



MISSION AD GENTES TODAY IN AFRICA

CHALLENGES TO MISSION AD GENTES
IN THE ENGLISH SPEAKING PROVINCES OF AFRICA
IN THE LIGHT OF THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
ECCLESIA IN AFRICA

Seminar on Missionary Animation and Formation
Nairobi 1-5 november 2004

MISSION ANIMATION NOTES

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Figure 1. Percentage of correct responses for each task. The number of correct responses for each task is indicated in the X-axis.

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Mission ad Gentes Today in Africa

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UNO DEI PIÙ IMPORTANTI...
...E UNO DEI PIÙ...

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...E UNO DEI PIÙ...

MISSION IN AFRICA

Job in Africa



The Challenges of the Mission "ad gentes" in Africa

that I might by all means save some" (1 Co 9:22)

"I have become all things to all

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Abbreviations

More than a year has gone by since the seminar on *Mission ad gentes* held in Nairobi from 1-5 November 2004. Even if a little late, I am happy to present this little book that contains the Acts of the seminar.

This publication is made with the intention of making known to all the conferes and sisters what transpired during the seminar and to invite everyone to reread and reflect on the different themes, so that our commitment to the mission *ad gentes* as individuals and as communities may be more efficacious.

Every province and community is invited to make its own comprehensive missionary animation project, based on the priorities chosen by the seminar participants.

It is our hope that the service rendered by several conferes to prepare this booklet for publication will benefit all the communities and renew us in our missionary fervour.

Fr. Francis Alencherry, sdb
16 April 2006
Easter Sunday

Introduction: The Challenges of the Mission “ad gentes” in Africa

Fr. Francis Alencherri SDB
General Councillor for the Missions

Welcome

It is my privilege to welcome you once again to this meeting, even though our local hosts have already welcomed you. On behalf of the organizers I welcome you and wish you a very pleasant stay and a fruitful meeting. Though working in different parts of this vast continent we share much in common. First and foremost there is the Salesian spirit, which is the bond of unity among us. This seminar is a Salesian Family venture, even though there are very few representatives from some groups of our Family. It is my hope that these days of living and working together, in the truly Salesian way, will help us to discover the areas in which we could network with one another with common objectives and even shared action plans. In a prayerful and reflective mood we shall learn to dream together for greater collaboration in evangelizing Africa. Sr. Elena Rastello and Fr. Joseph Pulikkal have done much to get the seminar organized at the local level. To them we express our gratefulness. I am sure during these days the efforts they have put into the organization of this seminar will bear abundant fruit.

The why of this Seminar

As already communicated, the general objective of this seminar is to take a closer look at “The Challenges of the

After even a casual perusal of the document *Eclesia in Africa* one is impressed by the fact that about two-thirds of the document is dedicated to the theme of evangelization under one heading or the other: evangelization and inculturation; the challenges of evangelization; the need for witness; the agents of evangelization, structures of evangelization, and so on.

The Challenges of Evangelization in Africa

Mission *ad gentes* in Africa" in the context of today, so that we can come out with strategies and concrete proposals to meet these challenges. For some years now, all over the world little is said about or done for mission *ad gentes*. Humanitarian and philanthropic activities have begun to substitute the commitment to mission *ad gentes*. It is our hope that this seminar will arouse much enthusiasm for mission *ad gentes* in the regions of Africa in which we work.

It is 25 years or so since Project Africa was launched by the then Rector Major, Fr. Egidio Viganò. It is also 10 years since the celebration of the special Synod for Africa, which was held in April-May 1994. In the following year the Apostolic Exhortation *Eclesia in Africa* was made public. These facts invite us to examine carefully the circumstances in which we work today as evangelizers and to recommit ourselves to the cause of mission *ad gentes*. It is good to examine ourselves on the impact this Synod and the document that ensued from it have had on our evangelizing activity in Africa.

To achieve this purpose we shall adopt the method of listening, sharing, reflecting and praying together. As individuals and as representatives of particular contexts, we have much to share with one another in order to build up a common patrimony of experiences, strategies, methods and lines of action.

Further, from the point of view of evangelization the Synod asked a fundamental question: "In a Continent full of bad news, how is the Christian message 'Good News' for our people? In the midst of an all-pervading despair, where is the hope and optimism which the Gospel brings?" As an answer to this question it states emphatically that "Evangelization stands for many of those essential values which our Continent very much lacks: hope, peace, joy, harmony, love and unity" (EA 40). In a context of hopelessness and gloom, "The sons and daughters of Africa need an understanding presence and pastoral concern. They need to be helped to recoup their energies so as to put them at the service of the common good" (EA 41).

At the very outset of this seminar on evangelization in Africa I would like to highlight a few of the important points dealt with in this document, as they have a direct bearing on our Salesian Charism.

1. The first concerns the context in which Evangelization is to be carried out, and our overall approach to people and societies.

Referring to the unstable and even violent socio-political situation existing in different parts of Africa the document calls for a positive approach to the people of Africa in spite of the adverse situation.

In some countries the internal situation has unfortunately not yet been consolidated, and violence has had, or in some cases still has, the upper hand. But this does not justify a general condemnation involving a whole people or a whole nation or, even worse, a whole continent (EA 39).

Further, from the point of view of evangelization the Synod asked a fundamental question: "In a Continent full of bad news, how is the Christian message 'Good News' for our people? In the midst of an all-pervading despair, where is the hope and optimism which the Gospel brings?" As an answer to this question it states emphatically that "Evangelization stands for many of those essential values which our Continent very much lacks: hope, peace, joy, harmony, love and unity" (EA 40). In a context of hopelessness and gloom, "The sons and daughters of Africa need an understanding presence and pastoral concern. They need to be helped to recoup their energies so as to put them at the service of the common good" (EA 41).

This is an invitation to us evangelizers to be optimistic and positive about the task entrusted to us and never to give in to judgementalism or facile and generalized condemnation. We are called to bring light to dispel the darkness, rather than blame or condemn anyone for the darkness.

From the Lord, but also by the witness of life, thanks to by the proclamation of the Word which she has received. The Church proclaims the Good News of Christ not only for an authentic life of witness:

3. Yet another aspect is the nature of evangelization which has a direct reference to our way of carrying out the tasks proper to our charism. First of all, evangeliza-

tion calls for an authentic life of witness: **the tasks proper to our charism.** First of all, evangelization has a direct reference to our way of carrying out the tasks proper to our charism. Above all else we must be evangelizers, no matter what we do or where we do it. With millions of people still to hear the good news, or to make the Gospel their way of life, we are called to rededicate ourselves to the task of evangelization. As members of the Church we share in its essential mission of evangelizing all people. "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EA 55). We cannot therefore limit our activities to those oriented to development on the merely human plane. Above all else we must be evangelizers, no matter what we do or where we do it.

With millions of people still to hear the good news, or to make the Gospel their way of life, we are called to rededicate ourselves to the task of evangelization. As members of the Church we share in its essential mission of evangelizing all people. "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (EA 55). We cannot therefore limit our activities to those oriented to development on the merely human plane. Above all else we must be evangelizers, no matter what we do or where we do it.

2. Another aspect concerns the urgent need of evangelization. This point is emphasized in several places in the document. The Synod recognized the urgency of proclaiming the Good News to the millions of people in Africa who are not yet evangelized (EA 47). Because in Africa there are millions who are not yet evangelized, the Church is faced with the necessary and urgent task of proclaiming the Good News to all, and leading those who hear it to Baptism and the Christian life. "The urgency of missionary activity derives from the radical newness of life brought by Christ and lived by his followers. This new life is a gift from God, and people are asked to accept and develop it, if they wish to realize the fullness of their vocation in conformity to Christ" (EA 74).

which Christ's disciples bear witness to the faith, hope and love which dwell in them (cf. 1 *Pet* 2; 15) (EA 55). To bear witness to the Gospel in word and deed: this is the task which the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops received and which it now passes on to the Church of the Continent. "You shall be my witnesses" (*Acts* 1:8): this is the challenge. In Africa these should be the fruits of the Synod in every area of people's lives (EA 56). In a world that is caught up in frenetic activity, the Synod calls on its ministers to give more attention to the duality of their life instead of to their activities. Genuine witness by believers is essential to the authentic proclamation of the faith in Africa today. In particular they should show the witness of sincere mutual love. "This is eternal life that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (*Jn* 17:3). The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with one another, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf. *Jn* 17:21-23). This is a very important missionary text. It makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of what *we are*, a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries in *word and deed* (EA 77). Evangelizing activity calls for an integrated approach. The Synod says that "Evangelization must reach 'individual human beings and society in every aspect of their existence. It is therefore expressed in various activities, and particularly in those which the Synod examined: proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication'" (EA 57). As for method the Synod proposes to adopt "the *Church as God's Family* as its guiding idea for the evangelization of Africa." The Synod Fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the

Church's nature particularly appropriate for Africa. For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelization will thus aim at *building up* the Church as Family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favouring solidarity and the sharing of personnel and resources among the particular Churches, without undue ethnic considerations (EA 63).

Is this not an invitation to live our characteristic Salesian family spirit to the fullest and to make it a means for evangelization? Further we are challenged to make of the Salesian Family a reality, an instrument of communion at the service of evangelization.

4. Lastly I would like to call our attention to some of the problems highlighted by the Synod, which are crying for urgent solutions. Though written 10 years ago they are perhaps more actual and more urgent today than when first written. They have a direct bearing on our work as educators and on our evangelizing activity in general. Among these problems are:

4.1 *Giving hope to the youth*

After pointing out the frustrations which take away enthusiasm from young people as they enter adult life, the Pope pleads their cause: "It is urgently necessary to find a solution for their impatience to take part in the life of the nation and of the Church" (EA 115).

Young people are not to be looked at only as recipients of an education. They need to be encouraged and formed to become protagonists in the transformation of their society. Even as young people they have a contribution to make. The Church in Africa knows well that youth are not only the present but above all the future of humanity. It is thus

necessary to help young people to overcome the obstacles thwarting their development; illiteracy, idleness, hunger, drugs. In order to meet these challenges, young people themselves should be called upon to become the evangelizers of their peers. No one can do this better than they. The *pastoral care of youth* must clearly be a part of the overall pastoral plan of Dioceses and parishes, so that young people will be enabled to discover very early on the value of the gift of self, an essential means for the person to reach maturity (EA 93).

Schools and other educational institutions have an important role to play in the realization of a youth pastoral that will make the youth themselves the protagonists of the transformation of their society. Catholic schools are at one and the same time places of evangelization, well-rounded education, inculturation and initiation to the dialogue of life among young people of different religions and social backgrounds. The Church in Africa and Madagascar should therefore make its own contribution to fostering "education for all" in Catholic schools, without neglecting the Christian education of pupils in non-Catholic schools (EA 102).

4.2 *The scourge of AIDS*

The problem of AIDS is as acute today or even more than ten years ago. It calls for a well-concerted effort for preventive measures through education side by side with the care of those afflicted by it especially the children and the young people.

The battle against AIDS ought to be everyone's battle. Echoing the voice of the Synod Fathers, I too ask pastoral workers to bring to their brothers and sisters affected by AIDS all possible material, moral and spiritual comfort (EA 116).

4.3 *Pastoral care of refugees, displaced people, and victims of war*

War is a grim reality in many parts of Africa. Some of them

The task of evangelization is not over. In fact it is still in its beginnings. We need to reach out to every human person, not only to proclaim the good news, but also to facilitate

Conclusion

ahead of us in the field of evangelization. These is to become more aware of the immensity of the task. Many other aspects of life that have a bearing on our mission could be highlighted. The purpose of singling out (EA 121).

privilege women of their rights and the respect due to them" African societies, all "the customs and practices which demons, to the extent that they are still found in some in her apostolic activity. The Church deplores and condemns, to the extent that they can participate at appropriate levels. With specific regard to the Church, women should be properly trained so that they can participate at appropriate levels. The document states:

and guaranteeing their rightful place in the social set up, without assuring true dignity and freedom for the women well known to us all. It is not possible to transform society The plight of women in the underdeveloped societies is 4.4 *The dignity of woman*

whether in Africa or on other Continents. (EA 119) and offered pastoral support wherever they may be, pressing appeal that these people be given material help suffer from the massive displacement of refugees I make a solutions to the *problems* of refugees and displaced persons, in the meantime, since the Continent continues to national organizations should find equitable and long-lasting. It is therefore urgent that national, regional and international organizations should find equitable and long-lasting refugees and the victims of war. The Synod document highlights the plight of are going on for so long that they do not make news any



the acceptance of the Gospel way of life as the normal one. Only in this way we can build a society where justice, peace, harmony and brotherhood prevail. We must go out from this seminar full of zeal for the Gospel, as did the apostles from the upper room in which they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We must infect other people with this enthusiasm to share Jesus with others, so that the fire in our hearts will truly become a contagion that spreads to all the corners of Africa. Mary, Mother of God and our Mother will be with us during these days as she was with the apostles who awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit, to encourage us, strengthen us, and to intercede for us that we may understand our mission ever better and commit ourselves to it without counting the cost.

Nairobi, 01 November 2004

Only Five years after its foundation in 1872, the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians realised their first missionary expedition to Uruguay in America, in 1878, and in 1893 our first sisters in Morse together with our Salesian brothers, ventured out to *Africa: to Oran, Algeria, encountered by what Don Bosco had said to Cardinal Lavigerie when they met in 1883: "I will send my sons ... and daughters, there!"*

Thanks to the witness given by her sons and daughters, the first generations of SDB/FMA stand out for their missionary courage and we ask ourselves: *What was the driving force behind the missionary impulse of those communities?* It was the love of Christ that moved them to leave Valdocco and Morse to be signs of his ever foreseeing love.

Welcome to all our brothers and sisters!

I believe we would all agree that this is *a favourable time for Africa* in so far as we are listening to the insistent invitation addressed to the messengers of Christ to cast our nets for a catch in deeper waters (cf. Luke 5:4, EA 6).

Ten years have passed since the African Synod, when the synod Fathers declared that the signs of the times indicated that it was, then, *the favourable time for Africa*. So also we, members of the Salesian Family, affirm today as we did then, that this is still the reality we are living today in the continent of Africa and of Madagascar.

The missionary project that was initiated by Don Bosco, is 'without boundaries' and remains, as it were, the DNA of our missionary impulse.

Introduction: The Challenges "ad gentes" in Africa

Sr. Ciri Hernández FMA
General Councillor for the Mission ad gentes

We believe that each one of our first brothers and sisters could identify with the words of St. Paul and say: *I was drawn by Christ himself. He called me to move out into the deep, as it were, ...for me to proclaim the Gospel message is a must.* This missionary ardour was contagious and a means of arousing the enthusiasm and involvement of young girls at a time when the mobility of a woman was rare and unheard of. The source of this missionary drive is the love that is rooted in the belief that God is present in every aspect of life and of history throughout the ends of the earth where young people and poor women cry out for bread and life itself. We, too, have been drawn by Christ to be witnesses of his message in Africa. Our twenty-first Chapter in 2002 was marked by the celebration of the hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of our first missionary expedition which we commemorated in a spirit of passion for our missionary call. We heard the urgent call to reiterate our missionary conviction that every baptized person and every Church community is responsible to assume, as a personal mandate, the mission of evangelization of all peoples. As a fruit of their reflections, the Chapter members singled out two specific perspectives that colour our vision in an effort to redefine our mission towards those who do not as yet know Christ. Firstly, they have indicated a greater understanding of being communities that work in contexts that are multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious. They have acknowledged and valued the diversity of culture as a gift of the Spirit that challenges us to become more aware of the enriching experience of diversity in our life together. In the Acts of the Chapter they state that *"the process of living in intercultural environments helps us to become more conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in every person and in every culture,*

even though these realities are marked by limits and the need to be rooted in the gospel message."¹ In the post African Synod document we read: "The challenge of dialogue is fundamentally the challenge of transforming relationships between individuals, nations and peoples in religious, political, economic, social and cultural life. (...) The Church in Africa is aware that it has to become for all, through the witness borne by its own sons and daughters, a place of true reconciliation" (EA 79).

Secondly, in close relationship with the first affirmation, the Chapter members have indicated a clearer awareness of the impoverishment of the planet, of increasing oppression and violence, and of the manipulation of world resources. It is a situation whereby the poor are becoming nomads who are obliged to take to the roads of human mobility as refugees and migrants, thus destroying the family unit. "In more ways than one, every aspect of life is threatened, trodden upon and manipulated especially in the case of children, young people and women."²

From this reality, considered at the margins of history, comes a loud cry. It is urgent to witness and announce the primacy of the living God, the One who listens to the cry of the oppressed and of the afflicted, with the compassion of Jesus,³ and to make visible – as community in mission – the salvific love of God for each creature, so that each one of them may have life.

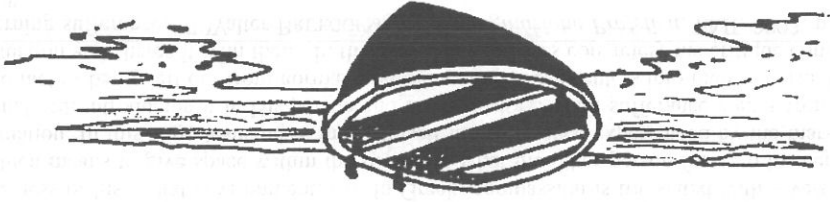
We recall that the post African Synod document states that *to proclaim Jesus Christ is to reveal the inalienable dignity of every man and woman* (EA 69).

