

Orthodox Christian dialogue with Banyore culture

by

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Abstract

Orthodox Christianity came to the Banyore people of western Kenya in 1942. The Banyore are Bantu speaking people whose language belongs to the Luhya group of languages. The Banyore live near the Uganda border; they are thought to be related to the famous Uganda Kingdom of Bunyoro Kitara. The first Christian missionaries among the Banyore were Protestants who came from South Africa in 1905. . The Orthodox faith reached Bunyore in 1942, through a Kenyan missionary from central Kenya, Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna, and Fr Obadiah from Uganda. The point of note here is that the first Orthodox Christian missionaries to introduce the Orthodox Christian faith to the Banyore people were Kenyans. I shall examine the relation between Orthodox Christianity and Banyore culture, and show how Orthodox Christianity, in dialogue with the Banyore people, became indigenised in Bunyore culture. Thus Orthodox Christians in Bunyore do not see Orthodoxy as something foreign, but as something that has become part of their own culture.

Key terms:

Orthodox mission, Orthodox Church, Christian missions, African Christianity, gospel and culture, inculturation, Kenya, African culture, Banyore, Banyore people, Orthodox Church in Africa, Patriarchate of Alexandria, mission and culture, cultural imperialism, mission and colonialism, Kenya history

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Introduction

This thesis examines the fact that the growth and acceptance of the Orthodox Church of Kenya among the Banyore people was a result of the Church's willingness to accept and accommodate the local Banyore culture, to make some of the culture part of the church's life. The willingness of the Banyore people to become part of the Orthodox Church of Kenya was solely based on the fact that Orthodox Christianity, which was regarded as a foreign religion, was embraced Banyore local culture.

The dialogue between the local culture of the Banyore people of western Kenya and the African Orthodox Church of Kenya is the means that was used to bring the two sides together. It seeks to explicate how the dialogue led to the easy spread of Orthodoxy among the Africans of Kenya, how the ecclesiological and christological message of salvation was reconciled with the local culture to bring salvation and redemption to the people of this culture.

I shall also explain how the Orthodox Church found an already-prepared home within African tradition, culture and ethos. It will show that African people fell in love with the Orthodox Church because of the *Orthopraxia*, *Orthodoxia*, and *Orthokoinonia* within its life. In this connection I have tried to explain Orthodox spirituality, especially the reflection of Orthodox liturgical praxis in Banyore cultural practices.

I have further tried to explain what spirituality and Orthodoxy is, and who the Banyore are. The introduction to the Banyore people springs from their place of origin before their migration to western Kenya.

The aim of this thesis is to underline the fact that spirituality existed within African people (Banyore) before western missionaries arrived, and it is only through the careful dialogue between the mission churches and the host cultures that the truth of what is spiritual and what is not among the local people will come out, and hence mark out a very strong, harmonious ground for missionary work.

I acknowledge that there are some negative elements in Banyore culture that cannot be compatible with Orthodox Christianity but in this case I will only discuss the positive elements of Banyore culture which led the Banyore to accept Orthodox Christianity.

Methods and sources

In addition to the research from books and other resource material, the main source of my findings is interviews of Orthodox Christian people from Bunyore, other Christians from denominations like Israel Nineveh Church, Church of God among many others and even professionals in African history. All the important terms in Greek, English, Kikuyu, Lunyore, and Kiswahili used in this text will be explained and defined for the reader.

To reach this goal, I have organised my findings into nine chapters, with a minimum of approximately twenty pages each.

Chapter One is an introduction to how Christianity came to Kenya, and in Bunyore in particular, brought by the first missionaries. It describes how Christianity came to Kenya and discusses Kenyan Christianity and culture. It also focuses on the liturgical art and worship of the Orthodox faith and its dialogue with African culture. The introduction seeks to unveil some pagan and local

cultural practices that are already found in Christianity especially those from the Hellenic, Roman, Jewish and Egyptian cultures, and how these practices have become very important in Christian piety. A subsection in this chapter describes Christianity and especially Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore. There is also a section describing the theological understanding of dialogue in mission and its value in spreading Christianity. I have drawn my findings from various writings of missiologists and other theologians, and complemented them with my own view of dialogue and how it has been ignored and distorted by some missionaries.

Chapter Two gives a general overview of Christianity in Africa. We will learn that Christianity came to Africa in the 1st century through St Mark. This demonstrates that Africa is the mother of Christianity despite it taking time for many areas in Africa to realise what they have in common with Christianity in general and Orthodox Christianity in particular.

Chapter Three examines the Orthodox Christian faith in general and its relation to Banyore culture. In it we meet some common ground between Orthodox Christian culture and Banyore culture. It also seeks to describe *karing'a* and its significance in the spread of Orthodoxy in Bunyore

Chapter Four presents a historical assessment of Christianity in Bunyore and in Kenya. In this chapter the how and when Christianity arrived in Bunyore and when Orthodoxy arrived in Kenya.

Chapter Five This chapter contrasts the classroom spirituality of the western Protestant missionaries who came with a modern print culture which replaced the ancient culture they found on the ground, classroom spirituality leading to

intellectualism and local spirituality leading to piety.

Chapter Six describes the Banyore people in detail. It includes the Kenyan Orthodox Church mission in Bunyore, what happened to the individuals involved and their roles, the Church growth and why it grew.

Chapter Seven deals especially with Orthodoxy and Banyore culture, and how Orthodoxy came to merge with Banyore culture. It also discusses where Orthodox Christianity and Banyore culture could not merge and what happened when they did not fit together.

Chapter Eight deals with the theology of dialogue with culture based on my findings and comparing these findings with various sources, from other Christian denominations and several experts such as Oleksa. The discussion leads on to how all these strategies presented come together or are relevant to the Banyore people and their entry in Orthodox Christianity. It also includes how St Innocent of Alaska's missionary instructions worked in Bunyore, how they assisted or were not helpful in the establishment of the Orthodox Church among the Banyore people. I also mention the relation between the shamans in Alaska and the traditional healers in Bunyore.

Chapter Nine gives a broad general conclusion based on my findings in the previous chapters and how Christian mission works, if Christianity in general and Orthodox Christianity in particular is to integrate with culture, especially Banyore culture. It deals mostly on the similarities of Orthodox Church mission in Alaska and Orthodox Church mission in Bunyore.

Chapter nine extends from the eighth chapter where I deal with the conclusion of the mission in Bunyore with a part of it reflecting on St. Innocent's rules of mission and whether they were also applied in Bunyore or not. The whole chapter is based, according to my findings, on how dialogue has been instrumental in the establishing of the Orthodox Mission in Bunyore.

At the end is a glossary of common terms used in the text, and the Index with brief notes and an explanation to guide any researcher. There is an appendix with examples of my questionnaire and the answers I received from the interviewees. There is also a bibliography, though I consulted many resources I did not use all of them, I tried to incorporate what they said into my own view to form something original of my own.

CHAPTER ONE

Christianity in Kenya

I feel privileged writing this from South Africa because I am a product of South African missionary work in Kenya. The first Christian missionary to be sent to Bunyore was known as Yohana Mbila and was sent as a Church of God missionary to Kima mission in Bunyore. Kima is not far from my home. He was martyred, and died as the first African martyr in Bunyore. In return he produced the first Munyore missionary to the Congo, who died tragically while on a safari. When Daniel William Alexander came to introduce Christian Orthodoxy, nobody knew that 30 years later Kenya would produce a missionary comeback to South Africa. I feel I'm returning thanks to these great fathers.

Alexander was a South African clergyman who defected from the Ethiopian Church in the 1920s to join the newly discovered African Orthodox Church, becoming its Bishop and later missionary. The African Orthodox Church previously was an offspring of the pan African movement fighting for African American rights from racism etc and was led by Marcus Garvey. When the African Orthodox Church arrived in Africa with Alexander it spread to East Africa from South Africa and later on the East African branch was received by the canonical Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa in 1946 (Hayes 2005:3-5).

The general overview of Christianity in Africa and especially in Kenya is an amazing journey. Though less has been mentioned about African Christian martyrs, sources and experiences of life reveal that Africa, especially Kenya, has

produced many witnesses (martyrs) for the faith. These are the martyrs who have not been recognised by any ecclesiastical calendar, but history by its generosity and justice has kept them alive in our memories. They have become our guiding pillars towards Christ

The church of Kenya as an apostolic church was founded; natured and nurtured on martyrs' blood, people who gave their lives for their faith. It may be an exaggeration, but can *argue mutatis mutandis* that the Orthodox Church in Bunyore was founded on the blood of the first Protestant missionary in Bunyore, Yohana Mbila who was killed in 1909 just four years after the establishment of Christianity in Bunyore.

Though Yohana was not an Orthodox Church member, the fact is that anyone who gives their life for the sake of Christ becomes a witness to and for all, irrespective of religious affiliation. We will discuss more about Bunyore later, since the aim of this page is to list some of the highlights of Christianity in Kenya.

1631- The first Kenyan Christian martyred in Mombasa. Chinguka massacred two priests and 280 lay people after they refused to renounce the Christian faith.

1883- First native Kenyan assassinated hence becoming the first Kenyan martyr. His name was David Koi teacher and evangelist (former refugee and run away slave) evangelist at Fuludoyo.

1885 - UMM (United Methodist Mission) missionary John Houghton and his wife Annie were killed during the Maasai raid on Golbanti among Galla of Tana River. In the same year Bishop Hannington was murdered on his way to Mumias

1905 - First Christian missionary in Bunyore Kima sponsored by Church of God U.S.A., started by Anderson.

1909- Yohana Mbila, South African pioneer missionary killed at Kima.

1910 - First Anglican and Protestant baptism in Western Kenya at Maseno and Kima.

1915 - Yohana Owenga, first Muniyore missionary sent to Congo by the Church of God in Kima, a product of Johannes Mbila, died on a safari in Congo as a pioneer missionary.

1923- Luniyore first scripture (St John's gospel) completed.

1935 - Archbishop Daniel Alexander from South Africa arrives to help Kikuyu and Meru secessionists set up an Independent church (African Orthodox Church of Kenya (AOC)).

1943 - Kenya Missionary Council becomes Christian Council of Kenya now currently is the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK).

1946 - African Orthodox Church (AOC) accepted into communion by Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria.

1954 - Initial Luyha Bible (Genesis) is published.

1971 - Archbishop and President Makarios of Cyprus baptises 5000 people into African Orthodox Church. He also lays a foundation stone for the Orthodox theological seminary, now bearing his name (Makarios III Patriarchal Ecclesiastical School) (Barrett, Mambo et al. 1498-1973:19-40).

1974: Defrocking of Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna, hence the split in the Orthodox Church into African and Greek Orthodox, one led by the defrocked Bishop under the Old calendar 'Omorphorion' and the other led by the Greek Orthodox Bishop under the new calendar of the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa.

1986, November 17th, assistant to the defrocked Bishop was re consecrated as the Bishop of the African Orthodox Church of Kenya, the uncanonical splinter group under the Metropolitan Cyprian in Greece. Given the name Niphon Kigundu

1987, July 16th, Defrocked Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna Reposed, his burial was attended by Metropolitan Cyprianos from the Old calendar Orthodox Church of Greece, the one that received Bishop George and reinstated him as its representative in Kenya.

1989: Fr Athanasius Amwayi, the first priest of St Mathew Esabwali in Ebukhubi Bunyore reposed.

1.11.2006: Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna of Nitria (The first Bishop of Kenya and first Kenyan Missionary to the people of Bunyore) is reinstated by Patriarch Theodoros II and the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria after having been defrocked on 30th, November 1979.

This is a very brief overview mostly targeting Bunyore and the Orthodox Church, the main character in the presentation. This is not a complete detailed history of the church in Kenya but just a glimpse.

South Africa played a vital role in the establishment of Christianity in Bunyore. Yohana Mbila was the first Christian missionary in Bunyore followed by Bishop Alexander who laid the foundation of Orthodoxy in East Africa.

Brief History of the Banyore People

In this I will describe the Banyore people, and try to explain who they are. This will demonstrate how they perceived Christianity in general and Orthodoxy in particular. There is also a brief theological analysis that will introduce us to the next chapter of Orthodoxy in Bunyore.

Bunyore is in the western part of Kenya. The inhabitants of Bunyore are known as the Banyore people. There are several discoveries regarding where the Banyore originated and their migration and all stories point to some of the truth although I was not able to verify some of the facts.

There are rumours that they are related to the tribe in Uganda that formed a very famous kingdom of the Bunyoro Kitara. According to Barnett (1965:12), the Banyore people originated from a man called Anyole. Anyole was from Bunyoro in Uganda and had six wives; from Bunyoro he moved with his six wives to Bunyore for fertile land and settled there. Their language is Lunyore. The Banyore are just a sub-tribe of the second major Bantu speaking tribe in Kenya known as Luhya. All the Luhyas reside in the western part of Kenya, bordering Nyanza and Rift valley, although there is a group of Luhyas residing in the Nyanza province.

Were, another scholar, seems to support Barnett's claim but he goes further to say that the Banyore people originally may have come from Egypt and along

their way passed through Uganda where they settled for some time before moving, which suggests that the Banyoro of Uganda may have also originated from Egypt. I was not able to discover if the theory of Egyptian origin is true or a mere speculation. We have to bear in mind that Were, is a Luhya himself besides being a scholar.

According to Were (1967:10), the ancestors of the Banyore came from Egypt or Sudan and from there travelled till they reached Bunyuli in Uganda then later in Ebusabakhwa (the present Sakwa Bondo in Kenya) then proceeding to Akala in Gem, where they settled for some time. Because of instability they moved to Ebuhandu in South Bunyore where they settled permanently and it was from here they spread to other areas in Bunyore. Were (1967:11) alleges that they may have come from Egypt or Sudan via the River Nile by boat. He claims that they were together in Egypt or Sudan with the Baganda, Bagisu and other fellow Baluhya communities before they decided to move.

The Banyore are found in the eastern region of western Kenya, they are divided into 12 sections all speaking the same language, tracing to the same forefather Anyole. Anyole is the father and founder of the Abanyole. He had twelve sons who in turn form the Abanyole sub tribe. The sons are: Abasiratsi (named after their father Asiratsi), Abamuli (Amuli), Abamang'ali (Amang'ali), Abatongoyi (Tongoi), Abasiekwe (Asiekwe), Abasakami (Asakami), Abamuli (Amuli), Aberaanyi (Mwiranyi), Abasikhaale (Asikhale), Abamuhaaya (Amuhaaya), Ababaayi (Ambayi) and Abamuhaando (Muhando).^{1a} Most of the Banyore people reside along Busia at the Kenya-Uganda border (Were1967:10-14). This is true

because this subdivision of the Banyore people still exists to date. During my interview with my grandfather Absalom Obukuyi who has since passed on, he seemed to hold on what Were is saying.

Christianity arrived in Bunyore in 1905, through the Church of God, a Protestant mission led by Anderson from the USA. It was started at Kima. The first black African missionary was Yohana Mbila from South Africa (Barrett et al 1973:23). The Orthodox Christian faith arrived in Bunyore through Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna, (who was a product of Bishop Alexander's mission in East Africa) in 1945 and history says that it grew rapidly so that by 1953 Orthodoxy in Bunyore was booming. The mission continued to grow from 1953 till 1962, when Gathuna and all the other Karing'a members were in jail for their opposition to the oppressive colonial government. Obadiah Basajjitalo from Uganda was a missionary in western Kenya, and spent most of his time in Bunyore because Bunyore borders Uganda.

We have three main functioning Orthodox Christian communities with at least 50-100 practising members. These are St. Gerasimos (recently consecrated St. Andrew) Ebuyangu, St. Mark, Ebusakaami and St Matthew, Ebukhubi. We have another five parishes, with visiting priests (Mission Parishes). The total Orthodox Christian community in Bunyore is about 20,000 excluding all those who have received baptism though they do not attend any of the Churches. Bunyore as a whole has a population of about 400,000, the majority of whom are either Protestant or Anglican, and only a few Christian Orthodox and Catholic.

There are several similarities between ancient Egyptian traditions and Banyore

culture, not to mention the type of food crops the Banyore people and Egyptians plant. The most common traditional crops of the Banyore are sorghum and millet; maize is an imported crop. The sorghum and millet were also a common food of early Egyptian times. Unlike maize, these crops can survive a long drought. The above mentioned similarities explains the main reason why Banyore culture had elements of Christianity even before Christianity. It is also said that the Banyore came from Egypt and due to drought they travelled far and following the Nile, eventually settled in the western part of Kenya, which was fertile. Some remained in Uganda and they are the present Banyoro tribe who formed the famous Banyoro Kingdom of Uganda.

According to Were (1967: 10-11), who specialises in the history of western Kenya, Omwa was the eldest ancestor of the Banyore, probably from Egypt where they are said to have migrated from the early 10th century and arrived in their present land about AD 1250. Omwa was the father of Mahindira who was the father of Anyole who is the father and founder of the Banyore people. I am assuming that the name Banyore was only assumed after their arrival in the land of their dreams. But then Barnet may be correct when he says that the Banyore people came from Uganda, that they were part of the Banyoro tribe which partially solves the mystery of where their current name Banyore originated from.

Anyole (or Anyore) had twelve sons who are also regarded as the twelve clans of the Banyore people. These clans are Abamutete, Abasiratsi (Where I belong) Abamang'ali, Abatongoi, Asiekwe, Asakami, Amuli, Aberanyi, Abamuhaya, Ababayi, and Abahando or Abalako. To date these still remain the twelve main

sub divisions of the Banyore people and there are Orthodox Christians in all twelve clans. Were states that their ancestors came from Egypt although it is also speculated that they came from Sudan. They travelled until they arrived in Bumuli in Uganda, and later on moved to Bondo, Akala in Gem. They settled in Gem for some time but it was not a suitable place for them to farm and perhaps the local inhabitants were not very hospitable towards them. They came to Ebuhandu in Bunyore and from here they spread to other places. My village, which was founded by the great grand son of Anyole, Ekhubi, is known as Ebukhubi and was one of the first places to receive Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore as a whole. During their migration they came in contact with Egyptians, Sudanese and Ugandans, and from them they took culture and traditions. So Bunyore has a complex culture that can be traced back to the tribes and people they came into contact with during their period of migration (Were1976: 10-14).

Tracing my genealogy line, I am Masaba, the son of Akunda, the son of Obukuyi, the son of Lwabi, son of Esikundu, young son of Ambeba, son of Ekhubi, son of Anyole who is the father of the Banyore people. In the traditional setting only the surnames were applied, and even when Christianity gave new names many people were identified by their cultural names because their Christian names were associated with foreign masters. The new-borns are named after their departed relatives and it is through these names that a triumphant society was kept alive (The triumphant society refers those departed members of society who are still considered as full members of society but elevated to a higher status of

interceding for the people to Nyassaye).¹

Abanyole are the people of Bunyore and Ebunyole is the place where they live.

Bunyore or Ebunyole means slow walk, (okhwe'nyola) or to pluck, like when you pick the leaves from the tree (Okhunyo'la). Ebukhubi comes from the noun "likhubi" which means cowpeas' leaves. These leaves are mostly planted by the Abanyole people and are used as vegetables, served with obusuma, (maize meal bread). Its seeds are known as tsimi'ndi, and are used for soup, which is sometimes served with obusuma (pap) or sometimes mixed with dry corn (maize cooked and eaten as amahe'njele which in South African terms may equal 'samp') (mixture of maize and beans).

If we accept Were's thesis, it is possible that Christianity was not something new for the Banyore² and it was not actually brought by the Americans who just received it few decades ago. If the Banyore can trace their ancestry back to Egypt then we can speculate that their ancestors may have come into contact with Abraham and the children of Israel during their captivity. This explains why we can see their relationship to the Semites. Since Were has not explained to us which section they belonged to in Egypt, we may be left with our own conclusion that, they are a section of the black Jews who were in Egypt. If this is the case the Banyore people have a direct claim to the ancestry of Abraham and then to

¹ Nyassaye actually is not a Luhya name it is borrowed from Luo the neighboring tribe. It refers to the Supreme Being (God) meaning the one who provides) It coincides with the typical Banyore term Wele Khakaba which means the same. However this name Nyassaye has been permanently adopted by the Luhya people including the Banyore and Wele Khakaba is almost falling into disuse.

Jesus Christ. However by saying so does not mean that I endorse Were's claim as the absolute truth, neither do I disqualify it as absolute lies.

Still in assessment of Were's argument, it could be that they were the first people to see Jesus Christ since biblical history tells us that Jesus' parents fled from Bethlehem to Egypt when Herod sought to Kill him (This is my own speculation). We do not know how long Jesus stayed in Egypt and at what age he returned to his homeland. If their ancestors witnessed Jesus Christ, then there is no doubt that they carried this image with them and this image was carried from generation to generation.

Another very interesting possibility is that, if the Banyore arrived in Bunyore only 1250 AD, it means that they could have heard of Jesus' ministry and death and resurrection and we may consequently say that some of their ancestors could have been at the Pentecostal hall when the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon the apostles. Mark the Evangelist, who is said to be the pioneer of Christianity in Africa, and the first Bishop and Patriarch of Alexandria may have ministered to their ancestors and by the time of their moving to Bunyore they were aware of the monotheistic God of Israel. This is my own conclusion based on what Were and Barnet have said in the above chapters. This is why their culture has developed in such way that it comprises of Jewish elements and hence Old Testament, Christian and Hellenic culture, as well as Roman culture since by that time Greeks and Romans were dominating the Middle East and Egypt as well.

² The Names Banyore, Abanyole, Bunyore, Ebunyole means the same thing the people of Bunyore as for the earlier and the Place as for the later. In Lunyore the word Bunyore is always pronounced as Ebunyole.

If this were the case then Christianity, and especially Orthodox Christianity might not have been an entirely new discovery brought by Western missionaries, but a revival of what already existed among the people. Some missionary attitudes of cultural superiority jeopardised the local way of worship and life. This is why I said earlier that the Orthodox faith found the ground was already prepared for mission and did not have a lot of a struggle in its mission to the Banyore people.

Briefly outlining the general traditional religious life of the Banyore people, even though we expect to meet it in detail ahead, we will discover that the myths and legends containing the archetypes of correct and most important meaningful human behaviour dominated Banyore traditional life. Mastering the sacred tales, proverbs (tsingano) and other tales, defined themselves and provided the basic truth upon which the survival and significance of the Banyore people depended.

