The Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC) renders health service mainly to the poor, marginalized and most underprivileged in society in almost all regions of the country. The Catholic Church service in the fields of pastoral a social development is coordinated by the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat (ECS)²³.

THE DIOCESE OF ADIGRAT CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The diocese of Adigrat is one of the oldest dioceses of Catholic Church in Ethiopia, which is located in the northern part of the country. The area covers estimately 132,000 km², which is the whole

²³ Cf. <https://businessguide.ezega.com/Default.aspx?action=BussinessDetail&pid=766260&bid=1314510&page=7>, [accessed: 25.04.2020].

of Tigray region (Note that the western end of Tigray i.e. Humera, Tselemti, Wolkait and Tsegedie are included into Adigrat Diocese by the “Decretum” issued on December 18, 1999), and northeastern parts of Afar Regional State (Zone 2)²⁴. During the departure of Jesuits, it was estimated that there were over 200,000 Ethiopian Catholics, and an estimated of over 50,000 of them lived in the districts which are within the territory of Adigrat diocese²⁵. So that Adigrat diocese has a profound historical and geographical origins.

Pope Gregory XVI appointed Mgr. Justin de Jacobis Prefect Apostolic of Abyssinia on 10th March 1839²⁶. The boundaries of the Prefecture were stated as comprising Ethiopia and the bordering countries without limits to both West and South²⁷. On 19th June 1847, the Prefecture became the Apostolic Vicariate of Abyssinia despite the establishment in the previous year of the Apostolic Vicariate of the Sudan and the Apostolic Vicariate of the Oromo. Then, on March 25, 1937, established as Apostolic Prefecture of Tigray, and on February 20, 1961, erected as Eparchy of Adigrat.

As a part of the Universal Catholic Church, the diocese of Adigrat focuses at its aim that is given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles, which is, the mandate to proclaim the Good News to the world (cf. Mk. 16:15). The catholic Church is well known in the world by its charity and support of spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of all people. Her schools, Monasteries, hospitals, seminaries, Churches, and so on provide extraordinary services according to its necessity for those in need without any discrimination.

²⁴ ADCS, *Eparchy of Adigrat: Profile of the Eparchy of Adigrat: Boundaries and Population, Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat*, in: <https://www.adigratcatholicchurch.org/profile-of-the-eparchy>, [accessed: 25.04.2020].

²⁵ ADCS, *Historical Perspectives, Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat*, in: <https://www.adigratcatholicchurch.org/history-1>, [accessed: 25.04.2020].

²⁶ K. O'Mahoney, *The Ebullient phoenix...*, op. cit. p. 5.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 4-8.

The Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat (ADCS)

The diocese of Adigrat accomplishes its pastoral and social activities through various ways. ADCS is one of the essential coordinating offices of the diocese. The present ADCS were first established on 11th November 1976, with the name “Adigrat Social Action Committee”. In 1987, it established in a new way with the name “Adigrat Diocese Catholic Secretariat (ADCS)” as the diocesan Social Pastoral and development coordinating office of the Catholic Church²⁸.

ADCS is a faith based non-profitable Church organization mandated to initiate, plan, execute and coordinate the pastoral, social, and development intervention of Ethiopian Catholic Church, in the diocese of Adigrat. It established to respond as mentioned above to the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of all people regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, religion and race. And also gives special attentions to the poorest of the poor, vulnerable and support their empowerment for self-reliance guided and inspired by the gospel values: such as Love, Respect for human dignity, Justice, Solidarity, Subsidiarity, Common good and Respect for culture. ADCS promotes integral human development through effective coordination and implementation of pastoral, social and development activities in a sustainable way.

The management board of governors of the ADCS led and administered by the bishop of the diocese. Members of the Board of Governors are drawn from the laity, diocesan clergy throughout the diocese and congregations, who oversee and administer the secretariat’s activities through the Secretary General (priest) who manages the overall activities of the secretariat along with the executive management committee of the secretariat and reports to the board occasionally.

²⁸ ADCS, *Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat*, in: <https://www.adigratcatholicchurch.org/adcs>, [accessed: 23.04.2020].

ADCS is led by the Secretary General (priest) and organized under two main sections, the Pastoral Activities Coordinating Office – PACO (coordinate by priest) and the Social and Development Coordinating Office – SDCO, through which majority of the Church’s socio-pastoral and development projects coordinated and executed. While implementing and coordinating these interventions, ADCS has branch offices in Mekele (the capital city of Tigray Region), and Shire-Enda Selassie (Northwest Tigray).

Institutions that coordinate by ADCS are: Education (Schools), Health facilities, Integrated Rural Development and Food Security Projects Programs, Emergency Relief and Drought Recovery/ Rehabilitation, Urban Development and Tourism, HIV and AIDS interventions, Women Promotion, Needy Children Support and social welfare services, and Capacity building and Organizational Development²⁹.

Catechesis

According to the Ethiopian constitution, “education shall be conducted in a manner, which is in all respects, free from religion, political and cultural influences” (Art. 90 Section 2). For this reason, there is no possibility to teach about religion in the schools. So that, the catechetical program is bound only around the parishes and outstations.

Mostly the children come with good bases of their faith. Because the families in the diocese have been Catholics for many generations and they introduce their children with the good base of their faith. This is a witness that the family is the first school of catechesis and the first Church of the faith, and also, as Pope John Paul II said “*the Christian family, in fact, is the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth and to bring him or her,*

²⁹ Cf. ADCS, *Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat*, in: <https://www.adigratcatholicchurch.org/projects>, [accessed: 23.04.2020].

through a progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity” (Familiaris Consortio 2), and it is also called that *the Christian Family – a ‘Small Church’ and the Foundation of a Healthy Society*³⁰. Therefore, it is worthy to appreciate families for their strength and for they are proud of the diocese.

The parish priest and catechist are engaged in the catechetical program and the seminarians are involved during their summer holidays.

Among other things, the catechetical program includes looking at some stories in the Bible, using images which can transmit the message of the Bible that the children can easily understand and not forget, praying and singing together, the teaching of the Church and her Sacraments specially focused first Holy Communion and Confirmation, how to practice Christian charity towards one another, and much more.

Catechesis is given using: the Holy Bible, Catechism of the Catholic Church, different books which are prepared from time to time by the diocese based on Holy Scripture, Traditions, and Magisterium as the form of questions and answers, and so on.

The use methodology in the diocese: children taught the prayers in the method of recitation to memorize in an oral way, in the form of questions and answers, storytelling, and there is always a quiz.

The catechetical program is always intended to help the children to shape their lives after the pattern of their faith. Once the children completed the program, they received a Bible or another religious book and several devotional objects, like rosaries or holy pictures to take their home as a gift.

³⁰ Final document for the plenary session of the CIAC meeting in Moscow, 4 February 2010.

Seminaries

In 1844, St. Justin de Jacobis established the seminary in Adwa with the context of cultural heritage, that is also with the Ethiopian rite without replacing or mixing it with the Latin rite. He opened the seminary for the purpose of the education and formation of the local clergy and has always been there. But for security reasons its location had to be changed, and those locations are Adwa, Guol'a, Alitena, Kudahanay and Adigrat.

Now a day in the diocese are: 16 male and female formation houses (seminaries); 1 Major Seminary – Institute of Philosophy and Theological Faculty (affiliated to Pontifical Urbaniana University)

Vocations to Priesthood and Consecrated Life

In general terms, 'vocation' means a 'call'. In other words, vocation is what God calls us to do with/in our lives. Everyone is called by God 'to know, love, and serve him'. The difference is how each one does this.

In the diocese of Adigrat, the vocation to the priesthood and consecrated life, even though there are up and downs, generally declined very much.

Canonical Structures of the Diocese³¹

Curial Officials,
Finance Committee,
Presbyterial Council,
College of Eparchial Consulters,
Marriage Tribunal,
Liturgical/Ecumenical Commission,
Commission for the Biblical Apostolate,
Commission for the Catechetic,

³¹ Cf. ADCS, *Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat*, <https://www.adigratcatholicchurch.org/canonical-structure-1>, [accessed: 23.04.2020].

Council for the Laity,
Pastoral Councils at diocesan and parish levels.

Statistics

The diocese of Adigrat Catholic Church has the total population of 24,951 Catholics, 35 parishes, 4 missions, 92 priests (74 diocesan, 18 religious), 118 lay religious (63 brothers, and 55 female sisters), and 13 Seminarians being trained to become Diocesan Priests (2020).³²

The present Prelate of the diocese is bishop Tesfaselassie Medhin. And the Rite of the Diocese is Ethiopian (Ge'ez) Rite.

Pastoral challenges in the Diocese of Adigrat

There is much misunderstanding of the people about their duty and right in the Church. They do not feel that they have the responsibility of supporting financially the pastoral works and the supplies for the priests. Instead, the “Catholic Church” in Ethiopia is seen as a giver but not as a receiver. This is due to the system inherited from the missionaries.

So that, the pastoral challenges of the diocese are: the people entitled to be supported by the parish priest, poverty, immigration, limited of well-trained catechists, lack of vocation, unemployment, Protestantism, political instability and so on.

³² Gcatholic.org, *Ethiopic Diocese of Adigrat*, in: <http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/diocese/adig0.htm>, [accessed: 22.04.2020].

ORTHODOX, MUSLIM AND CATHOLIC UNITY CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION (OMCUCA) CONCERN TO THE ORPHANED CHILDREN

The Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Charitable Association (OMCUCA) is a non-profitable union of the three religions (Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic) which is established for the concern of those who affected and infected by HIV/AIDS by the coordination of ADCS in 2006.

ADCS observed and realized that there was discrimination of those who affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and called a workshop for the three religious spiritual leaders. Then, at the first time the three religious group formed an association which is known as *Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Association (OMCA) Unity to save life* aimed at supporting people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in rural and urban settings of Eastern Tigray. Later the former OMCA changed its name to *Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Unity Charitable Association (OMCUCA) Concern to the orphaned children* carrying the overall purpose of its previous aim. And its board led and administer by Catholic priest³³.

OMCUCA seeks financial donations from benevolent organizations, individuals, mobilizing their followers in the Churches and Mosques, and initiating the people in different occasions. Through this way they deliver financial and educational materials support for the orphaned children, and are given 400 ET birr of monthly allowance to each child. From that allowance 100 ET birr is deposited into an

³³ Cf. OMCUCA, *Orthodox, Muslim & Catholic Unity Charitable Association (OMCUCA) Concern to the orphaned children*, <http://www.wheatmentorsupport.org.uk/document/OMCA-ovc-report.pdf>, [accessed: 22.04.2020].

account so that the child will have some financial backing when it is time to launch out on a future career³⁴.

CONCLUSION

The Catholic Church, after a lot of suffering and challenges, able to re-establish in Ethiopia adapting two rites. It has a deep history and geographical roots. Ethiopian Catholic Church strives to support Ethiopian society in all spiritual, physical, socio-economic and cultural needs of the people living in harmony, solidarity, equality, love, justice and peace. It has a good relationship with all religions and government. In any activities the Catholic Church is in the front line.

The Ethiopian Catholic Church has the mission to bear witness to the love of God (Acts 1:8) by promoting the integral human development of all members of Ethiopian society by ensuring growth and self-reliance through evangelization, awareness raising and capacity building with the aim of social transformation. Through her pastoral activities, disciplines, structures and strategies are always influential. In all Ethiopian Catholic Church activities of the foreign assistance is her backbone.

The economic dependence of foreign assistance, which guarantees its existence in the country, is a big challenge nowadays. Because there is a global economic crisis from time to time and big expectations of its need. So, it needs to look into itself and change its strategy. There is no difference among the Orthodox Christians and Catholic Christians. Therefore, at the end it is good and incumbent to Ethiopian Catholic Christian to learn a lot from our Orthodox Christian brothers and sisters. They are educated in their duties and rights in the Church. They contribute for the church constructions and the requirements of their priests. The Catholics accomplish all

³⁴ Cf. *Ibidem*.

the necessities with the support of foreign assistance in a short time without any involvement of the local people.

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LEONARD SANYU¹

CONSECUTIVE APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS TO UGANDA

Abstract

Podróże apostolskie kolejnych papieży do Ugandy przynosiły wzmocnienie Kościoła katolickiego w tym kraju. Fakt ich zaistnienia jest przypisywany zasługom krwi Męczenników Ugandyjskich. To przekonanie jest bardzo żywe w świadomości katolików w Ugandzie. Wczesnochrześcijański pisarz Tertulian podkreślał, że krew męczenników jest nasieniem Kościoła. Męczeństwo jest najwyższym świadectwem dawanym prawdzie wiary: oznacza świadectwo aż do śmierci. Męczennik daje świadectwo Chrystusowi, który umarł i zmartwychwstał, oraz prawdzie doktryny chrześcijańskiej. Jest to bardzo prawdziwe w przypadku Kościoła katolickiego w Ugandzie.

Key words: Uganda martyrs, apostolic journey, catechist, Mwanaga, faith, and traditions.

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INTRODUCTION

Uganda is a land locked country located in East Africa. The country got her independence from Britain colonial masters on 9th October 1962. The country currently has a population of about 41,268,778 people.² Catholics are 15,543,117. Of the 41.2 Million Ugandans 15.5 Million are Catholics.³ This article has considered: a brief history of religion in Uganda, Catholics compared to other religions, Uganda Episcopal Conference, Dioceses, Seminaries, Uganda Martyrs, Catholic Church Activities and Some of the Pastoral challenges.

BRIEF HISTORY OF RELIGION IN UGANDA⁴

Originally, there were traditional religions according to different tribes and kingdoms. Islam came to Uganda in 1844, the Protestants (Anglicans) in 1877 and Catholics in 1879. The first Catholic missionaries arrived in Uganda on 17 February 1879 at a place called Kigugungu, present day in Kampala Archdiocese. They sailed by canoe on Lake Victoria. These first missionaries were two: Fr. Simeon Lourdel (1853-1890) and Brother Amans Delmas (1852-1895).⁵

² Cf. Uganda Bureau of Statistics population clock, available online at, <https://www.ubos.org/>, accessed on 20 April 2020.

³ Cf. Uganda Episcopal Conference, *Statistics*, available online at, <https://www.uecon.org/>, accessed on 21 April 2020.

⁴ A detailed history can be found in the work by father professor doctor Waliggo JohnMary: J. M. Waliggo, *The Catholic Church in the Buddu Province of Buganda, 1879-1925*, Kampala: Angel Agencies Ltd 2010.

⁵ Cf. S. Minnaert, *Death of Father Lourdel (1853-1890) Apostle to the Baganda*, transl. D. MacLeod, Rome: Archives Generalate 18 July 2007, available online at, http://peresblancs.org/pere_lourdelgb.htm, accessed on 7 April 2020.

Father Lourdel died on 12 May 1890 at Rubaga in Kampala (Uganda) at the age of 37. He was born in the village of Dury (Pas-de-Calais). He was a member of the Society of Missionaries of Africa. This society had a mission to evangelize Africa and this mission was launched at Algiers by Archbishop Lavigerie (1825-1892) in 1868. Lourdel was ordained in 1877 at Maison Carree, near Algiers. In 1877 the same year of his ordination joined the community of Metlili in the Sahara. The following year Archbishop Lavigerie appointed him a member of the first caravan heading to Equatorial Africa. He formed part of the group consisting of Archbishop Livinhac (1846-1922), destined to evangelize the people of the Lake Victoria region. Their caravan had left Marseilles on the 17th April 1878. Father Lourdel evangelized the indigenous people of Buganda according to the instructions of Archbishop Lavigerie. By 1890, in spite of the 1886 persecutions and martyrdom of the Christian converts, the Catholic community even then numbered some 1,200 baptized and 10,000 catechumens.⁶

Currently, Uganda is made up of four Ecclesiastical provinces: Gulu, Tororo, Mbarara, and Kampala. Mbarara Archdiocese is comprised of five dioceses namely: Mbarara, Hoima, Fort Portal, Kabale, and Kasese Diocese. Kampala Archdiocese of six dioceses: Kampala, Kiyinda-Mityana, Lugazi, Luweero and Masaka diocese. The Archdiocese of Gulu consists of four Dioceses of: Gulu, Arua, Lira and Nebbi. The Archdiocese of Tororo is comprised of five dioceses: Tororo, Jinja, Kotido, Moroto and Soroti Diocese. There is a fully established Uganda Episcopal Conference. The Conference has an Executive arm called, "Uganda Catholic Secretariat" which endeavors the coordination of the social and pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church in Uganda. It aims at building a unity pastoral approach within the country. This work is carried out through 12 Commissions of the Conference under the guidance of the Secretary General

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

(always a Priest).⁷ In Uganda there are: 4 Archdioceses, 19 Dioceses, 640 Parishes, 2,379 Diocesan Priests, and 3,388 Catholic Schools, 219 Catholic Institutions, and 264 Catholic hospitals. There are over 105 religious congregations working in Uganda. The members to these congregations are from all over the world, however majority are indigenous Ugandans.

CATHOLICS COMPARED WITH OTHER RELIGIONS IN UGANDA

According to the most current population information, the 2014 National Population and Housing Census, in the previous 10 years the number of Catholics had declined yet Muslims, Pentecostals, the Seventh Day Adventists and traditionalists were increasing in number. Muslims increased from 12.4 % in 2002 to 13.7% in 2014 and the Pentecostals increased from 4.7 % to 11.1 %. On the other hand the Catholics reduced from 41.6 % in 2002 to now 39.3 % and Anglicans reduced from 36.7% to 32.0 %.⁸

The cause for the decline is generally attributed to the rising tide of Pentecostal movement that is fishing from the Catholics and Anglicans. The Pentecostal churches are vibrant (play very loud and vibrant music during their prayers throughout the year) and most of the youth have become “born-again” (Pentecostals) Christians. The Pentecostals and Evangelists are taking from Catholics and Anglicans more than any other religion. The Pentecostal way of praying has no moderation of the music they play and no controlled liturgical seasons. In that way, they appear to be very lively and not boring.

⁷ Cf. <https://www.uecon.org/index.php/pages/administration>, accessed on 7 April 2020.

⁸ Cf. Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Main Report*, Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016, p. 19.

This greatly attracts the youth and other people who like to live in high mood all the time.⁹

The Muslims are increasing because they allow polygamy, and they work hard to marry Christian girls who bear for them Muslim children. Some of these girls end up being forced or at least lured to convert to Islam. Those who fail to convert to Islam nevertheless all their children must be Muslim. In Africa, generally from the cultural perspective, the family system is patrilineal. The husband is the head of the family and always has the last say on major decisions in the family and so the girls who get married to Moslems cannot override their Moslem husbands regarding the decision of their children's religion. The Muslims always try to make the impression of being marginalized as a way of attracting for attention from the government. They have two to four wives and each wife giving birth on average six children.¹⁰

SOME ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

The achievements range from spiritual, social, political, and economic life of the peoples. Compared to other religions existing in Uganda, no one doubts the leading role of the Catholic Church to the different spheres of life of the people. From the year 1879 when the first catholic missionaries arrived in Uganda to the year 1896, a total number of 32,753 natives in [B]Uganda had converted from African religions to Catholic Church.¹¹ By 1906 there were 100,025 Catholics.

⁹ Cf. Daily Monitor, *Role of Catholic Church in bringing Peace to Northern Uganda*, 2 July 2015, available online at, <https://www.jpduganda.org/2015/07/02/tax-litigation-at-your-door/>: accessed on 15 April 2020.

¹⁰ Cf. Ibid.

¹¹ Cf. F. Tusingire, *The Evangelization of Uganda Challenges and Strategies*, 2003: Fr. Frederick Tusingire the author of this book is a Ugandan catholic priest with a doctorate in missiology.

In 1916, they were 150,603 Catholics, 218,824 by 1926 and 227,597 in the year 1927. “One can identify the blood of martyrs, disposition of the people and the missionary methodology as among the most evident factors behind the achievement.¹² By 1937, Catholics had increased from 227,597 to 366,000. Because Catholics are a majority, their vote is always important, especially during the contests for the national presidency. For this reason that the President of Uganda who is Anglican always tries to appoint a Catholic to be his Vice-President.¹³

The exact number of Catholics between 1937 and 1991 have been problematic to ascertain. But those after 1991 indicate an increase. According to the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census Report, in 1991 there were 7,426,511 Catholics of the 16,671,705 Ugandans. By 2002, of the 24,433,132 Ugandans, 10,242,594 were Catholic. Uganda produced the first canonized saints in sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda was also the first in as far as the localization of Church leadership in Africa is concerned. The first indigenous Archbishop Joseph Nakabaale Kiwanuka (1899-1966) south of Saharan African was from Uganda. He was ordained priest in 1929, ordained Bishop in 1939 and appointed Archbishop of Rubaga in 1960.¹⁴

The Catholic Church in Uganda has establishing educational facilities at all levels including the numerous primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions of education which are exemplified by the existence of Catholic founded colleges, Minor and Major Seminaries and the Uganda Martyrs University at Nkozi in Uganda. In Jurisprudence and Politics, as a representative personality one identifies the late Benedicto Kiwanuka who as the most effective

¹² Cf. *Ibid.*

¹³ Cf. Daily Monitor, *Role of Catholic Church in bringing Peace to Northern Uganda*, 2 July 2015, available online at, <https://www.jpuduganda.org/2015/07/02/tax-litigation-at-your-door/>: accessed on 15 April 2020.

¹⁴ Cf. Archbishop Joseph Nakabaale Kiwanuka, *Biography*, available online, <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bkiwa.html>

indigenous lawyer during the pre-independence years was eventually raised to the position of the first Prime Minister of Uganda and the first indigenous Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Uganda. Generally, the contribution of the Catholic Church to development in Uganda is indelibly written in the annals of Uganda.¹⁵ Uganda has also produced two cardinals: Cardinal Emmanuel Kiwanuka Nsubuga (1914-1991), Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala (1926-). Today, Uganda has a total of six (6) major seminaries which train and form priests for the Catholic Church. Generally there is a progressive increase in the number of seminarians in these seminaries, though the numbers vary from dioceses to diocese with some diocese having very few vocations to the priesthood. Some the factors contributing to this are cultural attachments.¹⁶

PAPAL VISITS TO UGANDA

In a span of less than 50 years, three Popes have visited Uganda. The Holy Father Pope Francis visited Uganda in 2015; Pope Saint John Paul II in 1993; and Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1969. Few countries in Africa have had such a rare opportunity of consecutive Apostolic Journeys. The popes have come to Uganda on pilgrimage because of the Uganda Martyrs. For example, Blessed Pope Paul VI in his homily said,

¹⁵ Cf. Daily Monitor, *Role of Catholic Church in bringing Peace to Northern Uganda*, 2 July 2015, available online at, <https://www.jpduganda.org/2015/07/02/tax-litigation-at-your-door/> : accessed on 15 April 2020.

¹⁶ Cf. Pamela Adinda, *AMECEA Online News*, 15th March 2019, Available online at, <http://amecea.blogspot.com/2019/03/uganda-two-major-seminaries-share-fence.html>, accessed on 5 April 2020.

Why have I come to Africa, to Uganda, and right here to Namugongo? I have come to do honour to your Martyrs. Here is being raised a Sanctuary to the glory of the Lord in their memory; and I decided to come from Rome to bless the altar of this Sanctuary. My intention is to venerate also, by this act, all those other Christians who have given their lives for the Catholic Faith in Africa, here and everywhere....they are our champions, our heroes, our teachers. They teach us how real Christians should be.¹⁷

Just like Pope Paul VI, the first Pope to visit Uganda, the subsequent popes expressed the same on their pilgrimage and Apostolic journeys to Uganda. Whenever the Popes visit the Uganda, they strengthen the Catholic Faith and their visits have always provided an opportunity for new converts to the Catholic Church.

POPES' PERSONAL CONTACT WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

Pope Saint John Paul II spent five days in Uganda. But in those five days he made personal contact with as many people as possible. He traversed the whole country visiting all the four Ecclesiastical provinces. Pope St. John Paul II arrived on February 5, 1993. He led the Eucharistic Celebration in Gulu (Northern Uganda); Met the youth in Kampala; Visited to the Anglican Shrine; had Eucharistic Celebration at the Shrine of the Holy Uganda Martyrs of Namugongo in Kampala (Central Uganda); Recitation of the Angelus in Kampala; gave a message to the sick and disabled of Uganda at Saint Francis Hospital in Nsambya; met the Muslims of Uganda in Kampala; met the personnel of Saint Francis Hospital in Nsambya; met the Bishops of the Uganda Episcopal Conference; Announcement the elevation

¹⁷ Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Homily on the Visit To The Shrine Of Namugongo Uganda*, 2 August 1969.

of the Shrine of the Uganda Martyrs to the status of a Minor Basilica; Celebrated the Eucharistic in Kasese (Western Uganda); met the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Uganda; had a meeting with the Combonian Community in Kampala; Celebrated the Eucharistic in Soroti (Eastern Uganda); met the participants in the Opening Session of the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops for the Special Assembly of Africa (February 9, 1993); Farewell (February 10, 1993)¹⁸. For him personal contact with different people was very important.

VISIT OF THE SUCCESSOR OF SAINT PETER BUT NOT ONLY THAT

The apostolic journeys to Uganda have had an eminently religious and pastoral purpose. It is first of all, the visit of the Bishop of Rome and the Successor of Saint Peter to the local Churches in Uganda. A Visit of the one entrusted with the care of the universal Church. Ugandans perceive the visit of the pope not as one just fulfilling the role of being supreme Pontiff but in him, they recognize an embodiment of the truth of Love, not a love on the lips but an affectionate love. For example Pope John Paul II clearly said, "I come to Uganda with deep affection for all her people."¹⁹ "I look forward to celebrating, in Kampala, in Gulu, in Kasese, in Soroti, the grace of our adoption as God's beloved Children (1 Jn. 3:1-2)".²⁰ This greatly strengthens the Catholic faith in Uganda especially as the people feel loved by the pope and loved by God in there concrete situation.

¹⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Apostolic Journey to Benin, Uganda and Khartoum (February 3-10, 1993)*, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1993.

¹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

Time and again the popes when they visit Uganda, they resound the exhortation to respect human dignity. They make statements like: “All Ugandans are called to put aside the conflicts of the past, to seek reconciliation with one another, and to work together to build a society in which the dignity of the human person and respect for human rights will be the norm of conduct for all.”²¹ Since independence, the country has experienced a series of civil wars in which many lives are lost and human dignity undermined. The personal visit by the popes paves way for more lasting harmony and respect for each other among the people of Uganda.

Popes are conscious of other confessions and of the followers of the other religious traditions.²² This gives new momentum to the Ecumenical endeavors and interreligious dialogue which Uganda enjoys today. The Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) founded in 1963 gained new momentum after the visit of Pope John Paul II and further paved way for the establishment of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) which was realized in 2001. The main reason, why the popes have consecutively come to Uganda is because of the Ugandan Martyrs.