A female African theologian states: "All beliefs and cultural practices should be examined to discern whether they contain life potential or should

¹ Matt 14: 14; Mk 6:34; Lk 7: 12-13; Matt 9: 35-36.

² "Jesus' compassion is not to be understood as a simple emotional reaction at a personal level, but as a public critique through which He dares to take position against the laziness of his social environment. (...) In Greek, compassion is translated with a verb which means to give space within the person to what the other person feels, to his/her situation. In this way, Jesus takes into Himself the suffering experienced by the marginalized, introducing it in His person and in His history. Their suffering comes from the fact of being left out from normal environment and Jesus enters into their abnormal situation and shares it with them. In this way, He expresses concretely his critique concerning suffering..." Walter BRUGGEMANN, *Immaginazione Profetica*, EMI, 2003, p. 128.

be condemned because they contain alienating and deadly factors?"² Culture, life, dialogue, justice, reconciliation, peace and community are intrinsic aspects of missionary evangelization in the Church of Africa, today. From the point of view of Church communion, as members of God's family, every Church community is, in itself, missionary. We all feel involved in *redefining missionary awareness* as we place ourselves in *attentive listening to the Spirit* who speaks to us in every Church community, according to its specific vocation and charism, of the women and young people who are victims of war, of genocide, of manipulation and political ambiguity. In listening to them we discover the grace of reconciliation that God is developing in them so as to acquire a new vision of reality that will enable them to assume the path of a "new humanity". We believe that our way of educating as Salesians, will be refocused due to the reality of the "marginal members of society" who could have a more human way of living and of relating to all peoples. What do we mean today, when, in relation to the African reality, we speak about broadening the horizons of "neighbourhoods" and those who are more "distant"? What do we mean when we speak about broadening the horizons of a continent that is so marked by the love for life within a process of ambiguous globalization that, among other



things, on the one hand, tends to increase personal, social and ecological impoverishment, and on the other hand, intends to bring cultures together and to influence the hopes and ways of acting with the pretext of modernization and development? We would like to consider this Seminar in close relationship with the previous one that was celebrated in Nairobi, Kenya in 2000, and hope that it will help us to continue identifying the great challenges of mission to all peoples in Africa, today, in the light of the African Synod, in keeping with the way of thinking and acting of the African Bishops.

This is, indeed, the favourable time for Africa, for all of us to dare to assume new possibilities for Africa and for the whole world. It is time to start afresh together as men and women who believe and proclaim, as Mary did to Elizabeth, that God is ever faithful and that we have reason to rejoice as we focus on our saving mission on behalf of young people and those marginal members of society, through the witness of the simplicity of our own lives that are fully human.

In so doing, we too will be strengthened by the Spirit and like John in his encyclical letter to the communities of Asia, proclaim with interior conviction:

“What we have seen and heard we announce to you, also. We write this in order that your joy may be complete ...” (cf. 1 John 1: 1-4)

May Mary, the shepherdess in the dream Don Bosco had in Barcelona, Spain, in 1886, show us the way to walk together with so many young people throughout the world.

² SHORTER, Aylward, *Celibacy and the African Culture*, Nairobi: Pauline, 1998, p. 9. Fa-ther Shorter who is an anthropologist and a theologian insists that "nothing escapes the purview of culture". According to him, it is the "prism through which human beings per-ceive the whole of their experience, domestic, social, economic, political, artistic." Hence he insists on the necessity of respecting the integrity of the culture as "whole system". He insists that "Cultures cannot be broken down into 'elements' or 'compo-nents' without doing violence to them (*Ibid.*)

³ *Ibid.*

Relationship between the Gospel and African Culture in the Context: the dynamics and implications from the perspectives of Sacred Scripture and the theology of mission.

ment where the Jewish culture became the medium of God's word, and later in its fulfilment in Jesus when for instance St. Paul a Jew brought the Gospel to the Greek world and the Roman empire and transformed it. The Gospel is always me-diated through persons who belong to a particular culture and society and hence through those categories, convictions, be-liefs and even prejudices.

That is one side of the story which regards the proclaimer. The other side is regarding the receiver. The Gospel that orig-inates from God has to be received by the hearer through his/her own culture, that which "programmes the thinking and acting of individuals, and shapes their own understand-ings, feelings and behaviour."² There is nothing called "naked Gospel that is passed on" nor "Gospel received in *tabula rasa*". Culture is both the medium through which the Gospel is preached and the vessel in which the Gospel is received. In fact, "the human being cannot be effectively evangelised if the culture is not addressed."³

These comments bring us to the topic of our discussion today: *Relationship between the Gospel and Culture in the African Context: the dynamics and the implications from the perspectives of Sacred Scripture and the theology of mission*. In this presentation I shall develop the theme along the follow-ing subtopics. (1) First we shall look at the situation, how this relationship was being perceived and how it is today for most part. (2) Then we shall look at the witness of the scrip-tures and the patristic tradition on the relationship between Gospel and culture [in a very sketchy way]: (3) then we shall

look at the dynamic process⁴ of their interaction and the relationship as enunciated in theology; (4) in the fourth part we shall look at certain very important anthropological insights regarding change (especially cultural change) and see how those insights can be fruitfully used in the task of "inculturation of the Gospel"⁵ and the "full evangelisation of culture."⁶ (5) Finally I shall, in a rather superficial way, try to hint at some of the implications of these for the inculturation of the Salesian charism in Africa by raising a few questions for reflection. (I am referring primarily to Eastern Africa, since my experience of the rest of Africa is rather scanty).

2. Relationship between the Gospel and Culture

2.1. Differing tendencies in this dynamic relationship: Challenging patterns of relationship

Today the Church views the dynamic relationship between the Gospel and culture as having two dimensions: "On the one hand [it includes] the ultimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity, and on the other the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."⁷ It means that evangelisation represents a dynamic rapport (a type of osmosis) between the Gospel and

⁴ The term *dynamic* usually used in "physics" is used in this paper to refer to those forces working in the relationship between Gospel and culture producing alterations or changes in the culture and the insertion of the Gospel into the African cultural forms; the term contains the fact of alteration, change, and development. (See, *Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition*, 1934).

⁵ *Ecclesia in Africa*, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II speaks of the "urgent need of Inculturation" (n. 59). The Pope sees inculturation as having two dimensions: The synod considered inculturation "an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa. It is a requirement for evangelisation, a path towards full evangelisation" (*Ibid.*). [Now on abbreviated as EA] ⁶ Pope PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntandi*, 8 December 1975, n. 20 [Now on abbreviated as EN]. ⁷ EA 59.

⁸ SHORTER, Aylward, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, pp. 152-163. Though certain missionaries such as Ricci, de Nobili or Paez realised that an authentic mission must penetrate cultures from within, nevertheless they found no support to their very important insights.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

For instance, Nguigi was Thiong'o, in many of his writings – which are read widely in the African Schools – laments the

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Okot p'Bitek's writings: The expense of the local cultures, languages and customs. He wants the cultures to be freed from the restrictive walls of nationalism, class race and gender. Though an agnostic who sees Christianity too in its present form as part of this cultural domination, his writings made a great impact on many intelligent minds and encouraged African forms of Christianity.¹⁰ Okot p'Bitek's writings, which are text books in the schools, are an open critique of Christianity. He found Christianity unacceptable because of the basic conflict between fundamental assumptions of Western civilization and the fundamental assumptions of African civilization. In other words Christianity is part and parcel of Western civilization.¹¹ He is convinced that Christianity "has barely touched the core of the life of most African peoples... [and] that the new God of Christianity was taken by many Africans as just another deity, and added to the long list of the ones they believed in."¹² In his work *Song of Lawino* he wrote:

You must vomit
The shyness you ate in the Church
Drink raw eggs mixed in millet flour;
And if this does not make you feel sick
Put one finger
Deep down your throat.¹³

We should remember that to many young, nationalistic African intellectuals, Okot is a powerful and faithful spokesman whose words are nothing but the truth!

¹⁰ Some of his most influential books are: *Weep not Child* (1964); *The River Between* (1965); *A Grain of Wheat* (1967); *Petals of Blood* (1979); *Devil on the Cross* (1982); *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (1993).

¹¹ Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H., 1970, p. 119.

¹² Okot p'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*, p. 113.

¹³ Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H., 1966, p. 212. His other writings, *Song of Ocol* (1970), *Africa's Cultural Revolution* (1973) are also very influential.

¹⁴ An often-quoted phrase attributed to Prof. Mbiti, to which most agree, "Religion is the main principle that dominates his life and sets a definite tone in his relationship with nature and his fellow man. The triangle of God, nature, and man is inseparable because these 'supreme beings' form the same one reality. Religion is not therefore something extraneous to the African, a 'beyond' in his experience." Okolo CHUKWUDUM B., *The African Church and Signs of Times—A Socio-political Analysis*, Kenya: GABA Publications, 1978, p. 2.

What was the impact of writers such as Ngũgĩ or Okot p'Bitik? It was not a rejection of Christianity which p'Bitik wanted to be "vomited out". In fact, the majority of Africans, being "notoriously religious"¹⁴ didn't reject the God of Christianity; instead influenced by such writers and thinkers, they began to "modify" the Gospel giving rise to many independent Churches. This was not limited to the protestant Churches alone. It happened in the Catholic Church too in Western Kenya, where we find a much indigenised community known as *Legio Maria*. That brings us to the second dangerous tendency in this dynamics of relationship that is quite widespread today (though not in any alarming proportions according to my perception): *the overvaluing of Culture at the expense of the Gospel*. This tendency of giving primacy to culture over the Gospel was very popular after the Council up to very recent times. It is still rather widely present among the elite (for most part the Religions in Africa belong to that group) as I can testify from my own experience as teacher of Theology for over ten years now. Such a view ignores the need to evangelise a culture, and leads easily to syncretic ways of life. This in fact is the third greatest challenge that emerges in the syncretic approach of "pick and choose" from both (Gospel and culture) according to one's own convenience. The situation of Evangelization in Africa witnesses a scene of *the society today*.

much syncretism and relativism in the life of the people.¹⁵ Leaders move from one church to another; marriage is celebrated in "traditional ways" to be later solemnized in the Church; traditional funeral rites follow Christian funeral rites (as it happened recently in the case of the funeral of Minister Maitha), etc. The moral crisis in Africa is critical today. In a very recent research on the state of inculturation in Tanzania the researcher Evaristi Magoti of the University of Dar Es Salaam gives his findings and he writes: "All respondents admitted that a crisis in morality, especially Christian morality exists. Again they listed the high rates of abortion, especially in urban areas, rampant corruption among civil servants, unstable marriages that end in divorce, adultery and pre-marital sex as examples. They also mentioned 'irresponsible parenthood,' a situation that causes young mothers to throw away babies and forces other children to end up in streets as street children, drug abuse and drug trafficking, the sexual abuse of minors, and homosexuality as additional reasons for the crisis. Finally, lack of respect for the elders, the oppression of women and prostitution, child labour, the growing gap between the rich and poor, and the spread of HIV/AIDS were also seen as symptoms of the moral crisis."¹⁶ The situation in the other Eastern African countries is no different.

A few days ago, the local papers here in Kenya published a report compiled jointly by the Society for International Development and the Ministry for Planning, describing Kenya as "a rich man's country" or one among the most unequal countries in the world where 10 percent of people control 42 percent of wealth and for every Shilling earned by the poor, the rich get Sh56 (that will be for every KSh 200 that a casual

¹⁵ In fact the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops urged the Catholic faithful to "avoid syncretism" in the process of inculturation (EA 62, quoting *Propositio* 31).
¹⁶ MAGESA, Laurenti, *Anatomy of Inculturation*, Nairobi: Pauline, 2004, p. 62.

labourer earns per day, the rich earn KSh 11,200). And according to the Report, this gap is growing.¹⁷ We shouldn't forget that the majority of Kenyans are professing Christians. An important fact in this "pick and choose" policy is that it is not limited to the traditional cultural practices alone. In fact the cultures are changing so fast with the impact of globalisation. Much of the moral evil that has gripped the society is from a materialistic, selfish, hedonistic culture that is growing in popularity and not from traditional beliefs or values. This situation of moral crisis calls for a closer look at the relationship between the Gospel and personal and social morality in the context of the African cultures and African traditionality.¹⁸

2.2. Relationship between the Gospel and culture: The witness of the scriptures

After having more or less heard about the situation on the ground regarding the challenges that emerge in this relationship between the Gospel and Cultures in Africa, now we shall look in a sketchy way on the biblical, patristic and theological data.

Looking closely at the dynamic of implanting of the word of God in the Jewish culture and later the Gospel of Christ into the Greek and Latin cultures we can identify three principles

¹⁷ See *The Standard*, October 224, *The Nation*, October 2004.
¹⁸ A few years ago Rev. Peter K. Sarpong Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kumasi (Ghana), in his key note address to the participants of the "Symposium on the Dialogue Between Faith and Culture," talked of the many counter values, worldly values and new social ills that are crippling the African person and society and insisted on the necessity of a personal and social morality. Cf. SARPONG, Peter K., "The Gospel as Good News for Africa Today: Keynote Address," in *The Gospel as Good News for African Cultures. A Symposium on the Dialogue Between Faith and Culture*, Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 1999, pp. 17-30.

19 Certainly we cannot deny the greater value of the Jewish religion vis-a-vis other religions in the world because of the special inspiration it received. Hence we may not give the same dignity and value to the other non-Christian religions (cf. NA 1-4; LG 16).
 20 The prophetic teaching is full of such a witness of total allegiance to the living God, and rejection of all forms of injustice to one's neighbour (see Amos 4:1f).
 21 Please note the term I used is "good" not "perfect". The whole of God's creation is good. But not perfect yet. "With the physical good there exists also physical evil as long as creation has not reached perfection" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 310).

Let me explain each of the above points.

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament testify to the fact that God intervened in the lives of the people in and through their cultures, without rejecting any culture *en masse*. In that encounter we notice both acceptance of cultural forms and values as well as purifications (including rejection) of certain practices, behaviours and value-systems. Thus, in working with Abraham and his descendants, God worked *with*, not against their culture, including their religion.¹⁹ What he condemned was idolatry, the elevation of human images to the place only the transcendent living God as revealed through the Patriarchs and the Prophets can occupy. Together with idolatry, the God of Israel condemned harmful acts against one's neighbour, especially the poor and the weak.²⁰ What he did *not* condemn was the use of cultural structures (the forms) of the Hebrews as a vehicle for expressing their commitment to the true God. Clearly God had seen and accepted everything that he had made as "good" (Gen 1:31). That includes the cultures of peoples.²¹

that are operative: (1) Acceptance of the cultures as basically "good"; (2) Rejection of certain cultural practices as totally incompatible with the belief in God, that is, incompatible with the commitment expected of "loving God" and "loving one's neighbour"; (3) Initial acceptance of certain cultural forms and customs leading to intermediary forms of religious syncretism, to be purified and transformed in a slow process.

Early Church history presents us with quite a few models of successful integration into the Christian heritage of pre-Christian Jewish and Gentile ritual customs, as well as ethical and ascetical ideals. On one hand we notice that the early Churches were bold in assimilating valuable pre-Christianian tradition. But with an almost instinctive discernment they

2.3. Relationship between the Gospel and culture: The witness of the patristic tradition and later centuries

A third principle operative in the interaction between the word of God and the cultures is that of patient toleration and slow transformation. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament we notice that certain cultural human practices and customs persisted, apparently with God's blessings, which today we find quite incompatible with the word of God and/or the Gospel of Jesus Christ (e.g., in the OT we notice toleration of trial by ordeal, polygamy, casting lots; in the New Testament slavery, place of women in the ecclesial community, etc.). God apparently was tolerant to them provided that the people didn't settle down in those practices.

However, there were (and still are) many sinful elements in the cultures. There were certain elements which were condemned as unacceptable and rejected as incompatible with the worship of the living God. There was not to be any compromise whatsoever to the commandment enshrined in the *Shema Israel*: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut.6:4). Hence all idolatry and magical practices were condemned and rejected. Secondly, the responsibility of being "just" to the other, especially to the weak, the widow, the orphan, the stranger. Consequently the Decalogue and the prophetic teachings insisted on both (cf. Exodus 20:1-17; Hosea 10:12; Jer 23:3f).

also knew, prophetically and counter-culturally, to reject what seemed to be incompatible with the demands of the Gospel and Jesus' call to radical discipleship.²² Nevertheless, certain cultural practices incompatible with the Gospel values continued to prevail, even with the apparent blessings of some Fathers, only to be rooted out many centuries later.²³ In other words the three principles operative in the times of the Old Testament and New Testament were still operative in the patristic times and later. The Fathers and the ecclesiastical authorities accepted all cultures as "good"; they rejected totally certain cultural practices incompatible with the allegiance to the God of Jesus Christ, and finally certain ambiguous anti-Gospel cultural practices continued to survive and at times flourish, some of which were purified or overcome, while others continue to persist, blurring the Gospel of Christ. There is no doubt that the implantation of the Gospel into differing cultures was also a process of integration, which led to the growth of different Eastern Churches. It is enough to think of the diversity that exists between the Alexandrian Church and the Antiochian Church, or the Greek Orthodox Church and the Armenians.²⁴ The Father engaged in a very fruitful dialogue with the cultures of which they too were part, either being born in them or as people who had embraced it in their missionary preaching. The fact of heresies, the writings of the apologists, the emergence of an ecumenical paradigm in the East and a monolithic paradigm for the Church in the west resulted from a dynamic interaction between the Gospel and cultures.