Like the Yup'ik people of south western Alaska described by Michael Oleksa, (Oleksa 1992:13) the Banyore people's tales started with 'Long time ago' (Haho Khale) thus transforming the sacred tales of primordial existence to the world experienced today. The Orthodox faith in Banyore is intimately interwoven in an effort to retain the survival of the traditional Banyore life style, traditionally transformed yet never corrupted by Christianity. It is becoming 'incarnate' in the native culture and identity of the people with the majority of the clergy as locals. Any Orthodox missionary who came worked with the village catechists and priests. One of the Orthodox missionaries who had succeeded in Banyore was Fr

Johannes Charles Eko³. The secret behind his success was that he learned the local language and culture. This confirms what St John Chrysostom once said, "Being delighted in the multi-national celebrations in Constantinople rejoiced that the teachings of the fishermen and tentmakers shines in the language of the barbarians more brightly than the sun" (Oleksa1998: 35). Chrysostom's statement tells us that multi-lingual worship is a long-standing tradition in the Eastern Church although it was a dangerous innovation in the eyes of the West. The Orthodox missionaries in Bunyore saw no need to discard all the Banyore traditional religious beliefs for they could perceive in them some positive appreciation of the cosmos thus affirming St. Maximos' the Confessor's theology: that, these spiritual realities worshipped by this community were indeed 'logoi' related to the divine Logos whose personal existence the Banyore people (Abandu Abanyole) had never imagined. "The Orthodox Christian mission has as its twin goals the incarnation of the Logos of God into the language and customs of the country," and the growth of the indigenous Church, which will sanctify and endorse the people's personality" (Oleksa 1992:11). They could announce the revelation of God in Christ as truly 'Good News' without completely denigrating the religious beliefs or pagan practices the tribe had traditionally maintained. St Maximos views humanity as potentially divine with every individual person moving towards unity in love according to the divine plan, yet distinct and unique, created to be eternally so.

³ Fr. Johannes Eko has since passed on in 2007. May his Memory be eternal.

CHAPTER TWO

Christianity in Africa

This chapter seeks to set the stage by describing Christianity in Africa in general this is because Bunyore is a part of Africa and so a general idea about Africa and Christianity in particular will act as our guide and be a foundation to build on while undertaking this investigation. There are many similarities within the cultures in the African continent. In this chapter there is also a general overview of when Christianity arrived in Africa as a whole and whether we have a right to claim that there were also African pioneers at the foundation of Christianity, its spirituality and theology. It will conclude with a brief outline of the history of Christianity in Kenya and East Africa and how Orthodox Christianity arrived in Kenya.

Orthodoxy in Kenya and particularly in Bunyore must be seen in the context of Orthodoxy and Christianity in general in Africa as a whole. This provides the setting in which we can see if there are similarities between some African cultures and Christianity, with special reference to Banyore culture.

In doing this, one cannot look at Africa from a detached position but one needs to be actually attached to Africa in order to be able to understand it better.

Spirituality moved from Africa to other places (Monasticism, Theology).

Christianity arrived in Africa in the first century through Saint Mark the Evangelist (Cross and Livingstone 1983: 35) it was centred in Alexandria under the name of Patriarchate of Alexandria. Moving from Alexandria, Orthodox Christianity later became strongest in East Africa, where we have many followers.

The theology of the Church was formed in Africa; the great heretics also came from Africa, and the great minds of the Church came from Africa. It may not be an exaggeration that Africa is the mother of our theology. According to Cross and Livingstone (1983: 35), Alexandria became famous as a centre of Christianity mostly between the 2nd and early 3rd centuries through the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria under Clement and Origen.

The early theology of the Church in Alexandria was marked by the influence of the neo-Platonic philosophy of Graeco-Jewish thought and was applied in Christian thought by, among others, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Because of this the First Ecumenical Council (325) was assigned to Alexandria the highest place in order after Rome (Cross and Livingstone 1983: 35). In brief we have the heresy of Arianism that rocked the Christian world of the time, the bravery of St Athanasius and other fathers led to the formulation of the Creed, and Alexandria also had the honour of determining the dates of Easter for the whole Church. On the issue of the calendar Calivas (2001:131) says “ The synod of Nicaea did not formulate any details regulating the paschalia, but apparently it left the task of their computation to the Patriarch of Alexandria (the city being the scientific centre of its day) who, by way of further explanation, was commissioned to communicate annually with all the local churches, informing them of the date of Pascha—the rules can be summarised in three key phrases: the spring equinox, the full moon, and Sunday. Pasha is to occur on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the spring equinox”.

Africa was also the site of the rise of monasticism, and the establishment of theological learning, to give just a few examples.

Ancient apostolic Orthodox Christianity has gone a full unbroken circle from continent to continent, from Christ to his Apostles to ancient Africa, from Africa to the rest of the world including America (Altschul 1997:1).

As we approach the mission field of our assignment, we have to bear in mind that we all share what has been passed to us from Adam. Our sinful ways and past failings have all contributed to the problem of human suffering, we are not immune from this as missionaries or saints irrespective of how we may justify our spirituality. This common understanding brings the whole human race to a common square. We realise that we are responsible for each other since we share common sin, common pain and common wealth.

Our understanding of other people, especially those with whom we do not share space with, comes from the philosophy that the sin of Adam hounds us all and is part of us all, and we make these sins our own. From this we find a deep release that leads to change, this protects us from irresponsible judgement, prejudice and pride.

The early Church in Africa, which goes back to before the fourth century in some places, gathered around the crucified Christ who had risen from the dead, and the suffering of those who stood by the resurrected Christ produced a mystical root that enabled the Church to flourish in the first millennium, especially in Africa. We cannot know this early treasure of Christianity if we do not create a space for dialogue with African culture and traditions, which is the treasure of this

reality.

According to Scripture, God has been dealing with various people and nations to execute His will for all creation. . Therefore we can learn that even African people have been the object of God's redeeming grace throughout the centuries, and then we will swallow our pride and be ready to dialogue. Many Africans have been slow to join Christianity not only because of the oppression caused by the foreign governments that occupied their countries but because they have not been helped to understand that the Bible speaks about them and their experience.

The emergence of Christianity in Africa was not out of the blue but it was rather a fulfilment of the many prophecies that came to pass before the Christian era (BC). This has been outlined in the sub-chapter below.

Africa in prophecy

The Orthodox Christian Church in Africa is a unique creation because its establishment in Egypt was the fulfilment of the prophecy in 750 BC by the prophet Isaiah. The reference is from Isaiah 19:19: "On that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the centre of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border". According to Conner in Altschul, 1997:4) the subject of the prophecy is the establishment of the Church in Africa because when Isaiah talks about the altar in the middle of Egypt and a pillar at its border, he is not referring to the Jewish altar because at that time there was only one altar inside Jerusalem, the place of worship and the temple of the Jewish race.

The prophecy was fulfilled during the flight of the Holy family to Egypt from King

Herod the Great. Jesus, his mother and caretaker Joseph found refuge among Africans. Though this may not be perceived as the origin of Christianity in Africa but it is actually the physical presence of Christ in Africa as a young child, this is something we cannot ignore, the mark left by the young Jesus came to be strengthened now as Christianity about 60 years later by the Apostle Mark. The Church in Alexandria became one of the four primary Christian Sees in the world in addition to Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch and later Constantinople.

Let us remember that when we talk about the altar as Prophet Isaiah puts it, its fulfillment in this regard is not in the Church as an institution, but it is fulfilled by the presence of Christ, who even by then even though he had not started his ministry, he was the anointed one, and He was God, and so his presence despite of the circumstances is a point for us to begin our African theological reflection.

The Isaiah prophecy is confirmed by one of the fathers and theologians of the Church of Alexandria, Cyril, who says, "The glittering cloud that carried the child Jesus to Egypt was his mother, Saint Mary who surpassed the cloud of purity. The altar that was established in the midst of the land of Egypt is the Christian Church that has replaced the temples of pagans, as the idols collapsed and the temples were dispersed in the presence of the Lord" (Altschul 1997: 5).

It is not by accident that Egypt as the mother of civilisation in Africa and the whole world became also the mother of spirituality. Other prophecies can be found in Isaiah 19:25; 60: 5-6; Psalms 68:31; mentioning Ethiopia spreading out its hand to God, and Psalms 72:10.

Conner (Altschul 1997: 5) continues to explain that this prophecy was also fulfilled because among the wise men (the Magi) that came to visit the baby Jesus was an African (also let us remember that the author does not tell us the race of the African who helped Jesus, because when we say African in this case, we refer to all those born in Africa and call Africa their home, irrespective of race) by the name of Balthazar.

Others, as stated by Origen who is the first to tell us that they were three are, Gaspar and Melchior (Cross and Livingstone 1983:858). He was one of the magi who came from a long distance to worship Christ the Lord. These few prophecies among many give us a proper understanding of a dialogue with the New Testament regarding Christianity in Africa as well as every part of Africa that Christianity has reached or is about to reach.

As well as Christ Jesus taking refuge in Africa with his parents soon after his birth, we have evidence to say that the New Testament itself has a lot of elements linking it to Africa, and that many important personalities in Jesus Christ's ministry have an African origin and so giving a very close relationship between the New Testament and Christianity in Africa. T

Therefore, this reveals that Africa was not only a receiver of the New Testament but a participant as well.

The New Testament and Christianity in Africa

When the Lord started his ministry one of his twelve disciples was an African. His name was Symeon who retained the title the Canaanite because of his descent from Ham through Canaan (Cross and Livingstone 1997:1502). This Simon also

known as the less, has been also called by Matthew and Mark as the Canaanite, but Luke calls him the Zealot (Cross and Livingstone 1983:1276. Also in Altschul 1997:6). Conner explains that the African Canaanites dominated Palestine originally called the land of Canaan in the years before Abraham or any other descendants existed. Conner, Cross and Livingstone all agree that prior to meeting Christ, Simon belonged to the faction of the Zealots whose aim was to expel Romans from Palestine through armed revolution (Cross and Livingstone 1983: 1276). Although the point Cross and Conner are bringing up do not hold too much water, but it remains the truth to be investigated further and also some thing to ponder about.

Although the people mentioned and many others to be mentioned after throughout this chapter had their origin in Africa, Im not trying to link them to Banyore people but through them the point of Christianity in Africa not as a foreign element comes itself clearly and through this we are able to understand the issue of Orthodox faith not being a foreign initiated faith even though it has becomes a part of a worldwide Orthodox family.

Another individual was Simon of Cyrene (in present-day Libya) the African who was compelled to share in carrying Christ's cross towards the place of skull or Calvary. History attests that it was not by chance that he happened to be in Jerusalem; by then he was a follower of Christ, part of the vibrant movement of Africans who believed in Christ and were living in Jerusalem at the time. He followed Christ with his two sons Rufus and Alexander whom Saint Mark identifies in his gospel (Mark.15:21, Mathew 27:32): "They compelled a passer-

by, who was coming from the country to carry his cross; it was Simon the Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus". Both Rufus and Alexander became great servants of the church and St Paul mentions Alexander in his Epistle to the Romans 16:13.

The matter discussed in the above paragraphs some of them are still subject to further research and investigation in order to be certain that the above mentioned were truly Africans. Another caution to take here is that during my research over this matter there is nowhere African specifically meant black skin pigment. We have Africans who are not dark or black. So we may have the above people like Simon of Cyrene as Africans not merely because of their skin colour but by the virtue of being born in Africa.

At Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, all the corners of the Church were represented including Africa and Ethiopia. Let us not forget the commission of St Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch as found in the book of Acts chapter 8.

One of the greatest elements in the resurrection of Christianity in Africa is St Mark, who was the first bishop of Alexandria in Egypt.

Saint Mark

This chapter will try to engage with the facts regarding the claim that St Mark is the founder of the Orthodox Church or Christianity in the African continent, at the present there is also a claim that St. Mark was an African by birth thus qualifying the point that the African continent received Christianity earlier than we think.

Although the historical evidence in this chapter claims that St Mark is the founder of the church in Egypt and throughout Africa, Tillyrides, (Makarios1998:10-11)

claims that Christianity made its way to Alexandria before the arrival of St Mark. In his argument he claims that Christianity arrived in Egypt through the Jews of the Diaspora. Mark's move to Egypt seems to be the beginning of the extension of the seed of Christianity that had been brought to Alexandria and all Africa through the Jews in Diaspora.

Christianity spread quickly as far as Nubia (Altschul 2001:100) Sudan and Ethiopia indicating that even the neighbouring countries may have been affected by the flavour of Christianity.

According to Frend (1976:320-321) Nubia was like the great gateway to the rest of Africa, and through its gate the knowledge, culture, and wisdom of Egypt was passed to the rest of Africa and vice versa. It is believed that Emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora sent missionaries to Nubia and by the 6th century all of Nubia had received the Christian faith.

According to the ancient tradition of Ethiopia, the faith of Moses, Abraham and Isaac was first brought into Ethiopia through the Queen of Sheba and we had many Jewish priests moving in to help propagate Judaism. This continued until the time of Christ when St Philip baptised the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). It also says that in the 4th century two young Phoenicians were shipwrecked off the Ethiopian coast and one of them was Frumentius. This Frumentius, a believer, led King Ezana whose throne was in Axum into the Church (Altschul 2001:10) and from there King Ezana allowed Frumentius to evangelise his people. As a result, Frumentius went to Alexandria in Egypt to ask for the blessings of the Patriarch, by then the Patriarch was Athanasius the Great. Athanasius ordained

him a priest and a made him the first bishop of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Church as a whole is one of the vibrant Oriental Orthodox Churches (Velimirovich, Nikolai, Bishop 1986:259-260).

The important point to learn here, is that after Christianity was introduced to African continent by the Jews in diaspora who were in Egypt by then, it was embraced by the local people themselves as the one just mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Some of the local people mentioned as African may have been the locally born people of Jewish descent but may be of the second generations who could call themselves Africans. Let us not forget that Egypt, which is the centre of Christianity in Africa, is in Africa and despite of it being a cosmopolitan city, the majority of inhabitants were and are Africans.

It was very easy for the Egyptians and other Africans to accept the teaching of Christ because of their belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, which is a very strong belief among the Abaluhya people in general and the Banyore people specifically.

The rise of monasticism in Africa due to severe persecution became the very pillar of Christianity in Africa and everywhere. The father of monasticism was Saint Anthony the Great who was an African by birth.

Africa also became a great centre of learning, especially Christian learning through the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria called 'Didaskalium', this school became an important centre of instruction in the Christian faith and theology along with other subjects like philosophy, civil sciences, medicine, physics, chemistry, etc (Cross and Livingstone 1983:35-36, Orthodox

Archbishopric of Kenya 2006:14-15).

The school that marks a milestone of missions in Africa in the early centuries was open to catechumens, those who believed in Christ but needed more instruction on how to live as Christians. It dialogued with the pagans and was therefore open to pagan students who were searching for the truth. This school, according to tradition, was attributed to St Mark as the one who opened it up as a means to counteract the overwhelming philosophy and pagan influence on Alexandria and the entire world of that time. The great teachers in this school were philosophers and theologians like Athenagoras, Clement the Alexandrene, St. Athanasius, St. Didymus and Origen, who was later condemned for falling into error. Among the great graduates from the school is St Gregory the Theologian, St Basil the Great, St John Chrysostom, St Jerome and Rufinus, who are today recognised as some of the greatest teachers and saints of the entire Christian world (Cross and Livingstone 1997:298; Archbishopric of Kenya 2006: 14-20). This school existed until the year 529 during the reign of Justinian, and after the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 led to the separation of the monophysites from the main Church hence forming the Coptic Church, where the Copts separated themselves because of arguments and claims about the nature of the Logos of God which affected the entire spread of Christianity in other parts of Africa. This separation led to infighting among the Christian family of Africa hence dividing the focus. Therefore, this explains why that although Christianity arrived in Africa very early on, it only reached other parts of the continent much later.

Mbiti (1975:184) would argue, "But it must be borne in mind that Christianity is not a European or American religion. It came to Africa before it reached Europe; and it was already in Africa long before European and American missionaries began to preach it in other parts of the continent". This infighting, which happened long before the invasion of Islam, became the first sign to affect the influence and spread of Christianity.

WHY DID THE CHURCH NOT SPREAD TO OTHER PLACES IN AFRICA IN TIME

The vibrant Church of Alexandria began to go downhill in the 4th Century (325 AD), during the Arian controversy that led to the split of the Arians from the entire body of the Church. This created a lot of hatred, betrayal, and persecutions among the Christians themselves. The second one came in the 5th century, as I had stated earlier; the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) put a great strain on Orthodoxy in Africa. According to Metropolitan Makarios of Kenya (Tillyrides 2007:18), the Heresiarchs Eutychus and Dioscurus created a problem by denying the equal two natures of Christ and emphasised only his Divinity, hence confusing the whole doctrine of the Incarnation. The Council of Chalcedon who came together to solve this problem resolved that Christ was equally God and equally man. The Coptic Churches of Egypt refused to accept the council resolution, and broke away, forming the present Coptic Church. The Church of Ethiopia later joined them, although the Church of Ethiopia later severed its relationship with the Coptic Church of Egypt for administrative purposes but retained the same theology. These two divisions -- of the Coptic Church of Egypt and later the Church of Ethiopia -- drastically affected the spread of Christianity in

Africa; a wound that took a long time to heal.

After this period of infighting within the African Church, the Church became vulnerable to an outside invasion from Muslim Arabs. In 642, the city of Alexandria fell under Islam, which marked the end of Byzantine rule. As a result, the Christian communities in Egypt and the whole of North Africa came under Islam. I attribute this to the disagreements among Christians themselves. At this time the Church underwent many persecutions, with its religious documents destroyed. This affected the mission of the Church very much and it's spreading to other areas especially in East and West Africa (Tillyrides 2007:18). Another problem that hindered this spread was the slave trade by Arabs along the coast of East and central Africa until the 19th century when the slave trade came to an end there was a drop in Islamic persecution then the church started to penetrate in these areas.

Another problem was that the church of the time was closely connected with the Roman Empire which was ruling at the time and at that particular moment the lost its missionary Zeal and became like a Roman advocate some times protecting and preaching Roman political interest.

Christianity in Kenya and East Africa

This subsection, which is a continuation of the history of Christianity in Africa, will outline the emergence of various Christian denominations in East Africa but in particular Kenya since our major focus is on Kenya. We will discuss the successes and failures, and how this led to the appearance of independent Churches and schools, and within this transformation how Orthodox Christianity

appeared.

The seed of Christianity arrived in east Africa along the coast of east Africa (Mombasa Kenya) in 1598 during the Portuguese exploration through Vasco Da Gama. Vasco Da Gama, who arrived on the Kenyan Coast in 1498, had with him many Catholic missionaries including the first missionary Francis Xavier who was on his way to India and stopped on the Coast in 1542, this opened the way for three missionaries (they were priests) who were stationed in Lamu on the coast of Kenya in 1598. We had also the Augustinians coming later on and building a Church on Mombasa Island, they claimed about six hundred converts from among the local population (Barrett et al 1973:29).

Many other churches at that time were built by the Portuguese who were also promoting the Roman Catholic faith. They set up philanthropic institutions such as orphanages headed by the brothers of Misericordia (mercy), the Church of our Lady of Good Hope, chapels of Shimanzi and Makupa and the Portuguese cathedral, which was built in 1846. When the Arabs gained control of the coast, including Mombasa, we see this Christian missionary work ceasing and the churches fell into disuse and everything ceased. And this is the last we hear about the Catholic mission in this area until later in 1890, long after the arrival of the Protestant missionaries, we see the Catholic mission again at the coast where they started everything again from scratch as if there was no existence of Christianity at all (Barrett et al 1973:29-30).

The next intensive missionary activity, which started again along the coast of East Africa, was the Protestant mission which came with a German Lutheran

preacher employed by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). CMS was an Anglican-sponsored Christian mission organisation. The missionary was Johann Ludwig Krapf who arrived in 1844. (Barrett et al 1973:30.) His coming marks the real beginning of Christianity in East Africa.

Ludwig Krapf had been in Ethiopia from 1837 to 1842 trying to reach the Galla people but when it became difficult he left in 1842 only to land in East Africa in 1844 by the permission of Sayyid Said who was then the Sultan of Mombasa. Having settled at Rabai Mpya where within two months of his arrival he was faced with the tragedy of the death of his newborn baby and wife Rosine. Despite this setback, he learned the Swahili language and helped in the translation of the first Swahili-English Dictionary, which later led to the translation of the Bible into several local languages, in which he also played a part. He did the translation of the first New Testament in Swahili in 1848 (Barrett et al 1973:30; Kabutu Clement, 1992:1). Krapf was later joined by another Protestant missionary, John Rebman. Unfortunately Krapf had to end his mission and return home in 1853. He had completed many translations but managed to make fewer conversions, which were one dying cripple by the name Mringe and a Giriama outcast by the name Abbe Gunja.

In 1862 the first missionary sponsored by the United Methodist Free Church arrived. His name was Thomas Wakefield who later was joined by Krapf who had returned to help him (Barrett et al 1973:30). The mission station was opened at Ribe. Other mission stations opened by the Methodists were at Ganjohi (Mazeras), Chonyi and Jomvu in 1879 (Kabutu 1992:1-2). Jomvu mission was

opened right in the middle of a Muslim community and we know that at that time Islam was a threat to the existence of Christianity in this part of the world.

In the 1860s Europe was becoming uncomfortable with the vice of the slave trade and so through their Christian missions focused their philanthropic attention on ending the slave trade, and the rehabilitation and resettlement of the freed slaves. This may have caused a lot of mayhem between Arabs and Christian missionaries.

In cooperation with the United Methodist Free Church, the Anglican-sponsored CMS (Church Missionary Society) set up various ways to help the rescued slaves; for example the priority at this time was how to resettle them. Another important person for this programme was Sir Bartle Frere who, having been appointed as a special envoy to Zanzibar where the slave trade was prevalent, encouraged Christians to focus their mission on the resettlement of freed and rescued slaves. This was in 1873 the same year that in collaboration with the Sultan of Zanzibar, he signed the treaty for abolishing the slave trade (Barrett et al 1973:22).

With Christian organisations was established the slaves' resettlement centre in Freetown in Kisauni in Mombasa, Kenya. There were many conflicts one of such conflict was that slaves could run away from their masters only to be received and housed by Christian missionaries and British sailors could buy the slaves and then set them free into the resettlement camps. Another problem was that the missionaries could offer the freed slaves nothing but theory and bookish education that at times seemed impractical. The only centre that seemed to

include practical and theory together was the Catholic centre at Bagamoyo where the victims were taught some skills as well (Kabutu 1992: 3).

According to Mr Clement Kabutu, lecturer at St. Makarios Orthodox seminary, even after the settlement of the slaves, all of whom were black, there arose within this Christian centre another form of slavery where it was claimed that even missionaries themselves did not treat their black employees very well, they regarded them essentially and racially different, treated them as little children to be patronised and guided so they remained in their eyes as slaves. This treatment was not only prevalent in a Christian environment but was continued by the British colonialists and this led to the formation of African independent schools and churches (Kabutu 1992:3).