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²² Cf. *Ibid.*

UGANDA MARTYRS²³

Martyrs of Uganda were executed between 1885 and 1887. The 22 Ugandan Roman Catholic martyrs were collectively beatified by Pope Benedict XV in 1920 and canonized by Pope Paul VI on 18 October, 1964. Their feast day and a solemnity in Uganda is June 3. Uganda Martyrs were executed during the persecution of Christians under Mwangi *kabaka* (ruling king) of Buganda now part of Uganda from 1885 to 1887. Christians were tolerated by the *kabaka* Mutesa I, but his successor Mwangi launched a campaign against them. Mwangi massacred the Anglican missionary bishop James Hannington in October 1885. Joseph Mukasa, an important member of the royal household and a Catholic, reproached the *kabaka* for the massacre, and, on November 15 of 1885, Mwangi had Mukasa beheaded. This became the first Catholic martyr of Uganda. The Christian pages under Mukasa's guidance became the next victims. Mwangi, having learned that they had received religious instruction from the page Denis Ssebuggwawo, ordered that all the youths be arrested. Charles Lwanga, Mukasa's successor, then secretly baptized the boys who had only been catechumens. The following day they were herded away to the village of Namugongo. Three of them-Pontian Ngondwe, a soldier, and the royal servants Athanasius Bazzekuketta and Gonzaga Gonza-were murdered en route. All the survivors, as recorded by Father Lourdel, superior of the Roman Catholic mission to Uganda, were imprisoned for a week. With the exception of Mbaga-Tuzinde, who was clubbed by his own father, the pages were burned alive on June 3, 1886: Ambrose Kibuka, Anatole Kiriggwajjo, Achilles Kiwanuka, Mugagga, Mukasa Kiriwawanvu, Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo, Gyavira, Kizito, Bruno

²³ Cf. Catholic Missal, Memorial 3 June. In Uganda 3rd June is celebrated as a Solemnity, and is recognized by the State as a public Holiday.

Serunkuma, James Buzabaliawo, and Luke Banabakintu. Subsequent martyrs included Matthias Mulumba, assistant judge to a provincial chief; Andrew Kagga, chief of Kigowa; and Noe Mawaggali, a Roman Catholic leader. John Mary Muzeyi was beheaded on January 27, 1887.²⁴

DAUDI OKELO (1902-1918) AND JILDO IRWA (1906-1918)²⁵

The martyrs Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa were two young catechists from Uganda at the beginning of the 20th century. They lived and were martyred in the years immediately following the foundation of the mission of Kitgum by the Comboni Missionaries in 1915. Daudi Okelo was born of pagan parents. At 14-16 years, he attended the instruction to receive baptism. Baptized by Fr. Cesare Gambaretto on 1 June 1916, Daudi received his first Holy Communion on the same day and was confirmed in October 1916. After completing his formation, Daudi accepted to be enrolled as a catechist. At the beginning of 1917, Antonio, the catechist in charge of Paimol, died. Daudi went to Fr. Cesare, then superior at the mission of Kitgum, offering to take Antonio's place. Daudi's appointment came only towards the end of that year, during one of the catechists' monthly meeting. The young Jildo Irwa was to go with him as his assistant. Before setting off, the two of them went to Fr. Cesare who informed them of the difficulties of their work, like the long travelling distance about 80 km from Kitgum mission and, the frequent in-fights of the local people, instigated also by gangs of raiders and traders of slaves

²⁴ Cf. J. F. Faupel, *African Holocaust; The Story of the Uganda Martyrs*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1st Reprint 2013. This work gives a full account of the story of Martyrdom and the lives of each of the Ugandan Martyrs.

²⁵ Cf. Roman Catholic Missal 20th October. In Uganda, this day is celebrated as a Feast.

and gold, sporadically visiting the area. To all this Daudi is said to have answered: "I am not afraid to die. Jesus, too, died for us!" So around November-December 1917, with Fr. Cesare's blessing, Boniface, the head-catechist of Kitgum, accompanied Daudi and Jildo to Paimol. Here Daudi immediately began his work by gathering children willing to take religious instruction.

At dawn he beat the drum to call his catechumens for morning prayers and, for Jildo and himself, also for the Rosary. He taught them the prayers and the catechism's questions and answers, repeated often in a sign-song like manner during the lesson, to facilitate the memorizing. It was a matter of teaching the first elements of faith, the so-called *Lok-odiku* (the words of the morning), namely the essential parts of the catechism. To this activity Daudi added the visits to the nearby small villages from where the catechumens were coming, busy during the day in assisting their parents to look after the cattle or work in the fields.

At sunset, Daudi gave the signal for common prayer and the Rosary, always closing with a song to Our Lady. On Sunday, he held a longer prayer service, often enlivened by the presence of catechumens and catechists of the area. Daudi of Payira is described as young man of peaceful and shy character, diligent in his duties as a catechist and loved by all. He never got involved in tribal or political disputes, fairly frequent at that time, as submission to the British government was often followed by ill-concealed intolerance. Due to an unhappy decision taken by the District Commissioner, there rose a serious tension. Raiders, Muslim elements and witchdoctors took advantage of the violent situation to get rid of the new religion brought by Daudi.

During the weekend of 18-20 October 1918, long before dawn, five people headed for the hut where Daudi and Jildo were staying with the clear intention of killing them. A village elder confronted the new comers telling them they were not allowed to kill the catechists, as they were his guests. Daudi appeared at the door of his hut and

entreated the elder not to get involved. Then the intruders entered into Daudi's hut and insisted with him that he give up teaching catechism. Realizing that Daudi was not giving in to their threats, they dragged him outside, pushed him to the ground and pierced him with their spears. He was about 16-18 years old. His body was then left unburied until a few days later some people, tying a rope around the neck, dragged the body over a nearby empty termite hill. The mortal remains, collected in February 1926, were later placed in the Mission Church of Kitgum, at the foot of the altar of the Sacred Heart.

Jildo had spontaneously and very willingly offered to go with Daudi to teach God's word in Paimol. Here he was loved by everyone because he was always available and exemplary in his duties as assistant-catechist. On the morning of their martyrdom Jildo answered to Daudi who was warning him about a possible cruel death, "Why should we be afraid? We have done nothing wrong to anyone; we are here only because Fr. Cesare sent us to teach the word of God. Do not fear!"²⁶ He repeated the same words to those who were urging him to leave that place and his duty as assistant-catechist. "We have done nothing wrong", he was saying in tears "For the same reason you have killed Daudi you must also kill me, because together we came here and together we have been teaching God's word." Having said this, somebody grabbed him, pushed him outside the hut and, placing him at a distance of two steps, pierced him through with a spear. Then one of them struck Jildo's head with a knife. He was about 12-14 years old.

The martyrdom of these two young catechists from Uganda is very meaningful for the current events the country is going through. It is a matter, first of all, of two young lay catechists who together carried out and remained faithful to their assignment to spread the Gospel

²⁶ http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20021020_okelo-irwa_en.html, accessed on 22 April 2020.

by words and deeds.²⁷ In Uganda lay catechists do a great work of evangelization by leading the Christians in Sunday prayers.²⁸ They also teach catechism to both the young and old. Some parishes have over 50 chapels attached and the pastoral care of these chapels is mainly carried out by the lay catechists with the priests visiting only occasionally to give sacraments.

SOME PASTORAL CHALLENGES

The challenges are social, cultural, political and economic in nature. There are rapid changes that have impacted on the beliefs, values and norms of the present day Ugandans. There is a decline the Catholic Church numbers due to the Pentecostal wave. The Catholic Church is perceived as too rigid and boring especially by the youth. Family life and marriage is threatened by consumerism manifesting itself as social pressure among young people and parents who want luxurious and pompous weddings. This has greatly hindered Church marriage as the parents of the woman demand for a lot of dowry which the husbands cannot afford. And so they choose to cohabit instead of going for Church marriage. There is social pressure to make quick money, which leads to various problems such as corruption. The crisis of parenting, single parenthood, abortions and contraceptives, challenge of illiteracy, poverty and sometimes there is poor Church-State relationship due to moral divergence in policies to suit political interests. All these make the work of the Catholic Church in Uganda complicated.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*

²⁸ Cf. Bengt Sundkler, & Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 17ff.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the challenges facing the Catholic Church in Uganda there is a continual and never failing hope and growth in faith and commitment. The Blood of the martyrs has indeed been, the seed of the Catholic Faith in Uganda. The consecutive apostolic journeys to Uganda have always re-kindled and confirmed the Catholic Church in Uganda.

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CONSTANTINE RUPINY¹

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GULU AND TORORO, ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCES IN UGANDA

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie dorobku Kościoła katolickiego w prowincjach kościelnych Gulu i Tororo w Ugandzie. Te dwie prowincje, Gulu i Tororo, były ewangelizowane odpowiednio przez misjonarzy kombonianów i Mill Hill. Artykuł ukazuje wkład Kościoła na podstawie danych statystycznych konwersji religijnych, szkolnictwa, służby zdrowia oraz ogólnego rozwoju społeczno-ekonomicznego. Wskazuje również na pewne istotne wyzwania, przed którymi Kościół stoi w badanych prowincjach, a mianowicie między innymi wyzwania moralne wynikające z wiary i konflikty międzyre-

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ligijne. Pomimo istniejących trudności rola Kościoła w tych prowincjach jest bardzo istotna.

Keywords: Catholic Church, Uganda, Gulu and Tororo Province, pastoral issues

INTRODUCTION

In this work, important data about the Catholic Church in Uganda are presented. However, since Uganda has four ecclesiastical provinces with nineteen dioceses, only data for two of the ecclesiastical provinces – Gulu and Tororo, which consist of nine dioceses, will be presented. The basic source of information is the Uganda Episcopal Conference Website.² The website is well updated. Some few other sources are also used. The challenges the Church is facing in Uganda and the contribution of the Church in Uganda are largely based on the author's concrete knowledge of Uganda's situations.

1. ARRIVAL OF MISSIONARIES IN UGANDA

Missionaries of Africa (French White Fathers) were the first Catholic Missionary group that arrived in Buganda (present day part of Uganda) on 17th February 1879.³ These French Catholic Missionary group evangelized the area now called Kampala and Mbarara Ecclesiastical provinces, that is, the central, western and southern

² Uganda Episcopal Conference [official website], <https://www.uecon.org> (accessed 22.11.2020).

³ Cf. Frederick Tusingire, *Evangelization of Uganda: Challenges and Strategies*, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation in Missiology at Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Rome: 1998, 36.

parts of Uganda. They currently consist of the following dioceses: Kampala, Kiyinda-Mityana, Masaka, Hoima, Fort Portal, Kasese and Kabale. However, due to Kabaka Mwanga's unwelcomed homosexual advances towards Christians, among other reasons, he persecuted both Anglican and Catholic Christians. Between 15th November 1885 and 3rd June 1886, he ordered the martyrdom of twenty two Catholics. They were canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

The Eastern part of Uganda was evangelized by the Mill Hill Missionaries who came from United Kingdom. They arrived in Uganda on 6th September 1895,⁴ upon the invitation of Bishop Leon Livinhac, the then Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers). *Kabaka* – King of Buganda (Uganda was not yet a republic), gave the missionaries a mile of land at Nsambya Hill. They started a mission station at Nsambya, from where they evangelized East of Kampala, and of the country such as Busoga, where we now have Jinja Diocese and proceeded further eastward to places such as Soroti and Tororo. In fact, their mission progressed well: on 26th May 1896 sixty four catechumens were baptized at Nsambya, and in the following month of June, one hundred and four Catholic Christians received the Sacrament of Confirmation.⁵ The Mill Hill Missionaries eventually invited the Franciscan Religious Sisters and the first group arrived in Uganda on 15th October 1899.⁶

The evangelization of Northern Uganda was especially marked by the arrival of Comboni Missionaries (they used to be called Verona Fathers) on 17th February 1910. They arrived from Italy, through Nimule, in the current South Sudan, and first settled at Koba and transferred to Omach, now in the present Diocese of Nebbi, in Gulu Ecclesiastical Province. Due to sleeping sickness, the missionaries abandoned Omach mission post and moved to Gulu in 1911.⁷ The

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵ H. P. Gale, *Uganda and the Mill Hill Fathers* (London: Macmillan, 1959), 114.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 236-237.

⁷ A. Medeghini, *Storia d'Uganda* (Bologna: Editrice Nigrizia, 1973), 425-430.

Verona Fathers were joined in Gulu by Comboni (Verona) Religious Sisters on 18th November 1918.⁸ From Gulu the Comboni (Verona) Fathers opened other mission stations at Kitgum and Palaro in 1915, Moyo in 1916, and Arua in 1918,⁹ Lango (1930) and Karamoja (1933). In 1923 Gulu became an Apostolic Prefecture under Msgr. Antonio Vignato but became a diocese much later on 1st December 1950. From Gulu diocese some new dioceses were created: Arua in 1958; Moroto in 1965, and Lira in 1968. Kotido and Nebbi dioceses were created much later.

2. CATHOLIC NATIONAL OFFICES AND INFORMATION¹⁰

Uganda has an Apostolic Nunciature based at Mbuya, Kampala. The current Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda is His Excellency Luigi Bianco, an Italian by nationality. The Nunciature was established on 2nd September 1966.

Then there is Uganda Episcopal Conference, which was founded in 1960, with the approval of the Holy See. Its offices are at Nsambya, Kampala. The current Chairman of the Episcopal Conference is Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Ziwa, Bishop of Kiyind-Mityana Diocese. His deputy is Rt. Rev. Robert Muhiirwa, Bishop of Fort-Portal Diocese. The Chairman of the Conference is assisted by Executive Board which is composed of six chairmen of various Commissions. In fact, the day-today running of the Episcopal Conference is entrusted by the Bishops to the Secretary General of the Conference. The current Secretary General is Msgr. John Baptist Kauta.

⁸ Cf. Frederick Tusingire, *Evangelization of Uganda: Challenges and Strategies*, 44.

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Uganda Episcopal Conference [official website], <https://www.uecon.org> (accessed 22.11.2020).

Catholic population in Uganda is 15,543,117 out of a total population of about 44 million persons.¹¹ There are four archdioceses, and nineteen (19) dioceses (including archdioceses). There are 2,379 priests (including 19 bishops ordinary, 2 auxiliary and 8 emeriti). The institutions include the following: 640 parishes, 3,388 schools, 219 higher institutions of learning, including 6 major seminaries, two main radios—Radio Sapientia at Nsambya, and Radio Maria station and substations, one national catholic television station (at Nsambya), One prominent university—Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi, and 264 hospitals and major health centres.

Uganda has four ecclesiastical provinces: Gulu, Kampala, Mbarara and Tororo. Gulu Archdiocese was erected to the level of Metropolitan Archdiocese on 30th January 1999, by His Holiness, and now saint, Pope John Paul II. The Ecclesiastical province of Gulu consists of three suffragan Dioceses of Arua, Lira and Nebbi. The province has His Grace John Baptist Odama as its Metropolitan Archbishop.

Kampala Ecclesiastical Province: Its Metropolitan Archbishop is His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese. It has four suffragan dioceses: Kiyinda-Mityana, Lugazi, Luweero and Masaka Dioceses.

Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province: Its Metropolitan Archbishop is His Grace Paul Bakyenga, Archbishop of Mbarara Archdiocese. The Province is composed of Mbarara archdiocese, Hoima Diocese, Fort-Portal Diocese, Kabale Diocese and Kasese Diocese.

Tororo Ecclesiastical Province: Its Metropolitan Archbishop is His Gracem Emmanuel Obbo, Archbishop of Tororo Archdiocese. Its suffragan dioceses are Jinja Diocese, Kotido Diocese, Moroto Diocese and Soroti Diocese. I will give some information about Gulu and Tororo Ecclesiastical provinces.

¹¹ Cf. World Bank Open Data, *Population, total* – Uganda, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=UG> (accessed 22.11.2020). The population figure is an estimate since the last census was in 2014.

3. GULU ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE (NORTHERN UGANDA)¹²

3.1. Gulu Archdiocese

The current Archbishop of Gulu is His Grace John Baptist Odama. The area is about 27,945 sq. km. It has a total population of about 1,649,695. The Catholic population is about 988,054. There are 29 parishes and 774 outstations. There are 73 diocesan priests, 32 missionary priests, 15 professed religious men of diocesan right, 148 religious women of diocesan right, 16 professed religious women of pontifical right, 1,243 catechists, 3 hospitals, 13 health centres, 458 primary schools, 48 secondary and vocational schools, 2 tertiary institutions, and 1 university. Uganda Martyrs National Major seminary – Alokolum is located in this archdiocese; 1 Radio Maria substation.

3.2. Arua Diocese

The diocese was created on 23rd June 1958 by Pope Pius XII, having been cut off from the then Gulu diocese. Its current bishop is Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki. The total area is 10,561 sq. km. population is approximately 3,196,885; Catholics are approximately 2,202,019; there are 54 parishes and sub-parishes; 187 priests (including the bishop) working in the diocese of whom 135 are diocesan priests, 40 are priests belonging to Religious Institutes/Congregations; 11 priests serve with the Refugees as a special ministry; 166 religious women; 39 religious Brothers; 253 primary schools; 32 secondary

¹² Cf. Uganda Episcopal Conference [official website], <https://www.uecon.org> (accessed 22.11.2020). Data about dioceses in Gulu Ecclesiastical provinces are from this source.

schools; 11 vocational (technical schools; 37 Nursery schools; 16 Health services (1 hospital and 15 health centres); 1 Radio Station.

3.3. Lira Diocese

The diocese was erected on 12.07.1968. Its current bishop is Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok. Its area coverage is about 12,030 sq.km. the total population is approximately 2, 123, 541, with 1,290,669 Catholics. It has 18 parishes; 72 diocesan priests; 12 missionary priests; 1 missionary brother; 4 Comboni sisters; 80 Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church; 27 Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu; 1,500 Catechists; 15 health services (1 hospital and 14 health centres); 27 Catholic founded secondary schools; 1 minor Seminary; 1 catechetical Pastoral training centre; 2 children/babies home; 1 Radio station.

3.4. Nebbi Catholic Diocese

Nebbi Catholic Diocese was erected diocese by Pope John Paul II on 26th May 1996. Its area is 5,098 sq. km. The total population of the diocese is 667,917, and Catholics are 528,178. The currently the diocese is governed by Msgr. Emmanuel Odaga, the Diocesan Administrator. There are 69 diocesan priests; 3 Comboni Missionary Fathers; 63 religious sisters working in the diocese; 25 religious brothers; 997 catechists; 41 major seminarians; 20 minor seminarians; 5 lay missionaries; 25 Catholic founded schools; 6 health institutions; 1 Radio Maria substation.

4. TORORO ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

This province consists of the dioceses of Tororo, Soroti, Jinja, Kotido and Moroto. His Grace Emmanuel Obbo is the Metropolitan Archbishop with his see at Tororo.

4.1. Tororo Archdiocese¹³

The archdiocese covers an area of 22,014.9 sq. km. The Population is approximately 3.6 million. Catholics are approximately 1.2 million. It has 45 parishes; 984 outstations; 119 diocesan priests; 9 religious priests; 243 religious sisters; 16 religious brothers; 945 catechists in outstations; 15 health services (1 hospital and 14 health centres); 26 pre-primary schools; 439 primary schools; 45 secondary schools; 11 vocational/technical schools; 1 minor seminary; 1 Radio Maria substation.

4.2. Jinja Diocese¹⁴

The diocese of Jinja was created on August 5, 1966, cut off from Kampala Archdiocese. Its current bishop is Rt. Rev. Charles Martin Wamika. The diocese has an area of approximately 8,917 sq. km; approximately 2 million people; about 683,839 Catholics; 21 parishes; 76 diocesan priests (+ 1 *Fidei Donum* priest); 37 missionary priests; 16 religious brothers; 48 missionary sisters; 2 hospitals (+ 1 government hospital). Other statistics about number of schools and health centres are not clearly available.

4.3. Kotido Diocese¹⁵

Kotido was erected diocese on May 20, 1991, detached from Moroto diocese, by Pope John Paul II. The current bishop is Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi, MCCJ. The diocese has an area of approximately 13,550, sq. km. its population is about 499,442, and the catholic population is about 193,010. There are 10 parishes; 20 diocesan

¹³ Cf. Archdiocese of Tororo [official website], <https://tororoarchdiocese.org> (accessed 22.11.2020).

¹⁴ Cf. Uganda Episcopal Conference [official website], <https://www.uecon.org> (accessed 22.11.2020). Also cf. Website of Jinja diocese: <https://www.jinjadiocese.com> (accessed 2.4.2021).

¹⁵ Ibid.

priests; 12 missionary priests; 1 missionary brother; 25 Ugandan sisters; 7 missionary sisters; 170 catechists. The diocese has 5 health centres; 5 secondary schools; 4 primary schools; 1 nursery school.

4.4. Moroto Diocese¹⁶

Moroto diocese was erected (from Gulu diocese) in 1965. Its current bishop is Rt. Rev. Damiano Giulio Guzzetti, MCCJ (Comboni Missionary). Its area is about 15,000 sq. km. Its entire population is about 500,00 people. The number of Catholics is not indicated. The diocese has 11 parishes; 12 diocesan priests; 5 *Fidei Donum* priests; 15 missionary priests; 2 deacons; 3 religious brothers; 31 missionary sisters; 41 Ugandan religious sisters; 185 catechists. The diocese has 1 diocesan minor seminary; 1 missionary minor seminary (Apostles of Jesus); 1 school of nursing; 1 catechists' Training Centre; 1 vocational/Technical institute; 3 Nursery schools.

4.5. Soroti Diocese¹⁷

It was created on November 29, 1980. Its current bishop is Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Eciru Oliach. It covers an area of approximately 12,920 sq. km. the population is approximately 1,819,000, and about 39.2% is catholic. There are 41 parishes; 87 Diocesan priests; 2 Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers); 54 Little sisters of St. Francis of Assisi; 3 Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church; 1,940 Catechists; 1,070 outstations; approximately 15 secondary schools; 1 catechists' Training Centre.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

5. SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH IN UGANDA

5.1. Faith-moral problems

There is a profound challenge of putting our Christian faith in practice. Some Catholics practice religious syncretism in form of practice of ancestor worship, consultation with traditional African diviners; use of contraceptives which go against Church doctrine of natural family planning; some elements of homosexuality precisely LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) activities which are being supported especially by Europe and North America; concubinage, premarital sex and extramarital sexual activities are some of the faith-moral problems which sometimes make a good number of Catholics not to live a sacramental life.

5.2. Economic poverty

Although Uganda is endowed with natural resources, including fertile soil, favourable weather for agriculture, and now petroleum is being drilled, and so forth, Uganda is economically a very poor country with majority of the population living in abject poverty; insufficient amount of food (some people eat once a day), unsafe drinking water, poor health services, poor human shelter (houses), etc. The poverty has affected the Church too which has to rely heavily on donations from developed countries for church construction, priests' remuneration and other related facilitation such as lack of means of transport for pastoral work, training of seminarians, religious brothers and sisters, as well as of catechists, etc.

5.3. Conflicts between Christian Denominations, and Muslims

Right from the time Christianity was introduced in Uganda, there always have been some religious (and sometimes political) conflicts between Catholics and Anglicans (and now the mushrooming Pentecostals). Preaching is sometimes directed to discrediting each other. Anglicans tend to occupy much of the important political positions since they were favoured by the British right before Uganda's independence from the direct British rule on October 9, 1962. There is a kind of scrambling for new converts. This poor and simply diplomatic relationship between Christians is indeed a scandal.

In addition, although the relationship between Muslims and Catholics is generally good, there is no fair religious dialogue in some instances. For instance, Muslims who want to convert to the Catholic Church are in most cases treated unfairly (persecuted) by other Muslims. Instead, they want Catholics to convert to Islam. This makes mixed marriage or disparity of cult or conversion of Muslims to the Catholic Church very difficult.

5.4. Ecological Problem

The relationship between people and nature generally leaves a lot to be desired. There is excessive exploitation of natural resources in Uganda, for instance, forests (trees) greatly exploited for charcoal meant for cooking, reclamation of swamps for agriculture and settlement, use of pesticides and other chemicals to improve agricultural productivity, among others. There is need for us to appreciate nature as a gift from God and that we need to use nature responsibly as stewards. Unfortunately, the church is doing little to help people in this regard, in addition to some of her members also involved in such irresponsible use of natural resources. Of course, this does not mean that we worship nature, no. Nature is not God or

god. But the responsible use of nature by man as its stewards needs to be promoted even by the Catholic Church.

6. SOME CONTRIBUTION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

In spite of the challenges being faced by the Church in Uganda, she has made significant contribution to the life of Ugandans in both spiritual and temporal spheres of life.

6.1. Evangelization of the People

With the available institutions and pastoral agents such as bishops, priests, religious, catechists, etc., and though still few in relation to need, Christian religion has been implanted into the country. Despite the problem of sin, evangelization is a big contribution as we believe that the Church provides all the necessary means of salvation in Jesus Christ. It has also improved the relationship between men and women. Women, normally considered as inferior to men, are now respected more and more, considering that we as human beings we are of the same dignity granted to us by our common Creator.

6.2. Provision of Formal Education

In many communities the Church provides education right in pre-primary, primary, secondary, institutional and even at university levels. This helped the natives, not only to learn how to read and write, but to rise to the level of professionalism in their fields of learning as we see in professions of teachers in schools, health officers, etc.

6.3. Provision of Health Services

The Church in Uganda, through the coordination by Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau, has many health service facilities such as health centres and hospitals. These health facilities, though with difficulty in affording medicines and other medical equipment, have contributed greatly to the improved health of the sick, reduce mortality rates, etc. We are grateful to many donors especially from Catholic dioceses and Episcopal Conferences in Europe and North America.

CONCLUSION

Considering that Uganda has nineteen dioceses, I chose nine of the dioceses to give summary information about. Much of the data is got from the website of Uganda Episcopal Conference, that is, the Uganda Catholic Secretariat. The information is reliable. The Catholic Church in Uganda is alive and indeed active in spite of the challenges that she faces. She is still relevant in the country and she is respected and listened to. We thank God for the unity the Church in Uganda has with the universal Church. This visible unity of members of the Church in Christ is an important note (mark) and strength to her mission, which is the mission of Christ, in Uganda and in the whole world.