²² Cf. CLERICI, Luigi Antonio, *A Reader in Early Patristics. Examples of discerning inculturation*, Gweru, Zimbabwe Press, 1995, pp. vi-vii.

²³ Here I am thinking of the practice of slavery, which was not condemned or rejected by many of the Fathers, or acceptance of despotic dictatorial forms of government and forms of many social injustices, etc.

²⁴ The diversity, primarily due to the differences in cultures, only increased in the life of the Church. Today the Eastern Churches are composed of so many groups – the Melkites, East Syrians, West Syrians, Copts, Ethiopians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Malabarese, Malankarites, etc.

²⁵ "Letter of Gregory I to Abbot Mellitus," the full letter is quoted in Shorter, *Aylward, Towards a Theology of Inculturation*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, pp. 141-2.

The dialogue between Gospel and culture, quite evident in the first centuries, continued in the later missions as well, though with less intensity and sensitivity. In the mission to the Anglo-Saxons, Pope Gregory, wrote: "... we have come to the conclusion that the temples of the idols in that country should on no account be destroyed. He [Augustine] is to destroy the idols but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water..." Pope Gregory then comments on the process, "It is certainly impossible to eradicate all errors from obstinate minds at one stroke, and whosoever wishes to climb the mountain top climbs gradually step by step and not in one leap..."²⁵ Another good example of a fruitful dialogue is that of saints Cyril and Methodius, missionaries from the Eastern Churches, who broke with the tradition of limiting liturgical language to Aramaic, Greek and Latin, and created a very powerful Slavonic Christianity.

2.4. The dynamic processes of the interaction between the Gospel and an individual within a cultural context

What was the process involved? I might try to describe it in this way: The "word of God" (always coming from the outside, through the patriarchs, Moses, Prophets, Jesus, the apostles...) is proclaimed to a particular social and cultural milieu. Then what happens? Various responses are possible. Let me try to outline them: (1) outright rejection of the salvific message; (2) ignoring of the message with a *laissez-faire* attitude; (3) partial acceptance leading to syncretic and relativistic forms of life; (4) commitment and allegiance to the Gospel with the readiness to live one's life for it. These responses, first at the level of the individual, also happen at the level of a particular culture, society or group. Scriptures know of communities who ignored the Gospel, those which outright

²⁶ Cf. KRAFT, Charles H., *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 448-454.

Start	Need	Process	Result
Sin - captivity Ignorance Non-Christian allegiance	* Freedom to understand * Enough understanding * Challenge to commit to Jesus	* Power Encounters * Truth Encounters * Allegiance Encounters	Commitment to Jesus
Growing relationship to God and His people	* Spiritual warfare * Teachings * Challenges to commitment and obedience	* Power Encounters * Truth Encounters * Allegiance Encounters	Growing relationship to God and His people
Stage 3 Growing relationship to God and His people	* Effective prayer * Teaching * Challenges to commitment	* Power Encounters * Truth Encounters * Allegiance Encounters	Witness to those at the beginning of Stage 1

The following figure could summarise the encounters with the Gospel in those three stages (leading to personal commitment > community commitment > witness as a missionary).²⁶

As faith-filled people (and not purely religious-sociologists) we can confidently say that the real protagonist of the transformation and growth of faith is the Holy Spirit, who is at work both in the individual and the cultures of the people. Charles K. Kraft, an evangelical theologian and professor of anthropology describes in a quite interesting way the dynamic process that is operative in the transformation of persons (which can be easily applied to the cultures as well).²⁶ For him the transmission of the Gospel should involve (a) an encounter of the power of grace bringing the person into freedom in Christ, (b) an encounter concerning truth which moves error and/or ignorance to correct understandings, and (c) an allegiance encounter rescuing people from wrong allegiances to a genuine relationship to Jesus Christ.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 453.
²⁸ John PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 46. See number 47 on the necessity of the proclamation leading to Baptism for insertion into the Body of Christ. [Now on abbreviated as RM].

i) Primacy of the Gospel: The principle of redemption -
What saves is faith in the Gospel!
 The Church, right from the beginning recognised the importance of the Gospel for salvation and its universality for all times, cultures and societies. Hence she acknowledges the necessity of preaching the Gospel leading to the conversion and Baptism of the hearer. Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* wrote: "The proclamation of the word of God has Christian conversion as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith."²⁸ He reaffirmed the same teaching in *Ecclesia in Africa* and insisted on the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel: "The Church is faced with the necessary and urgent task of proclaiming the Good

2.5. The relationship between the Gospel and the culture in the theology of mission
 Allow me now to identify a few salient principles to guide a healthy rapport between the Gospel and the cultures from the present day theology of mission.

According to Kraft – and I agree with him – all the three encounters are needed for transformation of persons and through them the cultures. He laments the fact that the majority of Christian missionaries coming from the mainstream western churches neglect the advocacy of power encounters (or the experience of the liberating grace) in the presentation of the Gospel. It seems the Pentecostals and the independent churches have done this better, which is one of the reasons why many ordinary Africans are very much attracted by them.²⁷

News to all, and leading those who hear it to Baptism and Christian life;²⁹ The Synodal Fathers and the Pope emphasised that evangelisation through proclamation of the Gospel and the witness of life is to reach individual human beings and society in every aspect of their existence and is expressed in various activities.³⁰

ii) Importance and value of the cultures: The principle of incarnation – “The word took flesh and dwell among us” (Jn 1:14)

Today the ecclesial teachings and theological opinion converge on the importance as well as positive values of a particular culture, some of whose positive values are “truly a providential preparation for the Gospel.”³¹ The Church insists on the importance of cultures in the proclamation of the Gospel primarily because of the theological principle of incarnation: “Just as the ‘Word of God became flesh and dwell among us’ (Jn 1:14), so too the Good News, the Word of Jesus Christ proclaimed to the nations, *must take root* in the life-situation of the hearers of the Word. Inculturation is precisely this insertion of the Gospel message into culture. For the Incarnation of the Son of God, precisely because it was complete and concrete, was also incarnation in a particular culture.”³²

iii) Necessity of evangelising the cultures: The principle of transformation, of “making all things new” (cf. Rev 21:5)

While the cultures are important, however, we also need to evangelize them, transforming them from within. Pope Paul VI had insisted that “what matters is to evangelize man’s cul-

²⁹ EA 73.

³⁰ Cf. EA 57. The African Synod examined five of those activities – proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and means of social communication – in an explicit way.

³¹ EA 33.

³² EA 60.

ture and cultures. ... They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel.³³ While the Church has the duty of proclaiming liberation and working for justice "evangelization will always contain – as foundation, centre and summit of its dynamism, a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy."³⁴

The Final Report of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1985 described inculturation as "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."³⁵ Pope John Paul II explained this further when he wrote: "Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces people, together with their cultures, into her own community. She transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within."³⁶

To direct the dynamic process of the encounter of the African cultures with the Gospel will be a task particularly incumbent on the developing African Christian communities. They must seek to express their Christian experience in ways that are consonant with the African cultural traditions, provided that those traditions are in harmony with the requirements of their faith. Pope John Paul II observes that, "this kind of process needs to take place gradually, in such a way that it really is an expression of the community's Christian experience... In effect, inculturation must involve the whole people of God, and not just a few experts, since the people reflect the authentic '*sensus fidei*' which must never be lost sight of... It must be an expression of the community's life, one

³³ EN 20.

³⁴ EN 27.

³⁵ Final Report of the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1985, II, C, 6.

³⁶ RM 52.

which must mature within the community itself, and not be exclusively the result of erudite research. The safeguarding of traditional values is the work of mature faith.”³⁷ The values and counter-values are to be discerned in the light of the mystery of incarnation and redemption.³⁸

There are, however, differences of opinion on the extent to which inculturation can go in the face of the multiplicity of cultures, the interaction between them and the powerful effects of globalization on the cultures, the rapid change that is happening to them, etc. There are theologians who think that a great deal that is presented to the African people in the name of Christianity is quite unnecessary,³⁹ while there are others who think that inculturation understood as going back and incarnating the Gospel in the traditional culture is not possible nor meaningful as the cultures keep changing. Then there are those who hold a somewhat middle position, that, though the cultures are changing, and rapidly in Africa, still there are certain permanent elements which need to be taken seriously since human beings live in and through culture.⁴⁰

3. Implications of the relationship between Gospel and Culture in Africa today

Now as in the biblical and later times, the Church in Africa is trying to discern carefully the spiritual and cultural values for a process of assimilation and purification, in order to maintain her own identity and to offer to today's society in momentous cultural change, the human riches of Christian

³⁷ RM 54.
³⁸ Cf. EA 61.
³⁹ This is the basic thesis of *Christianity Rediscovered* written by the American Missionary Priest Vincent Donovan. (*Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai*, London: SCM Press, 1982).
⁴⁰ Cf. DORR, Donal, *Mission in Today's World*, New York: Maryknoll Orbis books, 2000. See especially the Chapter “Mission as Inculturation,” pp. 91-108.

faith. We shall first of all see three major implications or emerging tasks due to the rapport between theology and culture, and then we shall look at some very concrete and practical suggestions.

3.1. Implications for theology and catechesis: Integration of Culture

In the process of the Gospel taking flesh in the African culture, theology, as a science (of experts) and as an activity (of every believer), will have to keep playing a major role. Anchored on our faith in the Gospel and seeking to understand ever deeper the mystery of Christ and the love of God which is beyond every knowledge (cf. Eph 4: 19), we need to insert Christianity into the African cultures, especially through the integration of authentic cultural values into Christianity.

I think two of the central ideas and trends emerging in the writings of the professional African theologians are the belief in the active presence of the ancestors and the place and role of the family. In Africa Ancestors are the mediators of life, of blessings and of virtues, all of which have their source in God. Professor Charles Nyamiti taps on this sensitivity and understanding of the ancestors making it the ground in which an African can receive Christ.⁴¹ We might notice how the understanding of "Jesus as our Ancestor" could easily make Jesus accepted and loved.⁴²

The centrality of family in African life too is exploited by the writers today especially in working out an appealing and understandable theology of the Church heeding the invitation of *Ecclesia in Africa*.⁴³ Other areas that still require serious reflection and study are the rites of initiation, other rituals and

⁴¹ NYAMITI, Charles, *Christ as Our Ancestor*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984.

⁴² Cf. BOKA DI MPASI LONDI, *A Theology for African Churches*, p. 58.

⁴³ Cf. FOGLIACCO, Nicolas, "The Family: An African Metaphor for Trinity and Church," in C. MCGARRY & P. RYAN (eds.), *Inculturation of the Church in Africa*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2001, pp. 120-158.

the sacramental celebrations in the Church. Christian anthropology still needs to deepen its dialogue with the notion of creation and the rich belief in the spirit-world.

In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* Pope John Paul II has identified the following as some of those positive values which need to be integrated and/or safeguarded: a profound religious sense, a sense of the sacred, the belief in God, the reality of sin in its individual and collective forms, need for rites of purification and expiation, the role and value of family, love and respect for life especially children, acute sense of solidarity and community life, etc.⁴⁴ Missiologists underline the possible fruitfulness of using the traditional myths, world-view, the traditional ways of explaining the origin of the world, origin of human beings, the origin of evil, the idea of morality, etc., since they all touch the mentality of a people which is what ultimately makes culture into a system. Some missiologists are convinced that the Christian doctrines are communicated better and the similarities and differences are noted clearer when the catechesis or faith formation is done through an integrative process.⁴⁵ These should form an important task of catechesis. I think very little has been done at the level of catechesis, at least academically, though I must admit that some of the local catechists are excellent in integrating the riches of their cultures and showing the similarity and dissimilarity between the cultural values and their Christian belief.

3.2. Implications for a personal and social morality

Due to many reasons – one of the major being the rapid changes that happened in the traditional societies and the present day pressures of globalisation – the African society is

⁴⁴ Cf. BA 42,43.

⁴⁵ Cf. LUBETAK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, New York, Orbis Books, 1998, pp.266-291.

experiencing a moral crisis both at the personal and the social level. While the moral crisis is a global phenomenon today, I think the acuteness that is felt here is unique. Hence we are at a stage in the evangelisation process, where the Gospel needs to penetrate and build a personal and social ethics, which is both Christian and African in the full sense. One must admit that the African finds Christianity problematic precisely because of the nature of its values and the ethical imperatives it imposes upon those who profess it. It is the nature of Christian ethics, moral theology, etc., to specify what values and norms Christians ought to pursue in the light of their supernatural vocation and orientation in Christ. As the Nigerian theologian Okolo notes, "African traditional religion is a natural one, rooted in the ethos and belief system of a people. Its cultural values are a mixture of good and evil; and from the perspective of revelation or Christian faith many African values are antithetical to those of the heavenly kingdom."⁴⁶ Here we see one of the sources of the moral crisis. Many tend to forget that authentic faith in God and His Son Jesus has profound consequences for one's fundamental operations, goals and values. In the Gospel language, it might involve, "hating your father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and your own self" (cf. Lk 14:26). Because of man's essentially supernatural horizon as a child of God and not of mere nature, Christian values unlike natural human values have a different source and reference point, namely, revelation and Christ. Human vocation and orientation are in Christ; through Him we are called to an intimate sharing of life with God. These Christian values are normative for human conduct as a result of a human being's new existence in Christ as a child of God and heir to the Kingdom. Christian values are thus normative for all Christians as

3.3. The *wazee* theology under the trees: Practical implications for missionary work

Traditionally most of the practical down-to-earth teachings which were vital for the well-being and growth of the community were given by the *wazee* (elders), meeting with the rest under the trees, especially the sacred ones. There, under the trees, under their cool shade, through sayings and proverbs, through rituals, through songs and parables, the wisdom of the group was passed on. In this section I would like to invoke that image and try to emphasise some practical implications for our missionary work from a better understanding of the interaction of the Gospel with culture.

Some tension is bound to exist between Christ/Kingdom of God and every culture. It is because of the final transcendence of Christ and His kingdom. The Kingdom of God will always transcend any culture and every culture. Certain values demanded by Christ such as love of poverty, simplicity, suffering, forgiveness of one's enemies, love for all, humility, celibacy for the Kingdom, etc. will always remain reversal of our natural values. If there is no tension within a particular culture between certain natural desires of men and women who make up that culture and the Gospel, then it is a sign of either compromise or loss of faith. Hence there should be a healthy tension, where the prophetic moral voices are never silenced in the Christian communities. There should never be a feeling, "yes we have done it, we have arrived." No! We are and always will be *en route*.

Truth and the Life' (In 14:6)."⁴⁷

so that the actions and values of Christians are judged in their ethical significance from the perspective of Christ and the teachings of the Church, since Christ alone is the 'Way, the

! While the Gospel, the Word of God, is fundamentally unchangeable, the cultures are not. They keep on changing. As Efoé-Julien Penoukou states correctly, "Culture is not a static thing. It represents, both in tradition and evolution, a way of being together. As transmitted and unceasingly interpreted it is both a vehicle and a creator of values capable of helping a human being to become fully human."⁴⁸ The implications of this are that as missionaries we need to be alert to the cultural changes. In that sense, what is needed is an on-going adaptation, and not a fossilisation of the culture involved.

The cultural changes that happen around are not uniform. They differ in the (1) extent of change, (2) the rate of change, (3) the object of change, and (4) the manner of change. The extent of change in a culture could be very general and radical, sectional, or partial. The rate of change could be very abrupt and sudden (revolution), short-lived, or long-term trends. The object of change could be at the level of the form of the culture, its functions, or in the basic assumptions, values and drives. The manner of change could be through substitution, loss with no replacement or fusion.⁴⁹ All these categories of change should be considered by the missionary in a never-ending discernment of the cultural matrix in the work of evangelisation.

!!) The work of evangelization will necessarily transform cultures. If the Church is an instrument of bringing about the Kingdom of God, then it is also an agent of cultural change. In anthropological and human terms, the work of establishing the Kingdom of God will affect the culture.⁵⁰ The Church will keep challenging the traditional and contemporary cultures from the perspective of the Gospel values.

! The work of evangelization will necessarily transform cultures from the perspective of the Gospel values.

⁴⁸ Efoé-Julien Penoukou, "The Churches of Africa," in Jenkinson, William - O'Sullivan, Hellen (eds), *Trends in Mission, Towards the Third Millennium. (Essays in Celebration of Twenty-Five Years of SEDOS)*. New York: Orbis Books, 1991, p. 45.

⁴⁹ LUBBERTAK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, New York, Orbis Books, 1998, p. 294-299.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

iv) What is happening in the contemporary scene of rapid cultural change is the loss of very many important and essential values, without providing for adequate substitutes. For instance the very important concept of sin or wrong-doing explained and structured around taboos in the African society has disappeared to a great extent through the doing away of taboos and the vanishing of sin by the modern man. This is quite evident from the way sins such as rape, adultery, murder, robbery with violence etc., have been on the rise in the contemporary society. So the missionary today has to be very creative by providing adequate substitutes for the "loss" of cultural categories. When the rites of passage are disappearing with their symbolic meanings, the Christian rites of initiation must be able to fill the void by being celebrated with due solemnity and explanation of the symbols. When the rites of purification and expiation disappear the Christians must be made to see them celebrated in the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. When the traditional structures of formation disappear the new institutions of formation should be able to cater for the ethical moral values necessary for all groups. Our missionary efforts, shouldn't be limited to building structures and socio-economic activities, but have to focus more on the moral life of the Christian (understood

iii) In the ongoing dynamics between the Gospel and Culture and consequent changes, the mind is the primary locus. Hence we must give primary attention to formation of minds and hearts. Cultural change is due to change in the set of ideas and values that individuals share. The Church has the task of an educator: to bring about a change in the mind and heart of "disciples", adopting for them "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). Mission today consists in altering, when necessary, socially defined mental contents and hearts of the people according to the Gospel. as educators, as formators of minds, hearts and spirits. portant role that we are called to play in the African society cording to the Gospel. Here we can easily recognise the im- cially defined mental contents and hearts of the people ac-

So the missionary today has to be very creative by providing adequate substitutes for the "loss" of cultural categories.