The first Protestant mission produced its first visible fruits through the production of well groomed local outstanding missionaries some of whom became martyrs, for example David Koyi, who was martyred in 1883, William Jones, ordained in 1885, Ishmail Seruler, George David, John Mougomba, Thomas Mazera and Stephen Kareri. Through them the Christian mission was ready to move from the coast to the interior of the country and even to other parts of East Africa. This was boosted later by the construction of the Uganda, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu railway that made it easier to move into the interior of those countries far from the sea port.

In 1890 the Neukirchen a German Evangelical mission arrived and established themselves among the Pokomo people, their work extended along the Tana River. However, their work was relinquished to the United Methodist Free

Church. This was because of the First World War in which Germany was directly involved. For the security of its missionaries, the Neukirchen German missionaries were recalled back to Germany by their government (Kabutu 1992:3).

In 1884-1885, there was a shift in the mission operations throughout East Africa, and the missionaries relied more on the protection of their home governments. After the Berlin Conference many mission organisations as Mr Kabutu (1992:3) puts it, tended to follow their national flags in order to have maximum protection hence resulting to nationalism among the missionaries where by they spread their gospel along with their countries' ideals and cultures; not only did they become Christian diplomats but their own countries diplomats and to some extent their ears and eyes.

This missionary shift did not go down well with the local African converts, who at the end could not see any liberation within these mission organisations, and also saw no difference between the missionaries and the colonialists, and this led to a sense of doubt, insecurity, and mistrust between the missionaries and the local converts. This is what later led to the formation of African Independent Churches of which the African Orthodox Church was one.

Another interesting phenomenon that also made things even worse happened in 1888 when the different mission groups, depending on the countries and denominations they represented, set up mission boundaries within the African areas without consulting with Africans themselves.

In the same year 1888, the directors of the Imperial East African Company

(IBEAC) Sir William Mackinnon encouraged the expansion of Protestant missionary activities in the interior, especially in areas where the company could ensure the safety of the missionaries. As a Scot, he encouraged the establishment of the East African Scottish Mission (Kabutu1992:3).

The pioneer of the East African Scottish Mission was a missionary known as Dr. James Stewart, who being David Livingstone's successor had worked among the Nyassa people in Malawi. After his appointment to come and serve the East African people, he moved from Malawi with seven missionaries and about three hundred porters to help him set up this mission. This was on 19th September 1891. The main aim of Dr Stewart was to establish this Scottish mission among the Kikuyu people of Central Kenya but he settled first among the Kamba people in Kibwezi where mission was difficult and many of his people either died of starvation or raids. In 1898 he managed to reach the Kikuyu people and by the stewardship of another missionary the Scottish Mission established themselves in Kikuyu with their headquarters in Thogoto in 1899. Barrett et al 1973:22;Kabutu 1992:3) Thogoto therefore became the first Protestant mission station in the central province of Kenya.

By the establishment of the Mombasa, Nairobi-Kisumu Uganda railway transportation became easier giving access to the interior and therefore paved the way for missionaries to move from the coast and central province to the interior regions of Kenya. The railway was begun in 1895 in Mombasa, and by 1899 reached Nairobi and 1901 Kisumu. It was easier now to travel through the most dangerous parts of central and western Kenya.

In 1890, the CMS had established itself in Taveta, which was a very important Swahili trading centre and a supply station for the caravans. The second Protestant mission station in the central province was established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Kabete. In order to avoid conflicts between the Scottish mission in Thogoto and CMS missionaries in Kabete, (which was 8 km apart) imaginary boundaries were drawn between Ngong hills and Mt. Kenya where the Church Missionary Society took the East and the Scottish Mission took the West (Kabutu 1992:3-4).

Still in its pursuit for central Kenya, the CMS arrived in Kihuruko in 1901 and Waithaka in 1903, Kahuhia in 1906 and Mahiga in 1908. Meanwhile the Scottish Mission was expanding to Nyeri and southern part of Meru. There were sometimes squabbles between the CMS and the United Methodist Free Church over Embu, which ended only after the setting up of imaginary boundaries (see Kabutu1992:4).

The main problem with the boundary setting was that it was negotiated by missionary bodies, who were all foreigners and the local population was neither involved nor consulted, this is the first sign of the Protestant mission failure to attract the local people and may have been one of the underlying factors behind the creation of independent churches and schools. There were also fights between the various missionary organisations. An example of such fight can be seen clearly when the Anglican mission prevented the expansion of the Roman Catholic Consolata fathers in the Trans-Tana region, claiming that this was in the interest of the British and the course of Protestantism in the region. The correct

dates are not given but it should be between 1902 when the first Consolatas arrived and 1920 when they expanded their mission from Kenya to Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania (Kabutu 1992:4, 6-7.). Again here we see that this reason does not take the needs or wishes of the local inhabitants and owners of the land into account, the people to whom the religion has come, the hosts.

In 1901 the first Protestant mission arrived in Western Kenya among the Luhya people. It was the American Friends who organised the Friends Africa Industrial Mission centre at Kaimosi. The missionary leader was W.R Hotchkiss, pioneer of the African Inland Mission (AIM). His philosophy was that theoretical biblical teaching should be accompanied with practical training in order not only to create an impact on the recipients but also to bring visible change to their lives. This is why by 1902 the Friends African Industrial Centre was established in western Kenya with another one following in Lumbwa in Kericho. The Friends Mission in Kaimosi, western Kenya had a very advanced high school for girls, a hospital, a theological college, and a teacher training college (Kabutu 1992:4). All these institutions are very advanced and functioning to date.

In 1905, the first Christian mission in Bunyore western Kenya was set up at Kima (Owekhomo) by the Church of God mission from the USA by Mr Anderson. This was the one of the first missions to use local people from other African countries as missionaries and to also send its product of local people to be missionaries. The first successful missionary in Bunyore was a South African by the name Yohana Mbila.(Kabutu1992:5; Barrett et al 1973:34)

He introduced the use of the modern hoe (Jembe) among the Banyore people

and he was also a very outstanding missionary (Barrett et al 1973:34). Beside the mission the Church also established other institutions such as the Kima general hospital, Kima primary School, Bunyore Girls High School, and Kima Theological College which have remained the best institutions not only in Bunyore but for the whole province of western Kenya as well. Kima is the centre of this mission for the whole of East Africa. It still commands a large number of the population in Bunyore with many local clergy and institutions.

In 1906, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church mission established itself in Kisii and the South Nyanza regions of western Kenya, besides being a successful mission it also established the first university to be set up and run by the church.

In 1921, the Pentecostal Assembly of Canada began its work in western Kenya and Nairobi. It established a Bible college in Nyang'ori in the Vihiga district of western Kenya, where they also established a boys' high school, primary school, Bible College and a printing press for Christian literature.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God mission which was the work of the Apostolic Mission in Iowa in USA opened in Nyang'ori and spread to nearby areas.

Since I am not discussing a detailed history, I will not go into the details of every thing but this will give an idea of how the Protestant missions came to Kenya. We have other missions like the Salvation Army that entered the country in 1921, set up stations at Embu, Nairobi, Malakisi, and many other parts of the country establishing several institutions for the blind and handicapped among others. It was later affected though not destroyed by the split of the Wokovu African Church from it in 1966. We have the faith mission which was an amalgamation of

Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans set up by Peter Cameron Scott. Started in Ukambani, Kijabe, and was extended among the Turgen people.

In 1902 the gospel missionary society Pentecostal movement of the African Inland Mission was established under a missionary settler by the name Krieger. However, due to lack of resources, Krieger Mission was forced to join the Church of Scotland Mission (Kabutu1992:4-5). This is not a full history, because the aim of this part of the research is not history but a brief outline of how the Protestant missions found their way into Kenya.

Roman Catholic Mission

The Catholic missiological interest as we said earlier started some time in 1858 when Bishop Maupoint Armand of Reunion sent his vicar general Fava to explore ways of opening a Catholic mission in Zanzibar. This date does not only mark the beginning of Catholic mission in Kenya but also in East Africa as a whole (Barrett et al1973:31). By 1860 a base had been established and by the help of Catholic missions from France Holy Ghost Fathers, two priests and two brothers had been sent to settle at the Zanzibar island becoming the first stationed missionaries.

By 1890 a permanent mission had been established in Mombasa, this extended in 1891 when the Holy Ghost Fathers opened a station in Bura near Voi and in 1899 in Limuru. As Barrett et al 1973:31-32 continues to narrate, the Catholic mission reached Ukambani in the Eastern province and established there a mission station at Kabaa and a school in Machakos in 1913 and by the beginning of World War 1 the Catholic mission had firmly established itself on the coast, central and Eastern provinces of Kenya. In 1902, the Consolata Mission from

Italy commenced their mission in Kikuyu land in central province. This led to infighting between the new society of Consolatas and the old one of the Holy Ghost Fathers over the boundaries of their respective work this continued till 1931(Barrett et al1973:32).

1906 Consolata Mission was entrusted with Kikuyu land and in 1909 the Nyeri Vicariate was formed. 1907 records the first baptism and then four years later the four Consolata Mission priests came to Meru district where the first out stations were opened in Baricho and Kianyaga hence making Meru a prefecture in 1926. The work of the Catholic mission in East Africa and in particular in Kenya cannot be fully comprehended without mentioning the devoted nuns and sisters who also left everything to come and plant the seed of Christianity working along side their priests and bishops of the time. The first to arrive were the Daughters of St. Vincent who arrived in 1903 opening the way for the formation of the sodality of African sisters by the name of Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters, which according to Barrett (1973:32) became a religious organisation in 1927. This followed a very important moment in the Catholic history of its mission in East Africa where we had the first African Mother superior by the name of Julia Wamboi in 1946. The Catholics tried very hard to integrate local people in to the ministry, this can be seen because after the appointment of Mother Julia as a mother superior attempts were made in 1914 to open up a seminary to train local clergy and by the year 1927 the first African clergy were ordained their names were; James Komisassa and Thomas Kemango. By 1939 a much more organised and advanced seminary was opened in Nyeri and given the name of

St. Paul Minor Seminary.

In western Kenya, which by this time was called the Kavirondo received its first Catholic evangelism through St Joseph's Society for Foreign missions of Mill Hill, which had a base in England (I attended my high school at the Mill Hill high school in Bunyore). It is very interesting how the English Catholic mission came to find itself in Kenya in this case western Kenya. It happened that the white fathers in Uganda found themselves a predominantly French Mission society in a British territory and in order to show that Catholicism was not the same as French nationalism, they requested the help of the Mill Hill Mission. It would appear that the Catholic religion may have reached first in western Kenya through Uganda.

As I sum up I cannot forget to mention the arrival of the first Franciscan sisters (which is the second arrival after the arrival of the daughters of St Vincent) of St. Mary's Abbey, Mill Hill and by 1903 the mission station had been established in Kisumu which enhanced the growth of the Catholic mission along Lake Victoria including Bunyore and Nyanza regions. This progress led to the opening of the first station in Kakamega in the heart of western Kenya in 1906 and within three years we had three stations operating in western Kenya by then known as Kavirondo. In 1908, the church was opened in the Rift valley province and in Nakuru in particular, The 1910 Catholic mission entered Kisii and in 1932 due to the rapid growth and for easy administration Kisumu was elevated to a Vicariate. This is again not a full account of the historical development of the Catholic mission in East Africa and Kenya. The Catholic religion is not very dominant in

Bunyore but it has a very strong presence, with a lot of philanthropic and even religious institutions set up all over. In Kenya as a whole the Catholic religion commands a large following.

Reflection and conclusion

Despite the infighting we have not seen much of the Catholics aligning themselves with the colonial powers but nor have we seen them condemning or sacrificing its prelates for the freedom of African people. By the fact that they followed their different nations colonial powers e.g. French, British Germany I can also conclude that for their survival they had to indirectly depend on their mother countries and this identifies them with the Protestant denominations that supported colonial powers for their survival. This is my own observation.

However the secret behind the growth of the Catholic Church may be its organisational structure, philanthropic involvement and involvement of the local population in to the service of the Church. This involves their efforts to learn local languages, customs and cultures.

According to Archdeacon Owen Kavirondo, we learn that despite efforts to integrate Africans into and become involved with the Christian mission, both Protestant and Catholic missions missed the target. Owen having this point in mind insisted on the rights of the African majority leading to a confrontational approach towards his fellow missionary Arthur in London in 1923 (Barrett et al 1973: 35). Owen began the Kavirondo Taxpayers Association aiming at helping civil servants especially Africans by teaching them about their civic rights and economic development. Although Owen became very popular among the

Africans, he later became suspect in African eyes because in 1930 there was a perception growing among Africans that all the foreign Christian missionaries were considered to be anti-African and their values and too pro western values and favouring colonialism. These sentiments affected even the good people such as Owen. This attitude led to Africans both those inside and outside the mission Churches to start seeking alternatives and this was another issue which led to the creation of African indigenous Churches amongst which the Orthodox Christian church finds itself. The only difference between the African Initiated Churches and Western Initiated Churches is that the later went looking for people (Africans) whereas the African independent Churches were founded by Africans themselves, they went searching for them, and this might be one of the reasons that despite the lack of financial and Government support these churches have thrived and found strong grass root support among the local people.

The Orthodox Christian Church had a successful mission in Africa especially in Banyore because of the many points of convergence in anthropology between Orthodox Christian faith, African traditional belief and teaching about human beings and the Creator. I have tried to show that Africa was not a stranger to the Christian faith and Africa as a continent where each community almost traces its ancestry and origin to one place shares a lot of beliefs and traditions even though these traditions, cultures and values are manifested in diverse ways. That is why when we learn about the similarities of African traditions in general and the Christian faith in the case Orthodox faith, then we will have a background for the Banyore.

According to Professor Albert Panteleimon Raboteu (Altschul 1997: 1-9), a professor at Princeton University and a convert to the Orthodox Christian Church, we learn several convergences that I too agree with. The convergences reveal and prove the fact that Christianity is not a religion of Europe as many of us think, but Christianity from the evidence we have just unveiled was established in Africa by the third and the fourth centuries long before it arrived in Europe. In places such as Ethiopia, Egyptian traditions of worship and monasticism and spirituality remained authentically African and authentically Christian until the present date. Traditionally African spirituality has emphasised the close relationship between the 'coinherence' of the other world and this world, the realm of divine and the realm of the human. There is another world within this world, which the Banyore may call 'Emakombe' literally translated as Hades. Orthodoxy at the same time emphasises on the reality and the Kingdom of God among us. In Orthodoxy the heavenly dimension is revealed through icons and Iconostasis. Icons serve as windows to the invisible world yet they also act as the ever-present world as do the lives of the saints that the icons represent. African traditional rituals are seen as windows to view the invisible world that also allows the passage between the two worlds (Altschul 1997: 1-9).

Traditional African piety reveals the other world as the dwelling place of God and host of supernatural spirits (some of them ancestors) that mediate between the human and the divine watching over the lives of men and women, offering when asked to protect people from harm or provide favour on their behalf. Orthodox piety on the other hand believes in the power of the saints, ancestors in faith, to

intercede with God for us, to protect and help us in times of distress.

Traditional African spirituality values the material world as enlivened with spirits and makes use of the material objects that have been filled with spiritual power. Orthodox spirituality sees the world charged with the glory of God and during the feast of Theophany it celebrates the renewal (Spencer1996:140-144) of the entire creation through God becoming flesh in the person of Christ. Orthodoxy accepts the holiness of blessed matter and uses matter like water, chrism, icons, crosses, incense, wine, bread, wheat, and oil in its celebration of the Holy Eucharist and all other holy sacraments.

In African traditional spirituality man is not perceived as an individualised self, but as living a web of relationships, inter-related with the community in both past and present (Mugambi and Kirima 1979: 61) An African has his or her security through his or her membership in the whole which is the family clan or community, one is defined within the family he/she is a communion of the whole, he or she is controlled by the whole and any individual contribution becomes part of the whole (Mugambi and Kirima: 61-62).The koinonia of kinship with both the living the departed members is very strong.

Orthodox spirituality emphasises the person as being radically interpersonal, a being in communion, reflecting the interpersonal nature (Akunda 2002: 62) of the divine Trinity. Christian identity is grounded in the reality of the mystical body of Christ, where we all become members of a community united by baptism and faith as the body of Christ. We find ourselves a big family of both militant (living members of the Church) and triumphant (departed members). This directly

reveals the concept of kinship both nuclear and extended, in Orthodox spirituality.

In qualifying this point, Mantzaridis (1984:53-54) says that, "In the partaking of the Holy Eucharist, man is united with the divinizing flesh of Christ and shares in ----becomes one body with Christ. When the believer is united in this manner with Christ, he is transformed into a temple for the Trinitarian divinity. As the entire fullness of divinity resides in the body of Christ, the Holy Trinity resides in those who are one body with Christ". This union includes both the triumphant and militant faithful. One who is in the Church thinks and acts through the Church for he or she is no longer an Individual but an individual within a communion whose conscience is powered by the conscience of the Church as the mystical body of Christ, hence though living on earth, he/she is participating at the same time in the new life and becomes a citizen of the age to be (Mantzaridis 1984:54).

In many areas African spirituality portrays human beings as children of God carrying in them a spark of God (Omwoyo-Spirit.) A bit of God's soul that animates the spirit of each man and woman. According to the book of Genesis, Orthodoxy teaches about man being created in the image and likeness of God and man's vocation is to become divine, becoming day by day more and more like the image in which he/she was created.

African traditional spirituality dissected the body and soul placing an emphasis on the joyful sorrow that reflects Africans suffering as slaves, colonised, oppressed and their perspective on life. The same is reflected in Orthodox spirituality where the joyful sorrow not only reflects the persecution the Church and faith has

suffered but also the poignant chant tones expressing the attitude of repentance that characterises the Orthodox Christian's attitude towards life.(Quasten1983:1-239)

The traditional religions in Africa with their symbols and images have been used to sustain morality, ethos and hope. They also act as a symbol of unity and common tradition (Mbiti 1975:162). They act as spiritual channels developed by people in the course of their history, by and due to demanding hardships.

Through this and many other ways, an African finds a part of self in almost all religious expressions of Africa.

And in its own way, Orthodoxy has realised and considers with great respect the moral and religious values of African tradition, not only by reason of their meaning but also because, as the Orthodox Church, we see in them the providential basis for the transmission of the gospel message.

I do believe that we cannot hope to convert people to our faith (the faith of Christ) without ever encountering them in their ordinary life. We enter into their mentality while respecting their worthy civilisation and religion; we engage in dialogue. In this way we are able to eliminate elements of culture that are unbecoming and harmful such as witchcraft, where people think that they can settle their scores through dangerous magic, gender inequality where men seem to enjoy comfort compared to women who are traditionally seen as objects to be used by men, respect of children as equal members of society especially females, polygamy, ethnic fighting where tribes end up in arms with each other to prove their strength, just to name a few of the cultural elements which are detrimental to the

wholeness and holiness of the Orthodox Christian faith.

Religion is always with us every moment of life, and as we experience joys, sorrows, achievements and failures, religion remains attached to us. This statement affirms the philosophy that everyone believes. We also realise that Christianity when it was introduced to Africa was not introduced to robots, but to human beings that had a belief before, e.g., the Kikuyus of Kenya had a belief in Ngai, and Ngai was a supreme power. The Banyore had a belief in Nyassaye to whom every Munyore paid reverence. With these beliefs, Africa formed local canons and regulations, modes of life, seasons and feasts. When Christianity came it brought the message of the same "Ngai", "Nyassaye" (God) that the locals had already a glimpse of.

It is religion that has defined African culture and with it the African community was held together (koinonia). There was always hope, love and thanksgiving (Eucharistia). Without the religion and culture that united and put people together, missionaries would have had a hard time in converting and evangelising in Africa.

Religion in Africa is a response to the ultimate reality. It is a response to man's problems, (thaumastos), wonders, and discoveries. Also, within religion humankind discovers their identity and upon this identity they exist by religion and culture, an African man was able to discern the future, use his past to determine both his present and future, to establish a firm foundation upon which his future generation was to build.

The presence of Orthodoxy in Africa has its foundation built on African religion

and culture - with very minor adjustments. An African has learnt to appreciate Orthodoxy as both a fulfilment of his/her dreams and as a short cut to understanding what he/she formerly practised and believed. An African experience of the amazing "phos" (light.) of Christianity and the "phronima" kerygmatically expressed, finds themselves with a whole personal experience of Christ in mind, soul, and body, in intellectual, social and cultural aspects.

The true African religion and culture involves the whole being, and at this point symbols and images marked a very important aspect of an African religious life. Within this lies the marking of seasons and feasts. To an extent, aspects of Orthodoxy such as symbols and images, feasts and seasons, marked the beginning of integration between an African pagan and a missionary Christian. The use of symbols like water, fire and incense in the Orthodox Christian Church was neither strange nor alien, but rather a detailed description of what already existed in the mission field. In his thesis; *"The new people of God"*, a mission analyst Francis Githieya Kimani explicates how Orthodox Christianity was received as a church of the people, for the people and by the people, reasons that allows me to presume that this may be one of the reasons why Orthodoxy received a welcoming response in African soil unlike the "sola scriptura" missionaries, justified by faith" who demonised and colonised African culture with the new religion of the blackboard and became colonial ambassadors (Githieya1992: 149-174).

The issue of culture is sensitive because it involves the whole person and to change all the senses of the person is something that needs to be negotiated,

not eradicated by force.

African religion did not remain at the level of contemplation or speculation but rather was always translated into action and applied to ordinary life by means of rituals, sacrifices, worship, and laws so that each member was aware of what to do, when and how to do it. Religion was not a Sunday, Easter, or Christmas affair as is often practised today but it was before, for life and beyond. It was a matter of respect for sacred places, people etc and was something one was born with and grew up with.

Reflecting upon religious experience, we can see that it is a product of intuition in the life and experience of the ordinary members of society expressed in symbols, images, worship and life as a whole.

Before Christianity an African person realised that their own experience and knowledge depended upon something super powerful, beyond their ordinary experience, and since they had no means of reaching the ultimate reality they diverted their reverence not "to" but "through" matter such as mountains, rivers, and the sun and so on. The mysticism of the cosmos and the entire environment of an African created a direct encounter with the Supreme Being and was a "theophany" of God.

By the mystical life, an African was able to lead intuitively to the "*Metamorphosis*" (Transfiguration). In their own understanding, an African sought and found a name for the indescribable super being. This discovery may be seen as a transfiguration, an encounter with the light of the super being, and it is this transfiguration of life the guarded and guided life, principled life until it came to be

fully explicated in Christianity. By the coming of Christianity, he/she was taught another name for the super being who is the Trinitarian God he/she was taught another means of expressing their "hara" sorrow, praise and complaint to their God - this become a brief prayer to the Trinitarian God. After moving to Christianity, he/she retained the former title he/she had for their pre-Christian God. Among the Baluhya, for example, God had two names, *Nyassaye* or *Welle Khakaba* meaning "one who provides". This has remained a name to describe God in the Luhya--Lunyore Bible (Interview with Lwabi Josphat 20/2007).