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OPIO POLYCARP¹

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

Abstract

Obecna sytuacja Kościoła katolickiego w Ugandzie jest zwieńczeniem długiej historii, która została przedstawiona w niniejszym artykule. Kościół katolicki w Ugandzie wiele zawdzięcza misjonarzom (Ojcom Białym, Misjonarzom Mill Hill i Misjonarzom Comboni), którzy zasiali ziarno wiary w Ugandzie oraz duszpasterzom, którzy później podlewali to ziarno i dbali o jego wzrost. Trzeba też wspomnieć o hierarchii, która poprzez dobrze zorganizowaną strukturę dba o ciągłość Kościoła, przez co Kościół w Ugandzie zyskał dziś na sile i ma przed sobą obiecującą przyszłość. Szczególne wyróżnienie przysługuje Męczennikom Ugandyjskim, którzy nie tylko byli znakiem rodzącego się Kościoła, ale także silnej wiary w Boga, która dziś stała się podstawą dla ruchu pielgrzymkowego w Ugandzie, gdyż wielu chrześcijan co roku wędruje do Namugongo, aby modlić

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się za pośrednictwem Męczenników Ugandyjskich. Również inne znaki wiary, które znajdują odzwierciedlenie w codziennej służbie Kościoła, zostały odpowiednio przedstawione.

Key Words: Catholic Church, Church in Uganda, Religion, Martyrs in Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Christianity is one of the widely professed religion in Uganda. As it is emblazoned in the 1995 constitution, every citizen has the freedom to worship:

every person shall have the right to: freedom to practice any religion and manifest such practice which shall include the right to belong to and participate in the practices of any religious body or organization in a manner consistent with this constitution².

The Catholic Church is a dominant religion in Uganda which presence have impacted a lot to the people of Uganda. This article seeks to present the situational analysis of the Catholic Church in Uganda, considering in some instances the progressive life of the church with special recourse to history. It is also the time that Uganda just like any part of the world grapples with the scourge of the COVID 19 corona virus which has its own impact in the church.

The History of Catholic Missions in Uganda

The history of the Catholic Church in Uganda is attributed to the first missionaries which history is much cherished and handed over

² *The constitution of Uganda*, Kampala, Uganda 1995, no. 29 paragraph 1C, p. 42.

from one generation to another. This history is part of catechism and it is attributed to two grate missionaries, Father Simon Lourdel and brother Aman, whose arrival brought about the birth of the Catholic Church in Uganda. The coming of these missionaries to Uganda was a fulfillment of a papal decree of 24th February 1878 entrusting to the White Fathers the evangelization of the area of what today is known as the Lake Victoria area, and they formed part of the five groups of the missionaries that originally were sent to Uganda³.

There were a batch of ten pioneer missionaries who dispatched from France in the year 1878, headed for the evangelization of areas around Lake Victoria and among which included Father Simon Lourdel and Brother Aman, and on their arrival in Munyonyo on 17th February 1879, they sought permission from the King of Buganda for settlement and to also help in transporting the other missionaries and properties across Lake Victoria⁴. It is from here that the Catholic journey from Uganda started and grew from strength to strength.

The Catholic Church in Uganda – population

Uganda 2021 population is estimated at 46,655,771⁵. According to the religious demography report of 2014 census, Catholics make up 39% of the total population, Anglicans 32%, Muslims 14%, 11% Pentecostal Christians and 5% other groups including those with no religious affiliation⁶. This makes the Catholic Church the dominant religion in Uganda.

³ Cf. F. Tusingire, *Evangelization of Uganda; Challenges and Strategies*, Mariianum publishing Company, Kisubi, 2003, p. 37.

⁴ H. Johnston, *A history of the Colonization of Africa by Alien Races*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, London 1913, pp. 245-260.

⁵ Cf. *Population of Uganda*, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uganda-population/> (accessed 6.2.2021).

⁶ Cf. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UGANDA-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT> (accessed 6.2.2021).

The Ecclesiastical territory

The Roman Catholic Church in Uganda is composed of 4 ecclesiastical provinces and 20 suffragan dioceses. There is the Ecclesiastical Province of Gulu which comprise of the dioceses; Archdiocese of Gulu, Diocese of Arua, Diocese of Lira and Nebbi Catholic Diocese. The other province is the Ecclesiastical Province of Kampala comprising of the diocese of; Archdiocese of Kampala, Kasana–Luweero Diocese, Kiyinda–Mityana Diocese , Diocese of Lugazi and Diocese of Masaka. Mbarara Ecclesiastical province is another province comprising of; Archdiocese of Mbarara, Diocese of Fort Portal, Diocese of Hoima, Diocese of Kabale and Diocese of Kasese. The last Ecclesiastical Province is that of Tororo with the dioceses of; Archdiocese of Tororo, Diocese of Jinja, Diocese of Kotido, Diocese of Moroto and Diocese of Soroti⁷.

HIRACHICAL STRUCTURE/PASTORAL AGENTS

Cardinal

Uganda has a retired cardinal named, His Eminence Emmanuel Wamala, born on the 15th of December 1926. He was ordained priest on the 21.12.1957. He served as Bishop of Kiyinda Mityana and Archbishop of Kampala, Uganda. He was elevated and appointed cardinal priest of Sant’Ugo on the 26.11.1994 by the late Pope John Paul II. This year he celebrated 25 years as cardinal⁸.

⁷ Cf. Uganda Episcopal Conference, Provinces, <https://www.uecon.org/> (accessed on 17.2.2021).

⁸ Cf. <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bwamala.html> (accessed 28.12.2020).

Archbishops/Metropolitans

The Roman Catholic Church in Uganda is composed of four ecclesiastical provinces under the able leadership of four Archbishops. The archbishops in Uganda govern their own archdiocese and supervises all the other bishops in their archiepiscopal province. Many of them have developed binding programmes for their provinces like Peace Week, Pilgrimages..., which help to enhance the faith of the Christians. They are also helping to maintain the unity of the Christians.

The four standing archbishops in Uganda are His Grace John Baptist Odama (Gulu Archdiocese), His Grace Emmanuel Oboo (Tororo Archdiocese), His Grace Paul K. Bakyenga (Mbarara Archdiocese) and His Grace Cyprian Kizito Lwanga (Kampala Archdiocese).

Bishops

Uganda has nineteen (19) dioceses with eighteen (18) ordinaries, except Nebbi Catholic Diocese which fell vacant on the 23.11.2018. The ordinaries are doing well their duties of leading worship and administering sacraments, teaching, and applying the truth of the Gospel in their own times and pastoral governance. There are also two auxiliary Bishop's in Uganda in the specific dioceses of Fortportal and Mbarara. They help Bishops in allocated pastoral care within the diocese⁹.

Priests and Deacons

There are quite several diocesan and missionary priests who are the immediate collaborators of the Bishop's. They are pastoral agents

⁹ Cf. Bishops of Uganda, <http://www.gcatholic.org/hierarchy/country/UG.htm> (accessed on 16.2.2021).

who are very instrumental in administering sacraments and offer other pastoral care to the parishioners.

There are over 2,379 priests in Uganda¹⁰. These looks encouraging number and an indicator of embrace for the vocation to the priesthood, but comparatively, this number is not proportional to the population, hence the need for more vocation to the priesthood to respond to the demands of the growing number of Catholic parishioners. Priests in Uganda are not salaried, and they depend on the charity of the Christian community and well-wishers but remain dedicated to pastoral care of the faithful and most of them are resident in the presbytery. Most of the dioceses in Uganda ordain seminarians to the clerical status of Deaconate after the third year of their theological training and they are very helpful in assisting the priests after their ordinations and performing attached duties of a deacon. Some dioceses like Lira Diocese to which I belong, give deacons one more year of pastoral work in a parish after finishing theological training so that they acquaint themselves with parish and priestly life.

The Laity

This is headed by a Bishop chair who work in close collaboration with the departments that fall under lay apostolate. They act as a bridge between the laity and the bishop's Conference. It is being coordinated by the chairman of the Laity on National level. This commission has been active in training of lay leaders about their responsibilities in the church. The laity are very instrumental for the future development of the church.

¹⁰ Cf Uganda Episcopal Conference, <https://www.uecon.org/index.php> (accessed 26.12.2020).

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Roman Catholic Church forms part of the Universal Apostolic Church with the Pope being the head. The Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) acts primarily through the Uganda Catholic Secretariat (UCS) to promote and coordinate social and pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church in Uganda. This task is performed through commissions and different committees. UEC is a member of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) and Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)¹¹.

Commissions

The different commissions coordinate the different apostolate in different fields and departments in the dioceses with the Episcopal Conference which operates under her administrative umbrella at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat (UCS). There is a Bishop chair responsible for the different commissions who work in close collaboration with the executive secretaries at the secretariat. The executive secretaries coordinate with the different dioceses¹².

The commissions are also responsible for preparation of reports which are given at different forums of the Uganda Episcopal Conference. Below are some of the commissions that help to define the operation of the Catholic Church in Uganda.

¹¹ Ibidem (About Us page, presenting the Mission, Vision, and objective. Executive board, administration, and members).

¹² Ibidem (Commissions page).

Health Commission and HIV/AIDs

The health commission is guided by a vision which calls for the Catholic Church to be a caring Church with a mission to promote integral human development in the whole world inspired by the gospel values derived from that of the very healing ministry of Jesus Christ. The main objective is to provide holistic health Care with key consideration of on curative, preventive, promotional and pastoral Care systems. All these is made possible by the Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB) which is the health office of the Catholic Church in Uganda and the technical arm of the health commission¹³.

The church operates 33 hospitals, 263 lower-level units, which makes 45% of the total health facilities in Uganda. The church also has 15 training schools which have over time produced morally upright medical professionals who have contributed highly to the good health care system in the country. It should also be noted that catholic health facilities employ 10,194 health workers which contributes highly to the employment sector of the country and UCMB has been very instrumental in offering services in view of improving managerial, administrative, fiscal, legal capacities of Catholic Health Services either directly through its own staff or through purchased expertise they gather and manage data/information in view of proving the relevance, cost efficiency / effectiveness and the social orientation of Catholic health services, gather and disseminate relevant information for Catholic health services, and facilitate the establishment of fora of common discussion, learning, collaboration, exchange of experience, identification of common problems and priorities¹⁴.

There is also HIV/AIDS focal desk at the secretariat which coordinates national office with the dioceses specifically on activities related to the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS. There are special

¹³ Cf. Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau, <https://www.ucmb.co.ug/> (accessed 26.12.2020).

¹⁴ *ibidem*

departments demarcated for HIV infected persons in most of the catholic hospitals to handle the clients with freedom, for instance AIDS unit in St. John XXIII Hospital Aber in Lira Diocese is an extensive arm of the hospital which provide special attention to HIV positive persona and it is constructed in a separate unit¹⁵. As matter of fact, the impact of the church in fighting HIV/AIDS scourge in the country has been grate and government has applauded the church for this noble initiative.

Education Commission

There is a bishop chair in charge of education assisted by the executive secretary on national level. He coordinates with the diocesan education secretaries on behalf of the secretariat. This commission is concerned with catholic education and they ensure Religious studies are taught in our schools. They have developed a syllabus which is distributed to all catholic schools through the diocesan education offices and they also protect the moral teaching of the church in all catholic founded schools, introducing the learner to Catholic culture and tradition, availing space in which the Gospel can fruitfully germinate in the education system¹⁶.

There are two sound national universities run by the catholic church which passes out graduates every year (Nkozi University and Kisubi University). The church has supported over 6,311 secondary schools and primary schools in Uganda¹⁷. It should be noted that

¹⁵ J. Franzelli MCCJ, *Bishop of Lira Diocese, 2013-2017 Quinquennial Report, (Un published report, A five-year report given by every bishop to Rome through the nunciature).*

¹⁶ M.A. Muwagga, and others, *How Effective is the Diocesan Educational Leadership in Enhancing a Denominational Education Philosophy in Uganda? Reflections from Roman Catholic Schools in Greater Kampala (Uganda)*, "American Journal of Educational Research" 6(1) 2018, pp. 88-94.

¹⁷ Cf. *Catholic Founded Schools*, <http://ugandaschools.guide/find-a-school/foundingbody/1> (accessed 6.2.2021).

the catholic church has been the custodian of good education in the country. It should be noted that there is wide opportunity for religious education of children in the elementary schools run by the catholic church.

Besides formal education, the church has also been very instrumental in skilling the youth through vocational trainings to respond the overwhelming wave of unemployment among the youth.

Priestly Formation

Minor Seminaries: Most dioceses if not all, have minor seminaries which help in the initial formation of seminarians in view of becoming future priests. There are 18 minor seminaries in Uganda. The seminaries still attract quite a good number of young boys who feel the call to the priesthood. This offer an indicator that the future of the church in Uganda is bright. The seminaries however are faced with the common challenge of financial shortage as the fees paid by seminarians cannot meet all the demands of the seminaries. This makes the seminaries vulnerable and many times left to the mercy of donors. However, there is a robust campaign towards self-reliance.

There are four National Seminaries), two philosophicum (Uganda Martyrs National Major Seminary-Alokolum and St. Thomas Aquinas National Major Seminary-Katigondo) seminaries and two theologicum (**St. Mary's National Major Seminary** – Ggaba and St. Paul's National Major Seminary-Kinyamasika)¹⁸. These seminaries attract quite several young boys which is an indicator that the vocation to the priesthood is still bright. There are approximately 800 seminarians for both philosophicum and theologicum. However, as reflected above, the challenge of finance also affects the running of our major

¹⁸ Cf. Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (official website), UEC Major Seminaries-AMECEA, <https://amecea.org/catholic-institutions-uec/> (accessed on 17.2.2021).

seminaries, which many times move on, thanks be to God because of the charity of many people.

There is also one diocesan Major Seminary (St. Mbaga Ggaba-Kampala Archdiocese) and one Missionary Major Seminary (PCJ-Jinja) which have proved helpful as some dioceses also send their seminarians there for the last part of their formation to the priesthood.

Lay Apostolate Commission

There is a bishop chair in charge of Lay Apostolate Commission and different executive secretaries under this commission help to coordinate their different departments.

There are quite several lay movements and associations spread in most dioceses and notable among them are. Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Crusaders, YCS (Young Christian Students) CARYM (Catholic Agricultural Rural Youth Movement), Young Christian Workers, Caritas Nurses Association, Pioneer Movement, Women's Guild, Uganda Martyr's Guild, Focolare Movement, St. Jude Devotion, Christian Family Movement, Single Parent Association, Kolping Society, Little Way Association, YOUFRA (Young Franciscans of Uganda), St. Egidio Association, Uganda Martyrs Association...¹⁹. The contribution of these lay movements and associations differs depending on circumstance. Some associations are alive and active, and their efforts must be commended, meanwhile, some are quite dormant and should be encouraged and revived. There is however need to stress the importance of formation in all this movements and association and the need to develop a stronger link between them, working together with the aim of building the same family, the church.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Franzelli MCCJ, *Bishop of Lira 2013-2017 Quinquennial Report, by Diocese (Un published report, A five-year report given by every bishop to Rome through the nunciature).*

The lay movements and associations help a lot in particular devotions and formation of the lay faithful, giving them the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the church.

Family Ministry

The family is the domestic church and family ministry is apostolate aimed at offering pastoral care and coordination to the mission of the family in the entire church. Most diocese have priests, catechists and some lay leaders who are at the fore front in coordinating family ministry.

The programmes that formed the core of Family Ministry are “Marriage Workshop”. Its chief goal is to help married couples to lead married life according to God’s plan. In a few years the ministry had expanded to include other programmes like; Pro-life Movement, Family Life Education Programme/Natural Family Planning (FLEP/NFP), Marriage Encounter (to foster skills in dialogue between spouses in order for them to grow in love), Adult Literacy (for economic empowerment and self-reliance in the family through literacy), the Faithful House Programme (to foster the building up of a well-integrated family and household capable of meeting modern challenges), COSBEL (to support people living, and to live positively, with HIV/AIDS), and the Kolping Families, to mention but a few²⁰.

These specific interventions are still on-going, and they complement the traditional catechesis proper to marriage received during the catechumenate and during preparations for marriage at parish settings. They also foster, deepen, and offer support in an on-going way to married life in its daily practice and commitment.

However, it should be noted that though there is a considerable number of both young and old couples taking up matrimony in the Church. Polygamy and divorce are still challenging sported cases, and the civil law of Uganda allows for separation and divorce. There

²⁰ *ibidem*.

are other problems that directly affect the institution of the family that has become the concern of the church among which are High poverty level, social problems like, alcoholism, domestic violence, Children's right, influence of culture.

Youth Ministry

The young people are the future of the church, and a well-formed youth is a pointer to a bright future of the church. The National Youth Apostolate office coordinated by a National Youth Chaplain, helped by a national youth coordinator, help in this specific role of forming the young people. It is a ministry that attends to the needs of the young people, responds to their challenges, and suggests means to overcome them. Every diocese has a youth chaplain who link up with the national office in relation to the same.

During the National Chaplains Annual general meeting to which I was a part, we were exposed to a wide range of discussion as pertains the roles of animators and their composition. The National Youth Apostolate Office team is run by a team composed of the National youth chaplain, National Youth Coordinator, National Coordinators of youth movements and Associations, Diocesan Youth Chaplains and Diocesan Youth Coordinators²¹.

The formation of the youth takes shape through the structure of different movements and associations. When I was diocesan youth chaplain for Lira diocese, we had several times reflections as chaplains from different dioceses and some movements and associations were outstanding. Some of them are as reflected below:

Young Christian Students (YCS) use the basic theme and method of See Judge and Act. YCS carries out animation in schools, institutions and parishes, students' days, spiritual guidance, counselling, bible

²¹ National Youth Chaplains Annual General Meeting, *Nsamby Kampala – Uganda, 1st – 2nd June 2019, (unpublished). Discussion on the roles of youth chaplains, formation of youth movements and associations (Min. 4/2019).*

sharing, charity work, ceremonials, enrolments, handover, rallies, elections, leadership training, music dance and drama.

CARYM This stands for Catholic Rural Youth Movement. Its aim has always been to help the young people who are out of school to engage in productive organic farming. CARYM envisions a commercial agricultural option for the rural youth.

YCW stands for Young Christian Workers. They are also guided by the principles of See Judge and Act. Their aim is to promote Christian ethics among the young employees.

Student's Outreach Ministry is a student-to-student mission for mutual support and growth in the Christian faith. It is a young wing of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in Uganda. Move to schools on weekends and carry out this ministry. They also organise recollections, retreats and conferences for youth during holidays.

Eucharistic Crusaders: they are guided by the motto; thy kingdom come, forever. This movement promotes ongoing catechesis among the young people aged between 8-16 years. Their main activities include charity work in the parish and chapel where they belong, Eucharistic Adoration, parade after prayers, annual gatherings, and meetings. The above movements and association help in promoting youth activities and engagements²².

Most dioceses in Uganda are on the move to developing Diocesan Youth centres. The youth centres are meant to coordinate and ensure on going formation of the youths by offering facilities for trainings, courses, social functions, recreation, sports, and indoor games. At least 11 dioceses have established diocesan youth centres.

Following in the mind of the Pope who value so much the world youth day, the catholic church in Uganda organises a National Youth Conference every year on a rotational basis and the theme that guides each year is borrowed from that of the world youth day. This even

²² *ibidem*.

attracts thousands of youth people who come and are given deeper catechesis on issues that affect the life of young people.

DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Church in Uganda is having quite a strong development arm that has with time portrayed the true image of a participatory church in the life of the people. Caritas Uganda founded in 1970 is the coordinating body of the socio-economic development Uganda Episcopal Conference. It helps in delivering social, economic and development services to the entire population within Uganda. Their activities range from: training farmers, micro finance, child protection, protection of shallow and deep wells, emergency relief, community health programs, care and support to orphans and vulnerable children, conflict resolution, Refugees Management and of recent support to training and management of Covid19 among the Christian communities. There are different projects under Caritas Uganda that define the key activities carried out by Caritas and some of such activities are reflected below.

Food Security and Economic Empowerment Through this Caritas has been able to train farmers on, general food production, value addition and marketing.

Water and Sanitation. Caritas has been able to do training in the communities on clean water usage, train committees to maintain water sources, Rehabilitation of water sources. Slabs for latrines are always distributed in the communities.

Child protection. They have been involved in training and mobilizing communities to support children living destitute lives seeking better living condition. They are also involved in skilling of young people in some dioceses through Technical Schools which trains young people in skills such as Carpentry and Joinery, Brick Laying and Concrete Practices, Tailoring and Garment Cutting, and Painting

and Decoration. This empowers the young people to respond to the crisis of unemployment in Uganda.

Environmental Protection. Caritas has been able to do advocacy on tree planting and environmental protection, distributed trees to enhance tree production and management. Besides that, Biogas has been promoted to guard against cutting of trees²³. This is in response to the call of the Holy Father in his encyclical *Laudato Si* “...all of us can cooperate as instruments of God for care of creation, each according to his own culture, experience, involvements, and talents”²⁴.

The above is not the only work done by Caritas Uganda, there are several other developments and pastoral oriented activities that Caritas are involved in. Caritas Uganda have also responded promptly always in a state of emergency, for instance helping the refugees from South Sudan with reliefs, offering hand wash as a response to the recent corona virus...

There is a new orientation towards a closer collaboration of Caritas with Justice and Peace right from the national level to the diocesan level.

Justice and Peace department

They work as a team and their work is cross cutting in the whole Uganda in fostering peace, reconciliation, and the Northern Province they invented the peace week, which is now celebrated annually, it is rotationally in the whole province of Gulu. This has become popular and applauded by the Uganda Episcopal Conference. They train young people identify the gaps of peace and justice in their communities and to involve themselves in being a solution to such

²³ Caritas Uganda, (official website), <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/africa/uganda/> (accessed on 17.2.2021)

²⁴ Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si*, 2015, no. 14.

gaps²⁵. Uganda today faces a lot of traits of political injustices and conflicts which needs the intervention of the church and one way is by teaching the young people to embrace peace.

Charitable Institutions: Babies /Children’s Homes

There are quite several children homes and orphanages that the church has established to take care of the needy children. This is done with consent of government and monitored by the probation officer of respective districts. This is a noble duty as it reflects the charitable image of the church.

The Association of the Religious in Uganda (ARU) took up the initiative to establish the Catholic Care for Children in Uganda (CCCU) which work is cherished by the Catholic Church in Uganda. They strengthen Religious institutes in the expression of their charism, with many religious being at the forefront of childcare reforms and offering services to children who do not have the opportunity to be raised within a family setting, that is, the children who are orphans and other needy and vulnerable children. Their vision is modelled for best practices in childcare and child protection²⁶.

Social Communication Commission

The Catholic Church in Uganda have Media Limited which is divided into Radio and TV. There is Radio Maria which has a wider catchment almost the whole country and there is Radio Sapientia located at the main office of the Uganda Catholic Secretariat.

²⁵ Radio Wa Lira Youth Prepare for the GANAL Provincial Peace Week 2019, (official website), <http://radiowa.org//lira-youth-prepare-for-the-ganal-peace-week-2019/> (contacted on 18.2.2021).

²⁶ Association of the Religious in Uganda (ARU), (official website), Catholic Care for Children in Uganda, <https://aruamsrii.org/catholic-care-for-children-in-uganda/> (accessed on 17.2.2021).

These have been very pertinent in Evangelization of the people through, dispatching National news from the Secretariat to the dioceses and other departmental communications and evangelization which gives avenue for the word of God to be shared to the people of God²⁷.

There are other dioceses that have also diocesan radios, and one diocese (Lira) is also having a diocesan TV though currently off air. Besides the above, print media like diocesan bulletin is common in most dioceses which all offer better avenues to share information and the word of God.

The last project which has come as a miracle at this time of the corona virus COVID 19, is the Catholic TV, this has helped dispatch vital information to the population though it was on trial and many Christians appreciated it.

Deepening Christian Life

To deepen Christian life, there are commissions that are set to handle such important issues.

Catechists' Commission which caters for the spiritual as well as human needs of the catechists. Most dioceses in Uganda have catechists' centres which help in the training and ongoing formation of catechists. Catechists are working in parishes, catholic communities, schools, and institutions. They are also stationed at different outstations offering services on behalf of the priests. The beauty is that even when the catechists are not salaried, they sacrifice to be stationed at the pastoral centres and thanks to the Christians who support them within their means.

There is also the Biblical Apostolate Commission which helps to promote the love for the word of God through bible sharing and radio talk shows. This is a serious pastoral concern, a culture that needs

²⁷ Cf. Radio Sapientia (Official website), <https://www.radiosapientia.com/> (accessed on 15.2.2021).

to be developed among Catholics. Bible Society have printed Bibles in most local languages to help promote this culture of reading the word of God. It is still a challenge though as it is very common with the influx of the Pentecostals to challenge Catholics even with wrong biblical text and interpretation because most Catholics do not have the spirit of reading the bible. Biblical Apostolate is a response to such a challenge.

The Small Christian Communities (SCC) is yet another key which help the Christians to identify at smaller groups within the communities and in growing grass-root groups that regularly meet in houses/communities to share the Word of God and other community issues related to their faith. Many Bishops of Uganda have decided to embrace this practical way of being a Church and many priests have been educated on the methodology of the SCC. This was an initiative that was embraced by the Bishops of AMECEA who supported the shaping of the Small Christina Communities in Africa and they embraced it as, “an ecclesiological aspiration, catechetical orientation and as a pastoral priority”²⁸.

There has also been a growing spirit of pilgrimage to the shrine of the Uganda Martyrs and deeper devotion to the Martyrs. The blood of the Martyrs portrays a growth in faith and an encouragement to the suffering church in Uganda.

Response to Covid19 corona virus

The Catholic Church in Uganda, just like most churches in the world, feel inclined to respond with empathy towards the plight of victims of corona virus. The church followed suit as per government directives by closing the churches and dispatching messages of sensitisation to the community. In the recent days, the church has

²⁸ L. Magesa, *The Church in Eastern Africa: Retrospect and Prospect*, in: *How Local is the Local Church? Small Christian Community and Church in Eastern Africa Symposium of Nine Papers*, ed. A. Radoli, AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1993, p. 5.

also extended help to the different communities and individuals affected by the COVID 19 corona virus.

CONCLUSION

The Catholic Church in Uganda is quite a progressive church with a wide range of pastoral care, laity taking centre stage in the life of the church and a pilgrim church which points to a bright future. However, even with such a promising future, the Church should not remain blind to the new challenges of the time and so it should equip itself with knowledge of such challenges and prepare to face them so that the Church keeps in her living spirit. There is however, a pointer to a vibrant Catholic church in Uganda.

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KYHEYUNE VIANNEY¹

THE SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF UGANDA

Abstract

W niniejszym opracowaniu autor przedstawia aktualną sytuację pastoralną Kościoła katolickiego w Centralnej Prowincji Kościelnej w środkowej części Ugandy. Rozpoczyna od nakreślenia tła ewangelizacyjnego jako koniecznego elementu zrozumienia współczesnej sytuacji Kościoła katolickiego na badanym obszarze. Autor odwołuje się zarówno do opracowań na temat Kościoła na tym terenie, jak i wykorzystuje swoje osobiste doświadczenia duszpasterskie. Aktualne studia nad sytuacją pastoralną Kościoła katolickiego pomogą w wytyczeniu drogi dla przyszłej realizacji misji Kościoła na tym obszarze i w ogóle w Ugandzie.