Mission today consists in altering, when necessary, socially defined mental contents and hearts of the people according to the Gospel.

⁵¹ LUBETSKY, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, pp. 305-307.
⁵² Homily 20, 4; PG: 162-164, quoted in *Ibid.* p. 329.

vi) To respect an individual as an individual is difficult enough in one's own social and cultural environment, and is doubly difficult in another cultural environment when sub-consciously there might be feelings of superiority or stereotype thinking. To treat an individual as an individual means, first of all, that we recognize that the person has feelings.

warmth and shine than for a Christian not to shed his light."⁵²

not seek to save others ... It is easier for the sun not to give Apostles, "There is nothing colder than a Christian who does St. John Chrysostom put it in his homily on the Acts of the affected by the Gospel who in turn will evangelize others. As by the numbers alone, but also by how many individuals are selves to touch others. Mission success should not be judged those individuals who are most suited to reach beyond them-whole society). A good mission strategy will not lose sight of the Gospel, whose Gospel values and allegiance to Christ culture according to the Gospel values. They are the "yeast" who will act as the "yeast" in the task of transforming the traditional ways. Hence we must prepare a "cream of people" involving individuals who are willing to deviate from the transforming way of introducing or incarnating the Gospel than by in-acceptance of the Gospel by individuals. There is no other or forced.⁵¹ The changes from without happen through the the Gospel. These changes could be unconscious, voluntary, changes triggered from "outside" through the acceptance of from without. In the case of the Gospel we are talking of Hence we must prepare a "cream of people" who will act as the "yeast" in the task of transforming the culture according to the Gospel values.

v) Changes within culture can be triggered from within or for the loss of cultural forms.

as a grateful response to the love of God/Grace) and provide

53 LUBBARTAK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, p. 323.
 54 Cf. KRAFT, Charles H., *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, p. 114.

Our local partners in the work of evangelisation have to be respected as individuals, as important and as friends. Our local partners in the work of evangelisation have to be respected as individuals, as important and as friends. One very important aspect (*stine gnan non* condition of this friendship) is the importance of learning the language of the people. A good missionary should be both theologically and anthropologically prepared for the advancement of the kingdom. Besides, as missionaries, it is good to remember that the antidote to antipathy to people of other cultures, imposition of one's own cultural forms and even outright rejection of other cultures is close personal relationship, which would make us break much of our cultural and mental conditioning.⁵⁴ This then will lead to reconciliation, mutual trust and healthy dialogue. This attitude is essential both for the missionary as well as the local members of the community. (vii) It is true that every Christian must be a witness and a missionary for Christ and the kingdom. However we also need "innovators" constantly making the Gospel relevant, by relating both to the Gospel and the culture. Their faith must be generative, ever adapting, ever finding new ways of loving God and their brothers and sisters in accord with the particular time and place. We must therefore, encourage prophetic voices or the so-called "innovators" as pastoral agents in the transformation of the culture. These feelings are culturally defined.⁵³ Correct interpersonal relationship with the "yeast of the society" is vital for these to rise and penetrate the hives of the rest. Our local partners have to be respected as individuals, as important and as friends. One very important aspect (*stine gnan non* condition of this friendship) is the importance of learning the language of the people. A good missionary should be both theologically and anthropologically prepared for the advancement of the kingdom. Besides, as missionaries, it is good to remember that the antidote to antipathy to people of other cultures, imposition of one's own cultural forms and even outright rejection of other cultures is close personal relationship, which would make us break much of our cultural and mental conditioning.⁵⁴ This then will lead to reconciliation, mutual trust and healthy dialogue. This attitude is essential both for the missionary as well as the local members of the community.

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change.

in society and culture a few "innovators" can make much true witness and Christian leadership demand. We know that courage those with vision, wisdom, boldness and faith that the transformation of the culture. We need to prepare and encourage voices or the so-called "innovators" as pastoral agents in the transformation of the culture.

⁵⁵ Cf. LUZBETAK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, pp. 332-333; 340.
⁵⁶ The Slavonic and Chinese rites controversies are good examples of that (*Ibid.*, p. 354).
⁵⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 341-43.

viii) Conflicting opinions stimulate change.⁵⁵ Change is not bad in itself; in fact many times it is the sign of life and the working of the Holy Spirit in our history, including the history of the Church and the cultures. A fearful attitude towards change will only generate short-term security while obstructing long-term growth and development.⁵⁶ Hence we must show openness to difference of opinion. This of course is not to say that the Church is a democracy or that the Gospel can be voted on. Change without restraint could lead to anarchy. Conflict and differences of opinion may encourage change, but not all change is desirable. The missionary has to be prudent and wise.

ix) Anthropologists tell us of the community factors in culture, namely the quality and the character of the community affects the rate and form of change.⁵⁷ This insight is vital in making the necessary cultural changes to be faithful to the Gospel. The relative size of the community, the zeal or apathy characteristic of the community, the respect enjoyed by the Christian community among the rest, all of which have a direct bearing on mission and the effectiveness of Christian witness. Hence the missionary must work for the evangelical quality and character of the community. Christianity began as a small "sect", "least of all seeds" (Mt 13:31-32) within Judaism, but grew as a great community. It was not the size but the hidden potential that mattered. The zeal, the dedication, the sense of mission, the willingness to sacrifice, and the enthusiasm and readiness for direct preaching compensated for the infant churches' smallness.

⁵⁸ LUBZBATAK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, p. 333. No society functions without certain control systems, which can be either positive (education, rewards, praise and prestige, security, symbols, slogans, propaganda, etc.) or negative (such as punishment, fines, gossip, commands, ridicule, threat, taboos). There are positive as well as negative controls, overt controls, and subtly hidden controls (pp. 357-8).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 349-351.

Recognise and value the social control systems and adapt them in the organisation of the Christian communities.

(x) We know that aspects of culture to which the society applies little or no pressure will tend to change more readily than those which the society insists on and to which it attaches severe and inevitable sanction.⁵⁸ In the dynamic rapport between the Gospel and culture, it is necessary to determine which aspects of culture are to be insisted upon. We missionaries must recognise and value the social control systems and adapt them in the organisation of the Christian communities. To understand the apparent lack of cooperation, the recidivism, apathy, resistance or opposition on the part of the members of the Christian community, we should carefully analyze the social control system (for this we need an *insider*). Social pressures form an important part in human and Christian behaviour. Hence certain controls, especially positive ones, might be well suited for use by our communities.

(xi) Anthropologists tell us that the most easily diffused in the interaction between the Gospel and the culture is the form, that is the symbol minus the meaning; less diffusible is the second level of the culture/Gospel namely the function or meaning; most difficult is the third level, the underlying premises, values and drives.⁵⁹ To diffuse the Gospel at the third level in the culture will take a considerable amount of formation. It can only be done through a consistent and systematic catechesis or programme of formation. Hence we must insist on an ongoing and qualitative catechesis and other Christian life programmes.

⁶⁰ Syncretism is understood differently by anthropologists and missiologists. For anthropologists it is the synthesis of two or more culturally diverse beliefs or practices, especially if of a religious character. It is a terminal process (*Ibid.*, p. 314). In that sense Judaism, Christianity are all fruits of syncretism. Instead for missiologists the term syncretism refers to any theological (doctrinally) untenable amalgam. To the missiologist it is not terminal.

(xii) In developing a mission strategy the Christian community must never lose sight of status and roles. The Christian community as it develops its mission strategy, should know the whole social structure of the group. For instance in Africa syncretism is present in a community, especially on children as innovators and neglect the adults, especially the *waze*, is sociologically naive. We should never lose sight of status and roles. As the modern society grows in its complexity, we also need to place strategically the "innovators" (in the government, military and police force, educational system, associations, economic forces, political parties, communications, civic organisations). Thus the spirit of the Gospel must penetrate all groups. By ordinary living the Christian must boldly proclaim the Gospel wherever he or she is.

(xiii) One of the unavoidable results of the insertion of the Gospel into culture is the emergence of syncretic religious practices or dual allegiances. For a missiologist, syncretism⁶⁰ represents theologically untenable amalgams. They could be doctrinally untenable (in content), and hence should be rejected. But syncretic practices could also be largely unavoidable and belong to the subliminal process in any cultural change. Syncretic expressions also often reflect important, and sometimes, central values of a society that demand respect. Hence it is necessary to discern first of all the nature of the syncretism present in a community.

Then we should also remember that syncretism is not a problem for the mission continents like Africa or Asia alone. In fact, it is everyone's situation or problem. The older church-

⁶¹ Cf. LUZBEŤÁK, Louis, *The Church and Cultures: Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, pp. 360-372.

es are syncretic in some ways, when certain code of behaviour and convictions are altered (For instance there are traces of syncretism present when Christians do not recognise the hedonism, scientism, positivism, commercialism, materialism as opposed to the first commandment; sin, hell and similar truths of faith being denied or forgotten; sexual revolution with its acceptance of homosexuality, cohabitation, pornography; amoral sexual education, prostitution; alcohol abuse; abortion, euthanasia, smoking, professional boxing, drug abuse...).

Anthropology tells us that syncretic combinations are a very normal process in religious change and growth.⁶¹ Here we need to recall the Old Testament where on one hand God presents Himself as a “jealous” God who tolerates no other gods. At the same time he does not reject those in the process of purification just because they are not pure – he rejects only those who refuse purification (see the parable of the barren tree Lk 13:6-9). Syncretism hence could be a bridge and even an accelerator in the dynamic meeting between Gospel and culture.

We may also meet a form of syncretism where in actual fact the person is living in two worlds: the world of Christianity and the pagan world he left behind. In all these cases our attitude to the content should be negative; instead we could deal positively with the process (of purification, a necessary stage in most cases). We need to encourage the dialectic between the Gospel and the local cultural traditions. In that dialectic we should notice that often some very genuine needs and ideals of the people are veiled in syncretism. If those needs and ideals are listened to, built upon, the Gospel could make much progress. Hence as general principles we could suggest that the missionaries’ attitude toward syncretism

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What is said about the relationship between the Gospel and culture in the African context can also be said of the relationship between the Salesian charism and the cultures of Africa. Though some of the Salesian presences in Africa are over 100 years, most of them are largely the fruit of the "Pro-

4. Practical implications for the implanting of the Salesian charism in the cultures of Africa

Morever we need to look out for healthy Christian substitutes for those ideals and needs of the culture. If not, the independent Churches that we have all over Africa, are basically syncretic and thrive because of the ways in which they have incorporated the traditional needs and ideals. This is a big challenge to the missionaries; we should not only teach, guide and pass judgements but also value the deeply felt needs of the people (value of family, hospitality, etc.).

However the attitude suggested is not of mere "patience". We need to take positive steps to direct the syncretic processes. If not, the result will lead to a terminal condition. Here the missionary and the Church should guide the process of selection. It often happens in this process that the essentials of the Gospel remain at the periphery while the theologically minor aspects which have greater appeal with the traditional ways and values are emphasized. More time and effort then is required to give importance to those aspects of the Gospel message that are more important for life and less culturally attractive.

We need to take positive steps to direct the syncretic processes.

ject Africa" initiated about 25 years ago. If we take the latter period of bringing in the Salesian charism, what can we say about its relationship with the cultures of Africa? In this part of Africa the Salesian charism was brought by missionaries who were by and large guided by the Conciliar (Vatican II) and post-conciliar teachings and their sensitivity to the local cultures. I don't think our missionary work of the past 25 years can be accused of being ignorant of the dynamic relationship between the Gospel and the cultures; nor could it be said that the implanting of the Salesian charism was largely insensitive to the local cultures. Certainly there have been failures in being appreciative and sensitive to the local cultures, but for most part I think we have been largely open to the local cultures, also since many of the missionaries were trained in the African Colleges such as Tangaza.

I do think, however, that we as a Congregation haven't demonstrated yet the maturity of an "inculturation of the Salesian charism" through serious studies and reflection, both as regards the integration of the cultural values and ways of life, and the transformation of the cultural styles of life with our charism. We could only hope that institutions like Don Bosco Ume, Don Bosco College Moshi and the Institute of Youth Ministry would become places of such a scientific dialogue relating our charism and ministry to the local cultural situations. Such a work demands proper scientific preparation as well as lived experience of the Salesian charism, and demands the participation of local Salesians.

Questions for reflection:

What could we do to begin and promote serious scientific reflection on the on-going relationship between the Salesian charism and the local cultures?
 Could something be done to prepare a qualified team of people who will act as "yeast" and encourage the so-called "innovators" for a profound inculturation?

Question for reflection:
How can we live the Salesian form of religious life and make our choices and options with much more sensitivity to the conditions, struggles and problems of the people around?

When Mother Teresa wrote to Archbishop Perier in 1947 requesting permission to move out of the Loreto Sisters and to begin a new group she stated the following as one of her reasons: "European Orders are too rich for them they get more than they give."⁶² I think her remark is true for most of the forms of consecrated life that is being implanted in modern Africa, including that of the Salesians. Most of the forms come from the West and are dependent on resources from the West. The style and quality of life is quite often foreign to the majority of the people living around us.

Questions for reflection:
Could you identify certain African values, customs, traditions, structures that can be appreciated and incorporated into the life of the Salesian communities?
What could be some of the values that we are losing (or have lost), which a genuine inculturation could bring back to life?

The interaction between the Salesian charism and cultures is a twoway process. The encounter with the African cultures on one hand should enrich the Salesian charism and life through the integration of cultural values, customs and practices which are typically African and valuable in the local context. Besides, African Salesians could bring back some of the Salesian values that seem to be disappearing elsewhere in the congregation, such as, family spirit, the spirit of hospitality, valuing of the person rather than the achievement, etc.

Our missionary effort is to hand over the Gospel of Christ, its saving message, for which like Paul we should be able to be-our calling to take everywhere the message of the God who came in Christ to redeem those of every society primarily on the basis of their faith relationship. This faith relationship is to be worked out within the primary form of life meaningful to a people, namely their culture. The battle should be for faith in the Gospel and not necessarily for religious forms and structures, unless they clearly contradict the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. Conclusion: "Woe to me if I do not preach Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 9: 16-17)

Questions for reflection:

How can we keep up the pastoral zeal that so characterized Don Bosco and thousands of Salesians? Are we sensitive to the problems and difficulties of the world of the young?
How can we effectively challenge and hopefully overcome the compromises in faith and moral life that the young are easily deceived into?

Salesian Missionary work is to be characterised by closeness to the people, zeal for the salvation of people and the spreading of the Kingdom, especially in the world of the young. "Following the example of the Son of God, who made himself in all things like his fellow men, the Salesian missionary makes his own the values of these people and shares their hopes and anxieties."⁶³

- I believe that the Holy Spirit, the true protagonist of the mission of Christ today in the Church and the world, is raising up a new generation of African Christians who will be truly Christians and truly Africans. God never lets down His people. He is ever faithful to His word. I state this with conviction because I meet regularly many committed and genuine African Christians everywhere – in the confessionals, in the work places, in the professional world. They are proud of their culture, but they value more than anything else the gift of the Gospel in their lives. That gives me great optimism and joy. I believe the response of Cardinal Poupard to the young man who questioned him – the episode with which I opened this presentation – will be proved true: "Tomorrow, it will be you, Africans, who bring your enculturated Christianity to other countries."
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Evangelization: the Dignity of Women Human Rights

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The topic can be expounded by raising the following questions:

What is evangelization?

What does dignity of women encompass?

Who is a woman?

What are human rights?

The dictionary defines evangelization as to teach the Christian religion.

Dignity is defined as true worth and nobleness of character, calm, formal and grand behaviour, a high position, rank, office or title, a high standard of moral and social behaviour, to be treated with proper respect.

Woman is defined as a fully-grown human female, a female person, a female person with qualities such as caring for weak creatures, with interest in people.

Human rights are indicated as:

The right to life.

The right to the means to support life: adequate shelter, clothing, and reasonable amenities.

The right to an education and upbringing appropriate to the needs and possibilities of the family and society to which one belongs.

The right to work, to provide for personal necessities and to be able to meet responsibilities.

The right to marry and raise a family.

The right to own a certain amount of property with due respect to the rights of others.

There is concern that their true worth may not have been fully realized owing to such factors as cultural inhibitions, limited educational and career opportunities, invisibility in public office. Indeed women have not been treated with respect

The Dignity of Women

They may not be in Church leadership or directly involved in teaching the Christian religion but the strength and growth of the Church relies/depends on women – they do the mental but backbone tasks such as nurture and service. They need to be empowered more as teachers.

Women and Evangelization

Teaching the Christian religion has been on in Africa since the inception of Christianity. Important points to note, however, are have women been involved, have they been equipped to evangelize, has evangelization enabled them to realize and reflect their true worth, has evangelization enabled attainment of rank, office or title, as well as a high standard of moral and social behaviour, indeed allowed for treatment with respect? And how has evangelization contributed to the realization and attainment of human rights? On the basis of what has been said above, which are some of the issues that call for consideration - with regard to evangelization, the dignity of women and human rights?

The right to associate with others for matters of common interest, for example to a trade union or political party or some social or cultural grouping.