Providing in this community is a very distinguished responsibility, a man was responsible if he could be able to provide for his family. The same happened to everyone in the Banyore community. Based on this the Luhya could wonder how there existed a proper order of provision in the environment: how the sun, moon, and stars knew their order of existence, that the one who provided for all these things was a great being. One who provided rain was a Supreme Being.

Secularisation and sacralisation were used positively in the mission of Orthodox Christian faith in Africa and this might be another factor as to why Orthodoxy is strong though not popular in Africa. However, we all understand already that what we look at as secular from a Christian perspective, ideologies and conviction is considered to be as sacred to the indigenous community. For example we Christians look at the issue of dowries as something secular, whereas we Africans find it very sacred in our community and discouraging it may ruin a mission to the African people. Others rituals such as initiations, tattooing, tooth removal, circumcision and even polygamy (except

clitoridectomy), may seem useless and even considered barbaric in many Christian religious eyes but they are dearly adored by the owners. If we allow those people who have undergone some or all of these rituals into our mission then it would be understood that we are accepting them totally and they will feel at home.

The Orthodox Christian Church accommodated part what already existed within the African community. By this means which may seem unorthodox to traditionalists (Traditionalists are those from Orthodox circles who believe that Orthodox Christian faith cannot be compromised by any other element outside of it, and rejects any dialogue with so called heretics, African traditionalists on the other hand seem to have accepted Orthodox ways and that is why many of them converted.) and fundamentalists, Orthodox Christian faith has flourished, to the point of becoming part of African traditional religion in the sense that it is no longer looked at as a foreign religion, but rather as a modified African religion (African faith is revealed in the Orthodox creed, songs and rituals.)

The presence of icons, images and symbols is an indication that secular natural matter can be unified to spirituality and aid mankind towards deification. An African always applied matters for instance the sun, moon, mountains etc plus other supernatural events such as life, birth, and earthquakes, that can be used to link to deity. By his/her inability to explain exhaustively all these events and phenomena, Africans were led to believe in the unknown. Western missionaries, without properly and critically assessing the context where they were to evangelise but full of their own superiority complex and "utopia", declared all

African efforts to reach God as futile, barbaric and pagan. Let us enter into a dialogue in order to share the small devils and gods each of us has in our religion or faith.

We have to accept the fact that any religion including Christianity is not a seasonal thing where we go to class, we read, we pass get the certificate and we forget it, it is something that permeates the whole of life, at all times. However, classroom spirituality may be dangerous as it can condition Christianity to certain places and hours. We become pious and dedicated while attending Sunday school class, or Church on Sundays and other feast days but outside of these religious occasions we lead a very sinful life.

AFRICAN INDIGENEOUS CHURCHES IN KENYA

This section will briefly outline the emergence of African Initiated Churches and why they came into existence.⁴ This is because in discussing the Orthodox Christian Church we are aware that it came into existence as an independent church not as a missionary church, it is only later that it came to be affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. This interesting development will also give a witness to how the voice of the people who have been oppressed and repressed politically and religiously may come out strongly without weapons and emerge successful. Beside my own observation my

⁴ Some speak of African Independent Churches, some of African Indigenous Churches, and some of African Initiated Churches, and the abbreviation for all three is AIC. The Orthodox Church in Kenya and Bunyore was, and remains an African Initiated Church. It was also an African Independent Church, though some might say that it ceased to be "independent" when it united with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria in 1946.

references here will be Stephen Hayes and Barrett who have also talked widely about this issue.

Due to the extensiveness of this section, I will mention some independent churches in passing but will later on focus on the African Independent Pentecostal Church through which the Orthodox Christian Church of Kenya was born.

There are several reasons that led to the formation of the African founded churches ranging from culture to socio-political. According to Kabutu (1992:8); these were just few among many of the factors as he outlines them;

1. Violation of African traditional culture especially female circumcision that led to the formation of Orthodox Church by then (Barrett et al 1973:36).
2. Missionary paternalism,
3. Colonial legacy
4. African religion
5. Conditions of modern society.

Historically the movement was started in 1892 and by 1992 there were about seven thousand indigenous churches, with a total following of about thirty five million, in Africa as whole. In Kenya the majority of them are located in western Kenya among the Luo and Luhya people.

The first of this kind in Kenya was the movement called 'Mumboism' that was like a political-religious movement that though it did not go far it set the stage for the proliferation of indigenous Christian religious movements. This was started by Onyango Dude from Nyanza western Kenya. As I was interviewing Mr Kabutu, he did not have a specific date in mind of when this movement might have

existed (Interview June 2007).

The first indigenous church in Kenya was set up in 1914 by a Catholic seminarian by the name Johanna Owelo. Owelo left the seminary and joined CMS which he later abandoned and formed the first African Independent Church by the name Nomiya Luo Mission in 1916, Alfayo Odongo from the same region started the Roho (Holy Spirit) movement that later became the Roho Musanda Church. Another movement broke from the Friends mission to form the 'Dini ya Roho' (Holy Spirit Church) (Kabutu 1992:8).

There arose also in Murang'a the "Dini ya Kaggia" or "Arata a Roho Mutheru" (Friends of the Holy Spirit). Others are Akorinu (Saviour), Aroti (Dreamers), Anabii (Prophets) all the above mentioned came to be nicknamed the Turban People (Andu a Iremba) because they could all be identified by the turban they wore on their heads. These churches are similar to the Holy Spirit Churches founded in western Kenya as we had seen earlier. Some of them if not all of them except the Karing'a and KISA rejected some of the Kikuyu traditions and sought only the guidance of the Holy Scripture and Holy Spirit. Others were the Holy Ghost Church of Kenya, Dini Ya Msambwa (Church of the sacrifice), Christian Holy Ghost Church of East Africa, the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church, the Holy Spirit Church of Zayun, the African Mission of the Holy Ghost Church etc (Barrett et al 1973:132-134).

In 1952, within the Catholic Church a prophetess emerged by the name Miriam Ragot who denounced the Church of Rome and the white race. The movement was suppressed but it reappeared in 1963, through another Luo prophetess by

the name Gaudencia Aoko who formed the Legio Maria Church. The revival within the Anglican Church saw the emergence of the Church of Christ in East Africa. This revival movement was started in Rwanda in 1927, reached Nyanza in 1938, and in 1952 there were two main factions within the movement i.e. 'Joremo' (people of Blood), and 'Johera' (People of love).

Still in western Kenya another movement came out of the Pentecostal mission in Nyang'ori, by the name of African Israel Nineveh Church by David Paul Zakayo Kivuli who claimed to have had a Holy Spirit experience during a serious illness. He started to preach from village to village gathering large crowd of followers. He named this church the African Church of Nineveh as a way to signify its independence from mission control. This church prohibited polygamy, alcohol, tobacco, and spirituality was highly regarded while dreams were seen as important sources of God's revelation. It has spread to many places and to date it is the most dominant in Bunyore and many other places of western Kenya. It is one of the indigenous churches that has joined the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

In central Kenya indigenous churches appeared in most cases for cultural reasons which Kabutu calls cultural nationalism (Kabutu1992:9). He goes on to say that while there were other areas of conflicts between the mission churches and socio-religious traditions of the Agikuyu (Kikuyu) people, the last straw was when the Kikuyu practice of clitoridectomy (female circumcision) was denounced and condemned by mission churches. It was seen as the dilution of the culture of the people that identified them as Kikuyu people. This led to the climax point when in

1926 a powerful attempt was made by the Kikuyu people to challenge the Western missionary attitude towards female circumcision by the formation of the 'Kikuyu Central Association' (KCA). This was done at a conference in Nyeri called specifically for this purpose. This Kikuyu people at the conference took the missionary churches' attitude towards their culture which they had practised for many years not only as a religious violation but political as well. The Western mission churches were seen as the mouthpiece as well as a polite weapon of the imperial government with imperial motives rather than salvation motives. This was because the Christian missionaries in Kikuyu land described clitoridectomy as barbaric and abhorrent from a political point of view. Amongst the missionaries who objected were Arthur Phillip and Hooper who saw the practice as 'disgusting and incompatible with their Christian teaching (Kabutu 1992:9). The Church of Scotland mission tried to make it a rule that its baptised members were to stay away from this practice of female circumcision or else face suspension from Church membership. Natsoulas 1988: 220, through Hayes 1998:117, clearly states that John Arthur of the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) took a lead in announcing to the mission's African agents (mainly teachers) to sign a written declaration denouncing circumcision and membership of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) the body that was perceived as an enemy of colonial rule. The whole matter became worse when these members who knew how to write were forced to sign and for those who could not write to put their fingerprints (kirore). Some refused to bow to the pressure and remained loyal to the KCA (Kikuyu Central Association) and they came to be nicknamed as

“Agikuyu-Karing’a” (Pure Kikuyus, straight Kikuyus) and those who signed were nicknamed the “Agikuyu Kirore” (The Agikuyu of the Finger, implying that they were like traitors). This imposition is one of the biggest reasons in this province that led to a mass exodus of Kikuyu people out of mission schools and churches to form their own schools and churches and this is where organisations like KISA (Kikuyu Independent Schools Association) and KKEA (Kikuyu Karing’a Educational Association) came into existence (see also Githieya 1992:146-150).

In defence to this practice the Kikuyu people looked at the missionaries and many whites who supported them as people who were not sensitive to the social and cultural implications this was going to cause and possibly saw it as a colonial witch hunt.

To them (the Kikuyu Africans) the initiation ceremonies like clitoridectomy were a means of graduation from adolescence into adulthood. Circumcision whether female or male was an outward sign pointing to deeper social, religious and cultural values of the Kikuyu community which under no circumstances was to be violated or in other words blasphemed by foreigners who did not understand and were not ready to listen and understand.

Kabutu says that it was not the outward sign that mattered in this case but the culmination of instructions and gateway to initiation into womanhood. It was the duty of the community to prepare its members to become trustworthy persons and circumcision fulfilled this role mentally and spiritually as well as physically (Kabutu 1992:9).

To conclude this, we have to realise that the whole issue here was the lack of

dialogue between the two sides because to a non believer even baptism which involves dipping some one in to the water may be seen as barbaric, just as the missionaries saw clitoridectomy as barbaric.

For the Kikuyu, it was their culture that was at stake not Christianity and so they had to use any means to stop this even if it meant deserting the so called mission churches and schools with all their comforts and this is what happened as we will continue to see as we move along. Though their tradition, especially female circumcision appeared to be “darkness” for missionaries for them it was the only way to prevent their culture and values from disintegrating, hence keeping intact the communion of the Kikuyu community. By the 1929 and 1930, the matter had reached a critical stage that frustrated people and resulted in them being rebellious by establishing their own schools and churches.

The main independent movements among many were the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) and the Kikuyu Karing’a Educational Association (KKEA) which were to provide both spiritual and educational necessities for local Kikuyu people especially those who had been displaced from missionary churches. This was because they did not want to discard the Christian faith and its teaching they wished to retain it but they were not willing to receive this faith from the mission churches who they believed had distorted biblical teaching for their own hidden agenda. So this led them to found African Independent Churches and not African independent religions. Simultaneously, what occurred was that whenever an independent school was established there was also an independent church established. For example the African Independent

Pentecostal Church came out of KISA while Karing'a gave birth to the African Orthodox Church which later on became known as the African Greek Orthodox Church (AGOC). I will briefly mention other churches that grew out of mission churches due to dissatisfaction of leadership was another issue because some of these mission churches did not allow Africans to exercise leadership roles within the mission church. The African Christian Church and school grew out of the African Inland Church in Murang'a in 1940 when we had other independent Churches growing as explained in the previous chapter at page 61.

Conclusion

In this subchapter we find an amazing truth, that most of these new churches were not founded by theologians but by lay people who did not find authenticity of the gospel within the Western mission churches, some who felt so religiously patriotic that they could only feel and practice this patriotism if they were given some indigenous leadership while others felt that it was only through the founding of their own churches, that their culture and values could be guaranteed survival, while others may have had as a reason that being no longer part of the so called colonial government churches they could be better able to fight colonialism. Because of all these issues, as we will see in the next sub section, the African people wanted to localise Christianity by incorporating an African traditional worldview.

Their churches put more emphasis on the importance of community life and human relations. We can criticise them for their tribal rivalry because many of them did not go along due to the tribal nature of their founding Churches not their

ecclesiology.

African Independent Pentecostal Church of Kenya and African Orthodox Church of Kenya.

These two independent churches are like twins, some times they could rival each other but they had the same reasons for being formed and both of them led to the formation of the present day Orthodox Church of Kenya and both of them can be seen as the parents of the Orthodox Church of Bunyore. Though started in the central province, the impact of these two organisations reached the whole country. They also became instrumental in the liberation of the country from the British in 1963 with most of their leaders being thrown into prison by the colonial regime.

The African Independent Pentecostal Church was founded in the central province by Mania Kiragu, Daudi Kunyihia, and Johanna and its leaders at the time were Kahihia, Benjamin, Muchangarioa, Petro and this was in the year 1925 (Hayes: 2008:1). It was a religious extension of KISA (The Kikuyu Independent Schools Association) this church is also known for its active role in Kenyan nationalism. By 1952 they had about 168 schools with about 60,000 pupils in both central and Rift valley provinces (Hayes 1998:2). They shared the same building for Church and school. According to Hayes's (1998:2), statistics, there were 28 schools in Kiambu, 38 in Fort Hall, 27 in Nyeri, 16 in Embu, 6 in Meru, and 47 in Rift valley. In 1952 the AIPC was banned along with other Kikuyu organisations so many of its members were forced to stay at home while others joined the Presbyterian Church. Following Kenya's independence in 1963, we see the influx of many people from the mission churches especially in Nyeri back to back with AIPC

(African Independent Pentecostal Church) since then the church has extended its arm to many regions of Kenya especially in Kikuyu land (see also Barrett et al 1973:231-232).

By 1929, the two Kikuyu Independent Schools Associations (KISA from which grew the African Independent Pentecostal Church under Johana Kahihia) and the Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association (KKEA, from which stemmed the African Orthodox Church) had an aim of providing independent education and from this there was a need to form an independent Christian foundation for its members. So in order to meet the goal of extending Christian religion for its people in an African way trained people were needed, especially ordained clergy. KISA made a request to the Anglican Church, which by then had a theological school, to have its two young men trained in the Anglican institution and in turn come back to serve as clergy. The request was not welcomed by the Anglicans and so they were forced to look somewhere else where they could get their young men trained. There was a dire need for the ordained clergy and so they could accept anything at that time.

KISA heard of an Archbishop of the African Orthodox Church in South Africa by the name of Archbishop Alexander and so they did not hesitate to invite him, at their expense and so Archbishop Alexander arrived in Kenya in November 1935. They (KISA officials) chose him (Archbishop Alexander) because he had told them that his African Orthodox Church was for Africans and controlled by them for them. He used according to Hayes language such as, 'the AOC was controlled by Negros entirely' (Hayes 1998:2).

This was the second time Archbishop Alexander had visited East Africa because he had been to Uganda in 1931 by the invitation of Reuben Mukasa (who later became Fr Reuben Sparta and consecrated in 1973 as Bishop Christophoros of Nilopolis) and Obadiah Basajjitalo. These two are the pioneers of Orthodoxy in Uganda. When they were Anglicans they had discovered the African Orthodox Church in America through reading and sought to join it and after learning about Patriarch McGuire of the African Orthodox Church in America (the so called Negro Church) they wrote to him in 1924 seeking to join the African Orthodox Church of America and so he referred them to the newly consecrated Bishop Alexander of South Africa who by that time was responsible also for Africa and that is how Alexander found himself in East Africa in 1931 and again in 1935 (Hayes1998:116).

Archbishop Alexander remained in Kenya until 1937, and during this time he was involved in the mission work of making the local African Orthodox Church in Kenya strong (This is how the African Orthodox Church of Kenya came into existence). He opened a theological seminary with eight students at Waithaka. KISA sponsored seven of them and one was sponsored by KKEA. Before his departure from Kenya he wanted to ensure that he left what he had established in a very strong position so he ordained three deacons and two sub-deacons. Once again we see the two rival organisations together.

Since the newly ordained could not agree on how to organise their new church, they split into two factions known as KKEA and KISA. among themselves with some like deacon (who later became a priest) George Gattung'u Gathuna

supporting KKEA (Kikuyu Karing'a Educational Association). The KKEA faction remained in the African Orthodox Church later becoming the African Orthodox Church of Kenya. Out of the second faction (KISA) grew the African Independent Pentecostal Church. So by 1937 we had officially two rival organisations bringing forth two rival independent churches namely African Independent Pentecostal Church from KISA and African Orthodox Church from KKEA.

The Orthodox Church later became the African Greek Orthodox Church of Kenya, under the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. Since both churches were watched with suspicion by the British Colonial Government, they were eventually banned from 1952 through to 1963 when Kenya became independent. Deacon George Gatung'u Gathuna later became the first African Bishop of the African Greek Orthodox Church of Kenya and by then the Orthodox Church of Kenya under the leadership of Archbishop Makarios had over 500,000 adherents, a seminary, several schools and hospitals and more than three hundred priests and many theologians.

The AOC and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria today

We know very well that the idea of the African Orthodox Church of Kenya joining the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria was just a fulfilled dream which Archbishop Alexander had wanted even though it was not possible during his time. We are told that after receiving the invitation from KISA, Daneil William Alexander (the Archbishop) before commencing his journey to East Africa, wrote to the then Archbishop of Johannesburg Isidore requesting from him an introductory letter or rather in a more ecclesiastical terms "the Blessings" to meet

with the Greek Orthodox Priest in Moshi Tanganyika, since it was also Archbishop Alexander's wish and request again to merge together the newly founded African Orthodox Church with the Greek Orthodox Church in South Africa and in East Africa which by then had about 14000 members. Archbishop Isidore of the Greek Orthodox Church in South Africa referred him to the Patriarch of Alexandria (Hayes1998:118). This at least sets a stage for us on how the African Orthodox Church found itself under the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, which is the canonical Orthodox Church.

This contact that Archbishop Alexander had requested earlier from Isidore, continued on a serious basis between the Church of Uganda and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, prompting Metropolitan Nicholas (Nikolaos) of Axum (who later became the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa) to visit East Africa to see what was happening with this new group, this was by the blessings of the Holy Synod to which he was to report back. This was in 1942.

Fr. Reuben Sparta and Obadiah Basajjitalo of the Ugandan African Orthodox Church came to learn of the African Orthodox Church (AOC) in Kenya which was led by Fr. George (Arthur) Gathuna. Reports had surfaced in newspapers that this church was also involved in the political liberation of the Kenyan people (Hayes 1998:119). Having met their Kenyan brothers, they briefed them on the Patriarchate of Alexandria with which they were in correspondence encouraging the Kenyan Church to seek affiliation with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa because it was the true canonical Orthodox See with apostolic succession, and it was the original Orthodox Church.

The joint letter was addressed to the then Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios requesting this merger, but though willing to act he died before he could do so. They made another appeal to the new patriarch Christophoros II applying to be received into the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa and in 1946 they received the canonical status and from then the African Orthodox Church became the African Greek Orthodox Church of Kenya under the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. Hence forming what came to be known as the Holy Metropolis of Kenya and Irinoupolis.⁵ It survived with visiting metropolitans or exarchs until 1956 (Zoe1964:379) when the new and first metropolitan of East Africa, Metropolitan Nikolaos was appointed. He was to oversee the Orthodox Christians in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. His See City (Headquarters) was Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania and from there he could pay pastoral visits to all the countries that fell under his jurisdiction. That is how it came by the name Irinoupolis.

The most important thing to note is that Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna became the first black Kenyan Orthodox bishop. Right now in 2008 due to the expansion of the Church in East Africa, the three countries involved have now been separated, each having its own metropolitan. Metropolitan Makarios of Kenya, Metropolitan Jonah of Uganda, Metropolitan Dimitrios of Dar-es-Salaam (Irinoupolis) meaning a 'a city of peace' and Metropolitan Jeronymos of Bukoba all forming the East African Orthodox Church.⁶

⁵ Irinoupolis is the Greek name for the city of Dar-es-Salaam, which means "City of Peace".

⁶ In the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria the titles "Archbishop" and "Metropolitan" go

On November 30th 1979 Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna was defrocked, caused by what he called a problem of leadership and authority. However, the Patriarchate accused him of a lack of vision.

Following his defrocking Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna joined a schismatic group under a bishop in Greece that followed the old calendar. The main task and vision of these schismatic communities was to fight against all their western fellow Christians being intolerant and anti-ecumenical. Several other Orthodox Christians in Kenya followed him, but eventually the schism was healed and Bishop Gathuna was reinstated posthumously by Patriarch Theodoros II in 2006.⁷

In a recent interview Father Johannes Eko said that the problem is almost over, since by 2005 many priests from the schismatic group have joined the Orthodox Church, and for the first time the Archbishop of Kenya, His Eminence Makarios led a memorial service at the grave of the late defrocked Bishop George, whose defrocking was the cause of the schism in Kenya. This was a dialogue that was started earlier by Archbishop Seraphim who left before he could bring it to reality. However, though the diocese of Kenya after 25 years seems to be accepting the blessed memory of the late Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna as its own, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria under Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II,

together, with all Metropolitans being Archbishops, and vice versa. All Metropolitans have a seat in the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

⁷ The Old Calendrist group broke away from the Orthodox Church of Greece after it adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1923 and insisted on using the Julian calendar. This schismatic group is under a bishop in Greece by the name Cyprian of Oropos and Fili.

has accepted and reinstated Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna into the diptychs of the Church. In the synod there took place on 1st of November 2006 a memorial service for the late bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna at the Patriarchate where the defrocking was lifted and he was returned to the diptychs of the church. This was about twenty-five years after his death.

CHAPTER THREE

Orthodox Mission in Bunyore

In this chapter the focus is on Bunyore and its entry into the Orthodox faith. It contains a short introduction to the Orthodox Church and more detailed information on the mission and the historical factors that influenced mission at that time. It details some of the people involved in this mission, giving information about names and places to show how the Orthodox faith entered Bunyore.

The Eastern Orthodox Church, to be distinguished from the Oriental Orthodox churches is one of the three main traditions (others being Roman Catholic and Protestant), is made up of a number of self-governing churches which are either 'autocephalous' (meaning having their own head) or 'autonomous' (meaning self-governing).