Keywords: Kampala Arch-diocese, Ugandan Martyrs, Papal visits, Buganda Kingdom, and Evangelization.

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INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church in Uganda is part of the world wide Catholic Church under the spiritual leadership of the pope in Rome. There are an estimated 15.4 million Catholics, which is approximately 41.9% of the total population, estimated about 40.1 million in 2019.

Currently Uganda has 19 dioceses, divided into four archdioceses; Gulu Archdiocese covering four dioceses in Northern Uganda also referred to as the Northern ecclesiastical provinces, Mbarara Archdiocese also referred to as the Western province, it covers dioceses five dioceses; Mbarara, Hoima, Fort-Portal, Kasese and Kabale. Thirdy, Tororo Archdiocese located Eastern part of Uganda, also referred to as Eastern Ecclesiastical province. It covers five dioceses; Tororo, Jinja, Soroti, Moroto, and Kotido.

Fourthly, is Kampala Archdiocese which is our main focus in this paper and most important because that is where the Catholic faith originated and circulated to other regions of the country. Kampala Archdiocese also referred to as the Central Ecclesiastical province is located in the central region of Uganda. It covers five suffragan dioceses; Kampala, Lugazi, Masaka, Kiyinda-Mityana, and Kasana-Luweero.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The context and situation of Catholic Church in Uganda today can only be understood and described adequately by studying a little background of the historical past by which the country was formed. It is therefore, useful for us to have a short survey of Uganda's history.

Prior to the British conquest, the region had a number of independent kingdoms with centralized monarchies like Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga and Toro. There were also chiefdoms and egalitarian

polities especially in the North and East of what came to be called Uganda. However, in this paper we shall concentrate Buganda kingdom, which is located in the central part of current Uganda which is our main region of study.

Christianity arrived in Uganda beginning with this central region during the third missionary movement that started in the 19th Century. The events which shape the history of Christianity in Uganda start from Buganda's contact with foreigners. By the time Catholic missionaries arrived in Buganda kingdom, the kingdom had already come into contact with foreigners. Muteesa I, who was the king of Buganda during that time had already come into contact with Arabs, who during their trade activities introduced Islam in the Kingdom. In fact between 1867 – 1876, the king permitted the adoption of the Islamic calendar, the king and his subjects even observed the Ramadan during that period of time².

In 1862, the first Europeans in the persons of John Hannington Speke and James Grant reached Buganda and were received by king Muteesa I. Henry Marton Stanley who reached Buganda in 1875 followed them. He taught the king a few rudiments of Christianity and western wisdom upon which the king asked him to send teachers to teach him and his subjects such wisdom. But political analysts also argue that the king wanted to have another force to encounter the Arab and Islamic influence in his Kingdom and to find an ally against Egypt that was threatening to annex his kingdom³.

Following the request of the king Stanley wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* in November 1875 about this open chance for evangelizing Uganda. The Church missionary Society of the Anglican Church in England responded to the challenge warmly and so its missionaries in the persons of Lt. Shergold Smith and Rev. C. T. Wilson reached

² S.R. Karugire, *The Political History of Uganda*, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books 1980, pp. 60-62.

³ *Ibidem*.

Buganda in 1877. Cardinal Lavigerie also responded according to this open chance of evangelizing Uganda. Therefore, his missionaries, the missionaries of Africa commonly known as the White Fathers reached Buganda on 17th February 1879, in the persons of Fr. Simeon Lourdel and Brother Amans. They were later followed by Msgr. Livinhac the leader of the Group⁴. Both were received well and allowed to teach the King's subjects although for security reasons they were not allowed to move about freely in the kingdom.

By the end of 1880, four religions, as it seemed to the people, operated in Buganda, these were; Traditional Religion, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism. This generated much tension as the religions rivaled each other furiously. This was made worse by the national animosities that existed between the countries from which the first missionaries came, that is, Catholics from France and Protestants from England. Muteesa I a mature wise king was able to hold back the tension from eruption. After his death in 1884, that tension erupted under the young king Mwanga his successor, who, inexperienced and afraid of losing his sovereignty, decided to purge his kingdom of foreign influence. So began the persecutions of 1885 – 1887 in which more than two hundred people lost their lives. The most remembered are the 22 martyrs who were burnt at Namugongo on 3.06.1886⁵.

In 1888, Mwanga decided again to round up all converts and missionaries and maroon them on one of the islands in Lake Victoria. The plan aborted and the Christian converts and Moslems joined forces and ousted the king in September 1888. The Moslems in October turned against Christians and proclaimed an Islamic state under king Kalema, the brother of the deposed king. Catholics and Protestants fled for their lives to Buddu and Akore respectively.

⁴ J.M. Waliggo, *The Catholic Church in the Buddu Province of Buganda*, Kampala: Angel Agencies Ltd 2010, p. 20.

⁵ B. Ssettuuma, *Coming of Age in Priesthood: A Centenary of Indigenous Catholic Priests in Uganda*, Kampala: Angel Agencies Ltd 2013, p. 64.

This was followed by a civil war, Mwanga now repentant, joined the Catholics who together with the protestants welcomed him since they did not have anybody who had royal blood to sit on the throne in case they won the war.

THE BECOMING OF KAMPALA ARCHDIOCESE OR THE CENTRAL ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

As mentioned above, the first Catholic missionaries arrived in Uganda, Buganda kingdom by then on the 17.02.1879. The first two missionaries were Fr. Simeon Lourdel and Brother Delmas Amans. They were welcomed by king Muteesa I and gave them a place to stay, which is Lubyā – Nabulagala. It's here that they started their evangelization work. Catechetical instructions obvious began with those nearby, and those where mainly the King's pages and other servers of the King.

The Present Archdiocese of Kampala (Central Ecclesiastical Province) is the result of territorial changes and shaping as indicated below

Victoria Nyanza Vicariate in 1883

The Vicariate Apostolic Nyanza was established by the Holy see in 1883 and was entrusted to the missionaries of Africa commonly known as the White Fathers, Rubaga in present Kampala became the seat of the bishop⁶.

⁶ Uganda Episcopal Conference, *Kampala Archdiocese – Archdiocese History*, <https://www.uecon.org/provinces/kampala-ecclesiastical/kampala>, (accessed 22.11.2020).

Upper Nile Vicariate 1894

On July 13, 1894, the holy see erected the upper Nile Vicariate dividing it from Victoria Nyanza vicariate and entrusted it to the Mill Hill Missionaries. Nsambya became the seat of the Bishop of the Vicariate. The name of Victoria Nyanza Vicariate was also changed to Vicariate Apostolic of Northern Victoria Nyanza.

Vicariate Apostolic of Uganda 1915

After the erection of vicariates in territories beyond the Nile on the southern side, the name of Northern Vicariate was changed to the vicariate of Uganda on January 15, 1915.

Vicariate of Kampala

On June 10, 1948, the name of upper Nile Vicariate was also changed to the vicariate of Kampala which later became the diocese of Kampala in 1953.

Archdiocese of Rubaga (1953 – 1966)

The Catholic Hierarchy in Uganda was established on March 25, 1953 and the vicariates of Uganda became the dioceses of Uganda. Rubaga became an Archdiocese with five suffragan dioceses namely: Gulu, Masaka, Kampala, Mbarara and Tororo. The first Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Rubaga was Archbishop Louis Joseph Cabana a white Father (1947 – 1960). He later died in retirement in 1981. He was succeeded by Archbishop Dr. Joseph Kiwanuka (1960 – 1965)⁷.

Archdiocese of Kampala (1966-)

On 05.08.1966, the Holy see joined together a section of the diocese of Kampala and the Archdiocese of Rubaga to create the

⁷ Ibidem.

Archdiocese of Kampala. It was covering most parts of central Uganda. His Grace Emmanuel K. Nsubuga (Later Cardinal) was consecrated on 30.10.1966 to become the first ordinary of the newly created Archdiocese of Kampala. He was elevated to the rank of Cardinal on 24.05.1976. He retired on 8.02.1990 and died on 20.04.1991. He was succeeded by His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala (1990 – 2006), since then, three other new diocese have been created namely: Kiyinda–Mityana, Kasana Luweera.

THE CURRENT CENTRAL ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

Having given a brief historical background of Kampala Archdiocese, now we proceed to analysis the situation in each of the suffragana dioceses which make up Kampala Archdiocese.

The Suffragan dioceses

As already mentioned, the Central Ecclesiastical province, which is the same as Kampala Archdiocese is made of five dioceses; these include Kampala itself, Kasana-Luweero, Lugazi, Kiyinda-Mityana, and Masaka.

Below is a table showing Statistics of Kampala Archdiocese according to Diocese:

Item	Kampala Archdiocese	Masaka Diocese	Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese	Lugazi Diocese	Kasana-Luweero Diocese
Founded	5/8/1966	25/03/1953	1981	23/02/1997	1/03/1997
Population	4,195,968	1,826,286	1,431,000	1,837,582	781,565
Catholics	1721039	1,077,508	44,000	861,276	250,573
Diocesan Priests	345	272	147	72	49
Parishes	63	54	28	22	17
Institutions	5	22	6	4	5
Hospitals	4	5	3	4	1

Tab. 1 Statistics of Kampala Archdiocese according to Diocese⁸

After giving the some statistical data in the table indicated above let us go ahead to analyze the life of the Catholic Church in the Central region of Uganda, which we refer to as the Central Ecclesiastical province.

Current Statistics of the entire Catholic Church in Uganda⁹

a. Catholic population:	15,543,117
b. Priests/Bishops:	2,379
c. Archdioceses:	4
d. Dioceses:	19
e. Parishes:	640
f. Institutions:	219
g. Schools:	3,388
h. Hospitals:	264

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN THE CENTRAL ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

The Uganda Martyrs

As it is rightly said that the blood of the Uganda Martyrs is the seed of faith, so it is true to the Christian faith. The first two Catholic missionaries (Missionaries of Africa, popularly known as the White Fathers) Fr. Simeon Lourdel and Brother Delmas Amans who were the first to teach the Catholic faith, began with the King's pages. Among these were the 22, Charles Lwanga and his Companions who were persecuted greatly by King Mwanga and consequently because of their faith, they suffered martyrdom between 1885–1887.

The martyrdom of the 22 martyrs, is a great land mark for the growth of Christianity in Uganda generally. Having been beatified in 1920 and canonized in 1964, by Pope Paul VI, Uganda has come to be known as the land of martyrs not only in Africa but world-wide. The celebration of the Uganda Martyrs day has always attracted pilgrims from near and far. Most remarkable are the three Papal visits in the recent past. In 1969, Pope Paul VI, visited Uganda from July 31 to 2 August, making Uganda the very African country to be visited by the pope in the modern times. On the same visit he ordained 12 bishops these were from Uganda and nearby parts of Africa. In February 1993, Pope St. John Paul II paid a 5 days pastoral visit to Uganda and he celebrated his main Mass at the National Martyrs Shrine Namugongo¹⁰. And recently in November 2015, Pope Francis has paid a 3 days pastoral visit to Uganda to mark the 50th Anniversary for the Canonization of the Uganda Martyrs. We can therefore, observe that the Uganda Martyrs have greatly boosted

¹⁰ Pope John Paul II, *Homily on Holy Mass in Kampala (Uganda) Sunday, 7 February 1993*, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1993/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19930207_kampala.html (accessed 22.11.2020).

the Church's growth in Uganda. This is evidently seen on 3rd June, the annual martyrs' day; millions of believers gather at Namugongo National Martyrs shrine to celebrate the martyr's day.

Training of the Local Clergy

It is important to note that at the beginning of Catholicity in Uganda, the entire clergy were missionaries from Europe: These included Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), Mill Hill Missionaries, and those missionaries from other congregations like Comboni Missionaries, Verona Fathers in northern Uganda. It was Bishop Henry Streicher (1891-1939) (White Father) who was keen on Africanizing the Church and he thought this would be done best through forming the local clergy. For him, to get one indigenous priest was important than converting ten thousand people. Under great opposition from his fellow missionaries he established a minor seminary at Bukalasa in 1903 and in 1911 a major seminary at Katigondo. His efforts were rewarded when in 1913 two Baganda priests were ordained in the persons of Basilio Lumu and Victorio Mukasa. He continued his policy and soon he had got a number of the local clergy he put them in charge of some parishes. Later on, even other bishops took on the Challenge and started seminaries: In 1923, Bishop Biermans established St. Joseph Minor Seminary Nyenga. Bishop Campling his successor established St. Mary's Major Seminary in 1926. Yet bishop Vignato of Equatorial Nile in 1927 started a seminary in Gulu, northern Uganda. It is from this seminary that on 24.12.1938, Bishop Angero Negri his successor, ordained the first two local priests for the Equatorial Nile Vicariate, that is, Fr. Donasiano Bala of Madi and Fr. John Ogom from Acholi. From then on, bishops having been starting especially minor seminaries in their dioceses. Currently in Uganda almost each diocese owns one minor seminary. However, the entire country has five national major seminaries; two are for Philosophy, two are for Theology and one is for both, Philosophy and Theology. These are Katigondo Major

Seminary (Philosophy), Alokolum Major Seminary (Philosophy), Kinyamasika Major Seminary (Theology), St. Mary's Major Seminary (Theology), and St. Mbaga's Seminary (for both Philosophy and Theology).

Founding of the Local Congregations

In order to meet the demands of education both in the religious and other sectors, Bishop Streicher Bishop Hanlon and Msgr. Antonio Vignato saw it necessary to call in other religious congregations. These religious congregations of both men and women once they arrived started to work in the direction of forming local religious congregations with the support of the bishops of the vicariates. With the help of Bishop Streicher, The White Sisters founded the Bannabikira Sisters also known as the Daughters of Mary in Masaka. The White Fathers in the person of bishop Lacoursiere also founded the Banyatereza Sisters in Fort-Port in 1901. The sisters of Mary Reparatrix arrived in 1913, with the help of bishop Streicher formed the congregation of sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix. In 1923, Mother Kevin started the congregation of the little Sisters of St. Francis basing at Nkokonjeru. Since then, all these congregations have done a great Job in educating girls and women. On his own initiative bishop Streicher also started a religious congregation of men for the education of the boy child. It is called Banakaroli Brothers founded in 1929. In the same year, the Brothers of Christian Instruction started recruiting local people to enter their congregation¹¹.

All the above congregations have done a great work in the area of evangelization and particularly have helped in catechizing both young people and adults. And also instructing pupils and students in schools. Others congregation like Daughters of Charity, have done

¹¹ D. Muwemba, *African Church History: The Uganda Catholic Heritage 1846–2010*, unpublished, p. 84.

a good job in taking care of the sick, elderly and disabled. On a close analysis these congregations through their selfless services, they have made the Catholic Church more and more credible in Uganda until now.

Enhancing Integral Education

On their arrival in Uganda, the Missionaries started schools. In 1902 they started Namilyango College, then St. Mary's Kisubi in 1906, then others like St. Henry's College Kitovu followed¹². And later very many schools have been founded by the Church. We can proudly observe that the Catholic Church has done a great job in providing formal education. Currently in Uganda, especially in the central region Catholic founded schools both primary and secondary are the best performing schools. In Uganda each of the missions (Parishes), has a school or schools around it. From the time of Missionaries, the Catholic Church has always also founded many technical and vocational institutions. These have taught very many people building skills, bricklaying, Carpentry, tailoring, Catering, Electrical and Mechanical engineering, just to mention. Therefore, in the sector of Education the Catholic Church in the Central region of Uganda scores highly. Catholic Schools and institutions in Uganda are known of their high quality integral formation, basically in both human and Christian values. Thus, producing well-formed and disciplined citizens. Very importantly, schools and institutions are places of evangelization from where young people are basic Christian values. Many people who have gone through catholic schools and institutions have eventually become in many cases evangelizers to their relatives and friends, some are good leaders of the laity, they are serving well using the knowledge they learnt from the mission schools and institutions.

¹² B. Ssettuuma, *Coming of age in Priesthood...*, op. cit., p. 75.

Enhancing Development

Through Caritas International/ Caritas Uganda, a predominantly Catholic organization, the Church in Uganda has enhanced economic and social development greatly. Caritas Uganda, has offices at every diocese in Uganda. It is actually a full department in the administration of every diocese. Caritas has helped people in agricultural formation, introducing new fruits plants, food crops and cash crops like coffee growing. They have consistently trained people new and sustainable methods of farming in both crop and animal husbandry. Caritas at diocesan levels has taught people to begin self-help projects on small and large scales as a means to self-reliance. Far more Caritas has programs in form of SACCOs which give people soft loans to either start up small businesses or boost up the existing ones.

Health Care

The Catholic Church in Central Uganda and in Uganda generally is doing a great and tremendous work in the area of health-care service. I can proudly note that they most trusted hospitals and dispensaries have been built by missionaries for example; Nsambya Hospital, Lubaga Hospital, Kisubi Hospital, long these are Catholic hospitals found in the heart of Kampala city. In almost all the five diocese which make-up this Archdiocese there is one average 4 hospitals and dispensaries which have been built by the Church. These hospitals have helped very much the citizens since many government hospitals are not doing well. The government hospitals are unreliable because of the high levels of corruption found in almost all government institutions.

CHALLENGES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

Syncretism as a fruit of African Religious Dualism

In many parts of Africans, the belief in mystical powers generated by divinities or gods is part and parcel of typical traditional Africans. This has led many Christians into syncretism. This fusion or call it amalgamation of pagan religions, practices and cultures with Christianity is one of the main challenges to Christian faith or Catholic faith in Uganda. In Uganda today, Catholic theologians have a big task of addressing this religious challenge to the faith which is imbedded in entire life of Africans. Due to the great attachment to their religious beliefs and practices, many Ugandans peoples after converting to Christianity continued with their former religious beliefs. This was caused by failure of the evangelizers to understand well the African cultures.

Poverty

Poverty is one of the biggest problems in Uganda today. Recent research reveals that over 80% of people in Uganda are poor. Over 60% of the Christians in Uganda can only afford one meal a day. Yet over 30% lack some basic needs of life. The main economic activity in the area is farming, where by the main cash crop was coffee, unfortunately it gradually died out. To make matters worse also vanilla which could be a replacement lost market. Those who have tried to carry out agriculture at a large scale have faced problems of market fluctuation, season change, pests and diseases to mention. Poverty therefore, has greatly affected the evangelization process and it is a big challenge to lay apostolate. Many Christians are willing to support and actively participate in pastoral activities but most of them are poor. Many Christians are swimming in abject poverty,

living below poverty line. It has caused low self-esteem among would be potential leaders in the Church. Poverty is the root cause of the many evils in the area such as child-sacrifice, witch-craft, theft, family breakdown to mention, are attributed to poverty. Many no longer turn up for Sunday because of their conditions, they claim to have no descent clothes to put on, and some are busy working yet many have lost faith in God who seem according to them, not to care about their miserly. Many faithful have refused to take up leadership positions because of poverty. Therefore, poverty remains a big challenge to the Church in Uganda.

High levels of secularism

In the entire world today there is an increasing wave of secularism caused by technology and science, people think and feel they can do without religion. People want to prove everything by scientific methods but not faith. Gone are the days when people believed in God and practiced religion due to fear of death. As it is the case elsewhere, there is a lot of secularism in this metropolitan region of Uganda. About 40% of the baptized Catholics are scandalously secular; they live as if they have never heard of Christ. Research reveals that it's only the old people who participate actively in Church activities. Of the 20 youths interviewed in Kampala Archdiocese, 15 of them enjoy watching films, going to night clubbing and attending local music shows than going for a Sunday service. Secondly, on a closer scrutiny, most people's lives reveal an inconsistency between the faith they claim to profess and practice on one hand and the real-life involvement they assume in society on the other hand. Yet the mission of the laity requires proclamation and witness to Jesus in every aspect of one's daily life.

Breakdown of Family Values

It is unfortunate that the wave of secularism has not spared the families, yet a family can be referred to as the domestic Church. This is the smallest unit of the Particular Church where the first catechesis is supposed to be carried out. Lay apostolate ought to begin with parents teaching their children the basics of Catholic faith; like the prayers. In his homily on the diocesan day, his lordship, Mathias Ssekamanya Emeritus Bishop of Lugazi Diocese noted with concern of the decline of parents' responsibility and laxity towards their duty of bringing up their children with true Christian values¹³. Today parents have neglected their duty of catechizing their children and have left the whole work to school teachers who are also busy with subject matter. Worst of it all many parents leave their children at home on Sunday without encouraging them to go for Mass/Service. Secondly parents have not given a good example to the young; many families no longer take religion serious therefore do not care about the faith of their children.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, we praise God that by His grace the Gospel reached Uganda. We also appreciate the Missionaries through whom the gift of faith reached the country. Although Uganda has many religions, but Christians are more in number. Thus we can comfortably say that Uganda is a Christian country. This assertion is backed up by the gift of the 22 Uganda Martyrs. Despite of some challenges, we ought to appreciate the faith of the many Catholics in Uganda. We cannot also fail to recognize the great work being done by the clergy, the religious, the catechists and the leaders of the lay

¹³ Mathias Ssekamanya, Homily during Mass of annual diocesan day celebrations of 2013.

faithful. Through their selfless commitment on the service of the Church has kept the light of Christ shining in Uganda.

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SAMUEL MUGISA¹

A HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA (EAST-AFRICA)

Abstract

Niniejsze opracowanie przedstawia krótką refleksję na temat powstania Kościoła katolickiego w Ugandzie (Afryka Wschodnia), jego atutów i możliwości, jak również aktualnych wyzwań, przed którymi stoi Kościół. Część pierwsza dotyczy powstania państwa ugandyjskiego, co wyrasta z czasów kolonialnych, podkreśla gościnność prostych obywateli, z których większość utrzymuje się z rolnictwa. Część druga omawia czynniki, które przyczyniły się do rozkwitu Kościoła katolickiego w Ugandzie, rozwój lokalnego duchowieństwa i hierarchii; odważne świadectwo i dobre przywództwo pierwszych misjonarzy – ewangelizatorów, docenienie wagi języków i tłumaczeń; dowartościowanie rdzennych mieszkańców Afryki: katechumenów i konwertytów; lokalnych wodzów i katechistów; współpracę i wysiłki misjonarzy; wpływ różnych zgromadzeń zakonnych; nabożeństwo do Najświętszej Maryi Panny i Męczenników Ugandyjskich; rolę rodziny chrześcijańskiej; wpływ placówek zdrowotnych i eduka-

¹ The author of this article is a Catholic Priest-student from Uganda under Doctoral studies in theology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

cyjnych; rolę dobrze funkcjonującego laikatu. Część trzecia omawia wyzwania, przed którymi stanął Kościół katolicki w Ugandzie od czasów działalności misjonarzy.

Key words: Uganda, Catholic Church, Evangelization, hierarchy, laity

INTRODUCTION

Uganda is a land locked country in East Africa astride the Equator located between 1° 30 S and 4° N. It has a surface area of 236,040 km² of which 36,330 km² is water and 199,710 are land.² As Karugire observes, such a geographical entity did not exist until the early 1900s when the British through conquests, signing of treaties and agreements created it.³

It is, therefore, eminently a creation of the British during their colonial activities between 1890 and 1926.⁴ Uganda's final borders were definitely drawn on 01.02.1926, the date from which the Constitution of Uganda begins to enumerate the indigenous communities that are authentically considered Ugandan.⁵ Economically, Uganda depends on agriculture and the greater part of the population

² *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Entebbe: Uganda Printing and Publishing Corporation 1995, Second Schedule article 5; B. Balletto, *Spectrum Guide to Uganda*, Nairobi 1998, p. 21.

³ S.R. Karugire, *The Political History of Uganda*, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books 1980, pp. 17-99; R. O'Neil, *Mission to Upper Nile: The Story of St. Joseph's Missionary Society of Mill Hill in Uganda*, Binghamtom; Mission Book Service 1999, p. 5.

⁴ J.M. Waliggo, *A Brief Overview of Society and Church in Uganda Democratisation and Reconciliation process and Development*, unpublished, [paper presented at Lubaga Social Centre, on 21.11.1994].

⁵ *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, op. cit., Third Schedule, article 10.

is peasantry, growing crops as coffee, cotton, cocoa, tea and tobacco. Other crops like beans groundnuts, millet, maize, soya, banana, casava, wheat and rice are also grown.⁶

Uganda has as its Motto: “For God and My Country”. This Motto acts as a norm of good conduct to every citizen; and for the leaders, to take up responsibility in the country means to stand by this Motto. However, since 1962 when Uganda got its independence, it has continued to face some political challenges⁷ Churches in Uganda have operated against the historical background of a weakened state.⁸

Whereas the post-colonial state was strong enough, churches were barely succeeding to keep control over their roles. During the times of dictatorship in the 1970’s and wars in the 1980’s, the Ugandan state weakened significantly (which had diverse effects on the Church as well).⁹ Nonetheless, churches have always assisted the victims of political upheavals and have consistently challenged the governments in the face of abuse of human right.¹⁰

⁶ B. Linda, *Uganda Economy*, in: *Africa South of the Sahara* 1998, London: Europa Publications Ltd. 1997, pp. 1084-1085.

⁷ V.K. Ssekabira, *The Church’s involvement in politics in Africa and in Uganda in particular*, “The Walligo: Journal of holistic theological reflection” 2 (2009), p. 125.

⁸ P. Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role in Uganda and other African Countries*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers 1991, chapter 1.

⁹ In 1966 Obote overthrows Kabaka Muteesa II. He was in turn overthrown on the 25th Jan. 1971 through a coup d’état of Amin Dada. In April 1979 Amin Dada, a life president is overthrown by the combined forces of Tanzania and Uganda exiles. Yusuf Lule brought to power and removed after two months. A coup within the general election of 1980 made by Paul Muwanga when the Democratic Party (DP) was seen to be winning. Then Obote was rigged in and overthrown by his own army UNLA in 1985. Then Tito Okello became a president overthrown by Mr. Yoweri Museveni (NRA) in 1986. Elections made after this overthrow have so far been disputed.

¹⁰ J.B. Kisoga, *Healing the wounds of Christian Divisions: Theory and practice of Ecumenism in Uganda*, “The Waliggo Journal of Holistic Theological Reflection” 2 (2009) 1, p. 49.