The right to freedom of speech and of information.

The right to personal freedom or liberty.

The right to religious liberty and freedom of conscience.

– rape, advertisements. Those who climb the social, economic or political ladder are said to have done so “through the skirt”.

The dignity that goes with a high standard of moral and social behaviour is compromised when women engage in anti-life practices such as prostitution, abortion, regardless of the underlying causative factors.

Human Rights

There are many women who are alive, but their quality of life is wanting. Poverty has done a big blow to the quality of shelter, clothing, education, medical care. They form the bulk of the rural poor.

While the Church is credited with western education which was initially inclined towards men, the breakdown of the traditional social structure has not received much response and remedy from the Church.

Many single women/mothers as well as the married childless have not been well received by society; indeed the Church is in a dilemma as to what to do with them. Nor has the issue of responsible parenthood and reproductive health been adequately responded to. The issue of owning property remains

a dream for many women owing to the patriarchal nature of Africa, which has infiltrated even in situations where women are financially able.

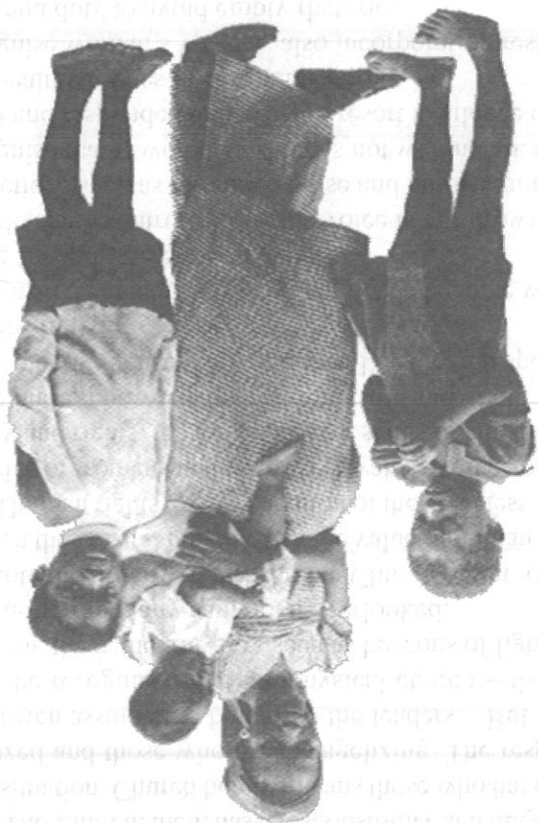
While women’s involvement in labour and political matters is minimal, the impact of women and society in general is commendable. The “Merry go round” and the small Christian communities/prayer cells/Bible study groups are a source of refuge and comfort for many women.

Women may enjoy and exercise freedom of speech but who really listens? As for the right to information, the illiteracy factor may render a good percentage of women ignorant. Per-

While women’s involvement in labour and political matters is minimal, the impact of women and society in general is commendable. Women may enjoy and exercise freedom of speech but who really listens? As for the right to information, the illiteracy factor may render a good percentage of women ignorant. Per-

- sonal freedom and liberty may be assumed but these are curtailed by ignorance and intimidation.
- As noted earlier, women fill the majority of the pews, but it is also noted that they are the majority with regard to religious tourism and the consequences of new religious movements: as participants in the bus and to how long we wait outside the narrow-headed at Reginald's station, the cathedral – are seen as beacons of light. The contribution of the laity cannot be overlooked.
- Given the above scenario one can rightly say that women have no voice and if they do then this voice is rather faint, inaudible. The Church, then, has a responsibility and duty to arrest this situation. Church hereby means those who have been evangelized and those who are evangelizing. The responsibility is often assumed to belong to the leaders. But it also ought to be recognized that the physical church – the mission station, the cathedral – are seen as beacons of light. The contribution of the laity cannot be overlooked.
- To promote the dignity of women the Church ought to:
- Awaken the general populace on the value of human dignity and human rights, on the situation of the voiceless and/or the voice of women and hence also awaken women on their dignity and rights, regardless of age, status or situation.
 - Equip and empower women to talk for and about themselves clearly: hence the women will be Church speaking for herself.
 - Recognise the qualities of woman: hence become woman caring for and interested in people.
 - Provide some control so that the voice is not drowned by distractions such as too much noise and not listening.
 - Recognise that if woman's voice is not well noted, appreciated and responded to she could resort to silence or other unhealthy modes of communication.
 - Recognise woman's voice as also incorporating responsibility and duty to avoid empty rhetoric.

The Prophetic Role of the Church



Conclusion

Evangelicalization is a human right, duty and responsibility. It should encompass all, including woman. Evangelicalization is to uplift, promote, affirm and uphold self esteem, community of one and all, and particularly the marginalized and disadvantaged. In herself woman is a dynamo that can spell well for the growth of self, Church and community. Her voice is

The prophetic voice of the Church

Conflicts come about where there is lack of democracy, that is, where there is no rule of the people. The term originated from ancient Greece to designate a government where the people share in directing the activities of the state, as distinct from governments controlled by a single class, select group, or autocrat. The definition of democracy has been expanded to describe a philosophy that insists on the right and the capacity of a people to demand for political change. Political corruption, lack of respect for rule of law, human rights violations are all common reasons cited as some of the causes of Africa's problems.

Conflict

Good news of our Lord Jesus Christ as presented in Lk 4:18-19. As evangelizers, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ commands us to go all over the world to preach the good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to the captives and set free the oppressed. In his "missionary discourse" (cf. Mt 10), Jesus taught us the paths of mission: poverty, meekness, acceptance of suffering and persecution, and the desire for justice, peace and charity. Which is why if anyone wishes to come after Jesus, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow him.

Evangelization: Preamble

Fr. Joachim Omolo Ouko, AU

Challenges of Evangelization in Conflict and Reconciliation Process

1. Spiritual: reconciliation with God in which God's redemptive love moves the sinner to repentance and contrition.
2. Psychological: reconciliation with one's self. The joyful feeling of having been forgiven by God from past guilt so as to start life afresh.
3. Social: reconciliation with one's neighbours and fellow human beings in general.
4. Ecological: reconciliation with nature and the cosmos. We cannot be reconciled with God while living in conflictual, disrespectful and abusive relationships with God's creation: air, water, land, plants, trees and animals. How can we love God when we hate his creation?

Levels of reconciliation

Reconciliation, which underlines the right ordering of relationships (peace) and fair administering of rewards and punishment (justice) is only possible where one admits the liability of doing wrong to the other. It is only after admitting that two warring parties can be reconciled in order to transform the damage caused by disagreements.

Reconciliation has always at least two sides: the party who needs to ask for forgiveness and the one who must grant pardon; the latter in his turn needs to ask for forgiveness from the first party.

It is only when we can speak of a genuine restoration of a broken relationship, the healing is accomplished by the mutual exchange of repentance and forgiveness.

Reconciliation is, therefore, the renewed walking together with those who had been alienated and separated from each other by conflict, brought about by dialogue and mutual pardon.

Reconciliation

Peace can only be obtained where justice prevails. To restore peace therefore, we must first of all correct injustices in our societies, communities and environments.

Yet in most countries of Africa the economic situation continues to deteriorate greatly due to poor planning, bad governance, nepotism and corruption. It costs African governments up to 50 percent in lost tax revenue, and in some instances, could be more than a country's total foreign debt, according to a research finding by the African Development Bank. It costs the continent nearly \$148bn a year.

The African Development Bank estimates that lower income households spend an average 2-3% of their income on bribes, while rich households spend an average of 0.9% of their income.

Yet still, corruption continues to hurt the poor by forcing them to pay for essential public services, which should be free, or by being denied such services in the absence of bribes.

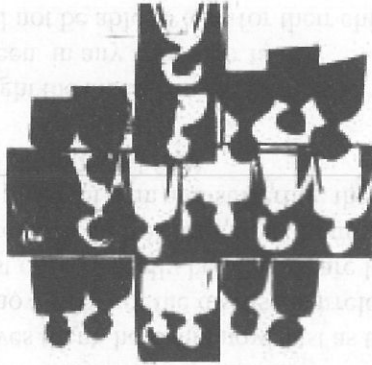
As such corruption can add up to 100 percent of the cost of government goods and services. In the process, corruption increases the prices of public services, lowers quality and restricts access by the poor.

In Angola, for instance, the last four years alone, around £600m revenue from the oil had apparently disappeared from the state's coffers.

Angola is also accused of mortgaging future oil production by running up debts on huge oil-backed loans.

In Zimbabwe the economy is in such a perilous state. Foreign currency is especially hard to come by due to massive corruption. The war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where Zimbabwean troops have been sent on a government support campaign, has for the past few years supplied an al-

ternative source of funds. Senior army officials – most of whom are close Mugabe allies, having served with him in the war of liberation in the 1970s – have made fortunes in the DR Congo. In 1996, it was estimated that up to 30bn dollars in aid for Africa ended up in foreign bank accounts, an amount equal to twice the annual GDP of Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. Although Ethiopia is one of the world's poorest and most indebted countries, which makes it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as drought, yet the effort to end corruption in that country has never been possible. This has resulted in the country's inability to pay its debt. By 1996, Ethiopia's foreign debt had amounted to more than \$10,000m, more than ten times the value of its exports. International aid fell from more than \$1,000m in 1991 to about \$600m in 1997, according to the United Nations. Neighbouring Somalia, with no proper government in existence to service its debt, has also been badly hit by drought and food shortages, and it almost certainly receives even less aid despite severe need. This is the country where illegal arms are sold openly in markets. Although corruption in developing countries is often believed to arise from the clash or conflict between traditional values and the imported norms that accompany modernization and socio-political development, the control and manipulation by the First World contributed a great deal to poverty. In spite of a huge outpouring of money by the First World, poverty continues to destroy Africa because such huge money has not been spent for the material progress or development of the continent, but to destroy it further with the inability to repay the debts. Without empowerment to farming skills, manual skills, the technical and organizational skills, this huge money would not help improve the economy, the purpose for which such money are intended.



In politics corruption may take root in different ways. It usually includes activities such as vote rigging, registration of unqualified, dead, or non-existent voters, purchase and sale of votes, and the falsification of election results. As such corruption falls in the restrictive category and involves illegal appropriation of public resources for private use or the illegal use of an individual's public position for his own personal enrichment. The bringing of judges, politicians and bureaucrats by members of the private sector is included in this category. The fact that most Africans live in societies with weak, inefficient, and poorly designed constitutional rules, which provide the government with almost unlimited power to intervene in private exchange, resource allocation is totally politicized and the civil service has replaced the market as the principal instrument for the allocation of resources. This explains why in several African countries, politicians regularly use cleanup campaigns to help them stay in power. Cleanup programs can be used to discredit members of a previous regime, to destroy the reputations of leaders of the opposition, and to improve support among the population for the incumbent regime.

Our programme in Korogocho takes care of patients with AIDS in their own homes in the slum. We provide counselling and pastoral care, basic medicines and some ARVs, food supplements and home care kits. Our aim is to keep our patients as well as possible for as long as possible. To help them come to terms with their sickness and prepare for their eventual death, so that when they die, they go to God knowing they are loved by God and by us.

Nowadays when we talk about AIDS, we say it is a disease like any other disease. But up to now we have not treated it as such. It has been so linked to sexual misbehaviour that few people can believe anything else. This attitude has had a tremendous impact on those unfortunate enough to contract AIDS. It is the cause of stigma, of denial among the patients themselves and also their relatives; it is the cause of despair, of suicide, and hundreds of patients hiding behind other diagnoses, like TB and Typhoid.

I think our job as carers, counsellors, pastoral workers, whatever our ministry is, is to try and help those sick with AIDS to know that God loves them, here and now, just as they are. Once they are sick, how they got the disease is irrelevant. It is difficult for most of us to really believe we are loved by God, how much more difficult it is for many of our sick. Besides having a lot of physical pain and suffering, they are also carrying a burden of guilt and fear:

- guilt that they caught the disease in the first place, (though it may not have been in any way their fault)
- guilt that they will not be able to care for their children

holds to her cheek a fretful child, making it better immedi-
being lifted up and held by God, just as a mother lifts up and
Ronald Rolheiser said that the sacraments are a moment of
increase in both physical and spiritual strength.

they really are the Touch of God in their lives; we see a great
We see the effectiveness of the sacraments. For our patients
listened to.

mu'ya prayers are not enough; the patients need to be really
this; every parish needs to train pastoral care workers. Ju-
toral care. There are not enough priests and sisters to provide
the patients achieve this growth there is a need for good pas-
patients with AIDS in the space of a few months. But to help
ing ready to die. We see the same thing happening with young
ing, and accepting of what their life has been, and even be-
old people mellow, become more tolerant and understand-
AIDS can result in tremendous growth. It is normal to see
painting a very bleak picture, but the pain and suffering of
finally achieve acceptance and peace before they die. I am
back to the earlier stages of anger and depression before they
Having passed through all these stages, they will then revert

- acceptance.
 - depression
 - bargaining
 - anger
 - denial
 - shock
- Then they will go through all the stages of grieving:
- fear of starvation.
 - fear of eviction by the landlord
 - fear of rejection by neighbours and even family
 - fear of what may happen to their children
 - fear of dying
 - baby
 - guilt that they have infected a partner, and perhaps also a

It is easy to think of children today as just children who need to be fed and educated and loved as children. The children of

The Children

6. ARVs when indicated.
5. Medical care and antibiotics to treat opportunistic infections.
4. Prophylactic Cotrimoxazole to prevent opportunistic infections.
3. Healthy lifestyle with enough food.
2. Psychological balance with good counselling.
1. Pastoral care. A peaceful heart, besides leading to a great sense of freedom, also builds the immune system.

There are many aspects in the treatment of AIDS, both for palliative care and for boosting the immune system. If I were to put them in order of importance this is how I would rank them.

- by really listening to the patient
 - by understanding about the sickness, and the fear it brings
 - appropriate use of touch, home care
 - praying in a way that expresses the patient's own feelings
 - appropriate choice of psalms, readings, etc.
 - staying with a patient up to the end.
- The rest of the course is on how to show that love:

1. That God loves this patient here and now.
2. That the patient will never be able to believe in this great love of God for him, unless he experiences love from us.

We train pastoral workers in Korogocho. There are two

main themes they need to learn.

Can you imagine what a tremendous reassurance this experience of being held by God is to a patient who is full of fear and pain?

today have a very different life and need a great deal of support and understanding. The children of our patients in many places are the main carers of their sick parents. A child of 8 or 9 may be the sole carer of a dying mother, it can be very frightening for her, especially if she has already watched her father die, and now realises that she is going to lose her mother too. Sometimes when visiting in the village we can think there is a lot of adult support, because when we enter the house, neighbours come in too. But when we go, very often so do the neighbours, leaving the child alone for 12 hours with total responsibility. Last week one of our patients died in the middle of the night, she was alone except for a 10 year old girl and a small baby. The child sat with her dead mother all night.

Kenya is not a child friendly society, I don't mean that children are not loved, they are but parents don't show it. I would like to delete from the Bible the phrase: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Our children need more affirmation, especially now. A 12 year old girl may take her baby brother to the clinic for immunisation, and be sent away and told to tell her mother to come. The child may be too shy to say the mother is too sick. That baby will not be immunised.

A small boy is late for school; does anyone ask him what he had to do before coming to school? Perhaps fetch water, wash the baby, make porridge for the younger children, change his mother's bed. When he goes home again he will cook a meal and do the washing, or perhaps go out to try and sell soap to get money to buy the meal. A boy like him, who is often in trouble for being late and doesn't get his homework done, will probably drop out of school, because it is all too difficult. Children blame themselves, if a mother is in a stage of depression or anger, the child thinks it's his fault. Many children even blame themselves for a parent's sickness.

Children don't know how to grieve. When a parent dies the child may go and play, not because he feels like it; he just doesn't know what else to do. We need to help children

"No cure will come in time to change this man's life except the surprise of being loved."



grieve. Every school holiday we have a memorial service for the children in Korogocho to help them thank God for their parents and to recognise that they loved them and still love them even if they are no longer with them. Maintaining this link also keeps family values alive in the children. Finally, I would like to say that the care of patients with AIDS and their children is not a job for a specialised group. It is a job for all of us. There is a need for the involvement of every one of your sisters, brothers and priests, and also all the Christians in our parishes.

Shiela Cassidy wrote, talking about patients dying of cancer: *"No cure will come in time to change this man's life except the surprise of being loved."*

Road to the Essence of Youth Spirituality in the Context of Emergencies

Fr. James Pulickal, sdb

It is good to remember that the Valdocco of Don Bosco was in a context of Emergencies. Youth by its very definition is in the context of emergencies. That speaks a lot for the relevance of the Salesian charism in an emergency context.

A. The real problems of youth in today's context

The lack of direction, of horizons, of meaning, of a Project of Life: these lead them to live at a superficial level, trying out things and experiences without any element which unifies life and gives it vitality (AGC 382, p.5).

B. Solutionlove, home (Constitutions, p. 254)

1. Fidelity to the "Oratorian Criterion" (Const. 40, DB's Letter from Rome).

2. **Animating presence** ...Resonating Presence...among the young (The Preventive System. Constitutions, p. 246).

3. **Our communities**, like every Christian community, must become genuine **schools of prayer** where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just imploring help but in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion until the heart truly **'falls in love'** (AGC 386, p. 46).

4. Settings with a strong spiritual character must in the first place propose and live **occasions of deep spiritual**

experience with young people.