The Orthodox Churches are united in faith and by a common approach to theology, tradition and worship. The word 'Orthodox' takes its meaning from the Greek words *orthē* ('right') and *doxa* ('belief'). Hence the word Orthodox Means correct belief or right thinking. However, according its most serious interpreters, Orthodoxy, is more than this; it is the wholeness of the people of God who share the right conviction (*Orthodoxia*- Right belief) concerning the event of God's salvation in Christ and His Church, and the right expression (*Orthopraxia*) of this faith. Orthodoxy leads to maximum possible application in *Orthopraxia*.

Everybody is invited by Orthodoxy to transcend confessions and inflexible institutions without necessarily denying them.

“We should never forget that this term is given to the One (Holy, Catholic and) Apostolic Church as a whole over against the heretics who, of their own choice, split from the main body of the church. The term is exclusive for all those, who willingly fall away from historical stream of life of the One Church but it is inclusive for those who profess their spiritual belonging to that stream...”(Nissiotis: ER 14 1961: 1-27)

The question is how can one profess one’s “orthodoxy”? How can one establish it? On what ground and from what sources? The Roman Catholics have Vatican II to draw from, the Orthodox do not. The Lutherans have the Augsburg Confession of their own; the Orthodox do not, and they also lack the equivalent of a Luther or Calvin, to mention just two from reformation movement, who could give them their theological identity.

The only authoritative sources the Orthodox possess are in fact common to the rest of the Christians: the Bible and the Tradition. How can one establish a distinctly Orthodox view on a basis which is common to non-Orthodox as well? The essence of Orthodoxy *vis-a-vis* Western theology in its entirety, i.e Catholic and Protestant, is even beyond any theological presupposition; it is a way of life, hence the importance of *liturgical* tradition, but also the closeness to the Byzantine culture.

It is widely held that the liturgical dimension is the only safe criterion, in ascertaining the specificities of the Orthodox theology. “The Church is first of all a worshipping community. Worship comes first, then doctrine and discipline comes second. The *lex orandi* has a privileged priority in the life of the Christian

Church. The *lex credendi* depends on the devotional experience and vision of the Church”, (Florovsky 1972: 172).

The heart of Orthodox liturgy, as in all or most Christian traditions, is Eucharist, which is called by the Orthodox ‘*Divine Liturgy*’. The most widely held criterion of determining Orthodox theology among the Orthodox of our time is undoubtedly the eucharistic approach to all aspect of theology, and especially to ecclesiology. It is only in the Eucharist that the church becomes Church in its fullest sense. Eucharist is conceived as a very manifestation of the Church and as a corporate act of the whole community.

Closely connected to the liturgical-eucharistic criterion, which constitutes for the Orthodox the only living *depositum fidei*, Orthodoxy is also determined by the following criteria: (a) the idea of the living Tradition; (b) the Trinitarian basis for all theologies; (c) the Pneumatological dimension; (d) the Eschatological perspective; (e) the Cosmic dimension of its identity. (see vassiliadis 1998: Ch 2).

Having taken you through the brief introduction to the Eastern Orthodox Church, I will now focus on the details of the Orthodox Church in Bunyore as promised in the introductory paragraph of this chapter.

The main source of these historical facts is an oral interview with the late Fr Nikiphoros Ambetsa, who is the oldest priest and whose father was the founder of the Orthodox faith in Bunyore, I also interviewed Fr Petros Kulali, the son of another founder and John Khoyi, (may his memory be eternal) who was the secretary during this period of mission. This was a joint collaboration with all the other priests of Bunyore, Fr Kosmas Akunda, and the late Fr Athanasius Amwayi.

I also interviewed the first theologian in Bunyore, Josaphat Lwabi Akunda, who shared a great deal and gave a theological analysis of the Orthodox mission in Bunyore.

The arrival of Orthodox Christian faith in Bunyore can be attributed first to the political oppression that was taking place through out the country and was being compounded by some of the Christian churches who seemed to support the then British oppressive regime. The fight for liberation both politically and religious united all the people of Kenya and even though Bunyore is found in the far west of Kenya, it was pro-active with all the political and religious movements such as Karing'a and KISA which were very active in central Kenya. Members of these movements became the first missionaries in Bunyore for example George (Arthur) Gathuna who later became the first Kenyan Orthodox Christian Bishop. People like Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna, Archbishop Makarios III of Cyprus, Obadiah Basajjitalo of Uganda, Daniel William Alexander of South Africa, (Daniel William Alexander was a Bishop from the African Orthodox Church in South Africa who travelled to East Africa to introduce Orthodoxy among the African people especially of Kenya; he laid the foundation, upon which all the rest of the mission work was done. These are among the great heroes of Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore even though some may not have been in Bunyore personally.

Also another reason for Bunyore's involvement was the coming of Archbishop Makarios III of Cyprus to Kenya. Makarios was a freedom fighter for his country Cyprus from the British and through his exile he met another freedom fighter of

the Kenyan people, Jomo Kenyatta and the two became friends such that after Cyprus got its freedom, Makarios travelled to Kenya to offer his support to the people of Kenya through Jomo Kenyatta and through the Orthodox Church. Makarios was at the time the president of Cyprus (Interview with Archbishop Makarios of Kenya June 2007).

His coming in 1957 and preaching against colonialism and racism in Kenya was a surprise to many who did not believe that a white man could come and have the courage to preach in favour of the oppressed. Many people in Kenya and especially in Bunyore inquired and longed for the Church to which this courageous bishop and president belonged and having realised the common ground between Cypriots and Kenyans with regard to freedom fighting, they found a friend they could confide in and many joined the Orthodox faith. This is remarkable because as far as we know Makarios did not come to Kenya as a missionary nor did he stay for a long time, he did not even visit many parts of Kenya only central and Nyeri, but his voice went beyond the areas he visited and touched Bunyore with a great impact, great indeed that Orthodoxy was full and vibrant at the time.

Archbishop Makarios' later returned to baptise about 5000 people and more in Central Kenya, He ordained a second lot of Orthodox priests as well as those that had been ordained by Bishop Alexander, established a seminary for African young men, and a Polytechnic for both Orthodox and non Orthodox, Christian and non Christian Kenyans fulfilling a realisation of Daniel William Alexander's dream for an African Church with African people. This contributed a great deal to

the flocking of the local people towards the Orthodox Church since nothing like this had happened before. Because of the relationship of Makarios III with the founding president of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta, there was a strong relationship between the Orthodox Church and the state, a situation that said volumes to all, especially the people of Bunyore.

The history of the Orthodox Church itself as taught to the people became a self-testimony. Orthodoxy had suffered a lot of persecution and many of her people had been persecuted, and those countries where Orthodoxy is prevalent had suffered a lot either from other denominations, Islam and secular authority and this suffering connected with the oppressed people of Africa, in this case Africans of Bunyore. It is one thing for the Church to preach against oppression and another thing to actually carry it out in practice especially in times when it is very risky and dangerous to make such a move.

Archbishop Makarios, who was an embarrassment to his fellow Europeans, was a hero among the African people of Kenya especially in Bunyore just as he was a hero for the people of Cyprus..

The most important point to note is that the local people themselves successfully carried out the mission in Bunyore; they used their own funds and means to seek the Orthodox Church. No missionary came to Bunyore to introduce Orthodoxy but the Banyore people themselves having heard of Orthodoxy went to seek for it in all parts of Kenya. The main character, Bishop George Arthur Gathuna (Arthur was his first name before he was ordained and took the name George) from Kiambu Nairobi is the servant to be commended for his single-handed work in

Bunyore, he divided his mission work to Bunyore and to the whole of the western province into six apostolic mission journeys which may be compared with St Paul's mission journeys. In each case we find that the people were very receptive, and unlike the western missionary practice of using material incentives as their mission hook to Christianity, Bishop George (Arthur) Gathuna gave nothing. The people themselves contributed to his expenses. There were poor means of communication and the people were poor, but the paradox is that despite the huge wealth we have today, we fail to capture the hearts of people in the same way our fathers did and instead we are losing people, is there something wrong?

Bunyore is the mother of Orthodox faith in the whole of western province of Kenya, and from there it spread to other areas of the western province. The Banyore people were the first to be enlightened by Orthodoxy in the western province and they became the catechists and evangelists for other people. This is why, when relating the historical pilgrimage of Orthodoxy in Bunyore, one cannot omit mentioning other areas of the western province.

The Orthodox faith arrived in Bunyore in 1942. According to Fr. Peter Kulali and the late Fr. Nikiphoros Ambetsa, the first field of mission was St Gerasimos Ebuyangu (now consecrated St. Andrew) in the western part of Bunyore.

Because of the political links between the Western-initiated churches and the colonial government, many people opposed the Western-initiated churches because they saw them as the agents of the colonial rulers. The Banyore people shared these suspicions of Western Christianity, then having heard of the newly-

established African Orthodox Church linked to the Karing'a, they decided to travel to Kahuho in Kiambu to seek this Orthodoxy. The date for this journey was 24th June 1942.

The elders who were chosen to represent the faith-hungry people of Bunyore were; Meshack Sialuma, the late John Khoyi, who until his death in 1995 remained a layman. He was the general secretary and co-ordinator of all mission activities. Others were Zadock Imbeba who was the pioneer priest and his son Fr Nikiphoros Ambetsa, Joseph Akunda who later became Father Joseph Akunda and he was the father of Fr Kosmas Akunda of St Nektarios Womuyembela. Michael Chiluka the father to Fr Peter Kulali of St Gerasimos Ebuyangu, also included were, Alpheus Osanya, Gerishom Osumba, Ismael Ndanje, Moses Otunga, Zephania Amakumba, Hezron Omuyinda, Isaac Mukhaye, Hezekiah Muyela, Zedekiah Opeywa, John Otele and Jairo Akhunya. Among themselves they also chose representatives who could talk to Fr Gathuna (Later Bishop Gathuna) these were; Meshack Sialuma Chairman, John Khoyi Secretary, Joseph Akunda treasurer. When they arrived in Kiambu to meet Fr Gathuna, they were welcomed by Ezekiel Kamau the secretary to Bishop Gathuna, Paul Njuguna layman from Rironi Orthodox Church in Kiambu, and Johannes Kimani the layman Muguga Orthodox Church.

During their talks, they emphasised the need for a teacher to teach them the faith, and in response they were given three catechists to accompany them from Kiambu. On the 17th December 1943, the delegates arrived back with the three catechists, who started a mission of teaching and I may say that the real mission

began at this time. The catechists were Gilbert Njoku, Thuku Githaro the third one my informant could not recall the name. The three reported to Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna (Bishop George of Nitria) about their progress in Bunyore.

As an encouragement from the first report, another teacher from Rironi was posted to continue from where the three stopped.

Fr. George (Arthur) Gathuna's first missionary journey to Bunyore took place on 19th July 1946, maybe the reason for this trip was that Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna (later became Bishop George Gathuna) was impressed with the response of the Banyore people. He went by train and the first station he alighted at was Luanda train station in Bunyore. This was also his first tour of the Western Kenyan Province. He was received at the station by elders Laban Akhomba, and Moses Otunga, who led him to the what became historically the first Orthodox mission field, and this place was Ebuyangu at the home of Meshack Sialuma. This region became the first place to receive the Orthodox faith in Bunyore, and indeed in the entire western part of Kenya, including Nandi.

On the 20 July 1946 Fr. George (Arthur) Gathuna performed the first baptism of 142 people and the parish was named St Gerasimos Ebuyangu. Because of the speed in which the faith was growing, he appointed the first Church leaders in Bunyore who saw the Church through thick and thin for almost a decade.

On the 21st of July was the third day of his first mission tour, Fr Gathuna moved from Ebuyangu St Gerasimos to Musiliba, still in Bunyore where 110 people were received in the Orthodox Church through baptism, on the 22nd of the same week, he was at Womuyembela where he baptised 137, people and named the

community St Nektarios. On the 23rd he proceeded to Mwisena in Kisa, another location outside Bunyore and 75 people were baptised. At the conclusion of his first pastoral visit, 462 souls were received in the Orthodox faith. While in western Kenya he stayed at St Gerasimos Ebuyangu, it was like his mission centre. He returned to Kiambu the following day.

Fr Gathuna's second mission trip to Bunyore commenced on the 5th of February 1947. This time he was accompanied by three Orthodox lay Christians from Kiambu. He proceeded to Butso, an area in western Kenya, bordering Bunyore, Timothy Omutembete and Gamaliel Opati received him at the village Emukaya Village, on the 7th still in Kisa location he baptised 20 people.

On the Sunday the 8th, February 1947 he celebrated Liturgy at St Nektarios Womuyembela (at that time there was no one ordained to the priesthood in the whole of western Kenya) according to the report by Fr Kulali Peter, this was the first Orthodox Divine Liturgy to be celebrated in the western Kenya Province and in Bunyore in particular. This liturgy was well attended because all the baptised Christians from all over Bunyore converged at St Nektarios. It is always the case even now for example if the Bishop is visiting all the people from different communities will converge to the host parish to meet the bishop and participate in the Divine Liturgy. On that day 91 converts were received into Orthodoxy. Having seen how the people in Bunyore were quickly grasping the faith, he (Gathuna) appointed some capable lay people who were to become catechists in other areas in western Kenya where people were yearning for the faith. Gathuna appointed John Khoji who was later secretary of the African Orthodox Church in

Western Province and Nyanza, and commissioned him or rather tonsured him a catechist and sent him to Tiriki at the home of Timothy Mulanga and in Maragoli at the home of Mathayo Mulamula (Later Fr Matayo Mulamula) Fr Gathuna had baptised the two at Kinamuye in central province (Kikuyuland) Catechist John Khoyi was welcomed in those areas by Peter Iniambu and Reuben Esikuri of Kapsagion village in Tiriki bordering Maragoli.

Because the church grew so rapidly there was a need for something to be done so that it could continue effectively in the absence of Fr Gathuna (who later became Bishop George of Nitria), the fact that the church that had originally arrived in Bunyore had gone beyond the borders and vicinity of Bunyore, led the spiritual father and missionary Gathuna to think of a plan. On the same day, before returning to Kiambu, he appointed some lay people with the title of evangelist who could go even further, especially in the areas that he had been requested to visit but time could not allow him. One of these areas where the church was expecting an abundant harvest was in northern Nyanza where the evangelists, who were also his representatives, were to be based. Those who were blessed were; Meshack Sialuma from St Gerasimos Ebuyangu, who was the chairman, Rufus Buchichi from Maseno (Mwitololo) in Bunyore, who acted as the vice chairman, John Khoyi from Esabwali in Bunyore was the secretary, Joseph Akunda, from St Nektarios Womuyembela in Bunyore was the vice secretary, Jason Amakutso, from Butso, Elekiah Ahila from Kisa, Hezekiah Muyela from Bunyore, Musa Otunga from Bunyore, Jason Mutasi from Maragoli, Timothy J. Isiche from Esabwali Bunyore, and Zedekiah Opeywa from Bunyore.

This mission was concluded by the reception of 142 converts by baptism and Fr Gathuna left for Kiambu to prepare for the third mission trip.

The third mission trip of Fr Gathuna to Bunyore took place on the 28th August 1948, he arrived at St Gerasimos Ebuyangu in Bunyore, and went the following day to Gisambayi village in Maragoli where he was received by a layman by the name Elias Omurende, after his mission to Maragoli he returned to St Gerasimos Ebuyangu on the 1st, October 1948 and returned to Kiambu the following day.

The fourth missionary journey took place on the 24th December 1948, though the goal was to travel further to North Nyanza where he had appointed the evangelists to do mission, as usual he stopped at St. Gerasimos Ebuyangu, in Bunyore where he had a Divine Liturgy and after the liturgy met with the parish council (Church leaders) where they agreed to open a bank account for the Church, the account was opened the following day at Barclays Bank. It is not known whether he proceeded to Nyanza or was tied up here with pastoral and administration duties. On the 26th of August same year, thirty-two converts from Buyangu, and seven from Mwilonje were baptised.

While still in Bunyore, on the 2nd January 1949, Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna made another powerful move in order to strengthen the mission, not only spiritually but administratively, he appointed local people into leadership positions to strengthen the faith and this caused the local people to feel a part of the Church, this may be one of the reasons that attracted many towards the Orthodox faith at that time because many western churches did not trust the local people and so were using their own people from abroad to spread the gospel.

None of the locals were in any leadership or stewardship positions in many of the mission Churches in Bunyore especially the American mission at Kima (Church of God). Gathuna's move was a big thing for the people of Bunyore they had at last a church where they could be heard and practise their talents of being responsible. He set up administrative and mission centres as a means of an effective service for Orthodox Christians, he made sure that every Orthodox Christian at least had access to the nearest administration or spiritual centre. Western Kenya was divided into three categories, the first category was Kisa, Buyangu, Esabwali, Butso with the centre at St Nektarios Womuyembela in Bunyore, the second category was Tiriki, Nyanza, and Maragoli with the centre at Muhetwe, and the third category general administration and pastoral centre where all the lay leaders and clergy could meet to discuss their mission work.

On the 15th, January 1949 Fr Gathuna was taken to South Nyanza, south Nyanza is at the far end of the country, across Lake Victoria from Kisumu and bordering Tanzania, near to Mount Kenya. Layman Javan Mutsa welcomed him. Accompanied by John Khoyi and Joseph Akunda, Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna administered baptism to eighty-nine converts and by the time he departed to Kiambu 136 people had been received.

His fifth mission trip commenced on the 5th May 1951. This was a tough time in the history of Kenya, where the Government was harassing freedom activists and the issue of Independent schools and churches had gained momentum and there was great tension. Fr. George (Arthur) Gathuna being one of the activists was aware that at any time something could happen to him so he decided to visit

again and prepare the ground in case he was arrested or killed.

While in Bubyore, Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna met all the lay leaders and advised them to keep the church very strong, since in the present political climate things could turn bad at any time. The following day he celebrated Divine Liturgy at St Nektarios Womuyembela, where again to the local lay leaders he gave advise because he had a premonition on how the colonial government would act. He made clear the status of the Orthodox Church in order to prevent any confusion that could arise during his absence. According to him, The African Orthodox Church has freedom for all, it's a religion introduced by Bishop Daniel William Alexander from South Africa in 1937. I assume he had much more than this to say about the church and its link to Alexander and how this line should be kept for the sake of African spirituality, culture and freedom. He did not stay for long this time but returned to Kiambu by train.

The sixth journey may be called a sad and farewell journey, it was sadly the last mission journey for Fr Gathuna. On the 28th January 1952 he came to bid the lay leaders a farewell and encouraged them to maintain the virtue of peace among themselves, this was because he knew that the Mau Mau emergency was approaching and he could be among those targeted after returning to his home in Kikuyu in October 1952.

During his visits, especially the last visit, he had informed the lay leaders to catechise people before baptising them, he blessed them and informed them, in case they encountered any difficulties, that they could be helped from Kampala where we had already ordained Orthodox priests. And this is how Uganda

became involved in the spread of Orthodoxy in Kenya, especially in western Kenya. This was because western Kenya, especially Bunyore, lies along the border with Uganda.

Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna was arrested together with other church activists and those who survived the arrests vowed to secretly and if necessary publicly testify to the faith of the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Christian members who escaped the arrest desired to learn more and so they through their secretary John Khoyi wrote a letter to Uganda requesting to be allowed to go there and study more about Orthodoxy. They (African Orthodox Christian who survived the arrest) selected eight of their leaders and on the 10th, January 1953 the eight leaders left for Uganda, these were: John Khoyi and Joseph Akunda, Ezekiel Muyela, Ambrose Mukoya, and James Omwakwe all from Bunyore, Michael Ogore from Maragoli, Nikodemus Omufwa, and Sylvester Mwalo from Butso.

In this difficult time the faith was maintained and propagated by lay leaders none of whom could be suspect.

In Uganda the above eight leaders were welcomed by Fr Sparta Mukasa and their main request to him and the church of Uganda was to help them not to lose the Orthodox faith in Kenya due to the political tension and unrest. In response to their request, Fr Obadiah was assigned to travel to western Kenya and help them. They happily left Uganda on the 24th January 1953, after an assurance that they would get a priest from Uganda; at this time there were no other missionaries from other continents.

The seventh mission journey was the continuation of Fr. George (Arthur)

Gathuna's mission by Fr Obadiah Basajjitalo from Uganda. He arrived in western Kenya at Busia train station on the 20th April 1955. He was welcomed and brought to the home of Meshack Sialuma, Ebuyangu, named St Gerasimos. On the 21st April 1955, he celebrated Divine Liturgy at St Gerasimos Ebuyangu. All the Christians from Bunyore and nearby Orthodox communities attended the liturgy. Immediately after the liturgy service, the elders from all the communities, met with Obadiah who had now assumed not only spiritual but also administrative responsibilities. In their discussion, they touched on ways to make the church firm financially and unanimously agreed to get some fees from the faithful whenever they received the special sacraments of the Church. The main areas were baptism where the candidate was asked to pay two shillings (2 Kshs), which was like a day's wage. Easter required everyone to pay two shillings (2 Kshs.) Christmas was five shillings (5 Kshs.) Marriage was ten shillings (10 Kshs) and at the registration of birth a parent was expected to pay twenty shillings (20 Kshs.) This was another step forward, for we recall Fr Gathuna was moving towards this during his mission trips to Bunyore.

On the 22nd, April 1955, Fr Obadiah Basajjitalo celebrated Divine Liturgy at St Nektarios Womuyembela in Bunyore and on the 24th of April 1955 he baptised eight converts at Musiliba in Bunyore. He later proceeded to the village of Joshua Aderi in Maragoli where he stayed for some time before returning to his station at St Gerasimos Ebuyangu and on the 25th of the same month returned to Uganda by train.

On the 28th, of August 1955 Fr Obadiah Basajjitalo returned to Bunyore which

for him was the second mission trip but in actual fact it was the ninth mission trip and blessed the lay leaders to carry on the election of their new officers, the following were elected; John Khoyi was elected as the chairman, James Omwakwe was elected as the secretary, Nathan Buso was elected as the vice secretary, while Nikodemus Abuhwa and Sylvester Mwalo were voted in as treasurer and vice treasurer respectively.

He appointed John Khoyi as the secretary to correspond with the Patriarchate of Alexandria and as a representative secretary for the patriarch in Bunyore, and the entire western and Nyanza province. He was given the power to draw up a church constitution and proceed to the registration with the Government. On the 28th August 1955, the African Greek Orthodox Church was registered in the western and Nyanza province. On the 9th, September 1955, the general committee was called to meet in Uganda to discuss the possibilities of sending some individuals to Uganda to the seminary in Namung'ona to study and come back to help the church. Western Kenya including Bunyore was represented by John Khoyi and Joseph Akunda, James Omwakwe, Paul Butsu, and Girisom Sabaya. They left for Namung'ona Uganda on the 22nd of September 1955. On the 28th of September 1955, Fr Sparta Mukasa and Fr Magimbi Irineos who was the secretary, in their discussion it was agreed that eight students were to be sponsored for theological studies in Uganda. The eight beneficiaries of these scholarships were; Meshack Omuchiti, Meshack Kukuti, Angote all from Bunyore, others were Enos Aderi, Ernest Aderi, Mathayo Omwiluki, Barnabas Etalin both from Maragoli and John Andebe from Tiriki. The above students left for Uganda

on the 6th of November 1955.