The Ugandan People

By 1995, Uganda had a population of approximately 33 million people. These people fall into 56 ethnic groups with about 56 indigenous languages.¹¹ In 2014, the National population council estimated the total population of Uganda at 40.8m people, with 55% below 18 years.¹² Uganda's 2020 population is estimated at 45 million people at mid-year according to the United Nations (UN) data,¹³ which is equivalent to 0.59% of the total world population and ranks number 31 in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population.¹⁴

Uganda is a country with a great variety of peoples and cultures.¹⁵ It is a nation where the people's faces are warm, and kind and their welcome is genuine.¹⁶ The hospitable nature of the Ugandan People shines.¹⁷ Among the four major classifications, the Bantu, the largest group makes up 65.7% of the population. These are found in the South and West and some parts of Eastern Uganda. The Nilotics, the second largest group makes up about 13% of the population and is found in the central section of Northern Uganda. The Nilo-Hamites,

¹¹ Cf. *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Third Schedule (article 10a), pp. 189-191.

¹² Cf. National Population Council, Ministry of Finance Planning & Economic Development, <https://npcsec.go.ug/key-facts-on-ugandas-population/> (accessed 16.12.2020)

¹³ Cf. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uganda-population/> (accessed 16.12.2020); see also: *The State of Uganda Population Report (SUPRE) 2020* made by the national Population Council in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

¹⁴ *The State of Uganda Population Report (SUPRE) 2020*, op. cit.

¹⁵ Cf. J.M. Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda*, Cornell University Press, London 1975, 54.

¹⁶ Cf. S. Mugisa, "The Ugandan People" in *Remuneration and care of local clergy: the case of Fort Portal diocese in Uganda*, (Licentiate in Theo. Thesis), Warsaw, 2020, p.14, quoting "The Uganda declaration Paper" The Rwenzori Jubilee Network Convocation, 17 August – 31 August 2014.

¹⁷ Greeting is part and parcel of everyday life which extends to the young, adult, fellow citizen or stranger alike.

the 3rd largest group, is found in North East, which constitutes 12.7% of the population. The Sudanic peoples constitute about 6% of the population and are found in North-West of the country.¹⁸

Current situation of the Catholic Church in Uganda in summary¹⁹

15,543,117	Catholic Population
19	Dioceses
5	Major Seminaries
3388	Catholic Schools
219	Institutions
2379	Priests
640	Parishes
264	Hospitals

RELIGION IN UGANDA

Although Uganda as a nation is a secular state, her people are a highly religious one and its surging...population is shared by a number of religions.²⁰ Roman Catholics are 39.3%, Anglicans 32.0%, Pentecostal/Born again/Evangelical 11.1%, Orthodox 0.1%, Seventh Day Adventist 1.7%, Baptist 0.3%, Moslems 13.7%, Traditional religion 1.0%, others 1.4%, Non religion 0.2%.

¹⁸ B. Ssettuuma Jr., *Coming of age in priesthood, a centenary of indigenous Catholic Priests in Uganda*, Kampala, 2013, 67.

¹⁹ Uganda Episcopal Conference, website: <https://www.uecon.org/index.php/>, (accessed, 02.02.2021).

²⁰ B. Ssettuuma Jr., *The State of religion and culture in Uganda 2008*, "The Waliggo Journal of Holistic Theological Reflection", 2 (2009) 1, p. 156.

ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCES AND CATHOLIC DIOCESES IN UGANDA

By 1950, Uganda had six vicariates: Uganda Vicariate, Rwenzori, Masaka, Kampala, Upper Nile [Tororo] and Equatorial Nile [Gulu].²¹ With the Apostolic Constitution *Quaemadmodum ad Nos* of Pope Pius XII of 25.03.1953,²² all the existing vicariates in Uganda, became dioceses.

Kampala Ecclesiastical Province	Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province	Tororo Ecclesiastical Province	Gulu Ecclesiastical province
Kampala Archdiocese	Fort Portal Diocese	Jinja Diocese	Arua Diocese
Kasana-Luwero Diocese	Hoima Diocese	Kotido Diocese	Gulu Archdiocese
Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese	Kabale Diocese	Moroto Diocese	Lira Diocese
Lugazi Diocese	Mbarara Archdiocese	Soroti Catholic Diocese	Nebbi Catholic Diocese
Masaka Diocese		Tororo Archdiocese	

²¹ Y. Tourigny, W.F., *A Century of Trials and Blessings*, Kampala: The Uganda Episcopal Conference, 1979, p. 29.

²² The text read in part: "We raise to the dignity of dioceses all the Vicariates Apostolic of British East Africa and divide them into four ecclesiastical provinces, Uganda, Kenya, Dar es Salaam and Tabora" [*Papal bulla Quaemadmodum ad Nos* of Pope Pius XII, 25.03.1953].

The Growth of the Priesthood in Uganda and the formation of the Hierarchy

The institution of the local Catholic priesthood has grown rapidly in Uganda. Before 29th June 1913, there was no indigenous priest in the entire country. But of now, there are more than 2000 local clergy including those who have passed on.²³ Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa describes it as a proof of God's love, which to many looked like a dream. At the time when people doubted whether Africans had souls, whether they were able to live a celibate life, etc., Uganda got the privilege to nurture the first African diocesan clergy in modern times.²⁴

The moving words of Bishop Streicher, in his letter to his missionaries in 1913 prior to the ordination of the first Ugandan priests, show the grandeur of priesthood in the life of the Ugandans. Bazilio Lumu and Victor Mukasa Womeraka, were the first to be ordained priests of the Catholic church on 29.06.1913. They were ordained at Villa Maria in Masaka diocese. Their ordination was seen as an answer to the laborious life and dedication of the formators and the missionaries and the intercession of the Uganda Martyrs whose blood watered the seed of faith.²⁵

Uganda had no local catholic bishop, but its first bishop Joseph Kiwanuka was consecrated in 1939. There are now, over 30 local bishops. There was no hierarch in Uganda by 1952 and in 1953, Uganda had only six dioceses, but now, there are over 19 dioceses all governed by indigenous bishops.²⁶

²³ B. Ssettuuma Jr., *Coming of age in priesthood, A centenary of indigenous Catholic Priests in Uganda*, Kampala 2013, p. 205.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

²⁵ Bishop Streicher to his Missionaries, 09.05.1913; Waliggo, *A History of African Priests*, Nairobi 1988, p. 50.

²⁶ B. Ssettuuma Jr., *Coming of age in priesthood...*, op. cit., p. 205.

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN UGANDA

Christianity reached Africa south of the Sahara late in the fifteenth century. In the last third of a century before 1914, an amazing growth of the Christian Church was witnessed in Uganda.²⁷ This was through the Anglican and Roman Catholic missions which entered almost simultaneously.²⁸ Inspired by the explorer H.M. Stanley's letter to the Daily Telegraph in London, 1875, which described the king of Buganda Kabaka Mutesa, as 'a great enlightened despot eager to hear the Gospel and speedily to propagate it throughout his kingdom,'²⁹ the first Christian missionaries arrived on 30th June 1877 sent by the Church Missionary Society, Catholic missionaries arrived soon after on February 17th 1879, spearheaded by the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) sent by their founder Cardinal Lavigerie.³⁰ The Roman Catholics as well as for the Protestants, the mass movement towards Christianity brought thousands into the Church. Not far from the year 1912 the White Fathers counted 113,811 Christians in their vicariate and the Mill Hill Fathers 22,393 in theirs.³¹

The influence of colonialism on Christianity in Uganda

In the struggle for Africa which was then in progress, Uganda was caught in the maelstrom of titanic forces and was thrown into internal confusion. French, English, Germans and Arabs contended for the

²⁷ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, The Great Century in the Americas, Australasia, and Africa, (A.D. 1800 – A.D. 1914)*, vol. V, New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers 1943, p. 412.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 413.

²⁹ Cf. K. Ward, *A history of Christianity in Uganda*, 1991, p. 3; see also: *The Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, <https://dacb.org/histories/uganda-history-christianity/> (accessed 03.02.2021).

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 418.

mastery³², In England the response to the appeal was immediate. Money and offers of personal service poured into the Church Missionary Society.

In the spring of 1876, less than six months after the publication of Stanley's letter, a large party sailed for Zanzibar. It was not until the summer of 1877 that those who survived the difficult journey into the interior reached Mutesa. The king received them cordially. He still professed himself a Christian.³³ Roman Catholicism was strongest in Portuguese, French, German, and Belgian territories. Protestant missionaries were chiefly from the major colonial power, Great Britain. Roman Catholic Missionaries were mainly from France, which was next to Great Britain in the proportion of African territory Acquired.³⁴

Factors which led to the spread of Christianity among the people of Uganda

Good leadership

The origins of the penetration of the deep interiors of west, East and central Africa Catholic missionaries can be traced to the zeal and activities of one remarkable person, Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage, primate of Africa and apostolic delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan, Cardinal Lavigerie. In 1868, he founded a new Missionary Society which became international and was supported by the Vatican Congregation, De Propaganda Fide and was wholly devoted to Africa. The religious order was named the 'Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique' (The Society of Missionaries of Africa).³⁵

³² Ibidem, p. 415.

³³ Ibidem, p. 414.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 321.

³⁵ See: Society of Missionaries of Africa [White Fathers], *Directory of the Constitutions*, Algiers: Maison Carrée 1914, nos. 345-347.

Having such leaders of great vision and love for the church enhanced Christianity. Bishop Hirth against all odds and scarcity of priests, decided to start the minor seminary in 1891.³⁶ Bishop Henri Striecher, championed indigenous clergy in Uganda and governed the Vicariate with great vision. Per R. Lefebre describes him as “a tough, humble, foresighted, holy and generous leader.”³⁷ Simon Lourdel (locally known as Mapeera) brought the faith to Buganda. Mapeera had access to both Mutesa and Mwanga (Kings), treated them medically, shared the exile which at one stage was forced on the foreign staff, and died, in 1890, of fever. The Catholic mission prospered also with Livinhac, leader of the initial party and the first bishop. In 1890 Livinhac became the superior general of the entire society of the White Fathers, but he did not forget Uganda.³⁸

Bishop, Alfred R. Tucker (of the Anglican Church), consecrated in 1890 and during the more than two decades of his episcopate, a tenure terminated in 1911 by ill-health, gave notable leadership. Latourette describes Tucker in these words: “of rugged physique, unflinching courage, bold initiative, sound judgement, organizing ability, and single-hearted devotion, Tucker made an ideal head of the enterprise.”³⁹ When Tucker arrived in Uganda his flock of baptised Christians numbered only about 200. In 1908 it was 62,867.

³⁶ Cf. B. Ssettuuma, Jr., *Coming of Age in Priesthood*, 2013, op. cit., p. 139, quoting R. Lefebre, *Ebyafaayo bya Jjajjaffe Ssebepiskopi Stensera*, p. 30.

³⁷ Cf. B. Ssettuuma, Jr., *Coming of Age in Priesthood*, 2013, op. cit., p. 139, quoting R. Lefebre, *Ebyafaayo bya Jjajjaffe Ssebepiskopi Stensera*, pp. 15-93.

³⁸ When in 1894, the international struggle for Uganda was terminated by the formal act which made the land a British protectorate, Livinhac was emphatic in denying that either he or his colleagues had ever acted as representatives of France or that they had spoken of their faith as the religion of France. Further to remove the suspicion of a French taint from the Roman Catholic mission, in 1894 the north-eastern part of Uganda was made a separate vicariate apostolic and was entrusted to an English society, the Mill Hill Fathers. To aid them, in 1902 there came Franciscan nuns from Mill Hill. (See: K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 418).

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 416.

Reinforcements came to the missionary staff. The Bible was translated into the vernacular, largely by Pilkington.⁴⁰ An educational system was developed which included the industrial training inaugurated by Mackay. There were schools for girls as well as boys. A beginning was made in secondary education which, it was hoped, would grow into a university course. Medical work became part of the programme of the mission. A native staff was trained, composed of teachers, evangelists, and clergy. Hundreds of places of worship, including a huge Cathedral were built.

Linguistics and translations

There were also many excellent linguists among White Fathers working in the region deep in the interior of East Africa, in the present day Uganda as Leon Livinhac,⁴¹ Le Veux, Gorju, Achte among others, Lavigerie's policy and practice of the early White Fathers from the 1870's put them in the forefront of the Missionary effort to understand and Master African languages.⁴² A translation of the four Gospels in Luganda and Rutoro was produced in 1905. The Church missionary society produced a New Testament in Rutoro in 1902 and an Old Testament in 1906. Thanks to the linguistic work of the early missionaries of Africa.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Leon Livinhac is an outstanding author of important manuscripts on the Luganda language, who placed great stress on linguistic studies. Upon becoming Lavigerie's successor as Superior General of the White Fathers, saw Lavigerie's missionary principles being put into practice: language study, the Catechumenate, medical care, the evangelisation of Africa by Africans themselves and became completely convinced of their validity. (A. Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa*, The White Fathers, during the colonial scramble (1892-1914), New York: Orbis Books Maryknoll 2006, p. 6).

⁴² A. Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa* (1892-1914), op. cit., p. 6.

⁴³ The role of African Catechumens and converts in the process of language recording, classification and standardisation should be emphasised, without their assistance, collaboration and invention, the task of translation of religious texts into African languages could never have been accomplished. Ibidem.

The role of African Catechumens and converts

African Catechumens and converts played a great role in the process of language recording, classification and standardisation should be emphasised, without their assistance, collaboration and invention, the task of translation of religious texts into African languages could never have been accomplished.⁴⁴

Role played by the local people

The indigenous people were so instrumental in the spread of Christianity. These responded well to the gospel preached to them. In central Uganda for example, the Baganda Churches were largely self-supporting, erecting their own structures and paying the stipends of the native staff. A diocesan organisation, heading up in a synod, was gradually developed, with the native Christians having a large share in it. The Baganda, active and intelligent, proved eager missionaries. More than once their enterprise led to the introduction of the faith to neighbouring tribes.⁴⁵

The role of the local Chiefs and Catechists

The success of the Catholic mission work in Buddu was partly due to the catholic local chiefs who accepted to serve as Catechists; the Catholic chiefs had accepted to act as catechists in their own areas. A group of full-time Catechists dependent on Streicher had been formed and the preparation of future expansion to neighbouring districts already started. Over 150 candidates had been baptised and thirteen couples married, while between two and three thousand catechumens were under instruction in the chief's enclosures and at the mission. Motives for conversion had been various. A few had come to the mission merely out of curiosity. Many came with

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Cf. J. M. Waliggo, *The Catholic Church in Buddu Province of Buganda, (1879-1925)*, Kampala: Angel Agencies Ltd., 2010, p. 64.

sincerity desiring to identify themselves with the new religion which also meant identification with the new political order. Several were attracted by Streicher's personality his free medicine especially for eye sickness and his free distribution of religious objects. The fear of hell dominated those who insisted on quick baptism.⁴⁶ The Lubaga mission diary of the White Fathers (01.10 and 03.11.1892), reports that by mid-1892, there were local Catholic communities running smoothly under their catechists in Kyaddondo and Busiro, while by September, Lubaga had no less than 150 catechumens.⁴⁷

Cooperation and capacity to mobilize

Cooperation was exhibited by the missionaries who had the capacity to mobilize resources for mission. This was done from their countries of origin but also from the 'older sister churches' in Europe and America. They also mobilized resources locally. It is a task to learn from them. Bishop John Forbes toured Europe, the United States of America and Canada to raise funds and the work that took him two years led to the construction of the current St. Mary's Cathedral Lubaga.⁴⁸ In Fort Portal diocese, following the earthquake of March 1966, which destroyed many structures including the old cathedral at Virika, bishop Joseph Vincent McCauley mobilised resources from outside, and embarked on building a magnificent Cathedral, which was consecrated on 21.04.1968 by Cardinal L. Rugambwa of Bukoba (Tanzania).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ J.M. Waliggo, *The Catholic Church in the Buddu Province of Buganda*, (1879-1925), 2010, p. 64.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Y. Tourigny, *St. Mary's Cathedral Lubaga*, Lubaga: Marianum Press GTO 1986, p. 16; B. Ssettuuma, Jr., *Coming of age in priesthood...*, op. cit., p. 117.

⁴⁹ A. Katuramu, *Ediini omu Uganda [Religion in Uganda] 1879-1979*, Kisubi: Marianum Press 1979, p. 119.

The role played by the White Fathers and Sisters

The White Fathers did not admit the converts to baptism indiscriminately. True to the injunctions of their founder, they required a four years' catechumenate. Much emphasis was placed upon training native assistants. Scores of catechists were prepared; Sisters were recruited from among the blacks, some for a congregation whose first novitiate was under the White Sisters, and some for a congregation of cloistered nuns; and beginnings were made of the long preparation for the Priesthood. Children 'reared as Christians' were admitted to their first communion between the ages of seven and ten.⁵⁰

The Devotion to the Virgin Mary

Latourette reports that 'from the outset the mission had been placed under the special protection of the Virgin Mary, and the Christians, accordingly, showed marked devotion to her.'⁵¹

Efforts towards Christian Family life, Education and self-supporting Laity

Stress was laid on the creation of families which would conform to Christian standards. Increasing attention was paid to education, although in 1914 less than one-third as many pupils were enrolled in Roman Catholic Schools as in those of the Protestants.⁵² It is reported that Protestants had 73,291 pupils,⁵³ as compared with 21,745 in Roman Catholic Schools. Catholics cooperated with government education policy – though always with more reservations than the Church Mission Society and with a concern not to lose their independence. Kisubi for the White Fathers, and Namilyango for

⁵⁰ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 419.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ K.S. Latourette, op. cit., p. 419, quoting *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society...* 1914-15, p. XXV.

the Mill Hill Fathers, became important high schools for the Catholic Church. The Catholics did not neglect their own seminary system, which aimed primarily at encouraging vocations to the priesthood. Both the high school and the seminary system were unashamedly elitist after their own fashion. But the heart of the mission education system continued to be the village school, built almost entirely by local initiative and employing 'vernacular teachers' whose training, pay and standard of living were very basic.

The role of local congregations

The success of Ugandan Catholicism has also root in the Lay orders that were established. The *Bannakaroli* (Brothers of Charles Lwanga); the *Bannabikira* (Sisters of the Virgin), founded by Mother Mechtilde of the White Sisters; and the Little Sisters of St. Francis, founded by Mother Kevin. The fact that these local orders flourished rested on the strong foundations of a solid Catholic piety at village level. The Ugandan catholic Church, particularly in Buganda, became surprisingly indigenized, long before the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.⁵⁴

The role of the Uganda Martyrs

'The mission that can produce martyrs can also produce priests,' Streicher had claimed. For Laity too, the cult of the martyrs became an important aspect of their piety; and remains one for the outstanding features of Ugandan Catholicism to this day.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ At Villa Maria, the Catholic center in Buddu, an elaborate ritual was developed on the model of the Kabaka's court. The Church was known as *Twekobe* (the place where the Kabaka dwells), and the Virgin Mary, as "Queen Mother" or *Namasole* was addressed as *Naluggi* (*She was the most effective door for seeking special royal favors*).

⁵⁵ K. Ward, *A History of Christianity in Uganda*, in: *The Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, <https://dacb.org/histories/uganda-history-christianity/>, (accessed 09.04.2020).

PRESENT CHALLENGES FACED BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA

Persecution of Christians

In the struggle for Africa which was then in progress, Uganda was caught in the maelstrom of titanic forces and was thrown into internal confusion. French, English, Germans and Arabs contended for the mastery.⁵⁶

Moved by the Arabs to panic at the prospect of having his territories annexed by Europeans, Mwanga (the King of Buganda) instituted a persecution in which numbers of native Christians were killed.⁵⁷ In 1885 the first Anglican Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Hannington, was murdered on his way inland from Mombasa, on the order of Mwanga. This was followed shortly by Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe, (the first Catholic martyr in Uganda), who had criticised the murder of the Bishop. On 3.06.1886 a large massacre of Catholics and protestants took place; many being executed at Namugongo.⁵⁸

Divisions and conflicts between the protestants and Catholics (Converts)

Political and religious matters were intertwined in the formation of Uganda as a British protectorate⁵⁹. Civil war broke out between the Protestant, pro-Britain faction and the Roman Catholic, pro-French party. The Anglo-German treaty of 1890 assigned Uganda to the British, but in 1891 the latter seemed on the point of withdrawal.

⁵⁶ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 415.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 414.

⁵⁸ K. Ward, *A history of Christianity in Uganda*, 1991, op. cit., 5-6.

⁵⁹ S. Mugisa, *The cultural perceptions of the vocation to Priesthood in Uganda*, Fort Portal: CAARD (U) Ltd., 2018, p. 125.

Protestant missionaries sought to further English influence, while the Roman Catholic missionaries saw their hope in French or German control.⁶⁰

In Uganda, educational rivalry was part of the wider ongoing controversy between Catholics and Anglicans, which went back to the origins of Christianity in this country. At Villa Maria, Protestants were said to be giving away cloth to attract pupils and adherents. *We redouble our visits to counteract them*, wrote the White Father diarist.⁶¹ The Missionaries of Africa at Rubaga reported that the Protestants were forcing children into their school, and at Butiti they were building a mission and school a mere five hundred metres from the Catholic station.⁶²

There has also been a challenge of meagre financial resources to sustain the mission and pastoral agents in fields of limited pastoral tools and trained personnel to serve in Church Institutions.⁶³ This is coupled to the failure of people to live an authentic Christian life and recourse to traditional practices.

The Challenge of mushrooming denominations and sects/ The challenge of the ‘prosperity gospel’

There are “mushrooming sects” and other religious denominations in Uganda, which seem to focus more on Property acquisition-prosperity-riches. as observed in *Evangelii Gaudium* is a challenge to the Catholic faith of many peoples today. Some of these new religious movements, tend to fundamentalism, while others seem to propose a spirituality without God (EG 63).⁶⁴

⁶⁰ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 415.

⁶¹ A. Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa...*, op. cit., p. 205.

⁶² Ibidem.

⁶³ Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, (14. Sept. 1995), no. 104.

⁶⁴ R. Muhumuza, *The pastor's tricks: An insider's testimony*, “Daily Monitor” <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/688334-791336-cqo199z/index>.

Not far from the year 1914, there was a sect led by a chief, which professed to be based upon the Bible. It eschewed medicine and doctors, depended upon faith for healing, admitted polygamists to baptism on the ground that monogamy was not taught in the Scriptures, and did not insist upon a prolonged catechumenate before administering the rite. For time, it attracted throngs, but within a few months appeared to be waning.⁶⁵ Towards the end of 1999, a cult emerged in Kanungu (western Uganda) headed by Joseph Kibwetere, Dominic Kataribabo and Credonia Mwerinde which led to the massacre of over 700 its adherents.⁶⁶ In western Uganda, there is also a sect started by one, Desteo Bisaka, his followers call him a “*mighty god*,” the powerful one. (Owobusobozi Bisaka) The sect has existed for over 33 years and has swayed off some Christians.⁶⁷

The challenge of ailments & civil strife

Uganda still grapples with the HIV/AIDS scourge. According to UNAIDS 2010 figures, HIV prevalence in Uganda is 4.8% for females and 2.3% for males ages 15-24. HIV prevalence increases with age 20-24-year-old have higher rates of HIV infection than 15–19-year-olds. The New Vision Paper reported in 2014 that 570 Ugandan girls between 15-24 years get infected with HIV/AIDS each week.⁶⁸

A number of ailment challenges have affected the mission; the Roman Catholic undertaking suffered from many of the adversities

html, (3.10.2007, accessed 03.04.2020); M. Ssebuyira & Z. Nakabugo, *Pastor arrested with miracle machine*, “Daily Monitor” <https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/688334-791328-cqo1a3z/index.html>, (3.10.2007, accessed 03.04.2020).

⁶⁵ K.S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity...*, op. cit., p. 417.

⁶⁶ P. Atuhaire, Uganda’s Kanungu cult massacre that killed 700 followers, “BBC.com” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51821411>, (17.03.2020, accessed 05.09.2020).

⁶⁷ P. Kamara, *Owobusobozi a god among men*, “NTV News report” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4sQ1W_tGr4, (accessed 09.05.2020).

⁶⁸ “New Vision, Ugandan Paper”, reporting on 08.10.2014.

that troubled the first decade. Disease and hardship took their toll, civil strife, partly aroused and greatly accentuated by religious differences between pagans, Moslems, Protestants and Roman Catholics, made the initial years difficult. Some of the early converts paid for the faith with their lives. Yet with fine heroism the missionaries persisted.

CONCLUSION

In this work, expounded briefly on some of the salient points on the history of the spread of Christianity in Uganda. So numerous were the individuals and the enterprises by which Christianity was spread in Uganda as in Africa in general. Whereas H.M. Stanley's letter to the *Daily Telegraph* inspired the sending of the first Christian missionaries; the Church mission Society (CMS) and later the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), the missionary zeal was never the sole impulse in their coming. The economic and political forces at work among European peoples would have brought it had never a missionary embarked upon his task. Christianity seemed to carry with it a certain desire to learn from what appealed to the local people as the powerful civilisation of the white man and so to acquire the Christian religion seemed an integral part of that European culture.

Motives for conversion had been various. A few had come to the mission merely out of curiosity. Many came with sincerity desiring to identify themselves with the new religion which also meant identification with the new political order. As in the case of Buddu, several were attracted by Streicher's personality his free medicine especially for eye sickness and his free distribution of religious objects. Whereas many embraced Christianity, the fear of hell dominated those who insisted on quick baptism.

In the case for Uganda, the expansion and credibility of Christianity depended on foresighted leaders, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests,

Catechists who gave witness of an exemplary life, upon faithful men and women religious who lived authentic lives by their evangelical counsels, upon a dynamic laity, parents and good educators and the political leaders animated by a sense of responsibility. On a spiritual note, we cannot underestimate the intercessory role of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards the success of the Roman Catholic Mission whose devotion was encouraged by the White Fathers and the courageous witness of the Uganda Martyrs, considered the ancestors in the Faith in Uganda.

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PAUL MAKUNDI¹

THE ACTUAL SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN KENYA

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu ukazanie aktualnej sytuacji Kościoła katolickiego w Kenii. Zwraca uwagę na sytuację społeczno-polityczną i moralną w tym kraju. Kościół został przedstawiony jako sumienie i głos Boży dla ludu kenijskiego wobec obecnych wyzwań, szczególnie zjawiska korupcji. Istnieje potrzeba, aby przywódcy narodu kenijskiego zdali sobie sprawę, że brak planu jest planowaniem porażki. Dlatego, aby uwolnić kraj od jarzma korupcji, Konferencja Biskupów Katolickich Kenii (KCCB) rozpoczęła ogólnokrajową kampanię „Zerwij łańcuchy korupcji” jako strategię mającą na celu pomoc w wykorzenieniu kultury korupcji w społeczeństwie.

Keywords: Church, Corruption, Christians, Campaign, Family.