5. **We take the first step** in approaching the young and joining them... we travel with them along the same road, listening to them and sharing their hopes and anxieties ...

- love and respect.
3. The emergency and vulnerability situation of the youth is the best for receptivity if handled with the greatest of care who long to share the world.
 2. Receptivity, openness, spontaneity and freedom is the very nature of youth. And it is the paradise for educators who long to share the world.
 1. Be the show-how to bring about a know-how in them: towards a know-Jesus through our show-Jesus in our lives.
- E. Impressionable Years (The Most Open, Flexible and Receptive)*

D. Love is Taught ... Picked up Consciously and Unconsciously... Learned.

1. Garry Homes is a creative lover who runs a centre for the disabled of Britain. His centre is called "Home for the Homeless". He enjoys making his inmates and friends and collaborators write portraits of others and their own... He stresses that we all have a sixth sense to pick up what people feel, more than what they say.
 2. Don Bosco's wisdom made him choose the right age group, and of course, the principle of **make yourself loved**. Love, spontaneity, genuineness, peace, joy, freedom, dignity, fearlessness, confidence, trust, faith, hope, vision, passion and enthusiasm have to be cultivated, nurtured and loved into being.
- C. Genuineness, Spontaneity, Sensitivity*

we patiently explain to them the demanding message of the Gospel... and we stay with them to repeat the gesture of breaking the bread and stirring up in them the ardour of faith that will transform them into credible witnesses and proclaimers of God's Word (GC 23, 93; AGC 386, pp. 47-49).

F. Situations where Education and Evangelization take place

1. Influence of the Society on the environment ...can build or break, decay or deform or cause maturing.
2. We can analyse the young best in their social context rather than just through psychological or spiritual research.
3. If an environment has produced a saint, the same setting can facilitate access to sanctity for many others.
4. Something could be learned from Nobel prize winners. Michael Warren comments on Bruner's book 'The Culture of Education': "Research has shown that a person's chances of winning a Nobel prize in Science are sharply increased by one's having worked in a laboratory in which an earlier prize winner had worked, apparently because of the habits of work, the kind of encouragement offered, the atmosphere of creative research established, the allocation of research money and the awareness of specific procedures needed for world class scientific inquiry."

G. Learning to Lean On Jesus

1. "Make yourself loved." As they get close to you, get into you, into the very recesses of your inner self – the spiritual, psychological and emotional self – they must discover a rock-like stability as in the God of Israel, as Jesus was and is.
2. Yahweh is the Rock of Israel, the Rock of refuge, the Rock of deliverance, the Rock who bore Israel, an everlasting Rock. No Rock like the God of Israel, Blessed Rock, the Righteous and Faithful Rock, the Rock in whom there is no wrong.
3. Youth who had parents, teachers, leaders and elders who possessed a tinge of these characteristics of the ideal Shepherd are models and leaders even in the most trying of emergencies.



Learning to lean.
 I am learning to lean on Jesus
 Earning more power
 Than I ever dreamt
 I am learning to lean on Jesus.
 Sad broken hearted
 And in all through
 I know I'll find peace
 That is so, so rich
 And all in life he asks
 Is a child-like trust and a heart
 That is learning to lean
 Learning to lean...
 I am learning to lean on Jesus.

4. The longer we live intertwined in their lives, the more they discover and trust and lean on us and imbibe our priorities and values... the priorities and values of Jesus ... And they will be able to say like St. Paul: "For us to live is Christ" or "Our entire attention is on the finishing line as we run towards the prize to which Christ calls us — Life on high with Jesus Christ" (the fullness of life).

Salesian Missionary Spirituality in Africa Today

Sr. Rosetta Guarnier fma

The title contains several different areas that need to be examined and then some practical steps towards action need to be identified. What are the areas?

- a) Salesian
- b) Missionary
- c) Spirituality
- d) Africa today

Each of these areas could rightfully be given a full day of its own in order to do justice to the many aspects contained in each. I obviously cannot do more than highlight a few key aspects which I feel to be of importance having lived and worked here in East Africa for twenty years. I will try to touch on each of these areas without, however, necessarily following the order listed above.

As Salesian Family we tend to look to Don Bosco to understand what is meant by Salesian Spirit, however, as we all know is not original to Don Bosco – he simply applied the teaching and attitudes of St. Francis of Sales, his patron, to the social/cultural context in which he lived. I would like therefore to base my reflections today on some key concepts from the thought of St. Francis of Sales and in them we will undoubtedly recognize many of the characteristics which informed Don Bosco's style of mission. I would like then to begin with a consideration of what is meant by spirituality. In his book *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition*, Jordan Aumann writes:

Gospel spirituality adapts itself to every age, but each historical situation and each culture responds to the imperatives

Gospel spirituality adapts itself to every age, but each historical situation and each culture responds to the imperatives of the Gospel in accordance with the needs and capabilities proper to itself.

of the Gospel in accordance with the needs and capabilities proper to itself. The spirituality of the Gospel is therefore a dynamic evolution which cannot be restricted to any particular age or fixed permanently in any historical context (p. 18).

St Francis of Sales expressed the same idea but in his own imitable style when he used the following image of a flower arranger when thinking of spirituality:

The flower seller Glycera had such great skill in arranging flowers that with the same sort of flowers she would make a great variety of bouquets....In the same way, the Holy Spirit inspires and sets out the teaching on devotion in such a great variety, presenting it through the words and writings of his servants. While the doctrine is always one and the same, yet the compositions in which it is set out are very different according to the variety of ways used of putting them together....

God's will is
that all might
be saved and
come to
knowledge of
the truth (1
Tim. 2: 4b).

Francis follows in the lines of the great traditions which preceded him. He makes no claim to be teaching a doctrine which is new – only searching for an expression of the values passed on from apostolic times which can be meaningful for the times in which he lived, could be applicable in the concrete situations in which people found themselves. In other words, helping people develop those attitudes, sentiments, practices which would enable them to live in union with Jesus day by day.

In his early years Francis went through a period of deep spiritual crisis in which he tried to understand the teachings of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas which seemed to imply some form of predestination – some are destined from all eternity to be saved, some to be damned. This misunderstanding of their teaching which was nonetheless propounded in his days caused him great anguish since it seemed so contrary to his own experience and understanding of God. Eventually he re-

solved his crisis by following his own intuitions which he supported from various Bible passages which show that *God's will is that all might be saved and come to knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim. 2: 46). This is the foundational belief on which Francis will build his spirituality – his own particular flower arrangement.

In this sense Salesian spirituality is necessarily **missionary** – it is the urge which comes from the deep possession of the truth that God desires that all may come to him and be saved. Since God wants the salvation of all, all must be brought to know this *missionary outreach*, and the means to salvation must be made accessible to all – ‘devotion’ to use a term of Francis.

This idea is central to our work in Africa since the same theme was echoed in the Synod for Africa: “God’s redeeming love embraces the whole of humanity, every race, tribe and nation: thus it also embraces all the peoples of Africa” (EA 27).

In a later article the document speaks of the need for inculturation: “...the process by which ‘catechesis takes flesh in the various cultures’” (EA 59). Since another speaker will deal with this issue more at length, I will not attempt to dwell on it in this presentation except to say that although in Francis’ time, the word inculturation was not in vogue as it is now, it was, however, exactly what Francis was trying to do in writing his *Introduction to the Devout Life*. In his days much of the available spiritual advice was written for people following the monastic life; so Francis saw that his task was to make relationship with God accessible in the every day life of people, busy going about their everyday affairs.

In terms of the spirituality of Francis, this desire to make the spiritual life accessible to all is closely linked to the important ideas of *Creation and Incarnation*. In one of his last Christmas sermons, Francis refers to Creation as the first visitation of God’s love, Incarnation the second.

According to Fr. Eunan McDonnell S.D.B., the originality of Salesian Spirituality, however, lies in Francis' understanding of love which continues and is itself the story of salvation: 'God is one, sole, and most uniquely supreme perfection and this perfection is one, sole, most purely simple and most simply pure act. Since it is simply the divine essence itself, it is therefore always permanent and eternal' (St. Francis of Sales)."

[In the footnote to this quotation, Fr. Eunan notes that the original French uses a present continuous tense which gives the sense that, for Francis, the being of God expresses a continual movement, creating and speaking ceaselessly through creation.]

Fr. Eunan goes on to say that in this understanding of creation as an ever present activity of God we see a reflection of the God who journeys with his people as the ever present 'Yahweh', our companion through the journey of life, always creatively at work in our lives.

Why this activity, this movement on the part of God? Because God is love, and love expresses itself in movement, activity, in doing the loving thing. "God's love is a movement, or at least an active habit tending to movement" (St. Francis of Sales). This continual creative act of God because of God's love, emphasizes God's involvement in the story of our salvation. Love, then, is not a property of God. It is not something which God can decide to give here and withhold there. It is not love in the sense of sentiment or passing fancy, but a deep inbuilt disposition to charity which does not change

through time. Thus when Francis describes God's love as an 'activity' or 'movement' he is describing a way of being. God's love is a movement which actively involves him in our lives, culminating in the gift of his only son.¹

Von Balthasar takes the words of Augustine and reorders them in order to express this truth which is the motivating force for St. Francis: "Your heart, O God is restless, until we rest in you."²

These are some of the theological bases on which Francis built his spirituality. I would now like to draw out some practical implications for us in this African continent of today to which we have given our life.

The first question I would like us to ask ourselves concerns the motivating force of our work. I believe that we can 'tune in' to this 'restlessness' of God's heart who longs for the hearts of his children to rest in him only through a life of deep prayer.

among us, and the Rector Major has been at pains to point this out in his letters and conferences, who are great builders of schools, runners of oratories, sources of handouts – because 'that's what Salesians do', without necessarily, however, being consumed by the desire to help all, and in Don Bosco's particular expression of the Salesian charism, especially the young, to come to live their every day life close to Jesus. I would like to remind you of something the Rector Major wrote in his letter of July/September 2003:

"Not infrequently, in visiting the Congregation, I have come across confreres brimful of apostolic energy and courage who are working in amazing works for the benefit of youngsters, but who do not seem motivated by a similar zeal for God. If on the one hand one cannot but admire their dedication, on the other one cannot help wondering what is the real motive force behind such great activity..."³

I believe that we can 'tune in' to this 'restlessness' of God's heart who longs for the hearts of his children to rest in him only through a life of deep prayer.

In another letter of October/December 2003, he writes while commenting on the importance of the annual spiritual retreat: "Our kind of life, with its multiple activities and few practices of piety in common, runs the risk of making us fall into a frantic activism with its threefold consequences: physical fatigue, mental stress and spiritual superficiality which, far from converting us into 'contemplatives in action', make us at best workaholics or – in the worst cases – mere functionaries rather than missionaries... The only way to combat such negative consequences of activism and give depth to our life, giving it new meaning and filling it with dynamism which makes us live not in a bureaucratic manner (doing what one is bound to do) but creatively (in the image of God our Father and creator – cf. Jn. 5: 17-18) and salvifically (prolonging the saving activity of the Lord Jesus – cf. Acts 3: 1-10), is by becoming first of all 'contemplatives in prayer'. An intimate relationship with the Lord will help to remind us that it is he who is the Lord of the vineyard and of the harvest, who causes the seed to grow, who charts times and rhythms. Similarly, from close union with him we shall learn the secrets of his Kingdom, we shall understand more deeply his plan of salvation and make his pastoral charity our own." These reflections of the Rector Major give emphasis to ideas which came out of the last Salesian General Chapter: "...our communities are called today more than ever in the past to make visible to young people, especially the poorest and most in need, the primacy of God, who has entered our life, won us over and placed us at the service of his Kingdom, as signs and bearers of his love" (GC25, 22). This aspect has been given such importance that it is placed as the first priority of the Salesian Congregation for the period 2002-2008. (cf. AGC 380, Jan./March 2003).

A positive development here in East Africa which is a response to this 'restlessness' of God to possess the hearts of his children, in my opinion, is the SYM movement. Although it needs still a lot of development and much more reflection on

"...our communities are called today more than ever in the past to make visible to young people, especially the poorest and most in need, the primacy of God, who has entered our life, won us over and placed us at the service of his Kingdom, as signs and bearers of his love" (GC25, 22).

how to set up realistic support networks to help sustain the young in a social context which is sending out very ambiguous messages, it has already done a lot to help young people feel they are not alone in trying to live lives of holiness. Keeping young people off the streets is only a first, although very important step, but for people consumed with the restlessness of God to possess the hearts of these young people, it can never be enough.

In the same letter of July/September 2003 mentioned above, the Rector Major says:

“...I become ever more convinced that the greatest and most widespread problem among the young are not those that hit the headlines like drugs and alcohol, and not even confusion in the area of sexuality, even though so many young people are unfortunately involved in them – and this is a problem to which we cannot remain indifferent. The real problem is the lack of direction, of horizons, of meaning, of a project of life. This leads them to live at a superficial level, trying out things and experiences but without any element that unites their life and gives it vitality...”

God’s ‘restlessness’ for his people was so strong that it led to Incarnation, God’s initiative to make his love known through visible, tangible signs. Here the Letter to the Philippian is extremely challenging. God left what was rightfully his (divinity) in order to assume what was rightfully ours (humanity). Paul writes: “He emptied himself...” – kenosis, and as I see it, the same self-emptying is required of the missionary who is restless for all to be saved. We come from different countries and each of us carries the cultural heritage, patterns of thought, ways of behaving which are rightfully ours. How ready are we really to ‘empty’ ourselves so that the message of salvation may be heard and may be truly assumed by the people of Africa?

SYM is
definitely an
attempt to
help the
young find a
project of life
within which
they can find
meaning.

I would like to draw on some reflections of Martin Nkafu Nkemkwa in his book *Il Pensare Africano come "Vitalogia"*. He invites his readers to see that the African has a radically different perspective on life. Those of us who come from the West are products of a long philosophical tradition going back to the ancient Greeks whose philosophical categories continue to inform our thinking today. He emptied himself...? – we cannot remove such an inheritance from ourselves. It would be to impoverish the world to do so; however, we can open our minds to try to enter deeply into another worldview which, as the author says, sees 'being' as secondary to the fundamental African principle of life force. How capable are we of assuming this alternative life view as different but of equal validity to our own? Sometimes we make superficial comments about Africans which reveal our deep-seated condescension in their regard. So is our evangelizing task that of helping Africans become more like us, or of joining Christ in the process of his 'self-emptying' in order that all might hear the message of God's love wrapped in their own language rather than ours? Here I am not, of course, referring only to the knowledge of an African language like Cibemba or Kicongo or Kiswahili, but the deep understanding of the African world view which is not European nor American nor Asian but African.

I would like to conclude with some reflections on one or two African values which are of great importance if we are to truly help people live with the certainty that God desires them and walks with them even in the midst of the tremendous difficulties which most Africans face every day of their lives. The Synod for Africa made an appeal for the family "...to become a privileged place for evangelical witness" (EA 92). I believe it is true to say that the family unit is passing through a period of severe trial throughout the African continent with the consequent threat to the very fabric of the society. In as many concrete gestures of solidarity as are possible to us I see it of great importance that we help Christians

build solid families which the Synod referred to as: "...a true 'domestic church', a community which believes and evangelizes, a community in dialogue with God and generously open to the service of humanity" (EA 92). If I did not know this article was referring to family, I might have thought it was referring to the religious community, and it is to the aspect of the witness of our communities that I would now like to turn my attention as a means of strengthening family in Africa. Both SDB and FMA recent Chapters have emphasized the need for strong communities. The vision statement from the GC 21 of the FMA reads:

"Community, the dream of God and the cry of our world today, urgently challenges our communities." We also reaffirmed the following conviction:

We, Salesian Sisters, believe that the spirituality of communion is the energy which regenerates the Family Spirit. It is a participation in the welcoming and compassionate love of God, who calls us to make our lives and our relationships more humane. Lived in generosity and joy, it is both prophecy and passion for the Kingdom.

While we work, therefore, to support the African family in the face of the many challenges of modern society and the strong pressures to adopt a western lifestyle and values, our own communities can become prophetic. In many places our communities are international and this in itself witnesses to people that Gospel values can prevail over all natural divisions and distinctions which could otherwise be present among us. To see us living together as a happy united family

demonstrates to people the unity to be found through living in close relationship with Jesus and adopting his values and lifestyle. God's heart is restless until he sees us living in the harmony which is the reflection of his own Trinitarian nature. To return again to the vision of Francis of Sales, he writes in a letter to one of his correspondents: "The children of the world are separated one from another because their hearts are in different places; but the children of God whose hearts are where their treasure is and who all have the same treasure – which is the same God – are consequently always bound and united together."

Helping ourselves and the people we are called to serve in mission to live with God as the real treasure of our lives is the other very practical challenge which faces us in Africa today. I think it is true to say that the majority of us in our experience of working with Christian communities in the African continent are aware of the serious dichotomies which exist between the faith which is professed and the actual living out of that faith in the moral decisions which face the ordinary Christian in everyday life. Hence the massive corruption prevalent in most countries and the permissive sexual behaviour which has allowed AIDS to grow rapidly in our societies.

The Synod for Africa faced these situations squarely. While acknowledging the great diversity which exists within the African Continent it found, however, that many negative factors exist in common: "One common situation, without any doubt, is that Africa is full of problems. In almost all nations there is abject poverty, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation. The results stare us in the face: misery, wars, despair" (EA 40).