On the 16th of November a meeting was held at St Nektarios in which the progress of students in Uganda was noted and acknowledged. It was discussed that it was time the bishop visited the church in western Kenya and ordained for them a priest who could assist.

On the 25th of December 1955, their request was answered through a message from Uganda that the Bishop had scheduled to visit western Kenya on 3rd, January 1956 and one of his main activities was to ordain some qualified candidates to priesthood. They planned how to welcome the bishop and chose who were to be the leaders in the centres that had been set up to receive the bishop. Bunyore, Kisa and Butso, had one leader who could also act as a spokesman. His name was Meshack Okubasu from St Gerasimos Ebuyangu.

Metropolitan Nikolaos who later became the Patriarch of Alexandria, accompanied by Fr Sparta visited western Kenya, and on his arrival he blessed the plot in Maseno at Mwitololo for the erection of an Orthodox Church which was to be built. At St Gerasimos Ebuyangu, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy and he promised to assist in the further development of the Church and the greatest thing was that he promised to select two of the best students from the Namung'ona Seminary and send them to Greece for further theological studies in 1961. The students selected were; Ernest Aderi and Enos Adero. The greatest history was the ordination of Fr James Omwakwe and Mathayo Mulamula who were the first priests in western Kenya even though they did not have a substantial Orthodox theological education. On the 5th June 1961 Nikiphoros

Ambetsa was sent to the seminary in Uganda and later ordained becoming one of the priests to be ordained for western Kenya and the second in Bunyore after Fr James Omwakwe. On the same day Fr Elias Ligonu was also ordained. Fr Elias had been a student at the theological seminary that was at Serem, Fr Obadiah was the teacher who besides teaching made sure that the western and Nandi regions of Kenya knew about the Orthodox faith deeply. This short story explains the long walk to freedom for the Orthodox Church, the African Orthodox Church of Bunyore (AOCB).

My next oral source by the name of Josephat Akunda, a theologian and one of the Orthodox converts in Bunyore, Born in Ebukhubi in Bunyore in 1945 He recalls how he woke up one day and just walked to the nearby Church without any prior knowledge only to find that it was Orthodox. He agrees that the Orthodox Church arrived in Bunyore in the 1940s and he mentions also that it came through Otunga from the nearby Nyanza province, Sparta and Obadiah from Uganda and George (Arthur) Gathuna. These three people played a crucial role in the evangelising of Orthodoxy in Bunyore.

During that time the emphasis was on baptising, teaching and gathering new people of God together.

We again see Fr George (Arthur) Gathuna on the forefront of the Orthodox mission in Bunyore, but just as all human beings, Fr. George (Arthur) Gathuna who later became the bishop had his ups and downs in his mission journeys. He was imprisoned by the colonial government, and the last straw was when he was defrocked on the 30th November 1979, the bright side of this is that everything he

seemed to have lost during the struggle he has regained. The missions he helped to build have grown and also he received back his canonical status posthumously through Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria Theodoros II in 2006.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bunyore culture and Orthodox culture

The Banyore people were religious before the coming of Christianity into their location. Their worship included the sacrificing of animals, (included burned animals, birds, smoke was seen as a sign of ascending the sacrifice to the Deity and the Spirits) offering of both grain and food stuffs to the spirits and through these spirits to the Deity. They had altars and shrines as places designated for worship and in every homestead this place was set aside. Men and women and children gathered around the sacred objects, sacred sites, and holy men. The worship used all the forms of senses smell, touch, and hearing.

God was given different names that reflected his attributes and personality. He was known as Nyassaye (but this is borrowed from the near by Luo tribe), Khakaba (One who divides-provides), Omwami (Lord). All the names were retained by Christianity and were inserted in the Lunyore translation of the Holy Bible.

God was seen as invisible, omnipresent, who had mediators like diviners, ancestors, spirits, to mediate between him and the living.

Of course in such a religious set up one cannot be satisfied without a mention of the mystical powers that existed. These powers were magic and they existed beyond human powers and comprehension. They were more transcendent than ordinary humans. Such powers regulated the life of the society, and at the same time united a society as one community with one destiny.

In the Banyore community, one could become a full member in several ways such as adoption, birth or marriage; initiations such as circumcision, tattooing, tooth removal, lacerations also qualified one.

With the exception of circumcision all other forms of initiation were done to both boys and girls. To arrive at full maturity within the society one had to undergo various stages of passage, birth, naming, and initiations. These initiation rites were accompanied by instructions and teachings from what we call sponsors or spiritual advisors, who were carefully selected men and women older, full of respect and commanding moral respect. They were known as abatili. The abatili (sponsors) were supposed to be above all those who had undergone the same initiation rite.

The Banyore year was accompanied by seasons and festivals and rituals marked each season. We had planting, harvesting seasons where the rituals and festivals were to invoke the deity for blessings and also to give thanksgiving; they were also for peace, life and prosperity in the community. We had also a drought season where the rituals and sacrifices were to appease God and the spirits for any sins committed. It was believed that one member's sins could throw the whole community in disaster.

In every society, there are conflicts, sickness and other problems. The Banyore people were not an exception. In this case they had their own special ways of responding to any kind of affliction that affected its people. According to my source, sick people were treated with herbs, by medicine men. At times for terminal illnesses the treatment was accompanied by sacrifices to appease the

Supreme Being and the spirits, whom it was thought that either the victim or his or her family may have offended. In cases where solutions could not be found, the mediums would be consulted and these mediums had special powers to communicate with the Spirits on behalf of the living and then get an answer. The people therefore went to medicine men, diviners, and healers.

Mental illness, could either be seen as an influence from bad Spirits or as a punishment was healed by both as well. In addition the victim was taken to a waterfall and showered with cold water from the fall. It was believed that cold water washed away the impurity and also scared away the evil spirits. It was a kind of exorcism (Bunyore is surrounded with many rivers but the ones I know near to my village are Musiola and Mu Jorodani, where baptisms also take place).

Those who deviated from the norms of society became offenders and they had in some way taken the responsibilities of their actions. They had to apologise to their victims, or apologise before the council of elders who in turn would absolve and mediate the process of reconciliation between the two parties, Some times they received some lashes in front of the whole community especially the thieves and night runners (wizards -- abalosi), some times they received community service where they could go to work at the home of the chief. They could be fined, for example, if there was a fight then the guilty party was supposed to pay in the form of cattle or chickens depending on the seriousness of the case.

The fine would be given to the victim and part of it would be shared among the elders who were judges of the case. This was because they were not being paid.

Curses also could be used as Mbiti (1969:197) said, some parents and close relatives especially the old ones had a mouth to bless or curse when they got upset by their juniors.

Parents who could not take their stubborn sons out publicly, could curse them and this punishment could last forever only to be withdrawn by them (parents) at a time of their choice. Mbiti says on this point of curses, “ There is mystical power in words especially of senior person to a junior one in terms of age, social status and office position” (Mbiti: 1969:197) some people could bewitch others in order to get back at them. For example if one woke up in the morning and found his bananas stolen, he could take some of the soil from where the thief stepped and he would go and say some words and do some magic or go to the magician who would, if the thief did not confess cause swelling in his legs and stomach resulting in death.

Adulterers, especially men could be tricked into sharing the stomach of the cow (slaughtered) and that could mean their end if they took someone else's wife. Those who dated and had children with girls from the same village could be tricked to either eat meat, or drink milk at any funeral and this could swell their stomachs and cause them to die. This was true and happened.

Growing up I remember seeing a wizard who was caught at someone's house night running. Apparently the owner had approached a magician who gave him a herb that he buried at the gate, in order to blind any one who came with evil intentions either to steal or bewitch. This herb worked in such way that the wizard was found in the morning lying naked, his eyes had been blinded. Everybody

came to see the man naked, and that was punishment enough, later he was cleansed and released.

Children who refused to listen to their parents and guardians for example by refusing to work, or hurling abusive words to their parents, stole parents food etc were punished by been denied food for their supper or other social amenities or were kicked out of the house for a day. We should not forget that ostracising, marginalisation, mockery and nicknaming attracted very severe punishments for the offenders.

Healing was a very important ministry of the Banyore people and so people called magicians, medicine men were revered even though we see them being portrayed negatively.

In Banyore as in any African society, magic was generally considered to be either good magic or evil magic. The use of good magic was accepted and esteemed by society. It is chiefly the medicine men, diviners and rainmakers who use their knowledge and manipulation of their mystical powers for the welfare of the community. According to Mbiti all of these can be identified as a magician.

A magician is any one who is in control of mystical power and can use it for good or for evil. Those who would use it for evil commonly are referred to as witches and those who use it for good are the medicine men, diviners and rainmakers, etc.

In this category, the magicians who are medicine men and diviners provided some of the mystical power to people in the form of charms, amulets, powder

and rags in order for people to use the items to protect their families, livestock, crops etc. On the other hand the witches use the same power to destroy. An example of them is sorcerers (*obusula*), wizards (*obalos*) (both form a group of evil magicians). They could be punished by even being lynched by the community. So in Banyore young children could be provided with some strings tied around their waists. In this string is a protective medicine against sorcery etc (see also Mbiti 1969:200).

To emphasise the above point: if it was discovered that a witch had harmed some one, the victim could go the diviner, medicine man, traditional healer or even other witches to counteract that power. The witch who caused harm could in turn be either ostracised, expelled from the village, or be killed especially if the case involved the harming of a child or a woman, vulnerable members of the community who could not protect themselves.

I had mentioned water in passing . Water as we see it today from an economic, social and Christian perspective, acts as a source of life and a cleansing agent. From time immemorial, before the coming of Christianity, or western civilisation to Banyore, water played a very important role in both cleansing and healing. In all cases no sacrifices could be done without water. Demon possessed people could be taken to the waterfall, and showered with cold water, cold water scared the demons forced them to flee immediately from the possessed. Water was and is still a sanctified liquid, and a life giver.

Further sacred uses of water include using it to bathe the dead before burial, washing with it by the bereaved and mourners after the burial as a sign of self

purification. Water was and is still in many traditional homes being used to pour on a baby at birth, water was sprinkled upon the candidate during the naming ceremony. Circumcision initiates could always go to the river at dawn to wash as a sign of blessing and cleansing.

It was also believed that if one was bewitched one could get well by drinking the water that the medicine man, or healer, diviner or another witch had washed his or her hands in.

From these few paragraphs there is no doubt that religion was interwoven into every aspect of society's life and dealings. The specialists like diviners, medicine men and healers, had also automatic spiritual powers thus were responsible for leading rituals and sacrifices, healing the sick and helping people with their problems. At the same time such people could be linked to leadership, and leaders could be seen from a religious point of view. To identify them easily, the traditional leaders and good magicians had special attire to identify them as those set apart from all others.

They had robes (tunics), bracelets along their wrists, ankles, necks, mitres on their heads, staff, bangles etc.) The religious leaders had similar titles like the one attributed to the Supreme. The chief or headman was called "Omwami" which when translated means 'Lord'

The morality of social, religious and political life was formed by the opinion of people thus calling on all the political leaders to live exemplary lives otherwise their misconduct could anger the spirits and punish the whole community.

The family tree and genealogy was very important to the extent that every boy in particular, was to know his family tree starting from himself (genealogical succession). The Banyore people were governed by *Abami* (Chiefs) who looked after several villages and or regions, the village headmen (*Amakuru*) represented the chiefs there was one in each village. They were selected because they were pious, mature people with no stain at all on their character and they were all men. Their duties included uniting the people, settling disputes, allocating lands, set aside feasts and holidays, they were also custodians of the political, social and religious canons of the Banyore community as whole.

The coming of Christianity in the midst of this, stripped the traditional leaders and diviners of all their powers hence at times causing religious and mental conflict between the people and the missionaries, thus leading to a form of Christianity with double standards especially by those who had converted to Christianity. At times the Christian instructors of the time were immoral and unethical although on the other hand their Christian teachings were similar to those taught by African traditional instructors.

Marriage

Marriage in this context is defined as a lawful union between man and woman, it does not include homosexuals. In Bunyore there is nothing like same sex marriage and it was considered as an abomination.

Before tackling marriage itself, marriage for procreation and companionship was very important to the Banyore people. Married people were given dignity.

However, there were cases where celibacy could be seen as an honour. We had

traditional healers and rainmakers who stayed on their own (monachos) and did not marry, and seldom took a shower. This kind of abstinence was seen as a sign of purity for religious purposes. People used to consult such people for prayers, for good luck and for advice, and took care of them in return. This coincides with our understanding of monasticism, that even although marriage plays a central role in the life of the Banyore people, celibacy for religious purposes is highly regarded.

All those who abstain for the sake of Christ are likened to angels and believed to be more effective in their prayers as a result of their full time commitment. In fact monasticism was not unique in this community. I should quickly point out that we had also women celibates who could also act as mediums and prophetess and also could perform miracles and heal people.

Marriage was understood in Banyore culture as a bond uniting the spiritual and the living, a union that united not only two people but two families, clans that were apart, hence an extension of friendship. Therefore, on this basis it was considered a community issue, everybody was involved and it was the joy of every one. And as such, sex was only allowed within marriage and a high bride price was given to those who were virgins at the time of marriage. Bride price (dowry) was not only an appreciation but also a seal of relationship between the family of the groom and bride to be. So there would be negotiations, visiting of the elders to each other, traditional celebrations including dances, and many other events. Even after the event of Christianity, the Church ceremony could only take place after all these procedures were completed. The Orthodox

Church, accommodated all this, it allowed the community to continue with the traditional process before the sacrament of holy matrimony could be performed, simply because some of this understanding of marriage corresponds with Orthodox teaching.

Also the Orthodox Church accepted those who were converted while in a polygamous state, their wives were recognised by the Church, and their husbands were accepted and given offices except priesthood.

According to many Protestant Churches such as the Church of God, those who were polygamists were either compelled to give up their other wives and wed the first wife, or they were not accepted by the church, seen as outcasts and even the teaching around the issue of polygamy scared them away.

Those who can understand the purpose of polygamy in those days will bear in mind that polygamy was a social status, especially among the Chiefs and those who aspired for roles in society and so it was natural. Many men of influence and power were polygamists, and so by rejecting them meant rejecting the entire community.

The Orthodox Church, though it does not support polygamy, welcomed them and made them part of their mission and used them actually to phase out polygamy. The strict law was only applied to those who were received in the Church before marriage.

However, the more the Western-initiated churches tried to condemn polygamy they had no way to combat infidelity within the monogamous families they had

advocated for and the issue of bastard children became an even greater evil that the church up to now has had to learn to live with since it is its own creation.

Looking at polygamy another way, as much as it looked evil, it was necessary in the African eye because it prevented a greater evil of infidelity, adultery, fornication and the production of bastard children was put under control.

Because of this tolerance, we had many people converting to Orthodoxy and now there is not a polygamist in the Orthodox Church of Bunyore. This approach is also seen in the 1899 missionary instructions of Bishop Innocent of Alaska to all who wanted to be missionaries in foreign lands. He says of marriage "Among the savage tribes in those parts, polygamy is met with but only among the rich and the powerful. Therefore while striving to incline them to monogamy, do though proceed with caution and tact, never in a masterful spirit but so as not to anger and embitter them" (Smith 1980:1-27).

Another very important issue here is that any marriage contract entered before baptism did not become an impediment to baptism neither was such a marriage to be annulled but those couples were received the way they were and could receive baptism and all the other rites of the church except for the Eucharist. Included in this was all marriages that were entered into traditionally, became recognised as legal by the Church and could be affirmed by the church through the sacrament if the couples were willing to do so. This was the opposite of the Protestant way of doing things, that any thing performed out of the church was considered worldly and could not be accepted and such people before becoming full members of the church had to have proper church weddings. This became a

hindrance for many as it seemed as if it was interfering and undermining the status of the local culture of marriage. The position of the Virgin Mary, which was not a high priority in the Protestant missions, was a very great inspiration to the mothers and women in the Orthodox Church. Even though the priesthood was reserved for men it did not bother women as such because they felt a part of the church, equally participating and recognised. Of course both parties did not accept marriage between relatives.

Sickness, death and funerals: This was another area that cultivated a lot of interest as a lot of the local people identified themselves with the Orthodox rituals towards the dead as well as its understanding of death. The anointing of the sick, the burial with oil, incense, and all the other rituals performed, reminded them of their own rituals where the dead were anointed, given all the accord that they were moving to another world. The Orthodox rituals for the dead signify that there is still hope and not despair beyond this life and death was a journey not a “telos”.

The Banyore people believed in that and they always buried their loved ones with dignity, but at the same time, they felt that they were still with them and that they were only moving to another land that we call Hades but they called 'Emakombe'. In this land they joined together with those who went before them whom they called ancestors, whom we refer to as saints. “Among the spirits of the righteous perfected in faith give rest O saviour to the soul of your servant and bestow upon it the blessed life-----“This is one of the hymns we sing during the funeral session that reflects in short the understanding of death. Though the Banyore have the

belief that the one who died has joined the ancestors, they believe also that the departed had their own strong community which interceded for the community to the Supreme Being (Nyassaye) This therefore was expressed not only in mere words but in rituals.

Death in Orthodoxy and especially a funeral is a kind of celebration (Kidea) and that is why after the burial, there is feasting in the Banyore community there would not be a funeral that could not be accompanied with feasts and dances, it was a joy escorting the one who has departed to the other world. Memorial services were very common started after three days, one month, and one year etc, this practice is also in agreement with the Orthodox practice.

However the most interesting point that attracted the Banyore towards Orthodoxy In this regard was that the Orthodox Church was tolerant towards all the traditional rituals and recognised them and the Church funeral could only be conducted after the traditional rituals, which included eulogies, public wailing, keeping of the body outside for three days for viewing, slaughtering of the cow, the traditional funeral dancers especially done for men who had families or influence. These dances were known as (*Esilemba- crown*) or *okhusina likhuli* (Dancing to the bells) this was done at home and when the body was taken to the church in addition the tradition could cease and give time for the church and this unity and understanding created a lot of trust.

In other faiths like Protestant, where the deceased was a baptised Christian traditional dances could some times be prohibited for they were seen as satanic but this was because they did not understand the meaning of the dances and all

that was done and because of arrogance they could not ask. In countries where Orthodoxy is predominant, there is a special cemetery for the Orthodox Christians, which seems to explain the theology of the triumphant Orthodox community where the militant community can have access easily to pay their respect.

In the Banyore community the deceased was not taken to the cemetery even at present, they are buried in his or her homestead as a sign that even by death he/she has to remain in the family. His or her memory remains eternal. In some cases there was the breaking of plates on the grave as was done in the Orthodox Church to signify that material has no value and that Christ broke death and death has no power. Death was no-longer a scare among the Banyore, everyone looked forward to this moment, and before one could die, at the moment of sickness, to be safe on his or her journey he or she had to confess whatsoever they had done, and forgive his or her children and ask to be forgiven only after this could the soul be released. In the Orthodox Church at the point of death, a priest asks us to confess, if at all we are able to talk and then offers us the last communion and anoints us with oil and then we are free to depart.

Sometimes it was believed in the Banyore community that if one was always in a coma, then there was a problem that he or she needed to confess and be clean otherwise the ancestors were sending him or her back to make his or her ways straight. This was common for old people who were terminally ill.

In the Orthodox Church we also believe that one who is at the brink of death may be delayed as a means of giving him or her a chance to repent, and that is why

we always rush there to read the last prayers for absolution and give communion and anoint with oil, although oil most of time is used for those who are sick to aid with healing. At that time this became possible because there were no old age homes; old people were seen as sources of wisdom and so were treated with respect even at the time of death. It is still the same today,, in Banyore I have never come across an old age home, unless someone dies in hospital, then he or she dies at home surrounded by their family. This is also common in traditional Greek communities.

Rites of passage and catechism

These were and still are important elements in the lives of the Banyore people. They formed and shaped the cultural and religious set up of the community thus streamlining the moral fibre of the community. There were a few single families due to divorce, they were mostly attributed to death, and we did not have boarding schools and so the families were kept together. We had an amalgamation of nuclear and extended families, and through this system there was catechisms going on. In particular, the mothers and grandmothers educated girls although at this time the lessons were limited to teaching girls to be good mothers and wives. The advancement today is that the education for girls from the community ranges from marriage to everything else. Boys were taught by their fathers and grandfathers how to be good fathers and husbands and how to protect their families and the community as whole. The men had a measuring yard to portray their adulthood, which was circumcision, which took place at the age of eighteen and above. There was nothing of this nature for women in Banyore culture. This emphasised how important the family was and that one

was an individual because of the family, and the family existed because of an individual. This sense of intimacy can and could be reflected in the Orthodox understanding of the Church.

In this regard one was supposed to express his or her opinions through the family or community, for each member represented the family not himself or herself. In the Orthodox Church our individual opinions are reflected within the family through the Holy Synods or through elders (spiritual mothers and fathers). We represent this huge family, which protects us.

As we advocate for freedom we do not encourage individualism, as we know that a person is a person because of people. Circumcision was not tampered with at all, the church continued to encourage family teachings that actually became the base of Christian baptisms in the Banyore community. When many other missions were screaming about this, Orthodoxy was comfortable with it, although it emphasised that whether circumcised or not one was still fully welcome into the Church.

By following the instruction of St Innocent of Alaska, we will see that true mission did not abruptly discard any of the ancient traditional customs or practice that are not contrary to Christianity, however the directive is that it is our duty as people of the Church to explain to the new converts that despite the fact that we are not reacting, is because the church is merely tolerating such practices because although different, they are not harmful to Christian teachings and values (Smith 1980: 27).

There was a tendency, as I learned from one elder who wanted to be

anonymous, that converts were expected to be at church services every day or at any time they were called upon during the week. This was a sign of obedience and their complete submission to the will of Jesus Christ. However, looking critically at this I suspect that this was a way the Protestants, who were alleged agents of the government, to keep people occupied so that they did not have time to plot or discuss their oppression.

In those days, to be a political activist was seen by the church as rebelliousness against Christ and so such people were considered to be sons of the devil. Those who became Christian were born again and were not supposed to be involved in the affairs of the state or politics. It was the will of God and so God himself would remove any suffering, and if there was suffering it was because the people were living in sin, with satanic traditions, and so they had to change. This was the mentality projected by Protestants. According to the Protestant missionaries the state was trying to show light and bring light.