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INTRODUCTION

“If these problems are treated normally, then the consequences will treat us abnormally.” What is corruption? Is a form of dishonesty or criminal offence undertaken by a person or organization entrusted with a position of authority, to acquire illicit benefit or abuse power for one’s private gain, it may include many activities like bribery and embezzlement, though it may also involve practices that are legal in many countries. Kenya has experienced a share of this problem through substantial loss of investors as well as foreign aid. Consequently, the country has taken wide-ranging measures to eradicate corruption. Some of these measures such as liberalization of the economy and trade have made a dent in corruption. Others, such as criminal process have met with many problems due to the socio-political structure of the country. This article highlights how the Catholic Church has been also involved to help fight corruption in Kenya. Among other problems, the issue of corruption is given a very special concern by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB). Therefore, the culture of corruption has grown roots in Kenyan society at large and became endemic. Institutions, which were designed for the regulation of the relationships between citizens and the State, are being used instead for the personal enrichment of public officials (politicians and bureaucrats) and other corrupt private agents (individuals, groups, and businesses). Corruption persists in Kenya primarily because there are people in power who benefit from it and the existing governance institutions lack both the will and capacity to stop them from doing so. The reason why the Church is involved is to conscientize the citizens how corruption demoralizes government and weakens the whole endeavor of policy formulation and its implementation. This article deals not more on the statics and data on corruption, but on the moral, social and spiritual teaching of the Church in Kenya. The active campaign in

the national and county level is the strategy used by the Church to bring change to the country. Some other areas discussed are Health, Education, Family, Justice and Social Development Services. All the information provide in this article is based on what the Church in Kenya is has been practically doing. The structure and coordination are supervised by the Bishops of Kenya.

KENYA CONFERENCE OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS (KCCB)

The Kenya Conference of the Catholic Bishops (KCCB): is a permanent institution, is the assembly of the Catholic Bishops in Kenya united and exercising together Pastoral offices over Christ's faithful, as shepherds of the Catholic Church in Kenya which they together promote by forms and means of apostolate suitable to the circumstances of place and time, in accordance with the law, to promote the greater good which the Church offers to all mankind (canon 447). The authority of the KCCB is vested in the Ordinary and Extraordinary Plenary Assembly. Currently there 26 Catholic Jurisdictions spread over 4 Metropolitan Provinces, that is, 4 Archdioceses, 20 Dioceses, 1 Apostolic Vicariate and 1 Military Ordinariate.² Guided by the Word of God, the Magisterium, and sensitive specific and local needs; KCCB is committed to exercising together certain Pastoral functioning that build the family of God into responsive witnesses of Christ's universal mission of service in charity to all humanity. The General Secretariat is the National administrative, facilitative and coordinative arm through which the KCCB implements and co-ordinates various pastoral programs at the National level and undertakes all those responsibilities which express the mission of

² Taken from Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)website, <https://www.kccb.or.ke/>

the Catholic Church in Kenya. All commissions and departments of KCCB are housed at the General Secretariat-Nairobi.

Types of corruption in Kenya: There are different types of corruption according to its nature and practices. The most known are as follows: Petty corruption, Grand corruption, and Systematic corruption.³

Petty Corruption occurs at a smaller scale and takes place at the implementation end of public services when public officials meet the public. For example, in many small places such as registration offices, police stations, state licensing boards, and many other private and government sectors.

Grand Corruption is defined as corruption at the highest levels of government in a way that requires significant subversion of the political, legal and economic systems. Such corruption is commonly found in countries with authoritarian or dictatorial governments but also in those without adequate policing of corruption. It occurs when a public official or other person deprives a particular social group or substantial part of population of a state fundamental right; or causes the state or any of its people a loss greater than hundred times the annual minimum subsistence of its people; as a result of bribery, embezzlement or other corruption offence. The definition gives legal relevance to the harms and voice to the victims. Grand corruption is a human rights crime and deserves adjudication and punishment accordingly.

Systematic Corruption (endemic corruption) is a corruption which is primarily due to the weakness of an organization or process. It can be contrasted with individual officials or agents who act corruptly within the system. Corruption has been a major issue in Kenya. A factor which encourages corruption in Kenya includes conflicting incentives, discretionary powers, monopolistic powers,

³ The Fight Against Corruption in Kenya, <https://www.cytonn.com/> 29 July 2018.

lack of transparency, low pay and a culture of impunity. Specific acts of corruption include bribery, extortion and embezzlement, corruption has become the rule rather than the exception. The system of governance is in two levels, that is, national government and county governments. Corruption has taken the same scales and roots, centralized and decentralized corruption. Governance in the public sector within the political system, there is corruption of the political process and of governance agencies such as police as well as corruption in process of allocating public funds for contracts, grants and hiring new office holders. The political act of graft is a well-known and global form of political corruption, being the unscrupulous and illegal use of a politician's authority for personal gain, when funds intended for public projects are intentionally misdirected in order to maximize the benefits to illegally private interests of the corrupted individuals and their cronies. This system has made the office holders maintain themselves in office by purchasing votes and enacting laws which use taxpayers' money. Consequently, corruption can have political consequences within the citizens asked for bribes becoming less likely to identify with their country or region.

BREAKING THE CHAIN OF CORRUPTION

The Church's Involvement in the Fight Against Corruption: Kenyan Catholic bishops are seeking divine intervention in the battle against corruption, urging citizens to turn to God with a specially crafted anti-graft prayer.⁴ The move is a six month's long campaign the bishops launched in October 2019, aimed at ending corruption in the country and other African countries. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Kenya ranks 144th out of

⁴ From organized crime and corruption reporting project (OCCRP), published Friday, 1 November 2019.

the 180 countries where survey has been done. Symbolically kneeling and praying barefoot before an altar, each holding a cross in a hand, the bishops each read and signed the commitment document to work tirelessly to fight the evil of corruption in Kenya. The statement said to mark the beginning of the anti-graft campaign was signed by all the bishops to show solidarity. Part of the statement read; “We humbly beg you, touch our lives and those of our leaders so that we may realize the evil of corruption and work hard to eliminate it. For any citizen who has acquired anything through corrupt means, Lord, give him or her, the spirit of courage to make restitution and come back to you.” This prayer appealed to the conscience of the people and God’s intervention. As part of their campaign, the bishops according to the Catholic Universe also banned all donations by Politicians, declaring that the Churches across the country will be receiving donations only electronically or via cheques, in order to track donors and avoid compromises with money of dubious origin. “Our Churches will not be used as political platforms or for any other motive other than for the worship of God,” the KCCB said. They prayed to God who raises up God-fearing citizens and leaders who cares for all and who will lead people in the path of peace, justice, prosperity, progress and above all love. The prayer was created to strengthen the bishop’s anti-corruption crusade.

Breaking the Chain of Corruption: Issuing another statement, the Kenya Conference of the Catholic Bishops (KCCB) as they were launching national Lenten campaign, they came up with a slogan “let us break the chain of corruption” presented at the beginning of October 2019 at the National Shrine of Subukia in the presence of over 40,000 Christians. The campaign focuses on an educational and prayer activity. For the occasion, a prayer was written that reads: Father in heaven, you always provide for all your creatures, so that they may live as you have always willed. You have blessed our country Kenya with rich human and natural resources to be used in honor and glory and for the wellbeing of every Kenyan. Christians must

join hands together with the media to start more concerted efforts in breaking the chain of corruption, they said, let us continue to count on your support because this monster of corruption cannot be faced with only one sector. Our new appeal is to all Churches, other Faiths and people of goodwill to try and join war on corruption to bring more honesty and integrity in our society.⁵ The ongoing declaration of war on corruption was an appeal to the conscience of all who choose a clean way life and acting that will bring integrity and sanity back in the country of Kenya. They said let us not focus on material corruption alone but all that promotes the culture of death such as:

1. The destruction of our environment is corruption.
2. Killing the unborn children, infidelity in marriage and domestic violence is corruption of family.
3. Selling drugs to the youth, enticing them to promiscuity and abusing them is the worst form of corruption.
4. Soliciting for favors and privileges to the disadvantage of others by either bribing or using tribe, religion, clan, political affiliation, office or intimidation is also corruption.
5. The attempt to cheat during exams, even after concerted efforts by the government to stop the vice, is a terrible form of corruption that will destroy the credibility that we have as a country. What is being witnessed during the exams is impunity with which the candidates, the teachers, and cartels are determined to obtain leakages is a sign of already a decaying society of people who do not believe in honesty.⁶

Kenyans must liberate themselves from all these evils by taking personal firm stand against all forms of corruption by saying NO to corruption. There is no other way to tackle this vice of corruption other than making a personal decision to live on what each has legitimately acquired and refuse to live beyond our means. Hence,

⁵ Catholic media network in Kenya (KMNK), November 8, 2019.

⁶ Ibid.

everyone must listen and interrogate his or her conscience, the inner voice given from God, which tells us to avoid evil and do well. Truly there is a window to liberate our country, our society and all.

THE NAIROBI SUMMIT ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEVELOPMENT (ICPD)

The Church's Involvement in the Health Sector: Under the Catholic Health Commission of Kenya, Health service delivery forms an integral part of evangelization for the Catholic Church of Kenya. As such, the role played through the Church's apostolate in Kenya cannot be underestimated. The Church has an extensive network of Health facilities that include 58 hospitals, 83 Health Centers, 311 dispensaries and 17 medical training institutions. These Health facilities offer a wide range of preventive and curative Health services, including vaccination. The Catholic Church coordinates these services through the Catholic Health Commission of Kenya. The Commission runs close to 30% of all Healthcare facilities in Kenya.⁷

The Nairobi Summit on International Conference on Development (ICPD): The Catholic Church through the Health Commission brought to the attention of Kenyans the concern on Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25. This Summit, 2019 marked the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, where 179 governments adopted a landmark Program of Action which set out to empower women and girls for their sake, and for the benefit of their families, communities and nations. Under this guise of advancement and development of women is advocating the so-called sexual and reproductive Health rights and comprehensive sexuality education as the way to achieve this development of women. The

⁷ Press statement by the Catholic Health Commission of Kenya, KCCB, October 13-19, 2014.

Church does not believe that these are issues that truly concern the development of women and humanity at large. Any meaningful summit is expected to focus on a program that targets actions that will uplift women and children living in the extreme poverty, migration, strategies for development, literacy and education, encouraging the culture of peace, supporting the family as basic unit of society, ending violence against women, as well as ensuring access to employment, land, capital and technology among others.⁸ The Church through the Health Commission of Kenya rejected the introduction of these ideologies centered on gender, and other alien practices, which go against the culture of Africans and religious heritage. It is perceived as a way of corrupting the youth by introducing foreign ideologies, that is, same sex union and active homosexual activities. The Church also showed the concern on the crisis of National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF); the Healthy facilities run by the Church have been experiencing a crisis of NHIF due to growing debt to be paid to the Health institutions across the country. In fact, many of the Health facilities and other Faith-based Health facilities have gone through a tough moment due to the non-payment to the point where it is difficult to procure medicine or pay salaries.

The Commission for Education and Religious Education: Through the Commission for Education and Religious Education, the Church runs 30% of all educational institutions in Kenya including special education facilities. The Church has over 8,000 educational institutions, out of which, 5,600 are Primary Schools, 1,900 Secondary Schools, 5 Colleges and a University. The Church affiliated institutions offer holistic education that is geared towards formation of the moral and spiritual character of the learner to become a better person. In addition, the Commission for Education and Religious Education continues to build the capacity of teachers, school administrators and managers as well as pupils and learners

⁸ Catholic media network in Kenya (CMNK), November 8, 2019.

through programs namely: Center for In-Service Religious Education Teachers (CISRET), Abstinence and Behavior Change for Youth, a human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV and AIDS) intervention program, Families matter, Pastoral Counseling, Child Safety and Protection, In-Service of Christian Religious Education for Secondary Schools Teachers and a Pastoral Care Program in primary Schools. These programs have gone a long way in character and spiritual formation of learners as well as professional development of teachers.⁹

THE CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION (CJPC)

The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission were formed in 1998 as the executive arm of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) on matters of peace and justice. The CJPC works to fulfill one of the KCCB objectives, that is, to promote justice and challenge oppressive structures in the society. The aim is to sensitize individuals, peace issues and their respective roles and duties in addressing peace development and human rights. Some of the programs that CJPC undertakes include governance and democracy, peace building and conflict resolution. Lenten campaign, transformative civic education, and constitutional reforms programs, all these being coordinated by diocesan offices in the regions. The objectives of CJPC are clearly set in the Commission as follows:¹⁰

1. To approve the contents of formation on programs and Lenten campaign

⁹ KCCB, Commission for Education and Religious Education, December 23, 2013.

¹⁰ Ibid.

2. To discuss and make decisions on publications of the social teachings of the Church in order to make them available in simple format and language.
3. To work for the eradication of injustice wherever it is seen to exist, by analyzing the situation in the light of the gospel, planning relevant steps and action in order to contribute to the solutions, issuing official communiqués as to the stand of the Catholic Church in Kenya.
4. Advice encourages and support to the diocesan CPJC and other groups involved in justice and peace issues.
5. To cooperate with institutions, Churches and peoples in the spirit of Christian Unity.

THE PROMOTION OF FAMILY AND VOCATIONS

The Catholic Church in Kenya, through the KCCB, in response to Pope Francis' call to finding new pastoral solution to the families, the local Church in Kenya from the Parishes, Small Christian Communities (SCCs), lay movements and other ecclesial associations across the country is committed to taking care of families and promoting vocations. The challenges which are affecting the Kenyan families are as follows:

1. Arranged and early marriages.
2. Negative effects of polygamy (polygamy hinders monogamy in relation to matrimony as a sacrament).
3. Loneliness brought about by absentee spouses, migration due to many factors like war and floods.
4. Unemployment (many young people completing studies with no employment opportunities available for them).
5. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are giving offers on artificial family planning methods which have negative effects.

6. The rapid growth of Evangelical churches and sects has drawn a few Catholics from their Church.
7. Cohabitation (popularly known as “come we stay” with no intention of legally binding relations, *mpango wa kando* (Swahili meaning for a side relationship, concurrent partnership, “a jump-off”, a casual sexual partner or an extramarital partner.
8. Practicing Catholics are fewer compared to numerical Catholics.
9. In interreligious marriages, some children are not allowed to practice the Catholic faith. This has led to disintegration of families.
10. Single parent families.
11. Divorce and separation especially among the young couples.
12. Drug abuse and alcoholism.
13. Physical violence and conflict over family resources.
14. Child labor and sexual exploitation and abuse.
15. Some marriage laws in Kenyan contradict the Catholic Church teaching on marriage and the family.

Church Initiatives to Safeguard the Family Unit: Beyond proclaiming God’s Word and pointing out extreme situations, the Church in Kenya choose to be present “as Church” to draw near families in need of help and charity. The Church presence is felt and experienced in different ways. Strengthening the family life programs in the Arc/dioceses, establishing community development programs that address the vulnerable groups so as to promote and defend their dignity; continuous catechesis on the dignity of marriage and family life through print and electronic media, seminars to various groups and associations of the Church like Young Christians Adults, Catholic Women Association, Catholic Men Association etc.; introducing family data in the parishes encouraging family members to be living witnesses to each other in the society, establishing a working tribunal in the metropolitans and dioceses to handle marriage cases and

related issues, by taking care of street children through children's welfare program by liaison committee developing child protection policies. Counseling programs for the separated couples at the parish levels and rolling out of the income generating projects at different level to support them. Taking care of the aged and sick by Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and Church-run homes which are in partnership with the mission hospitals and institutions; the on-going formation (as encouraged by Vatican Council II) with preference in counseling, family life and social ministries right from marriage preparation of young adults planning to wedding in the Church. In the spirit of ecumenism, the Church has been a member in the bible translation to the local languages and caring of the commercial sex workers and destitute children.

Pastoral Care and Nurturing Vocation: In general, vocation refers to a particular occupation, business, or profession. It is strong impulse or inclination to follow a particular activity or career. It is understood as a function or station in life to which one is called by God, a divine call to God's service or to the Christian life, the religious vocation or the vocation to marriage. The parents ought to know that all vocations come from God, but it is them who are the first formators of the children before they decide which call God is calling them to serve humanity. The role played by parents is that giving shape to the vocation of their children, faith and good examples from the family. By supporting their children psychologically, spiritually, emotionally and financially, parents do the God-given duty. It is the mission of the Church to care for the birth, discernment and fostering of vocations, particularly those to the priesthood.¹¹ The pastoral care taken by the Church begins from the family and goes on up to higher levels of education. In Kenya, the KCCB under the Seminary Episcopal Commission has established National Seminaries for training

¹¹ John Paul II, Post-Synod Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992, no. 34.

future priests. They are St. Thomas Aquinas National Seminary-Langata, Nairobi (theological studies), St. Augustine's National Seminary-Mabanga, Bungoma (philosophical studies), St. Mary's National Seminary-Molo (propaedeutic seminary for spiritual year), and St. Matthias Mulumba National Seminary-Tindinyo, Eldoret (theological studies).

Development and Social Services-Caritas Kenya: This is the development and humanitarian arm of the KCCB; it was established in 1973 as the development and social services in the Church of Kenya. Caritas Kenya works closely with the poor in the 47 counties across the 25 Catholic dioceses. It has been actively involved in monitoring of the drought situation in the country, using localized information from dioceses on the drought situation to mobilize the Caritas Internationalis Member Organizations lobby for supporting the people affected. Caritas Kenya is currently launching drought response activities in drought affected counties to enhance coordination and identification of humanitarian gaps. Its achievements have been accomplished through the appeals made by the bishops aimed at mobilizing Christians and people of good will to assist affected communities. The sectors of intervention are food security, water-sanitation and hygiene, shelter, peace building, and water. It also works with other members of the Caritas confederation, government ministries and non-governmental organizations within and outside the country.¹²

CONCLUSION

Each one must become an agent of change to bring light and life back in the Kenyan society, act against corruption, and speak out in the Churches, schools, institutions and in all sectors of the

¹² Caritaskenya.or.ke December 5, 2019.

country. If the conscience of people is informed and awakened the campaign against all moral issues will be corrected and the new change embraced. In an environment of devolution, Kenyans are tired of corruption but struggling with how to minimize it. The culture is not exclusive to the public sector; religious ethics has the potential to teach values and call for fiscal accountability across sectors. Indeed, several faith-inspired actors are trying, however, lack of coordination or sporadic interventions have yet to transform the culture or prevent new 'divinely inspired' actors from taking advantage of those seeking spiritual guidance. The Catholic anti-corruption campaign is informed by the belief that legal means alone will not win the war on corruption, which they want scaled up to the spiritual level. Spiritual formation is, therefore, at the heart of the Church's anti-corruption war. Man was created in the image and likeness of God and was commanded to govern creation rationally to bring forth fruit from the earth. The mandate given to man was to rule the earth as in Genesis 1:26 (Kingly function), to name creation – Genesis 2:15-20 (prophet function), and to worship God through sacrifices (priestly function).

The baptized have the special responsibility to share the kingly, prophetic and priestly life of Christ. In other words, the stewardship must imitate that of Christ. Everything belongs to God and man is simply manager or administrator acting on His behalf, commitment of one's self and possessions of created goods are for the service of God. Every Kenyan is called to share and give an account of how is managing what the Master gave us. The reward is to share the master's happiness here on earth and the life to come (Matthew 25:21) this requires a faithful and responsible accountability as illustrated in Psalm 8:3-8: "when I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and stars which you arranged, what is man that you should him in mind, mortal man that you care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god, with glory and honor you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hand, put all things under his

feet. All of them, sheep and cattle, yes, even the savage beasts-birds of the air, and fish that make their way through the waters.” let the efforts made by the Catholic Church bear fruits to the Christians and the government leaders who have been vested with the responsibility and positions in the society. God bless Kenya.

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KAROL MICHAEL CHIPONDO¹

THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL-CULTURAL CHALLENGES IN TANZANIA

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł omawia wpływ Kościoła katolickiego na przemianę, rozwój i zmianę społeczności w Tanzanii. Analizuje, w jaki sposób Kościół w Tanzanii w różnych okresach działał na rzecz przemiany społeczeństwa i wspólnoty tanzańskiej. Opierając się na faktach historycznych, autor stara się ukazać zarówno osiągnięcia, jak i wyzwania, przed którymi stoi Kościół w realizacji swojej misji. Ponadto, bada zmieniającą się specyfikę i dynamikę Kościoła w dzisiejszych czasach, wykazując, że rzeczywistość Kościoła odnosi się nie tylko do tego, w co się wierzy, ale także do tego, co się czyni na rzecz przemiany i rozwoju osoby ludzkiej. Na zakończenie Autor wysuwa sugestię, że przemiana osoby ludzkiej musi być integralną częścią posługi dzisiejszego Kościoła.

Keywords: Tanzania, culture, Interreligious Dialogues, Mission, religion, Transformation, and development.

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Church has been always known as the call from our Lord Jesus Christ to communicate the 'Good News to the world', to call all men and women to the repentance, faith and to baptize them in the Church (Mathew 28:19-20). The church in Tanzania is been involved in this process of teaching and baptizing for over 150 year of her existence. The aim of this article therefore; first, it is to investigate and evaluate the social, economic and political situation of Tanzania so as to understand the nature of the apostolate the church in Tanzania is undertaken. Second, is to explore the history of the Church in Tanzania, the missions and challenges that it has faced since the first missionary came to Tanzania. Third, is to investigate the social challenges and how the church has responded to them as the underlined part of her missions to the world. The underlined purpose of the threefold above, will contribute to the current debate on how to support the Church in Africa (Tanzania) toward the self-reliance. It hopes also to provide a clear information to the governments, policy-makers, researchers and people of good will, to support the programs and projects of the Church.

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN TANZANIA

Tanzania is one of the East African countries it that borders: Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. It is a Republic formed the union of two countries namely; Tanganyika (Tanzania mainland) and Zanzibar (Tanzania Island) united in 1964. Tanzania with an area of 945,090 square kilometres has more than 120 ethnics. Although each

ethnic tribe has its own language, there is one national language, Swahili that unites all Tanzanian².

It is one of the few countries in Africa that has often attracted attention as an exemplary peacefully and stable nation. In particular; this situation is attributed to the Leadership of the former president the late Julius Kambarage Nyerere (Father of the nation) and his political ideology of Ujamaa (African socialism). Due to this ideological formation, Tanzanians have managed to live peacefully as 'Ndugu' a Swahili word (brothers and sisters) despite their differences in religions and ethnic backgrounds.

From the time of independence there has been a close cooperation between the government of Tanzania and the Catholic church in providing the social, economic and political *services*³ to the Tanzanians. The right of worship is highly protected by the national constitution. Because of this, there is high sense of responsibility to all Tanzanians in bringing the social transformation of the so called the common enemies of the Tanzanians that is 'poverty, Ignorance and diseases'. Apart from that; social services like Education and health services is distributed in collaboration between the government and the private sectors including the Catholic Church.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TANZANIANS

The Catholic Church in Tanzania has a very long and fascinating history in her evangelization. The year 1868, marks the beginning

² B. Sundkler, C. Steed, *A history of the church in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004, p. 33.

³ F. Ludwig, *Church and state in Tanzania: Aspects of a changing Relationship, 1961-1994* [= Studied Religion in Africa], Leiden-Boston-Köln 1999, p. 11.

of evangelization where the first group of missionary landed in Tanzania coastal area of Bagamoyo. At this time three groups of missionaries namely; the Holy Ghost fathers, the White fathers and the Benedictines came to Tanzania coastal area (Bagamoyo) and begun the first missions. Their first contribution was to set – up free villages of slaves during the slave trade that was conducted by the English and Arab traders. In these villages, they taught and baptized the slaves who were freed from slavery and they became the first Christians. From these Christians some of them became co-workers of the missionaries especially as catechists and translators who helped the work of evangelization. Later on the mission was spread to all other parts of Tanzania like Moshi, Arusha Mbulu and Kondo.

The Church in Tanzania lodges a very unique role in the Tanzanian communities both in spiritual and physical services. One cannot talk of the success of Tanzania in providing quality social services without referring to the contribution of the Catholic Church. Apart from the social services there is a high growth of faith and the increase of the number of faithful, religious men and women, clergy and bishops. The growing numbers of the faithful and the increase of the agents of evangelization is a clear indication of the success of the Church in Tanzania. The Catholic Church in Tanzania grew very rapidly in terms of the numbers of the faithful, numbers of priests, religious congregations and also number of bishops. At the moment there are 12,220,689 (27.20%) Catholics, 34 diocese and 7 archdioceses. The number of priests, both diocesan and religious has reached to 2,182 priests.

On the other hand, there is great contribution made by the lay faithful together with their lay organizations in bringing unity and solidarity of the church with others denominations. For example, they have been instrumental in establishing the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) all over the country. A Small Christian Community is simply, a small group of around 10-15 families who meet weekly usually in their homes (but sometimes in a Parish,

a school or another institution) to reflect on the Bible especially the Gospel and see how it connect it to their daily lives⁴.

Actually, all the parishes have Small Christian Communities as a new way of evangelization and unity. Each faithful lives under these Small Christian Communities. Through these Small Christian Communities the Church has managed to be self-ministering in her apostolate. The Church in Tanzania under Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) runs over 260 secondary schools, 75 registered vocational training centres and 4 full-fledged Catholic universities. This is a great contribution for the development of education in Tanzania. This achievement stems from the fact that whenever the missionaries settled they established schools and health facilities⁵. This was acknowledged by St. John Paul II during the Synod of the African Bishops of the synod that:

But now, you Africans are missionary to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in the blessed soil. One duty however, remains to be fulfilled: we must remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider their outcome of the life, and imitate their faith that is the history which we should not forget; it confers on the local church the mark of its authenticity and nobility its mark as 'apostolic' That history is a drama of charity, heroism and sacrifice which makes the African church great and holy from its very origins (Ecclesia in Africa, no. 35).

In Tanzania the contribution of the first missionaries is seen almost in every parish. There are two kinds of schools; government schools and Non-government schools including the Catholic Church. The Church's educational institutions provide high quality education and teach good morals to the students. This is the reason why some parents chose to send their children to these schools in spite of the

⁴ J.G. Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of small Christian communities in Eastern Africa*, Nairobi: CUEA Press 2012.

⁵ F. Ludwig, *Church and state in Tanzania...*, op. cit., p. 11.

fees. The Church also runs a number of dispensaries, health centres and hospitals even at the parish level, one finds a dispensary of health centre that provides health services. Some of these health facilities are run by the religious congregation of sisters. Apart from health services, the religious sisters also provide other social services like taking care of the orphanages, sick people, elderly and poor people.

CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FACING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TANZANIA

There are several challenges the Church in Tanzania is facing in implementing her programs in education, health and spiritual services. The main focus in this part is to look briefly on some of these challenges and suggest the possible measure that can be taken by the Church.