What then does Salesian Spirituality have to say to people who live with these hardships day after day? First of all, Francis encouraged people to walk with God 'as a man walks with his friend.' The foundational concept of Salesian spirituality, that God wants everyone to be saved, leads Francis to con-

sider God, as I mentioned before when talking of the ever present feature of creation, as actively at work to bring about the fulfillment of our deepest longings. People need to be able to hold on to this hope in the terrible difficulties of their lives:

Our Lord leads us by the hand and does with us works which ask for our co-operation. Go therefore...to the work for which God has chosen you. He will be at your right hand, so that no difficulty will shake you. He will hold you with his hand so that you may follow his way. He has watched over you till now; all you have to do is keep a tight hold on the hand of providence and God will help you in all that happens, and where you cannot walk he will carry you in his arms. What need you fear since you belong to God who has told us so firmly that to them that love God all things work together unto good. (St. Francis of Sales).

While some may use such examples to fall into a kind of passive resignation, even fatalistic attitude towards life, Francis would see that such abandonment can only be achieved by the active movement of 'keeping a tight hold of the hand of Providence.' How may one achieve this? In various pieces of advice given to Jane de Chantal, the following 'active' characteristics may be found:

In his mind, great occasions for exhibiting one's devotion rarely presented themselves, but little occasions were there everyday: checking anger, selfishness and pride in unexpected and ordinary encounters was a great deal more humbling than waiting for a dramatic episode through which one might display one's fervour. In fact, the constant and ordinary repetition of small loving acts was, in his view, the most efficacious means of humility which in its turn, was the living out of the Jesus of Matthew's gospel.²

In short, our spirituality then asks us to walk with God as a friend who deeply desires our happiness and will lead us through the circumstances of our life to our own deepest good. Our task is to remain faithful to him in doing the loving thing as required by our daily duties and the needs of the people around us: family members, fellow students, work colleagues, chance acquaintances. To the priests I suggest the need for good spiritual direction in the tradition of Francis of Sales and our own Don Bosco who never spared himself the long hours in the confessional if it could enable him to reach the heart of his boys with the love of God. To us all lies the challenge of living faithfully the authentic traditions of our own spirituality knowing that they respond to the deepest longings of the African heart, convinced that God's heart is indeed restless until we rest in him.

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[Each participating Province was requested to present a short report on the impact of *Ecclesia in Africa* on the life of the Province from the perspective of evangelization. The following are the reports presented.]

I. AFE AND ECCLESIA IN AFRICA

The celebration of *Ecclesia in Africa* and the new era it opened to the African Church did indeed inaugurate a season of grace and brought a springtime of hope for our AFE Province. Although the blessings are many, the mounting challenges too are equally numerous.

The Impact of the Synod

- Our Salesian presences were reoriented to the rediscovered ecclesial image of the Church in Africa as Family – *to live and to make experience of the Church*. (A rediscovery of the SCCs in our parishes, various groups with specific charisms).
- Greater attention was given to the formation of Christians rather than to establishing structures (Catechists Formation, Faith Formation Programmes for Young People).
- Our ministry to young people focused on the spirit of *sensus ecclesiae*. Young people in our Youth Groups discovered the importance and the effectiveness of the *Peer Ministry* (Youth Reach Out programmes).
- The challenge of the African synod brought the concretes and our apostolate closer to the people and their needs.

- Our own approach to first evangelization and faith formation, especially among the young has taken a different perspective (Youth Evangelization and Empowerment).
- The Province as a whole worked towards a greater collaboration with the local Church through various joint ventures in the different Dioceses especially in the Youth Ministry and Education sector (New presences like Shinyanga School, Kakuma Refugee Centre, Tonj, El Obeld).
- Salesians made every effort to learn the local languages and were introduced to African culture.
- Salesian missionary spirit in the four countries contributed to the growth in local vocations.
- This new awareness enriched our own faith and strengthened our missionary commitment.
- The creative involvement of the laity in our various apostolates was another success story. This opening has enlarged the horizon of our ministry.
- Our apostolate in various presences were streamlined more in tune with the demands and challenges of the African Church. For example;
 - ◊ Activities promoting Inter-religious Dialogue were initiated in the Sudan;
 - ◊ The Development Office was established in Nairobi (Evangelization and Development);
 - ◊ The Communications Sector was given a new facelift in DBYES;
 - ◊ The Street Boys Project received greater attention as one of the priorities of the Province;
 - ◊ *Train the Trainer* Seminars were launched with great vigour in Swahili in many Dioceses of Tanzania, where even priests and religious participated along with the youth leaders;
 - ◊ Our collaboration with the civil authorities, NGOs and other like-minded people in the Youth Sector became very conspicuous (Kakuma, DBYES, Bosco Boys).

1. As a Province we need to make more efforts to live the missionary spirit – *Missionary Communities* and *Missionary Salesians* (Especially among the young confreres). We want to be evangelizing communities.
2. We feel challenged to honestly evaluate the witness value in our personal life styles and our Structures.
3. Although we had committed ourselves very much to the cause of the Displaced and the Refugees we have not responded effectively to the scourge of AIDS in this region of E. Africa, which is very volatile.
4. The missionary aspect needs to be strengthened more in the Formation Programme of our Province. Formation needs to be oriented towards *missionarietà*.
5. The proliferation of Christian sects and the invasion of evangelical movements from outside Africa pose a great threat.
6. The waves of Globalization and its negative traits are influencing very much the area of evangelization and faith formation in E. Africa. Here are some indicators:
 - ◇ Individualism, relativism, religious indifference and subjectivism esp. among the Young;
 - ◇ The neglect of the poor and the economically disadvantaged;
 - ◇ Education has become a rare commodity for the privileged few;
 - ◇ Youth are socially and culturally alienated and tend to ape the emerging western style of life;
 - ◇ Although we have a good group of lay collaborators in the Salesian Family (Cooperators and Past Pupils) we still feel the need to give more attention to their formation, their insertion into the Family and encouraging more local units in our presences.

ground. There are also Salesians who concentrate too much ready to be challenged by the youth, especially in the play-among the young is not effective. Some Salesians are not poses a number of **challenges**. Sometimes our presence Despite the above mentioned achievements, the future inter-religious association of Young Christian Students.

and pastoral formation organised by the Diocese, and the and prayer leaders, sending 1 or 2 lay persons for biblical Commission, charismatic renewal, seminars for catechists In our parishes, we try to promote the Justice and Peace these booklets is also another development. Savio, Don Bosco and Francis de Sales. The publication of receive 3 summarized small booklets of the life of Dominic feel a sense of belonging. Each of these youths is going to tending these rallies are becoming more responsible and a year have had great impact on the young. Youths at- the youth in our communities. Youth rallies occurring once youth delegate goes around the Vice-province animating also a positive development in the Vice-province. The The appointment of a full time Provincial Youth Delegate is benefiting from these technical schools.

themselves with different skills. Every year about 350 are schools have also helped many young people to equip on both human and spiritual formation. Our technical tion. Apart from intellectual formation, we do emphasize in our presences, receiving both formal and informal educa- there has been an increase in the number of young people The **impact** the Synod had on our SDB communities is that schools, 3 youth centres, 9 parishes, and 1 formation house. with South Africa. In the province we have 4 technical Sisters working in Zambia belong to the same province Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Namibia. The Salesian ZMB is a Vice-province extending to four countries:

II. SALESIAN PRESENCE IN ZMB VICE-PROVINCE 10 YEARS AFTER THE AFRICAN SYNOD

on structures/buildings. The challenge is to try to strike a balance – building the faith of the people and being present among the young.

Another challenge is to have qualified local conferees who have assimilated the spirit of Don Bosco. Some missionaries have not yet inserted themselves into the culture of the local people. They are not ready to assimilate their values, or to learn their language.

There is indeed the need to esteem the culture of local people. Missionaries should aim at restoring the dignity, pride and aspirations of the young people, their self-esteem and self-confidence, and promote their spiritual values. Actually, there is great value in reconstructing the traditional African philosophy that defines the individual as meaningful only in relation to the others. To be is to be in good relationship with the others in the community.

Last but not the least, lay people (especially our Salesian cooperators) should also be well prepared to be more involved in evangelization. We cannot work in isolation. There is a need, therefore, for us to enter into open dialogue with the local clergy and other religious congregations, and work together with all men and women of good will to give hope to the youth.

Social / cultural / religious changes taking place in our four countries (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Namibia). In the SADC region, these four countries are the most affected by AIDS. In addition, there is no stability in these countries. Despite the absence of war, there's exploitation, poverty, injustice, abuse of children, drug addiction, etc. Many young people, especially girls, are deprived of the right to education. The youth are deprived of access to gainful employment, relevant education, counselling facilities, and power to make major community decisions.

There is also a marginalization of the media. When we look at the rapid political and social change and the cultural confrontation, the mass media play a highly significant role in

1. Improving and investing in the youth centres. There the youth are given skills and challenged to stand firm in their faith, in their actions, and in what they hold dear in spite of the fact that others, mostly those older than themselves, may seek to discredit them and their views because of their youthfulness and inexperience.
2. Choosing one area of our Salesian mission. For instance, evangelization in technical schools. Then to invite those working in technical schools to share their experiences, evaluate and find the solution.
3. To have a good preparation for those people attending a meeting like this one.

Suggestions:

shaping the people of tomorrow. Catholic newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting stations have a role to play. But the presence of Catholic lay professionals is the key to influence our modern culture. Looking at the media which have become the primary socializing force, replacing family, school, and Church.... There is need to inculcate the mass media culture, and the Gospel, communicating it with courage and boldness. This requires a profoundly personal spiritual experience, high professionalism, immersion into the cultural environment of the audience, and bold imagination. Missionaries have to read the signs of the time and cultivate interest and be updated in the current affairs. They need to keep up with the pace of demographic growth, the progress of technology, or the fast changing culture. Young people expect a theologically educated person to be equipped to see how all aspects of life – politics, economics, religion, social and cultural realities – affect the individual and the community. It is precisely in these fields that the mission of the Church is to be found.

The Province of the FMA in Southern Africa is composed of Zambia, Lesotho and South Africa, while the SDB Province is composed of Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa.

Our Presences in Africa 10 years after the African Synod

Our communities have been influenced by the Synod in different ways. There have been areas in which we can say that we have achieved certain aspects. Other aspects need more attention.

Cultural Changes

- The value of sharing and caring is diminishing in strength because the struggle to survive is great. The extended family cannot cope any more with the AIDS orphans or with relatives who are sick; therefore, even children are left alone to fend for themselves or for other siblings, sometimes just a few years older than them.
- Traditional and religious marriage is practised very little in many instances.
- There are many families where each child has a different father.
- The economic Globalization is impacting and changing African reality.
- People are losing the certainty that mother nature is the main provider for their needs. Leaving the agricultural field, they become very dependant on the big cities and many times they do not have the means to provide for their family.
- Economic Globalization puts people in a situation of wanting, desiring, etc., but it does not create possibilities where they can earn the means to provide for what they need and want.

- Even though African people have quite a strong religiosity (cultural and Church religion), there is a lack of commitment in the specific group they belong to.
 - Sometimes they change from one "church to another", commenting that they do not find any difference between one profession or the other.
 - Sometimes they consider their faith as a very personal issue without any community implication.
- Evangelization*
- In S.A. we are educating ourselves with the spirit and process of the RCIA (The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults or the Baptismal Catechumenate).
- Youth Education*
- One area in which we can say that we are working well is the field of YOUTH.
- We have started a process of formation for leadership so that some youth will be enabled to adopt "youth to youth" ministry with competence.
 - This process is manifested by taking concrete steps to establish the Salesian Youth Movement as an effective means of empowering young people to be agents of evangelization.
 - Through education we restore the dignity of young people. We have formal schools and community schools. We offer education to faith, education to justice, to intercultural dialogue and to ecology. This is done by catechesis, retreats, networking with other organizations especially with families, organizing seminars, workshops...
 - *LOVE MATTERS* is an AIDS prevention programme directed to young people. It is a LEARN TO LIVE AND YES PROGRAMME.

to make them agents of evangelization.
 6. To be able to give the right formation to young people to
 Parish.. Youth... Women.
 5. To increase the responsible involvement of the Laity.
 houses and in our communities.

4. More African Tradition/Culture formation in formation
 3. More involvement in the Small Christian Communities.
 justice, to intercultural dialogue and to ecology.
 2. To strengthen the education of young people to faith, to
 (to move from the old style of catechesis to a more com-
 munity based style).

1. To make the RCIA a living instrument of evangelization

Challenges

and Bible sharing, skills centres, etc.
 courses, clubs, cooperatives (farms and gardens), catechesis,
 faith. This work is done through encounters, meetings,
 together towards self reliance and we offer education to
 We offer skill training. We help them to organize and work
 and their rights).

self-awareness (self-knowledge, knowledge of their culture,
 women. It is done by giving formation to women regarding
 One of our priorities is to promote the empowerment of

Women Empowerment

community schools.
 • We welcome in our houses and in our educative environ-
 ments the weakest AIDS victims: the orphans. We pro-
 vide integral education to the poorest through our com-

IV. ETHIOPIA-ERITREA: THE SYNOD FOR AFRICA AND OUR VICE PROVINCE Part I - The Beginning

1. *Participation in the study of the Instrumentum Laboris*
➤ Observations presented particularly regarding the need of a wider treatment of the problems of the Youth in Africa.

2. *Participation in the presentation and study of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation at*

- National Level.
- Diocesan Level.
- Conference of Religious Superiors level.

3. *The Document reaches the local communities*

➤ Particular studies done in the Post-novitate and the Theologate.

4. *"The Church we want to be"*

➤ Written by the Ethiopian Episcopal Conference.
➤ Application of the Synod for Africa to the Ethiopian Context.

➤ It reached all conferes and was used as a reference for retreats, conferences, teaching, etc.

5. *Awassa Apostolic Vicariate: First Ethiopian Synod*

➤ It was the first Diocesan Synod in the history of the Ethiopian Church (priests, religious and lay people together).

➤ Salesians from Dilla took active part in it.

➤ Presently the members of the Salesian Family are part of the commission created for the implementation of the resolutions of the Synod.

Part II: Achievements

Achievement - I

- The idea of the Church as God's family is quite a part of the idiosyncrasy of the Ethiopian Catholic Church, as well as of the Salesian Congregation in Ethiopia.
- The preferential option for the poor and the young, which is also constitutive of our charisma.
- The Salesians in Ethiopia manifest a Church that is for all.

Achievement - 2

- Through their educational activities, the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Salesian Sisters in Ethiopia have contributed in a very significant way to the *Integral Human Development of the Youth* through:
 - ◇ Technical Education
 - ◇ Primary and Secondary Education
 - ◇ Ethical and moral formation
 - ◇ Education for solidarity; Africans missionaries of Africa
 - ◇ Religious formation.

Part III: Challenges

Challenge - I

- ☞ Marriage and Christian Family in African / Ethiopian context.
- ☞ HIV / AIDS.
- ☞ The common dignity and mission of all members of the Church (the place of the laity, particularly women, has to be developed).
- ☞ Westernization process of Ethiopia in the context of Globalization.



- ◻ Faith & life (dualist Christian tradition).
- ◻ To be the voice of the voiceless.
- ◻ Formation of the Evangelizers.
- ◻ The ethnic tensions ad intra & ad extra.

Challenge - 2

- ◻ Help the Ethiopian youth to put their energies at the service of the common good, thus assuming their full dignity (not only "receivers", but also "givers").
- ◻ Inculturation of the Salesian Family into the Ethiopian context: towards a more "inserted" way of living the Gospel among the young.
- ◻ Social Communication.
- ◻ Vocational discernment in context.

Challenge - 3

- ◻ Help the Ethiopian youth to put their energies at the service of the common good, thus assuming their full dignity (not only "receivers", but also "givers").
- ◻ Inculturation of the Salesian Family into the Ethiopian context: towards a more "inserted" way of living the Gospel among the young.
- ◻ Social Communication.
- ◻ Vocational discernment in context.

Challenge: III fase

Challenge: II fase

1. Jesus spent 30 years knowing and reflecting and studying His environment before starting out on his Apostolate. We have to do the same.

2. Involving the lay people in our apostolate and in our meetings is a major step in inculturation. We need to inculturate every aspect of Salesian life. We need to invite local experts to enlighten us about various aspects of culture.

3. We must spend time to learn from people their culture and their ways of doing things. We should not go with the mentality of teaching people only.

Will this be possible?

• Give to everyone the possibility of learning.

• In the area of ongoing formation, sharing of experiences by veterans to create guidelines for those coming in and to accompany them with love.

• Proper orientation to the young in initial formation and a deeper reflection on the Preventive System and Salesian spirituality, without prejudice or superiority complex, accompanying them with love.

• Explicit effort and personal commitment at learning the culture, language.

1. What could we do to begin and promote serious scientific reflections on the on-going relationship between the Salesian charism and the local cultures? Could something be done to prepare a qualified team of people who will act as "yeast" and encourage the so-called "innovators" for a profound inculturation?

- We seem to be losing the sense of solidarity among us. We have to learn the sense of generosity. Sometimes missionaries give the impression that they do not need anything. African generosity is give and take.
- We seem to be losing the primacy of God (prayer life) in our personal and Community life.

3. What would be some of the values that we are losing (or have lost), which a genuine inculturation could bring back to life?

- Religiousity (primacy of God in one's life and in the community's life).
- Hospitality, sharing.
- Life: celebration of life!
- Reconciliation.
- Extended family. Sense of belonging to the community (finding solutions together, discussing matters together; respect for elders (listen to elders' wisdom); respect for age groups.