The Orthodox mission saw things differently; converts were not compelled to attend all the services of the week except Sunday liturgy. It was not an absolute duty to be at every service. Those involved in the political struggle were not a problem neither were they considered satanic, the Church encouraged them to be proactive in the quest for freedom and to resolve their struggle by peaceful means rather than use violence. There was also an issue regarding fasting, many Banyore were naturally vegetarians, it was therefore ridiculous to ask them to fast from meat, particularly since they only ate meat very rarely maybe one or twice per month. The Orthodox Church encouraged the people to eat whatever

they were eating in moderation. Milk was their livelihood and so they were encouraged to reduce the percentage of consumption in times of fasting. The Aleuts of Alaska Bishop (St Innocent) whose diet was meat, and not vegetables due to the environment, were advised to eat meat in reduced quantities at times of fasting (Smith 1980:29).

It was difficult for the natives of Bunyore to fast and observe the feasts in the usual manner and so the only way was for the church to accept what could be affordable and slowly bring them closer to God.

Those who were not ready to receive baptism even after catechism and persuasion were neither asked to leave the Church nor forced to baptism but given time. They were not demonised nor rejected but they remained as members of the Church community with full privileges except for receiving the Eucharist and this patience the Orthodox Church demonstrated led many people towards Orthodoxy.

Because of all these events, Orthodoxy seemed to the other denominations to be a traitor and the other missions even started to preach against Orthodoxy encouraging people to forsake it because it was not a Christian religion. This was mere propaganda and we will realise that Orthodoxy has suffered such propaganda in many other countries. In Alaska for instance, when the Protestants entered they behaved as if there was no Christianity before their arrival, in Russia after communism the other denominations behaved as if the countries with a dominant Orthodox Church tradition had no prior Christianity.

As in Alaska, we can conclude that the Orthodox Church attitude towards culture

in all the areas it has touched, has been overwhelmingly encouraging especially to the recipients of Orthodoxy. Alaska's 19th century extract of St (Bishop) Innocent reveals a great deal on this subject of culture. It was and has remained a guide to all the missionaries in Alaska. He says that the Orthodox mission was very concerned and sensitive to the destruction of the native-American cultures. The instructions under which the missionaries operated were humane and tolerant towards the native customs that were not in violation with Christian moral precepts. He goes further to explain that even sacraments like marriage were interpreted with a good deal of liberality during the first shock of native Christian contact. However, this attitude from missionaries as a rule reflects the admonition of metropolitan Gabriel who sent out the first contingent of missionaries to Alaska in the 1790's. His sending message, that many centuries later marked a very successful Orthodox mission in Bunyore, advised the missionaries to remember that "their goal was to plant the seed; as men they could do no more. If seeds bore fruits, it was not their doing, but God's grace alone.

The missionary's role, then, was to explain the nature of God and his design for man. He was also to witness Christian life and message, by this it was meant that he was to live with humility and simplicity, have patience, to keep his mission in perspective, to avoid excessive zeal" (Barbara 1980:27).

Reasons for success of Orthodox mission in Bunyore

This whole chapter will focus on the factors that led to the success of evangelisation to the Banyore by the Orthodox missionaries and even other missionaries. It is not easy for foreign religion as it used to be called to succeed

and have a magnitude of followers unless there is some secret behind the grace of God. Let us not forget that the Orthodox Church in Africa was an oppressed minority among an oppressed majority. Orthodox mission had been thwarted by persecution especially from the Turks and the West, and in this vulnerable situation it came to the aid of another oppressed brother, Africa. This relationship alone tells us more about Orthodox mission among the oppressed people of Kenya and in particular in Bunyore.

The approach of the Orthodox mission in Bunyore took almost the same structure as the entry of the Orthodox faith in Alaska, and in most cases the same reasons that led to the conversion of Alaskans to the faith may be the same reasons that prompted our Banyore people towards Orthodoxy. The difference is that when Orthodoxy through the Russians arrived in Alaska, there was no other Christian faith, however, in Bunyore by the time Orthodoxy arrived there were established Christian missions for example the Church of God mission in Kima, Anglican Mission in Maseno etc.

Although the Orthodox Church in Kenya and specifically in Bunyore is identified with the people of Greek origin, it has a large following from the native people and due to this continued growth, we are compelled to investigate the flavour behind this response.

Before entering into specifics, I remember growing up in the church, and every time I went into the Church after Divine Liturgy, before the announcement each member, especially the elders would raise up and offer a brief testimony of how the entire week was, what was good and bad, and then thank God for everything.

They could then ask the church to pray for them. This was similar to the Pentecostal testimony style but it was an African means of briefing each other, which commonly took place around the fires, before bedtime. It could also include song, parables, or narratives. At the end of these testimonies, the announcement would follow and then the song for the collection followed by the priest concluding with a closing prayer for all those testimonies and for the success of the coming week.

Each Friday the members would rotate at the homes of each other for prayer (Obutsillili-continuation). These prayers became later adopted by the Protestants and helped many people. Every Friday they would gather and also collect money and food for the poor and for the house in which they were meeting. There was a Eucharist or agape meal before the Eucharist

Although by the time Orthodoxy arrived in Bunyore there was already Christianity, most of the people had not yet found a home in those churches. At times the motives behind the new missionary churches were not good, some local people were used for profit making for the colonial settlers through their agents in the mission stations. Some people were converted to Christianity in order to provide cheap labour in settlers' farms and homes.

Christianity being a religion of obedience and road to civilisation its adherents had to return this favour by obeying without question. This made the converts vulnerable and those yet to be converted suspicious.

More workers could be coerced and convinced through baptism. This became so easy because as with the Aleut people of Alaska, the Banyore people looked at

their religious leaders as their fathers did and would not dare to raise their eyebrows and thus served them willingly and submissively. This explains why according to the missionaries, the Banyore people needed civilisation and they had received it from them through Christianity and so they had to pay back this great favour by blind submission.

Orthodox mission succeeded in this area because even though we had foreign missionaries, they actually led from behind understanding the fact that the local people themselves discovered Orthodoxy. Local people were comfortable with these people and they could identify with them because the missionaries were known to the people. After the Orthodox Church was affiliated to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, we had many Greek missionaries coming, the sense that was created was that the Greek people were like Africans because they were not part of the ruling masters and they had suffered several years under Turkish Rule (Greece), British rule (Cyprus) where their cultural identity was almost wiped out. This alone gave a kind of identification rather than suspicion. The local people who became missionaries to their own people are layman John Khoyi, Fr Sparta, Fr Gathuna and many others who we read about in the past chapters.

It may sound strange that by that time, unlike other mission churches whose allowances came from overseas, the Orthodox people of Bunyore who were only peasant farmers contributed towards the basic livelihood of those entrusted to serve them. We see them even raising funds for the fare of the Bishop to visit from Nairobi, local people felt once again in control, this spirit had been

developed in them by members of the African Independent Churches, and so any kind of sponsorship from overseas was seen at that time as a kind of domination. According to the late Nikanor Okwoku, my god parent and layman of St Mathew Esabwali, during the time of giving everyone contributed, some gave eggs, others farm produce and every harvest time they brought part of their harvest to the Church, some gave money and they did this with joy and happiness (Nikanor's son interviewed on the December of 1999). However this changed later when the Greek Archdiocese of Irinoupolis seeing this sacrifice, offered through the Churches abroad to help meet some of the expenses. However, though this has led to tremendous growth, it has also diminished this former zeal. But we also understand that times have changed, living conditions have changed, the populations have grown and it will not be easy for a local parish to pay for a priest, layman or the bishop in addition to the other expenses without help from some other source.

The mission work was speeded up by the appointment of laymen who continued to evangelise in various places even in the absence of priests. Due to the shortage of priests, laymen or readers became the backbone of the mission and Orthodoxy, they visited people, helped in all areas except Eucharist and baptisms although they could perform clinical baptisms otherwise called emergency baptisms, and did the catechisms.

When most of the clergy were in jail or underground, the mission was kept alive by these lay leaders, both men and women. Some of those lay leaders who brought and kept life in the Orthodox mission were: Paramount Chief Charles

Akhahukwa, John Khoyi, Mama Jerida Pwana, Mama Johanna Omwakwe who was the *papadhia* (priest's wife) to Fr James Omwakwe, Jairo Asubwe, Fred Akanga, among many others. They gave all their time, energy and material benefits to the Orthodox mission and because of this collective unity of the community, Orthodoxy found itself firmly established in Bunyore as strong as if it was a discovered local faith. It was also a new mission faith if we consider the involvement in the Greek missions at a later stage, which was later followed by the Americans, and the Finnish.

Language is a very important tool of communication and it was this secret that unveiled the progress of Orthodoxy. Because mission was carried out by local people, it is probable that they used a language that they could understand although some of them were bilingual in both English and the local languages many of them were only proficient in their local language, and so the message would be better received at the grass roots, and would have reached the majority. Lunyore has remained the main medium of conducting the Orthodox liturgical services although in some cases Kiswahili is added (Kiswahili is a national local dialect that put together all the ethnic communities of Kenya).

Because of the local people's involvement in their mission, it led to an understanding that the Orthodox Church was clearly identifying with the plight of the local people who in addition to their economic difficulties were also suffering from religious and political oppression. Orthodoxy identified with the natives' concerns like freedom of education, freedom of religious expression that included toleration of most local religious customs. I remember when I asked the late

Henry Ingolo about how the Orthodox Church used to be in those days, she said, “Eh Mwitsukhulu wanje, litukhu lie likanisa, khwabukulanga tsing’oma ma nependela yefwe ne lira attotoksi, ma khulombe egwaride mwitaaala liosi, ma khubukule abandu boosi, mwa khwinjile mwikanisa” (My grandchild, during those days, on the day of the church, we used to take our drums, and go around the village, singing towards the entrance of the Church and then entered the Church) (Henry Ingolo-1999).

Drums are an African tradition; there was no (celebration) dance, whether religious or political that could go without the sound of the drum. Adopting the drum from African culture into church culture in Bunyore was something important. An example the procession, which in our church we call a ‘*panygyri*’, which is mostly done in predominantly Orthodox countries at the celebration of a major saint.

A good example is the day of St. Dimitrios of Thessalonica, on whose day there is a long procession in the whole city of Thessalonica, the solemn entrance also corresponds with the early entrance of the people into the church. However when they did this it was just as part of their tradition within Christianity they had no idea that we have also such elements in our Christian worship. This is one of many examples. Examples of these customs includes marriage rites and rituals, burial rites and ritual, birth rites and rituals, moderation towards polygamy for those who are already polygamists, slow rules on fasting and feasting, initiation rites except clitoridectomy which was not practised among the Banyore people.

According to His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, (Dr Andreas Tillyrides) the

Archbishop of Kenya, (Interview 2007.08. 30,) liturgical worship was part of what attracted many black people including the Banyore to Orthodoxy. This is because Orthodox worship is full of symbolism. Because of the symbols, icons, incense, spirituality and ancient traditions, the African and in particular Munyore related to the Orthodox faith very well.

The other Churches preached against tradition and did not have all that the Orthodox Church had and if there was in those other Churches, it was not clearly expressed. This was also supported by archimandrite Innokentios Byakatonda who is also the Deputy Dean of the Orthodox Seminary in Kenya (Interview: 2007.09.01).

The Orthodox Church, when it came to Bunyore and to the African people as a whole, did not condemn their culture but received them the way they found them and in the process they transformed themselves from whatever they found unbecoming. For example, as stated earlier polygamy was a very serious issue among the Protestant churches, circumcision was almost an abomination, but then come to the Orthodox Church you could find that even the Bishop (Archbishop Makarios) went to western Kenya and with the elders gave prayers for those who were to be circumcised, he went to pray for the initiates before their circumcision, you could find polygamists being received as equally as the monogamists, and since the majority of the Banyore were in one or other of these categories and had felt rejected by other denominations, then the Orthodox Church became a better option.(Interview with the Archbishop 2007.08.30). The Orthodox Church embraced everyone that was willing to come irrespective of

morality.

Another reason was political, even after the affiliation to the Greek Patriarchate there was no resentment because the Greek people were known to be impartial towards the colonial government, which would indicate that they were on the side of the people of Kenya who by that were fighting for their freedom. The Greeks particularly Greek Cypriots were also fighting to be liberated from the British yoke.

Another very interesting point that came up during my discussion with Archimandrite Innokentios Byakatonda (Interview: 2007. 09. 01) was that the African people especially the Banyore in this case, were upset with the other denominations because they were classifying the people and treating them differently according to whether they were poor or rich. For example he said in many churches, poor people were buried by lay people while rich people were buried with full rites by priests. This I can recall myself growing up in my village. In the Orthodox Church, by its teaching, every baptised member is equal to every other and is entitled to be buried by the clergy and so we find that our, even presently, Orthodox Church funerals are a great opportunity for evangelising where many people are gathered and learn about Orthodoxy and join.

Conclusion

1. The Orthodox Church in Bunyore, as in every other part of Kenya was not brought by foreign missionaries but by local people themselves who in turn seek more about Orthodox Christianity from the missionaries and that the first missionaries were the Africans themselves from Uganda and Kiambu.

2. The majority of the people who took on church responsibilities in Bunyore were the Banyore themselves, the missionaries even after they arrived did not bring their own people but used the people they found and in this case the Banyore people who felt that they owned the faith something which they had never experienced before from other denominations.

3. Orthodoxy arrived in Bunyore first and from there spread to other areas of western Kenya.

5. Respect for culture, richness of worship and non-political alignment were some of the features that attracted many to the Orthodox Church.

This will lead us to the next chapter, which discusses in some detail the dialogue with preparatory culture. Preparatory culture is the local culture in which the Church happens to find itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

Print Culture and Oral Culture

Classroom spirituality and Banyore spirituality

When we look at culture we will find that it covers many things and many definitions depending on who is defining it. A westerner at times may not define culture the way an African may, or a missionary may not look at it the same way as a native and because of this, I will provide some definitions and later on pick one which applies to the context I'm investigating. According to Kottak (1974:3-4) culture is traditions that govern the thought and behaviour of individuals exposed to them. These are the traditions the children learn as they grow up as members of a given society. He defines a society as an organised group. Through opinions developed over the generations one's behaviour may be regarded as proper or improper.

Mayers and Grunlan (1979: 41-42) define culture as learned and shared values and ways of behaving. It is a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other habits and capabilities acquired by a human as a member of society. It is inside some one's head as an understanding and in the external environment as an act and artefact adds Moore and Exum (1998:46-47). The same is supported by Taylor (1970:1-3).

In this context of the Banyore, I define culture as the tradition that governs the behaviour and thoughts of an individual in a Banyore society. This includes shared values, knowledge, belief, art, moral and other general habits and the way people live, behave and act as earlier described by Mayers and Ranlan,

More and Exum and Taylor in their general definition of the word “culture”.

It includes both their physical and intellectual development. Culture reveals itself in art and literature, dance, music, drama, styles of building houses, people's clothing, social organisation, political systems, religion, ethics, religious officials and leaders.

This definition leaves no room for doubt that culture is like the heart of any person born into it. Separating a human from their own culture is like separating milk and water which when mixed becomes one substance. To take away water one has to take out milk, and vice versa.

Within culture are beliefs, which portray to us the way people think about the universe and their attitude towards life itself. This includes God/gods, spirits, human life, magic and life after death.

Beliefs are often expressed through practices, ceremonies, and rituals that in general show how certain people express their beliefs in practical terms. Some of these practical things are praying, sacrificing, offering, and performing ceremonies, rituals and observing various customs. Festivals are joyous occasions where people sing, dance, eat and celebrate a particular event or occasion.

To make the above successful religious objects and places are needed, these are places and things set aside as holy and sacred. Some are made by man, others are taken naturally from nature, some belong to private individuals, others belong to the whole community an example of those that belong to the whole

community are shrines, sacred hills, mountains, rivers, etc.

All the practices and life of the people as explained above reveal their values and morals. The values and morals deal with ideas that safeguard or uphold the life of people in their relationship with one another and the world around them. They include truth, justice, love, right, wrong, good, evil, beauty, decency, and respect for people's property, keeping of promises and agreements, praise and blame, responsibilities of both an individual and the community, character and integrity. They help people to live with one another, settle differences between them, maintain peace and harmony and make use of their belongings. As Mbiti (1975: 175) says, African people have a deep sense of what is wrong and what is right and in the course of years, this moral sense has produced customs, rules, laws, traditions, and taboos to be observed by each society.

To fulfil all these religious duties, we need religious leaders and officials who conduct religious matters like ceremonies, sacrifices, prayers and so on. They are in most cases trained men and women, and include rainmakers, priests, kings, medicine men, and so on. They are all keepers of a religious heritage.

As we had said in the previous chapter an individual is part of a whole in both Orthodox Christian understanding and in African traditional mentality, Mbiti (1970:2) adds that religion is not solely an individual business but his/her community of which he/she is a part. It is written everywhere in the life of the community and in a traditional society there are no irreligious people. That is why African people worship God at any time, at any place, there are no rules that force people to pray on certain days, times and in certain places (Mbiti 1970:1).

There is no Sunday holiness where one pretends before a pastor who does not know how he or she lives other days of the week. In African tradition each member is watched every day from their way of life to the way of speech, and so one cannot put up a hypocritical face in the day and the devil's face of the night.

Religion for Africans is not a book religion, it has been and still is the normal way of looking at the world and experiencing life itself, it is found wherever people are. It is developed with all other aspects of their heritage and belongs to the people and it is the people. It is not preached, but one acquires it from birth. It functions more on a communal basis, while the community holds its beliefs.

Ceremonies are performed mainly by a group of family, relatives etc, its influence covers all aspects of life from before birth to after death (Mbiti 1970: 2).

African religion is a way of life, circulating in the veins; it has no scripture, no Qur'an, it is only written in the history, the hearts and experiences of people. The African concept of Trinity may be reflected in their hold on the universe in three tie creation namely the heavens, earth, and the underworld, since these three are seen as inseparable.

Having defined what culture is in detail, this section will discuss on why blackboard spirituality seems to have failed among the natives of Bunyore whose spirituality comes from oral tradition, rituals, proverbs, narratives etc, whose life is naturally religious. In this I will discuss as well ancient culture which corresponds with African culture and modern culture which includes print culture which is common in Western Europe and not Africa. Having seen the above chapter, we will see that some of the points mentioned below, by Bajis made the Orthodox

faith a very strange culture even among many of the European denominations that were establishing themselves in Africa, yet Africans saw Orthodoxy as the right faith for them because they had a lot in common. That is why we see western missionaries supporting colonialism and rejecting Orthodox Christianity. They claimed that the Orthodoxy that was being preached by people like Reuben Sparta, Gathuna even the late Archbishop and President of Cyprus Makarios III was simply man made fabrications and total heresy, asserting that no white man had such a religion.(Zoe 1964: 385). From this statement we may say it was propaganda directed against Orthodoxy while on the other hand we may also conclude that they (western missionaries) did not understand Orthodox Christianity because it had a different approach which to them was primitive and undeveloped. This chapter therefore helps us to understand the unique Orthodox way of evangelism compared to the Protestant and western popular way of evangelism.

In analysing Orthodox culture, Bajis (1989:1-2) says that Orthodoxy is intuitive, that though firmly supported by scholarship, it does not trust or rely on the scholarship (what I may refer to as classroom or blackboard spirituality) as its basis of faith. He argues that it is very hard to integrate the Christian faith into intellectual thinking. Doctrines are valuable if they can protect the mystery of Christ and redemption from heretical teachings (I Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 4: 4-11) but at the same time, he goes on, doctrine cannot communicate faith so well that one could experience God by studying them alone. God's love always surpasses every man's finite doctrinal formulations.

Words will never replace faith, nor would our reason be able to understand and comprehend fully the things of the Spirit. In comparison, Orthodoxy does not try to explain what we do not understand while in Western theology taught by many Protestant missions in Kenya, they tried to explain what could not be understood through classroom theology, and since Africans were not used to this, this theory failed drastically. Among the Banyore then, people learned what they could not understand through nature and experience and what was beyond them was not to be researched and religion was something inside, that could not be studied in order to be followed, for no amount of teaching could sufficiently express the Lord's wonders.

Orthodox culture

Since we are talking about dialogue with culture, it will be appropriate to examine what exactly is the Orthodox way of life or culture, for we know that it is because of its culture that it was accepted by the African people and in particular among the Banyore people. Here we will see from its background that Orthodoxy is mostly African in nature, and by its origin and it is compatible to the African way of life. Orthodoxy has been referred to as Eastern while the other side of Christianity has been called Western. According to Bajis (1989: 1-2).

The Orthodox Church is referred to as an Eastern Church because its faith roots are from Middle Eastern and Semitic thinking (this covers areas like South Italy, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Asia Minor, and the Middle East). We also know that Christ's disciples were Middle Eastern by birth, culture and language and even the Holy Bible in its entire set up, is Eastern in nature.

Besides the above, it should also be understood that the centre of the Christian faith was in the east, the first churches founded by the Apostles were in the East and it is from the east that they were sent out to places such as Rome. Rome was not a centre of faith though later it became a mission field. The eastern Christian centres for almost a hundred years were Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. The majority of the foundations of the Christian faith (dogmas) was formed in the east, we cannot forget the first biblical schools for interpretation in Antioch and Alexandria whose theological perspective still influences the understanding of the scriptures today. All the fundamental councils of the Church took place in the east as well (Bajis1989:1-2ff).

According to Bajis, (1989:5-6) whereas the West studies a subject by dissecting it into smaller pieces, classifying each set by a set of definitions, the Orthodox way of studying is by observing how the entire subject is related to each of its parts. Orthodoxy, which is eastern, seeks to understand Christian teaching from within the context of the whole Christian doctrine, not isolated units. For example as an Orthodox student I cannot study the Eucharist as an isolated unit but only in its relationship to the whole church, the Holy Trinity and the entire Orthodox Christian doctrine.

Western theology on the other hand, wants to explain everything, even that which is beyond human understanding through scholarship, books and always emphasises that for one to be a good Christian they had to master one and two etc and doctrines became a defining factor not a means towards a total knowledge. According to eastern Christian Orthodoxy, a theologian in this

denomination is one who prays and is always in dialogue with God.

As it is the culture of the East, Orthodox Christianity is communal, stressing that it does not seek to divide people as each individual is seen in relation with others (in communion with others). The Church and those individuals who comprise it reflect the relationship between persons and the Trinity. No divine person can exist outside of communion with others, which is why Orthodox Christians understand the church as a community of believers, a household etc. The same bonds that unite the three persons of the Holy Trinity, also unites the individuals who come from all walks of life to form the body of the Church. These individuals who form the bond of the Church are bound together by love, self-discovery and union.