To begin with, the church in Tanzania lacks proper and well trained agents of evangelization. The greatest challenge lie in the area of priestly formation and religious education. The Synod of the African Bishops addressed the problem of formation by saying *it is necessary to discern them wisely, to provide competent directors and to oversee the quality of the formation offered* (Ecclesia in Africa, no. 50). There has been a great increase in the number of vocations. There is a need to increase the number of seminaries, yet the biggest challenge is lack of qualified formators and professors to teach.

Furthermore, the development of secular education demands a greater capacity of religious formation systems of the Church. For example, there are government secondary schools in many villages, yet the Church has not prepared enough catechists to teach at that level. The church needs to improve the capacity of the catechists and other pastoral agents⁶.

⁶ *Is Tanzania the Next Target for Radical Islam?* [interview with bishop B. Mfumbusa, Diocese of Kondoia], “Zenit. The world seen from Rome”, <https://zenit>.

Another challenge is high the prevalence of poverty and an economic inequalities within the society. There is chronic food insecurity and many families have to struggle to meet their basic needs. Mostly the economic growth is mentioned at the national level or remain for the few but for the majority of the Tanzanians there is no growth in the quality of the living.

According to the World council for economic development, poverty alleviation essentially must seek to attain basic needs of the people. This reflected mainly on eradicating extreme poverty, and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality. In most cases the catholic church, especially in the rural areas is working hand in hand with the government to liberate the Tanzanians from the extreme poverty.

However, since there is no more assistance from outside the question remains, what must Church to do to support her missions and apostolate? Now the church is calling for self-supporting programs and projects. The Council of the Bishops insisted that the laity must take up the renewal of the temporal orders as their own special obligation (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no 7), because this task is not the priority of the priest or religious. Only the laity, because of their skills in the marketplace, in the institution of the society and in the everyday activities of men⁷, can make the Tanzanian self-supporting.

While working with people of different faith and religions, the Church in Tanzania recognizes the contributes to different cultural practices. Pope Francis emphasizes this *has* nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest conviction when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves (*Querida*

org/2014/02/06/is-tanzania-the-next-target-for-radical-islam/, (accessed 22.11.2020).

⁷ P.G. Malima, *The Empowerment of the Laity in the Catholic Church in Tanzania*, <https://www.uibk.ac.at/theol/leseraum/pdf/malima2012.pdf>, (accessed 22.11.2020), p. 5.

Amazonia, no. 106). However, some of these practices, violate human rights. For example, in some communities there is violence against female genital mutilation (FGM), son preference, daughter deficit cultures and gender based violence. Working with the Governments, the Catholic church is increasingly, encouraging discussions on these cultural practices that violate human rights in all forms. Also, in some of the communities the rights of the people of albinism are yet not to be realized. There are negative attitudes towards Albinos, due to fear and lack of knowledge about albinism. In recent years the killings of albinos has escalated to an extent that the church and the government have raised attention to the problem to stop it. In 2008 for example the Tanzania albinos society reported at least 35 albino people were murdered.⁸

Interreligious dialogue is another challenge for the Catholic Church in Tanzania. Tanzania is vast with the Islamic religion which is growing very fast especially in the cities. At the national level government of Tanzania gives allows freedom of worship. However, this freedom has been misused by the fundamentalists or radical Muslims who are coming from outside the countries. These are:

preachers from Muslim counties who come to Tanzania and make some political demands. For example claiming *sharia law*, and require that everyone subject to it. At times these fundamentalists instigate conflict by making verbal attacks to the non-Muslims⁹.

There is also a growing number of Quranic schools some of which have becomes extremist in nature to the extent that they encourage pupils not to attend to secular schools. Following this threat, the special assembly of the African Bishops emphasizes *the importance* of ecumenical dialogue with other churches and ecclesial communities.

⁸ M. Green, *Priests, witches and Power popular Christianity after mission in southern Tanzania*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2003, p. 69.

⁹ *Is Tanzania the Next Target for Radical Islam?...*, op. cit., (accessed 22.11.2020).

Also welcomes a dialogue between the African traditional religious and Islam (Ecclesia in Africa, no. 49). There should be also a change of mentality of the Christians that, other religious including the Muslims were to be converted to Catholicism.

In Tanzania, the medicine outlets is normally regulated by the Tanzania Food and Drug authority (TFSD). The church health facilities on their part play an important role with provision of health care services. For example in all parishes especially in the rural areas where the governments facilities have not been established, the church has dispensaries to provide services to the poor people. Also the church provide health education in prevention and control strategies of some diseases like HIV, Malaria and TB. The aim is to enhance community participation in health promotion and disease prevention.

From what has been said above, one may realize that the Catholic church in Tanzania is following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ who identifies Himself with the poor and those who were neglected. This is the call of the church in Africa today, to read the signs of time and move according to the real situation of the poor, the voiceless whom it has to serve. Hence the apostolate of the church has to be geared toward the integral human development(Body and soul). In way, the Church in Tanzania needs to express to the people of Tanzania love, unity and compassion and the Love of our Lord Jesus and the Kingdom of God.

CONCLUSION

This article raises more other vital questions for the future development of the Church in Tanzania; In what ways can the challenges that face the Church in Tanzania some of which are highlighted above be combated or been transformed into opportunities for the Church's mission? Can the church in Tanzania

be able to utilize these challenges be it in Politics, economics, morality and family relations towards the building of a new evangelization? These questions call for more research for the church in Tanzania.

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STEPHEN PIYO¹

THE SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI

Abstract

Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia analizę obecnej sytuacji Kościoła katolickiego w Malawi, jednym z krajów kontynentu afrykańskiego. Rozpoczyna się od zarysowania tła historycznego tego kraju. Chrześcijaństwo w Malawi zapoczątkowali misjonarze, którzy odegrali również ogromną rolę społeczną dzięki promocji edukacji i zdrowia. Poza tym artykuł opisuje osiągnięcia Kościoła katolickiego w Malawi oraz wyzwania, przed którymi stoi Kościół katolicki w ogóle, ale ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem diecezji Zomba, która jest jedną z ośmiu diecezji w Malawi.

Keywords: Malawi, Christianity, Missionaries, Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), Diocesan Local Clergy, Schools, congregations, Statistics, Infrastructures

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INTRODUCTION

Malawi is one of the 55 countries in African Continent, with its capital city in Lilongwe. It received its independence on 06.06.1964 and became republic in 1966.² It is found in the central Africa. Sometimes it is linked to the East African region, and at other times it is linked to the southern Africa. It shares borders with Tanzania to the North, Zambia to the West and Mozambique to the South and East. Malawi has three political regions namely the Northern region, the Central region and the Southern region. It has an area of 118,484km² with the population of 17,563,749 million people.³ Therefore, it is currently estimated at 18 million people.

It is called *the warm heart of Africa* because of the kindness of its citizens. The Malawian citizens are widely known as kind people who show their kindness even to strangers regardless of their poverty. There are many tribes in Malawi however the major tribes are the Lomwe from the Southern region, the Chewa from the Central region and the Tumbuka from the Northern region.

CHRISTIANITY IN MALAWI

Christianity in Malawi was brought by missionaries, mainly from Europe, the first being the Protestant Church of Scotland in around 1860. The Catholic missionaries came in later. The first Catholic Mission in Malawi was opened at Nzama Parish in 1901 in the Central region of Malawi.⁴ These first Catholic missionaries were in

² Hebert Reijnaerts, Ann Nielsen, Matthew Schoffeleers, *Montfortians in Malawi: Their Spiritual and Pastoral Approach* (Mzuzu: Luviri Press, 2018), p. 414.

³ According to the Preliminary Results of the 2018 Census in Malawi.

⁴ Hebert Reijnaerts, Ann Nielsen, Matthew Schoffeleers, *Montfortians in Malawi*, p. 48.

two groups the Montfortians and the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa). These missionaries came from countries like Holland, France, German, Italy and Canada among others. The Montfortians established the Church in the Southern Region of Malawi and the white Fathers settled in the North and the central part of Malawi. The other missionaries like the Comboni, Carmelites, Spiritans, Kiltigans, Calpuchins and others came in later.

The Catholic Church in Malawi is one of the powerful and main churches. The other churches which exist among others are: Anglican Church, Seventh day Church, Central Africa Presbyterian Church, Islam and other mushroom churches.⁵ The Catholic Church Christians form 30% (5,269,125) of the total country's population which is one third of the total population. It is estimated about six million of Catholic Christians.⁶ It consists of eight dioceses. The dioceses are as follows: Lilongwe Archdiocese, Blantyre Archdiocese, Mangochi Diocese, Dedza Diocese, Karonga Diocese, Mzuzu Diocese, Chikwawa Diocese and Zomba Diocese.

The dioceses are grouped into two metropolitans namely Blantyre Metropolitan which includes Blantyre Archdiocese, Mangochi Diocese and Zomba Diocese and Lilongwe Metropolitan which includes Lilongwe Archdiocese, Dedza Diocese, Mzuzu Diocese, and Karonga Diocese.

⁵ D.D Phiri, *History of Malawi* (Claim Press, 2004), p. 193.

⁶ Interview: Fr. Godino Phokoso, National Communications Director, Lilongwe, Malawi [22April, 2020].

THE LOCAL CLERGY IN MALAWI

The Association of Diocesan Local Clergy of Malawi (ADCCOM) through its secretary General indicates that the total number of diocesan local clergy in Malawi is four hundred and three.⁷ This is the total number of all diocesan priests in all the eight dioceses in Malawi. It should be noted that this total number of priests excludes the religious who are also there from Montfort congregation, Comboni congregation, Franciscan congregation, Carmelite congregation, Stigmatine congregation and Palotine congregation just to mention a few.

CATHOLIC CHURCH INSTITUTIONS IN MALAWI

The Catholic Church in Malawi has institutions such as Seminaries, Universities, Nursing Schools, Technical Colleges, Secondary Schools Primary Schools and Parishes. It has two Major Seminaries namely St. Anthony Major Seminary situated in Mchinji district in the Archdiocese of Lilongwe which is the central region of Malawi. It offers Philosophical Courses for three years to seminarians under priestly formation. It has also St. Peter's Major Seminary situated in Zomba district in Zomba diocese which is the southern part of Malawi. It offers Theological Courses for five years to the major seminarians on priestly formation. Currently, it has two formation Centers which offer spiritual courses for a year to candidates from the eight dioceses before being admitted to the major seminaries.

The Catholic Church owns one University namely Catholic University [CU] which is situated in Nguludi-Chiradzulu in the

⁷ Interview: Fr. Gift Seleman, General Secretary of Association of Diocesan Clergy in Malawi [20th February, 2020].

Archdiocese of Blantyre in the Southern region of Malawi. There is also another Catholic University [DMI] in Mangochi diocese but it is run by a congregation. There are seven minor seminaries in Malawi in which every diocese has its own operational minor seminary except one diocese [Karonga] which do not have since it's a newly established diocese in references to the other existing dioceses. The Catholic Church in Malawi has twelve Technical Colleges, five nursing schools, 12 Private secondary Schools, 125 community day secondary Schools, 18 secondary Schools and 1424 primary Schools. The distribution of these Institutions is as follows in the eight Catholic Dioceses in Malawi.⁸

Name of Diocese	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Technical Colleges	Nursing Schools	Community Day Sec.Sch	Universities
Blantyre	222	3	2	2	18	1
Chikwawa	89	0	0	1	5	0
Dedza	181	1	0	0	17	0
Karonga	86	4	1	0	4	0
Lilongwe	230	4	2	0	24	0
Mangochi	280	0	2	0	23	1
Mzuzu	264	4	3	2	1	0
Zomba	72	2	2	0	13	0
TOTAL	1424	18	12	5	125	2

⁸ Interview: Bro. Paschal Mtuwana, National Catholic Education Coordinator, Secretariat-Lilongwe, Malawi [24 April, 2020].

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACED BY CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS IN MALAWI

The Catholic Church in Malawi faces financial challenges in terms of running its minor and major seminaries. The challenges come due to the dwindling of subsidy which it used to receive from Rome and it was of great help for the running of its minor and major seminaries.

Furthermore, it faces the challenge of vocation boom to priesthood. This has led to insufficient places especially at St. Anthony Major Seminary which offers philosophical courses to seminarians cannot accommodate all of them. This has made the Episcopal Conference of Malawi [ECM] to allocate a specific number of seminarians from every diocese who can be admitted to St. Anthony Major Seminary.

This entails that if the diocese has so many candidates in that year, some are requested to wait till the next year. This also increases the burden of School fees for the diocese or the Archdiocese for every diocese or Archdiocese shoulders for the number of their seminarians in their particular diocese or archdiocese.

The Catholic Church in Malawi struggles with the running of its major Seminaries since the seminaries do not have major and lucrative investments like office blocks for its sustenance. The seminaries depend mostly on rain fed investments which most of the times are not reliable due to unpredicted rainfall patterns. In case funds are available it could be able to come up with stable income Generating activities for example building office blocks among others.

Lack of qualified personnel in the Major Seminaries still remains a challenge for the Catholic Church in Malawi. This challenge manifests itself especially in the section of Philosophy. This made the Episcopal Conference of Malawi at one point to close St. Anthony Major Seminary for a while. Now the Seminary has been entrusted

into the hands of the Sulpicians for specific agreed years and meanwhile, the Episcopal Conference of Malawi has sent a good number of priests for further studies in view of the problem under discussion.

It is undeniable fact that the world has technologically advanced in Information Communications Technology, however, the Catholic Seminaries in Malawi lag behind in terms of the use of ICT. This is due to both poor and costly internet services in Malawi.⁹ This makes it almost impossible to E-learning especially now, when all Schools are closed down due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

This also holds true with the Catholic University which is also closed down. Likewise, the Catholic University lacks enough space to accommodate many students. There are many students who would have loved to be admitted to the Catholic University, but there is limited space. Currently, it has just started a weekend learning classes in the capital of Lilongwe which is the central part of Malawi but in the Northern part there is no any centre.

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) states that the total enrolment in public and private primary school in Malawi has grown at a relatively stable average rate of 2.5% per year over the past 5 years. Public primary school enrolment grew at an average of 1.9 per year while private school enrolment grew at an average of 27.9 per year during this period.¹⁰ This has also affected our Institutions such as primary schools and secondary schools.

In most of our Catholic Schools both Primary and Secondary, we have a critical shortage of Catholic teachers as well as sufficient teachers in general. This has a great impact when it comes to the implementation of the Catholic policies and principles which ought to be followed in all our Catholic schools. At times, the authorities

⁹ Interview: Fr. Godino Phokoso, National Catholic Communications Director, Secretariat, Lilongwe-Malawi [22April, 2020].

¹⁰ Ministry of Education: The 2018/19 Education Sector Performance Report.

in the diocese struggle to get Catholic head teachers for our Catholic schools. Despite this challenge, Catholic primary and secondary schools emerge to offer the best education far much beyond public government schools and private schools. In fact in Malawi, the Catholic Church institutions do extremely best in terms of offering best education and this is recognized by the majority of the Malawians and it is also shown on the country's performance of results every year.

The infrastructures of most of our primary, secondary and Technical Schools leave a lot to be desired. There are some of our primary and secondary Schools who have poor infrastructures. Some buildings are very old and they are those that were put in place by missionaries who first came to Malawi for evangelization. Some of them they are in bad shape. This also includes teachers' houses which are also in dilapidated state. The Catholic Church lacks the capacity to renovate these old schools and teachers houses due to lack of financial support. Indeed, they are in dire need of renovations. This is viable project that could be implemented by various dioceses for their primary schools and secondary schools having in mind the big role that these schools are playing in the lives of most Malawians.

The Catholic Church is aware that in its institutions such as primary, secondary and technical schools not only Catholic students are admitted into its schools but also non-Catholic students are admitted in an effort to support the state in educating the citizens of the country. However, there is weak financial support from the state especially towards our Catholic boarding schools for example in giving subsidies for the support of supporting staff wages. The Catholic boarding schools rely very much on the boarding fees to supplement support staff salaries. This is also a great challenge for the Catholic Church in Malawi especially towards its institutions but it tries its own best to curb these challenges but it is over stretched since we have not yet reached on self-reliant Church.

In most of Catholic Institutions especially in primary and secondary schools, there is a general cry of lack of necessary teaching learning materials especially text books and laboratory equipment. This brings a challenge especially in science subjects such as physical science, biology and chemistry among others since students do only the theoretical part of the subject but are unable to do the practical part of due to the lack of laboratory equipment. Though I have already pointed out that most of the Catholic schools are stars in terms of performance as compared to most of government and private own schools, they would have gone a bit far had all catholic schools have enough textbooks and laboratory equipment.

Generally, there are poor sanitation facilities in most of Catholic primary and secondary schools in Malawi. This situation is most unfriendly especially to girls' students.

It has been observed that in most of our Catholic institutions, there are unattractive working conditions for both the teaching staff as well as the supporting staff. This affects the spirit of working hard and the spirit of dedication in giving the best of what the teachers' have. It encourages laziness since they know that they do not have attractive and favorable working conditions.

The Catholic Church in Malawi meets some challenges in their relationship with the Muslims in Malawi. The borne of contest is the ongoing dispute concerning wearing of hijabs by Muslim students in Christian schools Catholic Church inclusive. The Muslims in Malawi encourage their sons and daughters who are learning in Christian school to put on their hijabs as they go to school and not school uniform of those Christian schools.

The proprietors of Christian schools, Catholic Church inclusive, feel that all students regardless of religious affiliation should wear school uniform of that particular Christian school. There was commotion in some of our Catholic primary schools especially in Mangochi Diocese where the majorities in the district are the Muslims who caused unrest when they learnt that their sons and daughters

were sent back from school following wearing the hijab instead of school uniform. The classes were interrupted and the Muslims came to such schools armed with pangas and knives and intended to destroy school blocks. The issue is still under discussion. However, the proprietors of Christian schools continue not to allow the Muslim students to wear hijabs as they go to Christian schools.

There are some places in various dioceses where most of the people including our Catholic Christians do not have access to clean water. This is so because the areas have very few water taps in hard-to-reach areas. This makes our Christians to take a long distance to go and fetch such water which in a long run makes their teeth to decay since the water they take is salty.

In addition to this since it is hard to access the safe water, when they take this same water and water for their gardener for vegetables or tobacco, it affects the growth of the seedbeds and the crops as well. In such places we need new taps which are placed so deep so that people may be able to get safe clean water. This is really a challenge for the Catholic Church in Malawi because they are some members of the Church which the Church expects to give their offerings as we are talking about a self-reliant Church. They are people of good will, but circumstances do not permit them. If a way could be found to assist them to get out of their situation for it is really hazardous to their life.

Having talked the Catholic Church in general in Malawi, I would like specially to highlight more by singling out one diocese of the Catholic Church in Malawi and that is Zomba Diocese where I come from.

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZOMBA

Zomba was made a Diocese in 1959 but first it belonged to the then Nyasa Vicariate which was created by Rome in 1897 with Joseph DuPont, a White father, as its bishop. At the time it was created,

Zomba Diocese also belonged to the Southern Province which was known as Shire Vicariate and which was created in 1908 and entrusted to the Montfort Missionaries under Bishop *Auguste Prézeau* as an Apostolic Vicar. He was followed by Bishop Louis Auneau who became Apostolic Vicar and served the Shire Vicariate from 1910 to 1950. From 1908, there were two vicariates in Malawi namely, Shire and Nyasa and the Nyasa Vicariate also included part of Zambia. The vastness of the Shire Vicariate and the continuous increase of Catholics in Malawi (then called Nyasaland) demanded the creation of more vicariates for efficient administration.

In 1948, an Apostolic delegate, the Archbishop of the Vicariate, David Matthews came and recommended that the Shire Vicariate be divided into two with one part, the Northern Vicariate being headquartered in Zomba with a British head and the other one in Blantyre with a Dutch head as had apparently been recommended by Bishop Auneau himself.¹¹ Rome approved Archbishop Matthew's recommendation and by the Apostolic Letter "*Qui Divini*" of May 15th 1952, the northern part of the Shire Vicariate, was erected into the Vicariate of Zomba and Father Lawrence Pullen Hardman SMM (British) was appointed its first Apostolic Vicar.

Zomba Catholic Diocese covers 3,522 km² and has over 207,894 Catholic Christians in its 19 Parishes. The Parishes are as follows with the indication of the total number of Christians in that particular Parish.¹²

¹¹ Zomba Diocese, *2017-2022 Strategic Plan document*, Balaka: Montfort Press, 2017, p. 11.

¹² Zomba Diocese, 2019 Catholic Statistics results as produced by the Chancellor (Fr. Isaac Tsegula) in 2020.

2019 STATISTICS OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZOMBA-MALAWI

PARISH NAME	CATHOLICS	SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES	CATECHISTS	OUTSTATIONS	NURSEERY SCHOOLS	PRIMARY SCHOOLS
CHIPINI	6,174	80	1	16	11	9
DOMASI	8,714	41	1	6	1	1
LIN-GONI	7,155	31	2	7	1	3
LISAN-JALA	10,379	48	1	11	13	3
LI-WONDE	6,466	43	3	10	0	3
LWANGA	12,955	33	3	2	0	0
MAGO-MERO	18,134	98	2	8	1	7
MATIYA	39,904	100	2	15	1	7
MAYAKA	11,476	74	3	6	1	8
MLOM-BOZI	11,226	57	2	4	4	2
NAMI-TEMBO	11,506	75	2	8	1	6
PIRI-MITI	15,390	83	2	7	3	5
SITIMA	8,832	45	1	7	0	2
THONDWE	7,696	39	3	3	2	4
ZOMBA	13,974	78	4	8	0	9
MATA-WALE	13,062	37	2	3	0	2
KWIPU-LULU	4,851	46	1	5	0	2
TOTAL	207,894	1,008	35	126	39	72

NB: The Catholic Diocese of Zomba has 53 diocesan Priests serving in this diocese. It has also religious women and religious men congregations. There are 92 religious women in total from Daughters of Wisdom, Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Carmelite, Benedictine sisters, St. Joseph the worker sisters from Mombasa-Kenya and Mercedelies Sisters. There are 17 religious men from the following congregations: Marist Brothers, Montfort Missionaries, Calpuchin, Stigmatine Fathers and Brothers of St. Gabriel. The Catholic Diocese of Zomba has 6 health centres.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZOMBA AS A LOCAL CHURCH

The Youth of Zomba Diocese form 52% of the total population of the Catholics in the Diocese of Zomba. They are one of the vibrant Church groups. However, they do not have youth Centre where they could be holding for various activities including annual Youth Congress as well as youth rallies. The diocese would have loved to put in place the Youth centre but it cannot afford due to financial constraints.

There are priests who are retiring from priesthood after reaching at retirement age but also for the priests who are sick, unfortunately the diocese do not have home care house for the sick priests where priests could be taken to that place with very good facilities and being taken care. It is the wish of the diocese to have such home care for the sick if funds permit.

The diocese has a great challenge in ensuring that priests in this diocese have a very good means of transport like vehicles. There are a number of priests serving in the diocese who are not having vehicles as their means of transport. This has an impact in their service to the Christians in the Parishes where they are assigned to serve the faithful. There are some who are using a motor bike since the day of their ordination. Unfortunately, motor bikes are not reliable means of transport for it provides high risk of road accidents. In fact we have lost some numbers of priests who have died due to motor bike accidents. Motor bikes are not practical in Parish setting.

Some of the Priests' residences and Convents are very old and are dilapidated hence they need renovations. The Diocese would have loved to renovate such kind of priests' residences and convents for the sisters, but it cannot manage. Christians are trying their own best to support the Priests, Sisters and Catechists but could not raise funds

for the renovations of such priests' houses and convents because of the high level of poverty among them.

In references to the above statistics, the Catholic diocese of Zomba has 35 trained Catechists who play a very big role in teaching the Candidates for Eucharist, Confirmation but also leading prayers with the faithful in the Churches where there is no celebration of the Eucharist but also leading funeral services rarely do they have ongoing formation due to the lack of funds. Most of these trained Catechists use their motor bicycles to travel for a long distance to lead church services. There are very few parishes who have managed to buy for them motor bikes. This still remains a challenge to the Catholic Diocese of Zomba.

CONCLUSION

The role that the Catholic Church in Malawi plays cannot be underestimated. It is the Catholic Church in Malawi that brought multiparty in 1994 when the country was under one party system. The Church did this through its famous pastoral letter of 1992 where the Episcopal Conference of Malawi raised the concerns of most of the Malawi and denounced the evils and the injustices of the government of that time. It was not easy, but it changed the face of Malawi as a country. In addition to this the Catholic Church in Malawi continues to play a very good role in relation to education sector and health sector in making sure that its schools are offering the best standards of Education as well providing health care through its hospitals and health centers. However this does not go without challenges as I have already alluded to in the previous analysis.

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MICHAEL CHIMWALA¹

THE SITUATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI

Abstract

Celem tego artykułu jest przedstawienie sytuacji Kościoła katolickiego w Malawi. Po pierwsze, przedstawia on podstawowe informacje na temat kraju. Po drugie, ukazuje tło historyczne chrześcijaństwa w Malawi. Po trzecie, prezentuje tło historyczne katolicyzmu w Malawi. Po czwarte, omawia dotychczasowy rozwój Kościoła katolickiego w Malawi. Po piąte, podkreśla aktualne wyzwania, przed którymi stoi Kościół katolicki w tym kraju. Wyzwania te dotyczą słabej zdolności finansowej do swobodnego wypełniania swojej misji, rozrost Kościołów zielonościowych i ewangelicznych, odejście wielu katolików do innych Kościołów, brak wystarczającej liczby kapłanów do pracy w Kościele, utratę wiarygodności moralnej przez księży i zakonników, nietolerancję religijną ze strony muzułmanów, technologię i media społecznościowe. Wreszcie, podkreśla też istnie-

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jące w Kościele Katolickim w Malawi szanse, niezależnie od wyzwań, przed jakimi obecnie stoi.

Keywords: Catholic, Christianity, Faithful, Missionary, Evangelization.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE COUNTRY MALAWI

Malawi is among the African countries located in the sub-Saharan Africa. It is a landlocked country which borders with Tanzania to the North, Zambia to the West and Mozambique to the South and East. It is one of the smallest countries in Africa with a total area of 118,484 km², of which one-fifth is water surface, largely dominated by Lake Malawi. An estimated 85% of the population lives in the rural areas and predominantly relies on subsistence farming for their livelihood.

Malawi was formerly known as Nyasaland. This word “Nyasaland” etymologically means the “Land of Lake”² because of the Lake Malawi which separates it with Mozambique and Tanzania. History states that the name “Malawi” is derived from the word “Maravi”³, an old name of Nyanja people who formed one of the ethnic groups in Malawi. These people were Bantu speaking who migrated to Lake Malawi in the 14th Century and developed a large ethnic group and were ancestors of today’s Chewa people who constitute Malawi’s

² H. Reijnaerts, A. Nielsen, M. Schoffeleers, *Montfortains in Malawi: Their Spiritual and Pastoral Approach*, Mzuzu: Luviri Press 2018, p. 23.