2. Could you identify certain African values, customs, traditions, structures which can be appreciated and incorporated into the life of the Salesian communities?

4. Efforts at qualifying local confreres are laudable. Local confreres should be qualified in technical areas. Salesians should be qualified to take up teaching.
5. In Korr a centre for local culture is being created and people are being sent for training. Some confreres are studying African culture.

- Individualism is creeping in and we could lose that sense of belonging to the family. The antidote to individualism is community, family life: The Salesians particularly stand out for the African spirit of family and welcoming hospitality. We share even our different types of food. We invite people into our houses.
- We have become too busy people. We have no time to listen. In Africa evening is the time when we listen to one another.
- Because of our full immersion into the local Church's pastoral programme and strategies we could be losing the essence of *Valdacco & Morrese*. We could be losing the values of the Preventive System (active presence among the young).
- Sometimes we are not ready for self-sacrifice. We are tempted to look for Comfort and an easy life.
- Traditional ways of dressing could enhance cultural integration. At the same time we should respect the need of the African for identity. People like to have a clear identity of dress.

4. How can we live the Salesian form of religious life and make our choices and options with more sensitivity to the conditions, struggles and problems of the people around?

- We need to go back to our origins – our own families, their struggles and difficulties. Our structures and the life style in our formation houses sometimes lead us to forget this aspect.
- We need to make an effort to know the people around us. For example, visit the slums, go to the poorer neighbourhoods.
- We should not close in on ourselves. Instead, dialogue with the local people, listen to them. We should challenge ourselves to find the answers to problems with them.

who need everything from us, requires a lot of sacrifice. To be sensitive and close to the people, especially those in this. But our sensitivity is limited to our 'small world'. Our Past Pupils' organizations could help out to provide opportunities for learning a trade and finding employment. We are sensitive to the unemployment problem. We provide opportunities for learning a trade and finding employment for youth.

the recognition of and working together with other people other we keep up our pastoral zeal. It is also enhanced by Working together as a community and supporting each be a life of witness – a model for the young.

have the big numbers but to know the flock. Our life must be a life of witness – a model for the young. the style of our contact with the young – not so much to dedicated his whole life for them. We may need to change pastoral zeal and an option for the poor youth as Don Bosco. We have to know Don Bosco well. We need pas-

• We keep up our zeal by passing on the charisma of Don Bosco. We have to know Don Bosco well. We need pas-toral zeal and an option for the poor youth as Don Bosco. We may need to change the style of our contact with the young – not so much to have the big numbers but to know the flock. Our life must be a life of witness – a model for the young.

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- We can offer effective challenge to the moral compromises by our witness of a good religious life. We should be able to confront and challenge them. Youth who live good lives can be peer leaders. Music, Drama, making video programs will be helpful. The youth need self confidence to face their environment. We must build self confidence in them so that they are able to face their environment. These days it is more difficult to be present with the youth because of new attractions. But we need to make an effort.
 - AIDS: What are we doing? We conduct AIDS awareness programmes in our schools and parishes. We do not seem to reach anywhere with all the efforts made. We have to think up new strategies.
- (This is a synthesis of the three attitudes identified by each group.)*

6. Identify three positive missionary attitudes already present among us.

- Hardworking, joyful communities of radical witnesses, showing readiness to respond to the emerging needs.
- Generous. Ready to work in very difficult areas and to persevere in spite of difficulties. Spirit of detachment and readiness to serve where needed.
- Acceptance of living in multicultural communities. Disposed to inter-cultural dialogue within our international communities, showing openness to understand the different cultures (language, customs and traditions). In general missionaries want to learn local languages and they are open to local cultures.
- There is a common Salesian approach to the Mission. Involvement of many forces in the Salesian evangelizing mission, welcoming readily the collaboration of the local people.

7. Identify three negative attitudes which we need to overcome to be effective evangelizers.

(This is a synthesis of the three attitudes identified by each group.)

- **Inculturation:** The need for more effort to learn language and culture – To accept the others in the community and the apostolate without prejudice – Get rid of prejudices and biases, indifference towards the culture (language, customs, feedback of the people) – An over-critical attitude towards the culture, etc.

- **Individualism:** Lack of community planning and vision for the mission – An attitude of closed approach to the mission (little networking) – Individualism and discrimination present among the members of the community in financial matters – the tendency to project oneself as the only protagonist and refusal to collaborate with others (At the congregation level the mentality that we are the only ones) – Refusal to move on and accept a transfer.

- **Lack of focus in the apostolate:** Forgetting why we have come ... becoming mere social workers – The attitude of: we are coming to teach, or give (as if the people do not have anything) – When going to a poor place looking only at the material needs and forgetting to take care of the spiritual needs and consequently making people dependent.

8. What positive pastoral response could we give as Salesian Family to:

a. Foster the dignity of women?

- Create awareness among men by workshops.
- Empowerment of women through education and pastoral work.

- First, we must be persons of peace and reconciliation in our communities. Building communities in which there is peace and serenity and thus witnessing to peace in the locality.
- We should have a common plan of action (networking). We should play a prophetic role on justice and peace and vidually and as a group. Active involvement in peace and reconciliation movements and groups. Use the media to highlight peace and justice issues (newspapers).
- Create awareness among our young people on their role

9. Explore ways in which we could become promoters of peace and reconciliation in the contexts in which we work.

- Through promoting education and instruction. Increase the percentage of girls in Salesian schools. Responding to drop outs.
- Provide support and care to single mothers.
- SDBs and FMAs need to witness together this healthy attitude.
- Women themselves need to come out with various initiatives. Encouraging Women Development Centres (gender issues) in our parishes and other pastoral contexts.
- *b. Address the problems created by AIDS?*
- Conscientize the members of the Salesian Family about the issue of AIDS, the response of the Church, the approach of the Media...
- Preventive activities and special programmes. Availing of Prevention Programmes in our pastoral and educational centres.
- A special concern for the AIDS orphans through our new presences.
- Visits to rehabilitation centres or homes.
- Approaching the issue through networking with like-minded people.



- Our tendency to associate with some tribes or select people creates distance. There should be openness to all ethnic groups/tribes. We must educate people to peace especially where there are people of different categories or tribes.
- We should establish communities in different areas of the country so that people do not feel that we are working only for certain tribes.
- We need to make the Gospel message understood deeply. There is need for deep catechesis. Conducting good reconciliation services especially in conflict areas is helpful.
- We should condemn injustice, join in protests (eg., Fr. Kaiser's death). We must sensitize people about the injustice done to them, about hazards they are forced to face.
- Being the voice of the voiceless: Many people have no access to newspapers, television. We must create forums for people to become aware of their situation.

Identikit of an Incultured Missionary Community

FMA

- United, witnessing, discerning community founded on the primacy of God and prayer and with a passionate love for youth (especially young women).
- Open to dialogue in our multicultural/intercultural FMA communities and with the local culture.
- Collaborating with the Salesian Family, the educating and local community and networking with other organizations.

SDB

- We believe we have been called to work in this mission area.
 - We have to believe in the people, and that the seeds of the Gospel are there, before we reach.
- ### Identikit

- We should have a "listening mood".
- Listening to the people,
- Listening to reality,
- Listening to the Gospel.
- Invest more time in sharing (not only action).
- Think carefully the changes (a change of house sometimes means a big cultural change).

- Be hospitable communities, with a welcoming and caring attitude (as Africans do).
 - Give primacy to the teaching of the faith (not be just educators, but first and foremost evangelizers).
 - Have a shared vision, a common pastoral plan of action, which helps to avoid individualism.
 - Give attention to our life-style. We have to be conscious of the way we live, and know the why of the options we make.
- Places of Witness and net working**
- Greater collaboration with the local Church.
 - Network with other Christian denominations and regions, and like-minded people (in shared spaces).
 - Enough time should be given to every confere to learn the local language.
 - While witnessing above all to the unity of the charism, we should also make clear the specificity of the lay brother's vocation and of the priest's.
 - We have to keep ourselves near to the working class, the poorest, the young.
 - We have to take real care of our conferes in formation (responsible parenthood), so that the Salesian Spirit may take roots in their hearts. In the initial formation communities: give a strong missionary slant to the formation style.
 - We have to think about the structures of formation: we have to network to get suitable places for a real Salesian formation in a place where the Salesian Spirit can be lived and learnt.
 - The structures of the community should be carefully thought out, so that they may not be a hindrance but help for the Salesian to reach the heart of the young, the poor.
 - Our communities should be set up with not less than three conferes.
 - Strengthen the Missionary Animation Commission at provincial level.

Other Groups of the Salesian Family

Beliefs

- Conveying the Gospel values in a way that is appreciated by the particular African community.
- We accept the living spirituality of Don Bosco, then use it to pass on the Gospel values in a way acceptable to the local community.
- We should deal in a way that portrays that inculturation is a two-way process.

Identity

- Should be living in communion.
- A community accepted by the local community.
- Should involve the local community in its different activities.
- A community that shares joys and sorrows of the local community it lives in.

Places of witness

- Live an exemplary life.
- Being with the young all the time and giving time to listen.
- Helping them to live a LIFE of helping one another.
- Places that are loving and accommodating.

Networking

- Mutual respect and understanding among the various branches of the Family.
- The mission statement should be understood by each Family member for the good and common service of the Church.
- Each branch of the Family should take advantage of the existing media facilities.

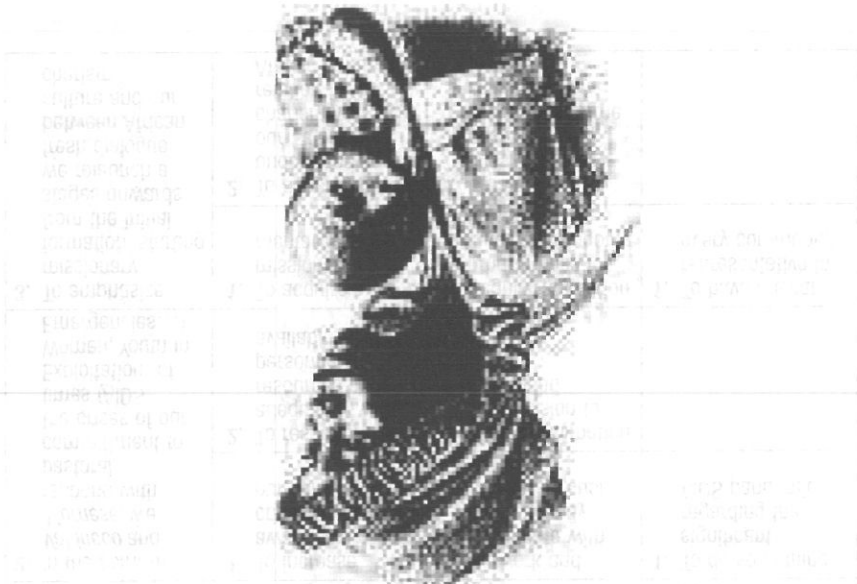
Priorities for the Renewal of Missionary Awareness

From the various proposals made in the different groups the following priorities were chosen as a common minimum programme for the years ahead. These were further elaborated into objectives, strategies and a few interventions, with the understanding that they would be taken up again in the individual Provinces and made into comprehensive programmes of action in order to usher in a new missionary awareness.

1. To renew our missionary call as Salesian Family we want to be a God-centred community in the passion for evangelization and in witnessing to communion.
2. In the spirit of *Valdocco* and *Morse*, we respond with pastoral commitment to the crises of our times (AIDS, Exploitation of Women, Youth in Emergencies...).
3. To emphasize missionary formation, starting from the initial stages onwards, we relaunch a fresh dialogue between African culture and our charism.

LINES OF ACTION	STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set apart specific times for sharing the word of God (Lectio Divina) 2. Eucharistic adoration 3. Personal prayer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better preparation and active presence during the community prayers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primacy of God among ourselves 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To renew our missionary call as Salesian family God-centred community in the passion for evangelization and in witnessing to communion.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make an effort to be there for all the community moments (meals, meetings ...) 2. Set moments to share information and reflection on activities and other areas of concern. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Sense of belonging to the community by common discernment, planning, implementation and evaluation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Foster greater communion among ourselves 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. In the spirit of <i>Valdoco</i> and <i>Morse</i>, we respond with pastoral commitment to the crises of our times (AIDS, Exploitation of Women, Youth in Emergencies...).
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To do something significant regarding the AIDS pandemic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network and coordinate with those already working in such sectors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase awareness of the crises present in our context 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To emphasize missionary formation, starting from the initial stages onwards, we relaunch a fresh dialogue between African culture and our charism.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To have a local representative in every community 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular animation programmes for initial and ongoing formation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To acquire a missionary mentality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To deepen our understanding of our Salesian charism in relation to the African cultures
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Create possibilities of dialogue with the local people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To respond adequately with resources and personnel available 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To emphasize missionary formation, starting from the initial stages onwards, we relaunch a fresh dialogue between African culture and our charism.

Mission Priorities of the Salesian Family 2004-2008



- How do you propose to follow up this seminar in your province?
- Delegates will diffuse the information throughout the Province (Eg. Through the Salesian Bulletin).
 - Mission Department/Commissions of the Salesian Family to plan together considering all the proposals and the priorities that emerged in this Seminar.
 - Provincial Councils will follow up with concrete guidelines for the Provinces.

Among the rich proposals, experiences and challenges of *mission ad gentes* in Africa, we have shared and underscored also that of making our respective communities sdb / fma / other groups of the Salesian Family: *A community in mission, a community for the Kingdom.*

Communities

- that have as their source of inspiration the *first Christian communities*, in the prophetic and missionary dynamism of the Salesian charism, here and now.
- that are open, close to the life of the people, to the existential needs of the more threatened youth who have not yet received the proclamation and the witnessing of Christ.
- that are not centred on themselves, but are in the attitude of “*exodus*”, to the marginalized, ready to fulfill the indication of Jesus: Go!

Communities that share

- the lifestyle, the passionate search for God together with those who seek Him with a sincere and honest heart.
- the joy of having found, met Jesus who calls them to become signs of a reconciled humanity, renewed by his resurrection.
- the responsibility of building a different world, in net-working with all ... a new heaven and new earth ... a new Pentecost.
- the educative mission as the theological terrain in which God manifests Himself and calls.
- A Community that makes culture the expression of an authentic missionary spirituality.

A Spirituality

- of presence that facilitates encounter.
- hat whispers, as it were, the Gospel, the fascinating person of Christ in his simplicity, sincerity and immediacy, to the poorest of youth, girls and women.
- in dialogue with the culture of these young people.
- of reconciliation and harmony ... like a journey of personal and communal sanctity.

O Mary, Mother of God

And Mother of the Church,

We, Salesian Family,

turn to you and with you fervently pray:

May the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Make of the cultures of Africa

Places of communion in diversity,

Fashioning the peoples

Of this great Continent.

Thank you!

Closing Remarks

The first sentiment is one of thanking God and all those responsible for the organization and the celebration of this seminar. Personally I am sorry that due to indifferent health I could not participate as fully as I would have liked.

Looking back at the work done during the past days, it must be admitted that we may not have heard anything new in the field of *Missio ad gentes*. Nevertheless, some insights would have come home to us with greater forcefulness, provoking in us greater commitment and fidelity. As a sort of Souvenir I would like to highlight some of the points that were stressed time and again in the course of our reflections.

1. The urgency of *Missio ad gentes*:

➤ Wherever we are, whatever we do, we are missionaries: evangelisers, signs and bearers of God's love to the young.

➤ Every one of our presences should be an evangelising presence.

➤ With two thirds of Africa still waiting to hear the good news of the Gospel and a good percentage of those who have already heard it not having assimilated it so as to make it their way of life, we cannot sit back complacently.

2. The need to witness individually and as communities:

➤ Unity of spirit and action within the same community.

➤ Creating unity within the Christian community.

- 4. The urgency to adopt a more positive and constructive attitude towards the people and their culture:**
- We accept people as they are and bring the Gospel to them.
 - We neither condemn people nor give up on them.
 - Cultivating friendly and brotherly relationships with the people is the most effective means of evangelization.

- 3. The urgency to involve people in their own development and formation:**
- We work with the people for their all-round development. The people are the real protagonists. We are only facilitators.
 - Even in financial matters such as looking for and spending funds, the community and the people need to be involved. It is necessary to avoid the tendency to make people dependent on us in different ways, particularly by becoming their 'benefactors'.
 - The Christian spirit of solidarity requires that we be detached from money and possessions to place everything at the disposal of the community.

- Networking for the mission as members of the same family (Salesian Family) inspired by the same ideals, united by the same mission.
- The spirituality of communion should characterise our style of living and working.

5. No one can give what he/she does not have:

- Only God-filled or Spirit-filled people can be authentic evangelizers.
- Being is therefore more important than doing. In fact, our doing must overflow from our being and this should be evident to those who come in contact with us.
- Young people need models and heroes in their efforts to live according to the way of peace, justice, forgiveness and harmony. The missionary should be such a model or hero.

6. Let the Word of God be the constant and ultimate term of reference in all our work of evangelization:

- In our preaching, teaching and catechizing let not the word of man replace the Word of the living God. Lead people to the refreshing fountain of the Word of God right from the early stages of catechesis.

7. "Paul sowed, Apollos watered, but God alone gives the increase" in his own good time!

- We must believe in the process of the formation of a truly Christian community, guided as it is by the action of the Spirit of God. But we cannot neglect our little part.
- Ours is a young missionary presence. We need patience to see the fruits. "Discouragement", "disillusionment" and similar words, therefore, do not exist in the dictionary of the committed missionary.

Nairobi - 5 November 2004

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