³ D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi, From Earliest Times to the Year 1915*, Blantyre: Assemblies of God Literature Centre Press 2004, p. 13.

majority. It is said that the name Malawi means “Land of Flames”⁴ depicting the effects of sunlight on the Lake Malawi.

Malawi has three geographical regions-North, Centre and South. The people of Malawi are generally of Bantu origin and the main ethnic groups found in this country are Chewa, Yao, Lomwe, Tumbuka, Nyanja and Ngoni. The national language spoken in Malawi is called “Chichewa” and more than 95% of Malawians speak and understand it. English language is also considered national business language especially for the learned. The Malawian society is characterized by patrilineal system in the north and the matrilineal system in the center and the South.

Malawi is a small country but with a high population. Statistics show that the country’s population as of now is about 18.6 million people. According to projections, Malawi’s population is growing at an alarming rate with the fertility rate of 6.7. Rapid population growth has resulted in Malawi having a ‘young’ population. More than half of Malawi’s 18.9 million people are children and about 50 percent of Malawi’s population is below the age of 15.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY IN MALAWI

Malawi is a God-fearing country and almost 95% of the population is said to have a religion. Estimates agree that the country is predominantly Christian with 80% of the population. These Christians are Presbyterians, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Seventh Day Baptists and Pentecostals and evangelicals. Apart from Christianity, there are also other religious such as Islam, African Tradition Religion (Indigenous Religion), Hinduism, Sikhism, Rastafarianism, Judaism, Buddhism and Bahaism.

⁴ Ibid.

The origin of Christianity in Malawi has got a deep history which is connected to a historical chance visit to Malawi by Dr David Livingstone, a zealous Scottish missionary and explorer who journeyed up the Zambezi and the Shire rivers on a boat ending up on the shores of Lake Malawi in 1859 while searching for the source of the Nile river. He did not find the origin of the Nile River but fertile grounds for Christianity. His expeditions opened missionary activities of evangelization. But practically speaking, the real work of evangelization which lead to proper Christianity is traced back to Scottish Presbyterians missionaries after Dr David Livingstone had opened for them missionary activities of evangelization. These missionaries arrived in Malawi in the mid 1870's and established two Christian centers of evangelization namely: "Livingstonia Mission" named after Dr. David Livingstone and "Blantyre Mission" named after Dr David Livingstone's birthplace. These centers were established in the northern and southern parts of Malawi, respectively. This is the reason why the figure of Dr. David Livingstone is very important in Malawi for he was the pioneer of Christianity in Malawi.

The Catholic population in Malawi is estimated at one third of the total population of about 18.6 million. The Catholic Church in Malawi can be described as a "young Church" given that catholicity came to Malawi not very long ago. It was established in 1901. The work of evangelizing Malawians to Catholicism was done by European missionaries in two phases. The first phase was done by the French Catholic Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) who arrived on the shores of Lake Malawi to start a Mission at Mponda in Mangochi district in 1889⁵. These missionaries came with a very progressive pastoral initiative based on catechumenate. Although such was the case, it was not easy for them to evangelize because the chief in the area did not allow them to exercise their ministry

⁵ Cf. J. Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: African Church History*, (2nd Edition), Nairobi: Publications Africa 1998, p. 20.

because they did not supply him with firearms intended to be used in slave trade. These French Catholic missionaries told the chief that they *had no guns but only Jesus to offer*⁶. Upon seeing that the missionaries did not supply him with the needed firearms, the chief became so unfriendly to them. He later asked them to go back to their country for *he had no need for their religion*⁷. This forced the French Catholic missionaries to leave Malawi due to the mentioned challenge. The second phase of Catholic evangelization in Malawi was masterminded by Bishop Dupont who invited the Dutch Montfort Missionaries to come to Malawi for evangelization. Even though circumstances forced the French Catholic missionaries to move out of Mponda, they had their heart and soul still in Malawi. They wanted to try again evangelizing Malawi but this time around by using the Dutch Montfort Missionaries. The first thing that the Dutch Montfort Missionaries did when they arrived in Malawi was to place a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the trunk of a tree in Nsanje which was then called “Port Herald”, appealing to Mary Mother of God to take possession of the country Malawi, and entrusting themselves and their work of evangelization. From Nsanje (Port Herald), these Dutch Montfort missionaries went straight to Ntcheu district where they established their first Mission at Mzama in 1901.

Motivated by their mission and charism, they started working hard to evangelize the local people there. They used different strategies in their mission of evangelization. The first strategy was the establishment of “Christian villages” where prayer houses were erected. Through the establishments of these Christian villages, the missionaries came closer to the local people whom they intended to evangelize. This was a great tool of evangelization. The second strategy was the establishment of “Bush Schools” where many young

⁶ D.D. Phiri, *History of Malawi...*, op. cit., p. 178.

⁷ P.A. Kalilombe, *From Outstation to Small Christian Communities: A Comparison between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, Lilongwe: Montfort Media 2016, p. 42.

local people got educated while at the same time embracing the Catholic faith since catechism was also taught in these bush school. This was regarded as another tool of evangelization. The third strategy was giving hands-outs in terms of money, food stuffs and clothes as part of works of charity to the poor and vulnerable families. Although this was taken as corporal work of mercy, in the long run it was a powerful tool for evangelization. Another strategy of evangelization was the establishment of Health Centers in their mission areas. The medical services given by the missionaries brought the local Malawians to be in contact with the missionaries who also taught them about Catholic faith. The medical care provided by the missionaries was very pivotal to the missionary work of Catholic evangelization in Malawi. All what these Catholic missionaries were doing to the local people may seem to have been small gestures, but many Malawians were attracted to the missionaries with their Christian faith. Upon being evangelized, many Malawians started attending catechumenate classes. According to the history of the Catholic Church in Malawi, *the first catechumens were baptized in 1905 after four years of catechumenate*⁸.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI TODAY

Today, there are over 6 million Catholic in Malawi-around a third of Christians and a fifth of the total population in the two Archdioceses (Blantyre, Lilongwe) and the six dioceses (Karonga, Mzuzu, Dedza, Chikwawa, Mangochi and Zomba). The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) which was established in 1961 with approval of the Holy See is an assembly of bishops representing

⁸ Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), *History of the Catholic Church in Malawi*, www.ecmmw.org/new/about-us/history-of-the-church-in-Malawi, (accessed: 20.04.2020).

these eight dioceses with its mission *to bring about the Kingdom of God in Malawi by teaching and promoting unity, development, justice, peace, and solidarity*⁹ (ECM strategic plan). In terms of affecting the vision and mission of the Catholic Church in Malawi, the offices of the Episcopal conference of Malawi work through the following directorates: Pastoral and Social Development, which are linked through and supported by Finance, Investment and Administration.

Based on Episcopal Conference of Malawi framework, the mandate of the Finance, Investment and Administration Directorate includes human resource management, corporate governance, financial sustainability, coordination, and networking, monitoring and evaluation and partnership development and management. The Pastoral Directorate has various desks under it such as catechetical, family apostolate, youth and vocations, Bible apostolate to focus on the spiritual functions of the Church as its core area. The Social Development Directorate focusses on such areas as development with the following commission-Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM), Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Catholic Health Commission (CHC) and Catholic Education Commission (CEC). This Social Directorate promotes sustainable livelihoods, access to affordable and quality health services, increasing equal access to inclusive quality education, promoting peace and justice, and ensuring effective and timely communication at all levels. In so doing, the directorate complements efforts of the government and development partners to achieve the Malawi Growth Development Strategy. Cutting across the implementation of the vision and mission of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, are also such desks as Communication and Research, Child Protection and Monitoring and Evaluation.

⁹ Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), *About us*, <https://www.ecmmw.org/new/about-us>, (accessed: 20.04.2020).

GREAT STRIDES MADE SO FAR BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI

Looking at Malawi now, one can marvel at the role the Catholic Church has played and is still playing in evangelization. Apart from evangelization, the Catholic Church has played and still plays a great role in promoting health, education and social services through its numerous hospitals, clinics, health centers, schools (kindergarten, primary, secondary), nursing colleges and universities and care for the vulnerable. Today in terms of social services, the Catholic Church is serving a lot of Malawians by providing them with social services irrespective of their religious denominations.

CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MALAWI

To state that there are no challenges facing the Catholic Church in Malawi would be to grossly misconstrue the situation of the Catholic Church in Malawi. Alongside some signs of life of the Church in Malawi as we have seen, it should also be mentioned here that there is evidence that the Catholic Church in Malawi is facing some significant challenges in its mission. These challenges are emanating from within the Church as well as from without.

Poor Financial Capacity

Due to poverty of the country, the Catholic Church in Malawi also lacks adequate financial means necessary to fulfill its mission of bringing about the kingdom of God in Malawi. She has inadequate material means in terms of enough finances, infrastructure and means of transport for pastoral work. There is lack of good Church

infrastructures such as churches, rectories, convents etc. The same poverty and hunger hinder some Church members to go for Church prayers at the parishes.

Mushrooming of Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches

Due to freedom of worship in Malawi, there are many Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches that have emerged and are still emerging. According to statistics, there are over 107 Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches. Because of this, there is a cacophony of religious voices that Catholic turn to get confused and when one considers Islam, the religious challenge becomes more accentuated. These Churches most of their preaching is against the catholic doctrines. Women and the youth who constitute a significant proportion of the Catholic population in Malawi, most of them are easily influenced by these Pentecostal and Evangelical Churches.

Defections of Many Catholics to other Churches

The Catholic Church in Malawi believes in proper faith formation of its members at every stage of their Christian life. Although such is the case, however, there are many members that are leaving the Church to join other Churches especially those churches that preach the “Gospel of Prosperity” to attract members. Most of poor Catholics are taken up by such preaching and join such Churches. This exodus indicates that proper catechesis needs to be thoroughly done in the Catholic Church in Malawi to its members to deal with defection problem for it is believed that those that do defect have a skin-deep faith formation.

Lack of Enough Pastors for the Church

The Malawian Catholic church has a smaller number of pastors as compared to the number of Christians to be taken care of. There are some out station churches that do not have masses for over 3 months

due to shortages of pastors. Because of this reason, most Catholics disappear from active Christian life after confirmation only to reappear when they want to enter marriage.

Loss of Moral Credibility of Priests and Religious

In the bygone days, priests and religious radiated with a deep sense of holiness in Malawi. Many cultures held them in high esteem and looked up for moral guidance. Along with the flow of change of time, many modern immoral and materialistic values and mentalities got inside the life of some priests and religious. The society now critically looks at some priests and religious and speaks about the aberrations and inconsistencies seen in their life. All these failures of the few priests and religious are raising serious concerns for the Catholic Church of Malawi. Due to such failures, many young boys and girls lose willing to discern priestly and religious vocation. This is one of the contributing factors to the decline of priestly and religious vocation in Malawi.

Religious Intolerance by the Moslems

In Malawi, there is no religious tolerance of the Catholics by Moslems in areas where Islam is strong. Hence no peaceful co-existence between the Muslims and the Catholics in these areas. Another thing is that agents of Islam are using various strategies like giving scholarships to the Catholic youth to win them to their religion. This is a big challenge that the Catholic Church in Malawi is facing regarding presence of Islam.

Modern Technology and Social Media

In Malawi, modern technology and social media is used to reach out many Catholics in spreading the Good News. On the other hand, modern technology and social media is also misinforming the Catholics, especially the youth. This is a big challenge that the

Catholic Church in Malawi has to deal with hard to make sure that the youth use the modern technology well.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it is good to highlight opportunities within the Malawian Catholic Church. The Catholic Church in Malawi has an opportunity to expand and improve work with many of its pastors being youthful and energetic. Another opportunity is the availability of lay catechists to teach the Catholic faith and doctrine and availability of lay people who can work as Eucharistic ministers. There is also an opportunity of material resources such as land and institutional structures like schools, colleges, and universities and health facilities, if used properly can be a source of income. There is also opportunity for experienced and skilled members, who, if utilized can revitalize the Church. These are the capabilities and resources that Malawian Church can build upon for its growth. If used properly these opportunities can help to expand and improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the Church in Malawi.

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AERON KUMUSEKERE¹

RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

Abstract

Kościół katolicki jako struktura religijna funkcjonuje w Zimbabwe od końca XIX wieku. Istnieje obok różnych wspólnot protestanckich, afrykańskich kościołów niezależnych oraz tradycyjnych religii afrykańskich. Mimo tak wielkiego zróżnicowania denominacji i religii to właśnie Kościół katolicki cieszy się większością przynależnością mieszkańców Zimbabwe. Zastanawiające jest, w jaki sposób Kościołowi katolickiemu udało się zachować wiarygodność i taką dominację. Czy wynikało to z jego początkowego podejścia, polegającego na wykorzystaniu instytucji takich jak szkoły i szpitale? Czy też z powodu strategii multi-katechetycznych na rzecz ewangelizacji? Skupiając się na chrześcijaństwie, a w szczególności na Kościele rzymskokatolickim, artykuł omawia aspekty religijne, ekonomiczne, społeczne i polityczne, które pozytywnie i negatywnie wpłynęły na stosowane przez Kościół strategie ewangelizacyjne.

Keywords: Catholic Church, Missionaries, Evangelisation Strategies, Catechesis

¹ The author is a priest from Zimbabwe, actually during his studies ad licentiam at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

Zimbabwe (/zɪm 'bɑ:bweɪ, -wi/) a country officially known as the Republic of Zimbabwe was formerly known as Southern Rhodesia. It is a landlocked country located in the southern part of the African continent that celebrated its independence from colonial rule on the 19th of April 1980. Etymologically the name “Zimbabwe” stems from a Shona term for Great Zimbabwe, an ancient city that is situated in the south-eastern part of the country whose remains are now a protected site under the ministry of tourism. The name itself is from the Karanga dialect, a Shona dialect where *dzimba* = plural of *imba*, “house”; *mabwe* = plural of *bwe*, “stone” literally meaning “houses of stones.”² This country is situated between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers; and is bordered by South Africa in the south, Botswana in the west, Zambia in the north and Mozambique in the East.³ It has a population of about 14 645 468 (2019 statistics) consisting of 38.9 % of people below 15 years, 56.9 % people between the ages of 15 – 65 years, and 4.2 % of people above 65 years.⁴ Zimbabwe has many languages though only 16 are recognised constitutionally as official languages and the most common ones being English, Shona, and Ndebele. Since the 11th century Zimbabwe has been the site of several organised states and kingdoms as well as a major route for migration and trade. King Lobengula of the Ndebele Kingdom was the dominant king when this country went under foreign rule. The British South Africa Company of Cecil John Rhodes led the colonisation of Zimbabwe and demarcated the present territory in 1890 which covers an area of 390 757 km² and called it Southern Rhodesia. Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain on 18 April 1980.

² Lawrence, J. Vale, *Mediated monuments and national identity*, “Journal of Architecture”, 4 (4), pp. 391–408.

³ *Zimbabwe*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwe>, (accessed 30.03.2020).

⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population prospects – Population division*, <https://population.un.org/wpp/>, (accessed 30.03.2020).

In terms of evangelization, the Roman Catholic missionaries were the first to arrive in Zimbabwe in the 16th century through the Portuguese Jesuit missionary, Fr. Gonalo da Silveira who was killed in the Munhumutapa state in 1561. According to Stan I. G. Mudenge “Fr Silveira’s presence threatened Muslim traders and his assault on Shona traditions and customs irked traditional elders who laid against him saying that, Silveira was a spy, a *muroyi* (wizard) and a double dealer.”⁵ The Dominicans appeared in the 18th century but there is no discernible trace of presence found because they did not manage to have a stronghold either. In 1890 the Jesuit Catholic missionaries, led by Fr Andrew Hartmann in companionship of the Dominican Sisters, entered Lobengula’s territory accompanying the pioneer column as chaplains and nurses respectively. In 1799, Johannes van Der Kemp being helped by Robert Moffat and his wife Mary, launched protestant missions through a missionary society called London Missionary Society (LMS). The first Protestants to arrive in Zimbabwe were the Methodist missionaries who arrived in 1896. Pentecostalism and African Indigenous Apostolic Churches emerged in the 1920s, and grew rapidly, with the Zion Christian Church now with the largest Protestant following in Zimbabwe. Since 2000, thousands of Indigenous Apostolic and Charismatic Evangelical denominations emerged and these dominate the religious field even though they exist as multiple and distinct groups. Generally, Zimbabwe has a Christian majority though it is constitutionally not a Christian country. In Zimbabwe “religion takes a central place in the lives of all civilizations and cultures as religion is found everywhere, on television, in films and music, and in all the Zimbabwean’s surroundings.”⁶ The Catholic Church today

⁵ Stan, I. G. Mudenge, *Christian Education of the Mutapa Court: A Portuguese strategy to influence events in the Empire of Munhumutapa*, Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House 1986, p. 8.

⁶ Paradzayi, D. Mubvumbi, *Christianity and Traditional Religions of Zimbabwe*, Bloomington: West Bow Press 2016, p. 170.

is faced with a situation whereby members leave the Church joining Pentecostal and apostolic sects mainly contributed by a lack of deeper union with Christ revealed in the evangelization approach. Just like what Fr. Walter Gallahue once said, “Our method of teaching often leave people with information but without the encounter with Christ. It is sinful to sacramentalise people without evangelizing them.”⁷ Truly such a method has led people to qualify for sacraments because they have demonstrated knowledge of the subject matter but without showing in their attitude and ways that they have encountered Christ. Although the non-Catholics appear to be more than the Catholics, the latter is generally has majority members as a single denomination. This is because these mushrooming Apostolic or Pentecostal sects may have the same nature of operating but in reality they have different leaders who are independent from each other. One leader may have between one thousand to twenty thousand followers across the country whilst Catholics number more than one million of the country’s population.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe is composed only of a Latin hierarchy of 2 Metropolitan dioceses, that is Bulawayo and Harare; and 6 Dioceses that is Chinhoyi, Gokwe, Gweru, Hwange, Masvingo and Mutare, which jointly form the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. Each metropolitan diocese has 3 *suffragan* dioceses. There is also the Apostolic Nunciature to Zimbabwe as papal diplomatic representation (embassy-level) in the capital city Harare.⁸ The Bishop’s Conference is made up of both blacks and whites. These dioceses mostly have common approaches to evangelization, apparently, due to the similar environments they are

⁷ Walter, Gallahue, *Evangelisation is more than words*, “Jesuits Zimbabwe”, 01.05.2015, <http://www.jesuitszimbabwe.co.zw/index.php/2015-01-05-16-44-03/in-touch/147-2014/no-34/292-evangelisation-is-more-than-words-fr-walter-gallahue-ofm>, (accessed 30.03.2020).

⁸ *List of Catholic dioceses in Zimbabwe*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Catholic_dioceses_in_Zimbabwe, (accessed 15.03.2020).

located. Currently the Catholic Church has one National seminary for the 8 dioceses in the country which is situated in the capital city–Harare. Each diocese has a pastoral center to help for the ongoing formation of the faithful. The Bishop’s Conference has been of much help in the country in social, economic, pastoral, political, justice and peace. They have been issuing pastoral letters as a board and also together with some other Christian boards in the country addressing crucial matters in the country. Although the Catholic Church is still authoritative as the conscience of the country, she is facing some challenges due to the growing rise of Pentecostal churches that preach the gospel of prosperity leading to some Catholic members playing double standards as they also attend their services. Religious syncretism and double belonging is also rampant many Catholic members still consult traditional practitioners and practice many of the African Traditional Religion rituals. Vocations to priesthood and religious life have been reducing gradually which has affected the priests–faithful ratio in the parishes. The majority of the parishes are served by at most 2 priests with a population of more than 1 000 members. In most mission and rural parishes priests cover a minimum of 20 centers. This has affected the numbers of the faithful because most of the times they hold services without a priest creating a void in their doctrinal knowledge and reception of the Eucharist. They hunger for spiritual nourishment which is rarely found due to this shortage of priests. Actually on Sundays, one priest may celebrate three Masses in different centers spaced for about 30 km or more. The dioceses have pastoral centers were ongoing formation for catechists, guild members, religious brothers, priests and sisters, are mostly done. Workshops and spiritual exercises are scheduled throughout the year in order to empower members for mission. However, the majority of people, especially from rural parishes, do not manage to attend due to financial constraints. The dioceses have no specific trained catechists and they depend upon volunteer catechists. The volunteer catechists pass through training

and workshops coordinated by administrators of the pastoral centers. Currently, there is a rise in initiatives from local Catholic colleges and universities in providing short courses on Christian doctrine and catechesis. Some individuals are utilising such facilities and are studying through their own financial means.

More so, the method of evangelization in Zimbabwe seem to follow the same trends. When the missionaries first came into Zimbabwe, they struggled to gain converts due to the approach they used. They saw the Zimbabweans as people without a culture or religion and the most uncivilized, who wanted to be imparted with whatever knowledge the missionaries had. The missionaries found Africans as very difficult to convert because of their allegiance to their kings and customs. "Sometimes they felt that Africans did not believe in their voluntary work, and instead believed that missionaries merely wanted to separate people from their customs and traditions."⁹ After learning local cultural life, they realized that Africans had their own traditional religious beliefs which they condemned. But, the "African customs associated with respect for the ancestors persisted beside Christian practices and rites no matter how hard the missionaries called on their flocks to abandon these."¹⁰ Despite such resistance, Christian communities increased considerably due different factors life true conversion by some, efficiency of western education in mission schools, and material benefits. Some mission schools provided free services in order to draw many people into the Church. According to Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo, "initially missionary education was religiously oriented, but soon included academic, industrial and teacher training."¹¹ Parents were initially reluctant to allow their

⁹ Chengetai, J.M. Zvobgo, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, Gweru: Mambo Press 1996, p. 104.

¹⁰ A.J. Dachs, W.F. Rea, *The Catholic Church and Zimbabwe, 1879-1979*, Gweru: Mambo Press 1979, p. 223-224.

¹¹ F.A. Correia, *A History of Christian Missions in Zimbabwe, 1890-1939*, Chengetai J. M. Zvobgo, "Zambezia", 1997, 24 (2), pp. 195-197.

children to attend these schools but later on they were completely convinced of the benefit of education for boys and girls. Although this helped to gain more members and many are still in existence up to today, it created a dependency syndrome as the Church was viewed as very rich and the provider of everything. The Africans thought being members meant enjoying all those benefits without supporting themselves from their own reserves.

Furthermore, the missionaries utilised mission hospitals in order to gain followers by offering free medical facilities to cure patients. In the African worldview, the healing ministry is very prominent and people also engaged traditional healers for protection from their enemies and bad omens. So in order to proclaim the total salvation of body and soul as Christ did, the missionaries opened hospitals, dispensaries and clinics which proved to be a very convincing way to evangelise. Although at first the Africans had no confidence in white doctors, they later gained confidence because of their “gentleness supported by spectacular cures, and missionaries took advantage of this confidence by ministering to their spiritual needs at the same time.”¹² It may seem many people became members of Christian denominations, especially mainline Churches, because they had the same methods of evangelization. Catholicism continued to expand leading to the introduction of indigenous ordained ministers in spite of the stringent rules that were available. Chishawasha major seminary was introduced in the 1920s in order to cater for local clergy and also the introduction of local religious brothers and sisters emerged during the same time frame. By 1942, first black priests had been ordained.

Today, there are thousands of priests and religious members who serve in parishes, mission schools, hospitals and clinics that continue to be centers of evangelization. In terms of catechesis the Robert Bellarmine method of question and answer memorization dominated

¹² *Ibidem.*

in imparting Christian doctrines. People would memorise and continue to recite repeating what they have been taught in order to receive sacraments. These methods are still in use today even though there are new methods that have been introduced in order to fill the gaps. The new methods like storytelling, dramas, and visual aids for the young, congresses for different age groups, quiz competition for all age groups, retreats and recollections for different groups, have been introduced in order to continue to evangelise the evangelised. The catechists are also being empowered with new skills in pedagogy so that they are able to catechise different age groups with different methods. There are specific syllabuses adjusted for specific groups but all try to cover knowledge in the areas of the Scriptures, the sacraments, the creed, Church history, common prayers and popular devotions.

However, although the Catholic Church has had great achievements in her mission and ministry she continues to encounter different challenges. Evangelisation in Zimbabwe is being affected by the religious, political and socio-economic situations. As the majority of the members are amongst the poor, many are finding it difficult to support the Church even though they have the desire. For some who have financial capabilities they are finding it difficult to support as they had been used to a life of receiving from the Church and not give to the Church due to the previous approaches to evangelization. The rise of African Initiated sects has impacted on the pastoral aspect of the Church as these proclaim the Gospel of prosperity leading the faithful who are financially constrained to join them. The dioceses are not yet at the level of supporting trained catechists and other members who may need proper training for the sake of their positions. The main people involved in catechesis are voluntary catechists and the majority are old people who are not able to attend consistent workshops for ongoing formation. Even concerning the local clergy studies, the local ordinaries are depending much on foreign donors for scholarships thereby reducing the number of priests furthering

their knowledge for the benefit of the Church. The political situation in the country also is not stable such that some of the faithful fear to bear witness due to political affiliation. Many are victimised if they belong to the opposition parties or proclaim what is not in line with the political ideologies. Members who belong to the same parish may be enemies in action because of political differences. This has caused a lot of harm because Catholics are amongst the people fighting against each other. As the country has Christian majority and Catholics being the majority amongst the Christians many a times they are found wanting in corrupt activities and political violence.

In conclusion, Zimbabwe, a country with a Christian majority, is still growing in terms of faith. Many accomplishments have been realised from the plantation of Christianity in the 19th century. Schools, hospitals, local clergy, brothers, and sisters having been produced and continue the work begun by the missionaries. Even though different challenges exist that emerge from the religious, socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe, the Catholic Church is still the conscience of the country as the government provides a listening ear to the bishop's conference pastoral letters.

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The Catholic Church in Africa is the part of the universal Church that is developing very dynamically. The remarkable historical heritage, the proximity of the missionary period and the present situation overlap to form an interesting subject for pastoral research. The book contains a series of articles on the Catholic Church in Africa, presenting the ecclesial situation in selected countries from a historical-pastoral perspective, allowing one to become acquainted with places and data that would otherwise be difficult to access for the European and Polish reader. The articles have a similar structure: they begin with a historical introduction, usually concerning the history of the missions in a given country, and then proceed downward, presenting a more detailed history of the diocese or ecclesiastical province in question. This is not only a starting point, but also a reference to the patrimony of faith, which, even when the conditions of the Church have changed, remains a foundation and a constantly valid point of reference. This is followed by a description, often including statistical data from a particular ecclesiastical province or diocese, together with the pastoral structure: the various commissions and the implemented pastoral strategies.