The African people also have a culture of seeing each individual in relation to each other and both form the community, clan or tribe members. Each member represents not only him or herself but also the entire community. Each is a unit of a whole hence the Zulu saying that a person is a person because of people. While in the West in most cases a person is seen as an isolated unity, and so individualism is emphasised and within the Protestant churches personal salvation is emphasised by the Protestant teaching.

As individuals we represent a huge family which protects us, which is why in Orthodoxy an individual's opinions are expressed within the family of Holy Synods, Spiritual fathers and Mothers etc.

Therefore the Christ of the Banyore people is a communal Christ, with communal rhythm. We learn that Christ approaches and recognises an individual within the

community and not outside of it.

Though the Orthodox faith recognises an individual's salvation, it emphasises the fact that communal life through the Eucharist and the entire sacramental life depicts the manner in which mankind is saved within the community of faith. This concludes that an individual salvation is effective within the community. Although we are all individually responsible for our actions, through communal struggle salvation is attained by each individual.

Based on this and also relating to African communal culture, the theology of *koinonia* particularly as expressed in the Eucharist and other sacraments became a backbone upon which the Banyore conversion was based. This *koinonia* became a binding force for the living, the dead, and those yet to be born, thus creating an environment of careful listening, promotion of love and spiritual vigilance.

The God of the Orthodox faith as in the God of a Munyore, is humble, who responds to his people whether departed, alive or those yet to be born, He does not need an appointment and He is always available

In concluding this reflection, I will therefore say that ethnicity despite its many negativities, was a force that bound the Banyore community and it is from this understanding that the Banyore viewed the community of baptised Christians. see Taylor (1963: 201).

Western Christianity promoted individual salvation, not on the basis of the community but on the individual , which finally led to a reformation movement

and divided Western Christendom whose outcome has affected the Christian movement throughout the world.

The eastern regions from ancient times looked at everything in relation to the other, the whole cosmos as holiness; they looked at the mountains, rivers, forests, etc as the dwelling places of God, and for them everything in the cosmos mattered and were full of holiness hence treated with respect. This was not worship of matter but veneration of matter and this gave birth to the use of signs, and images such as the icons in the Christian faith of the East. That the power of the one on high, is projected through the visible to the people. This was confirmed through the theology of the incarnation of Christ according to the Gospel of John (1:ff) see also Bajis (1989: 4-5).

In relation to the above, Orthodox Christianity has adopted this culture of being holistic in the sense that everything stands in relation to the other, where the whole world and everything in it, in all places belongs to Christ. Body, Spirit and Soul though distinct they are inseparable. This is why Christ came to redeem the whole person (Soul, body and mind) he will also redeem the whole of creation. Therefore, because of this the Orthodox faith does not create a chasm between what is sacred (Spiritual) and what is profane (matter), it believes that God created both and one day He will redeem both Bajis (1989:4ff). This factor helped the Orthodox existence among the Banyore who do not separate nature from the Spirit but through nature they understand the unseen spirit, which is why they could respect mountains, sacred places, plants, seasons etc as the dwelling places and agents of the unseen Supreme power (Nyassaye).

Orthodox Christianity looks at church membership as including those existing within time and place and those existing beyond time both those who exist equally on earth and equally beyond the earth. The Church therefore is one body where God dwells among both the living and those who have passed on. The acts of memorials and remembrance of the departed as practised among Orthodox Christians was not a strange practice among the Banyore but it correctly conformed to Banyore culture.

As westerners emphasised books and learning of the book of law, the Orthodox Christian emphasised that their culture is relational and experiential including the relation between the three persons of God, among the called people of God (brothers and sisters in Christ). Orthodox Christian culture emphasises that there is no creed or book that can explain our life in Christ amicably other than that it is the experience in Christ, not intellectual knowledge but union with Christ that brings revelation. A doctrine as understood by Orthodox culture is a symbol that points to Christ but not the way.

In this case we see that this was similar to the Banyore way, who did not study ancestors and Nyassaye (God) but it was all experiential, and relational and when the Orthodox missionaries approached the Africans they did not condemn this experience as foolishness and evil but carefully tapped on this experience and this enabled the Orthodox Church to grow as quickly as possible.

Having explained what Orthodox culture is and compared each element with the Banyore culture I will now continue with the issue of classroom culture and how the Africans of Bunyore perceived it and how it affected their acceptance of

Christianity especially Protestant Christianity where it was widely practised.

The practice of forcing Africans to go to class for certain lessons before they got baptised later on backfired on the initiators, because African converts became Christians on Sundays and remained traditional believers for the rest of the week. They consulted the Church for material problems but for spiritual matters they consulted their traditional healers. I will also explicate how culture plays an important role in their religious life and how in this context culture can be defined.

Orthodox life, whether among simple or educated people, is found in every aspect of life, it is not based on the classroom. This may be the same with African religious life, which is blood not books. One does not need to know how to recite a certain paragraph on a certain day of the week, but one is born religious and dies religious, religion follows all one's days, and activities, whether outside or inside the place of "Omusambwa" (Place of sacrifice – altar). The vine of spirituality is found in culture, religion, politics, social events, and private events, and is taught by example rather than by books. This was the main strength of the success of Orthodoxy in Bunyore compared to other denominations.

In this chapter therefore I will briefly explain how the Anglican and Church of God missions were a blackboard religion and how this affected and collided with the local Banyore culture. The Holy Tradition taught by Orthodoxy, and the Holy Fathers and Holy Mothers, who by their lives have left us a legacy to follow, and inspired many Banyore people to identify themselves with the Orthodox faith. This is through a Holy Tradition; there was a theology of apostolic succession,

through which the past generations of apostles, saints etc have left us a legacy of experiences and thoughts through which we struggle and also try to live for others, and this is mission. And this style of mission was applied to many places in Kenya and in Africa as whole where missionaries from the west also happened to go. African piety relies on its rich heritage, a heritage that relies on what the past generations of the African people's thoughts and experiences, were passed on to their children. According to Mbiti (1991:1), the earliest man may have lived in East Africa and if this is true then Africa may be the mother of all the people in the world.

Classroom spirituality

As Taylor (1963: 201) points out, the failure of the church in Africa was that the Western missionaries expected to meet people in their best clothes or their best outward appearance . He says that they could only see children in their uniform, clergy in their robes, ordinary Christians in a Christian context. Meeting local people in such situations prevents one from planning or preaching with much wisdom and relevancy. As a result Christianity, contrary to African religious life, becomes something to be put on at certain times and in particular circumstances and has nothing to do with the other areas of life. This implied that our God does not care about what is inside as long as you are well outside, meaning that it was okay to hide what you are inside provided you could mask yourself in brilliant garments.

In many areas of Kenya, and especially in Bunyore, Christianity depended upon the monopoly of western education, and thus became a classroom religion. In my

tribe of Bunyore, those who converted to Protestant missions were called "Abasomi" (people of the book), which explains how the local people perceived Christianity as the religion of intellectuals. Only those who could read and write could be Christians. The gospel had been presented as instructions, with no sympathy and imagination. Sermons outnumbered symbols (Ambetsa Ref Fr. Dec 2002).

When Orthodoxy came, it approached from the other side, where symbols overpowered the sermons.

Because of this, Christianity became a daylight religion of reason, set over against the dark of superstition. The kingdom of God was thus confined within the protective walls of the conscious and rational, has left untouched the great deep of subliminal and unredeemed glories of the elemental energies of man (Taylor 1963: 5). These and many other factors left Christianity in Bunyore as it did in the rest of the evangelised regions, as a religion of the white man. Some of the things that may also affect Orthodoxy in its mission will be the way the *Evangelion* was presented. For example in many pictures and films Christ is depicted as white with blue eyes, with a white mother dressed in a European style, this form of worship bore no relationship to the traditional ritual or the contemporary prayer of African life. This is the reason why many converts had to double deal, go to the churches and at the same time continue worshipping in their traditional ways.

The organisational structure of the Church was part of mission and its way of reaching decisions was modelled always on western concepts. There are

outward signs that can be replaced by relevant ones; they are symptoms, school uniforms or a classroom religion reflecting a worldview that is fundamentally European.

It may be true according to the above facts, Christ was presented as an answer to the questions and quests a white man would ask, the solution to the needs that a western man would feel, the saviour of the world for the European worldview, object of adoration and prayer for European historic Christendom. But if Christ were to appear as an answer to the question and quests of Africans what would he look like? If he came into the world of African cosmology to redeem man as an African understands him, would he be recognisable to the rest of Church universality? And if Africans offered him the praises and petitions of her total, uninhabited humanity, would they be acceptable? (Interview Clapsis 2003: October)

Therefore as Taylor attests, the missionaries (mostly Protestants but also at times Orthodox) (Akanga Fred Jan 2003) looked at the language of the classroom as perfect; it did not require other sources. This was an attitude of the early Protestant missionaries in Bunyore, they trusted in themselves and their classroom religion and did not try to enter into the lord of the Banyore world (and see what he says). As my conclusion to this argument, I do feel that based on all the evidence we have stated in this chapter and previous chapters, it is wise to sensitively and appreciatively enter into that other man's world in order to talk more effectively and successfully about Christ. We cannot talk to an African about the Kingdom of God, how powerful it is, when we cannot respect his

kingdom, when we do not recognise his traditional leaders as kings, queens, they form his visible kingdom and through whom he can be able to understand the invisible Kingdom of God.

In the religion of the classroom, there is a very big distinction between present, past and future. The past is forgotten, those not yet born are not considered. Only those in the present who can learn and know the book are productive and considered. This theology is foreign to Orthodox theology, where past, present and future are seen in the same camera, for example in the Eucharist, the future, past and present are realised at the same time. An African Munyore in this case does not see any distinction between the three. All of the three sustain life and form a community. Sengor writes: "I do not know when it happened, I always confuse childhood with Eden, and I mix up death and life, which are joined by a tender bridge" (Beier 1959:3).

The living man is happier because he is alive but the dead one is more powerful. The Orthodox theology of the saints who become more powerful after their death and intercede for us, therefore appealed to the African people of Bunyore, who saw their departed ancestors (those who lived well and virtuously) as more powerful than those still living and in most cases go through them whenever they want to approach Nyassaye.

The conclusion of this chapter therefore has sensitised us to the African and in particular the Banyore cultural concept of time and space in regard to spirituality, that their God is everywhere and everywhere is a church, everywhere is a classroom for them and that religion cannot be reduced to mere lessons for a

period of time but it takes our entire life to study and every aspect of life is our teacher. God cannot be limited to space or a book and the classroom is but just a small fraction of the struggle to learn about God and it alone cannot lead us closer to God unless our entire life creates for us a space to learn.

We also learn that death is no longer a threat to the spirit of anyone who is prepared, the physical separation strengthens the spiritual union between the deceased and the living.

The following chapter will introduce us to early Christian customs and their relationship and similarities to Banyore Culture.

Eastern, Western and Karing'a Cultures

This section describes in more detail the difference between Western and Eastern Christian cultures, as well as African culture especially karing'a culture and its significance towards the penetration of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church in its midst. It will close with a general overview of the Orthodox faith, focusing on the Eucharist and its relation to Banyore culture.

A concrete theology of experience, living endeavour with God, is the culture of Eastern Christianity. This kind of culture emphasised the relation to, and the experience of God, not through books but through life. It stresses on the relationships between people as an expression of their relationship with God and as a symbol of the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. This relationship is expressed through the members who have been baptised referring to each other as brother and sister therefore partaking from the same cup and spoon of the holy mysteries. The doctrines are only to protect the mystery of Christ and redemption from heretical teachings (1Corinthians2:6-8).

The Eastern hemisphere where Orthodoxy was born and natured sees the world as a whole and as a result, Eastern Orthodox Christianity adopted this culture, t even its pillar of theology is supported by the theology of incarnation, epiphany (baptism) where what was natural was united by what was divine. The theology of icons and other signs in Eastern Orthodox Christian worship became prevalent while in the West especially in the Protestant Churches such a move seemed to be seen as an anathema. As a result there existed a greater chasm between the

natural one and the divine one within Western theology compared to the theology found in eastern Christendom.

In relation to the above, Eastern Christianity is holistic in nature. In this perspective the world is the total revelation of Christ at all times and in all places. An Orthodox prayer says, "Heavenly King , Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who dwells everywhere and abides in every thing, come and abide in us and save our souls O Good One". This prayer has the eastern character of asserting the presence of God in nature at all times and in all places. The creation is not looked at in isolation especially the environment and its components, but all is looked at as a part of the saving witness of the presence of God.

Anthropologically we are all completely related to each other, we are not just a fraction of the whole. The way we relate to each other is the way the local church relates to the universal Church. The local church represents the universal church without losing its distinctiveness, it is the same with a person, and the person represents the whole of society without losing their distinctiveness.(see also Yannaras 1984:20-21).

During any prayers and in particular during the Eucharist, a Western priest or the officiating clergy is the 'mediator' but in the East we reject this conception, because the priest as a person who represents the whole church to God, he is also the icon of God so says Hayes (1998:32). The priest is not apart from the community he is performing the Eucharist for but he a person who is a person because of people; that is why St. Ignatius said that where the bishop is, there is also the Church because the local bishop not only leads the local church but he

also represents it.

In Banyore community and many of the communities of Kenya, a person represents the community, the community is not a community without individuals and a person is not a person without the community, as Ogbonaya (1993: 120) stated that, the king is the people because he is the king because of the people.

Eastern culture emphasises that a person is not a fraction of the whole, nor is he/she an isolated particle of the whole, he/she is the whole and he/she contains in themselves the whole. He/she is a person because of the community and he/she is always a person within the community (see also Hayes 1998:34).

There are also very different ecclesiologies between Western and Eastern Christian cultures. The Eastern Orthodox Church views the Church as one Holy , catholic and apostolic Church while in the West the term catholic tends to focus on the 'general or universal'. In Orthodox ecclesiology the term 'catholic' means 'Whole'. The Catholic Church of the West is seen as a single body bound in unity by the Pope in Rome, where the local church is not complete in itself but it is part of the whole (Hayes 1998:28). Hayes continues to say that the congregation sees the Church as local in the sense that as Catholic it is the sum of all local churches, also implying the incompleteness of the local church. Protestant denominations like the Methodists look at the Church as a denomination or a sect, in which each church/ denomination is not complete but just a fraction of the universal Church, this would indicate that the local church is not actually the whole Church but just a fraction of the Church (See also Hayes 1998: 28).

On the contrary Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology emphasises that the local church

is complete in itself and self-sufficient. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts but the completeness of the whole resides in all the parts, so the completeness of the whole church resides in the completeness not in fractions of the local churches. The local church led by its bishop is complete yet not independent but interdependent with other local church" (Hayes 1998:28ff). Though complete it is also in relation to other churches and this is what makes the Church Catholic.

In the Western Church, mission begins when one leaves the church to go to preach to the world, yet in the East, mission begins in the Church through the celebration of the Eucharist which provides both the meaning and the fullness of the entire Church mission. Outside of the Eucharist, we cannot understand mission. The inner circle is bigger than the outer, thus the mystery of the Church is that the Church is bigger than the world and that is why mission starts from inside the Church and not beyond the Church. What contains God who created the universe is bigger than the universe created by God. For example a simple woman, the Virgin Mary carried the whole universe when she conceived Christ and she became bigger and very important to our Christian faith and belief.

The cultural significance of Karing'a

The Kikuyu resistance to western missionaries' ideology and the Kikuyu culture of nationalism lead to the formation of Karing'a. This was a very basic factor, which in collaboration with many other factors led to the formation of Orthodox Christianity in Kenya and the authenticity that it possesses.

The culture of nationalism, was vital to the Kikuyu as it portrayed the pride of the

local people and their belief that a religious person needs freedom politically, and it is in this freedom that they could exercise freely their religious, social and cultural roles. This shaped an awareness for everyone in the country to the extent that Karing'a ceased to be a Kikuyu plight but the Kenyan concern which captured the interest and support of many local Africans, thus making it easy for the Orthodox ideology and philosophy to penetrate.

CHAPTER SIX

Orthodox spirituality and African culture

This chapter seeks to expand on what has been mentioned previously in other chapters. It seeks to explore the relationship between African cultures in general and with particular reference to Banyore culture with Orthodox spirituality. For instance it does not separate general life (social, political, economic, etc) from religious life. One is expected to be religious at all times, festivals and objects etc are seen as part of the vessels which drives one towards their salvation and union with the supreme.

Let me quick to point out that though my thesis is defending Banyore culture, I'm not saying that in any way Orthodox Christianity is a continuation of Banyore culture but a transformer of African culture. A transformer without replacing it.

Also in this contest when I speak of the other faiths, it should not imply that the Orthodox in Kenya is not ecumenical. There are very sound relations between the Orthodox Church in Kenya and other Churches and even other religions but again despite of this relationship we cannot throw away history, for history helps us not to repeat the same mistakes.

Orthodox spirituality and its understanding of mission in other cultures rests on the Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus, this letter simply describes who a Christian is in relation to the world and what is their destiny and this guides their relation and goal in life and in mission. If we know that we are just guests in this world that even though we dwell in this world we are not of it, then we will have a guide on our spirituality and mission. I will quote this letter in detail in order to set a

stage for this chapter and for the chapters that will follow in regard to Orthodoxy and in Africa.

For Christians are distinguished from men neither by country nor language nor custom which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own nor employ peculiar form of speech of their own, nor live a life which is marked out by any singularity. But inhabiting Greek as well as Barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food and the rest of the ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries but simply as sojourners. As citizens they share all things with others, yet endure all things as if they are foreigners. Every foreign land is to them their native country and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They are in the flesh but do not live after the flesh, pass days on earth but they are citizens of heavens. They obey prescribed laws but at the same time surpass them by their lives. They are poor yet make many rich, they are dishonoured yet in their dishonour they are glorified" (Roberts and Donaldson:1994: 26-27).

"The soul dwells in the body yet it is not of the body, so Christians dwell in the world yet they are not of this world" (Roberts and Donaldson 1994: 27).

The dimension of mission and its spiritual direction is an element that is unavoidable, as we cannot avoid not breathing as long as we are alive. Air is all over us.

Orthodox spirituality is an integral duty, which includes the proclamation of the gospel, building of the community and a search for God and finding God in diverse circumstances and relationships, energy and vision for the future. An African religious person in his or her spirituality is not of a single dimension but their piety permeates every space of the self, the environment and everything else. Western missionaries tried to separate the two, failing to see that spirituality was a mystical reality within every aspect in life. However during the missionary period especially with the English missionaries, spirituality was directly connected to the classroom, hence becoming a book and class an intellectual spirituality, Sunday or feast day spirituality, hence missing the whole aspect of touching all the sectors of life as the Banyore traditional religion did. This kind of spirituality created "more hunger than satisfaction"⁸ According to them, classroom education created civilisation and civilisation made a good Christian. For one to be regarded as a full Christian, and even to be baptised, one had to attend the class, and after the class one would be considered qualified and nobody followed anyone up, while in Banyore education was not limited to time, it was lifetime.

Religious life in Africa is always linked to ordinary living, which demonstrates that an African is a theologian by nature, who cares for nature and his neighbours. The sense of "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" as described by Mbiti (1970:106), explains very well the religious reality of an African

As an Orthodox believer, I am convinced that sacredness is and can be found in

⁸ Interview with the Mama Jeridah Pwana, and supported by Theologian Lwabi Josephat.

ordinary experiences. This is reflected in the use of matter in Orthodox worship. The incarnation of the Logos, his nailing on the cross, all proves how the ordinary can be sacred. The wood (cross) an ordinary piece of wood for punishing the criminal, becomes the real agent by which Christ saves us. The cross becomes the centre of our life, it is no longer a shameful instrument.

When we speak of a holistic concept of mission we are on solid ground here because mission as the work of God's Spirit and can only take place in the real world. The spiritual search for God goes with actual daily life, and that is why the prayer of ritual accompanies everything done in African piety. For example, among the Banyore, pregnancy is always protected by prayers and rituals, social work is also accompanied by prayers, for example the ploughing and planting season, the harvesting season and so on. One is welcomed into the world with rituals and escorted into another world with rituals and prayers. Comparing this to the Orthodox point of view, we see that Orthodox spirituality is not superficial, it always recognises and permeates every space of life hence designing prayers for every occasion that ever enters and embraces human life and the community (for example those occasions that cause yearning, those that embrace and those that provide acceptance, affection for human life and community, and those that surround or restrict, give rule to human life and community). Ritual does not work apart from the community but with the community, yet maintains that aspect of being in the world but not of the world. Always, God as omnipotent continues to surprise us with His unexpected presence in African culture, which may only be discovered through our deeper search, appreciation of and dialogue with African

culture.

This is a general reflection on the relation between African culture and Orthodox Christianity, which will be fleshed out as we examine the theme of 'Orthodox dialogue with Banyore culture'.

Many African cultural practices and beliefs were rejected by Western missionaries, who tended to look at them as pagan, uncivilised and dark. In the concluding chapters I hope to show that this image is far from the truth, thus creating space for rethinking what will enable us to closely analyse African culture, and separate its demonic aspects from its pious aspects. There is no human culture that is perfect or holier than others. All cultures are struggling to search for God. This constant search for God often affects and is affected by our individual culture and at the same time through the wider culture.

By the end of this thesis, we will see that most Africans are naturally Christians and at times their view of life, symbols, and poetry are reflected in the church's practical theology.

History shows us that Christianity has undergone several transitions and influences since its founding. Each community that has received Christianity embraced it under the umbrella of its own cultural practices and as a result Christianity assumed new elements from these communities. The effectiveness of the spread and acceptance of Christianity here is linked to the cultural elements that acted as an umbilical cord for the new Christian religion and the newly-converted community.

These elements gave security and hope in the new lands. None will doubt that these elements, by becoming part of the church, became part of the sacred baptism, a New Testament upon which the local community was wholly committed and became part of the life of the Church.

In Jesus' parables and teachings, Jesus used elements and examples from daily activities as well as from his own local community's culture. In response to this, the Jewish Christians, and apostles did not view Christian religion as a foreign element or parasite among them, but instead, Christianity was looked upon as part of their normal life (Wallis 1970:1-3) which every Jew was bound to protect. St Paul in his mission always applied local elements from the hosting cultures to explain the mystical elements of Christianity. From the examples above, there is no doubt when I conclude that our Christian religion has been Judaized or has been Romanized, it has been Hellenized, orientalised, and it has been Anglicised, presently, it is trying to be very much Americanised. This would indicate that it has been a little bit affected by the environments it has passed through, and this therefore leads us to confidently accept that the Christian religion has left a mark on every sphere it has passed. Then why should it be evil for it to be Africanised? Africa is nearer to Israel than Rome. By being Africanised, I do not imply the creation of a new African gospel. Every age has to shape the divine image it worships over again just as it has been done by our own countries. St Clement of Alexandria notes that "There is only one way of truth (Christianity), but into it streams pour from all sides as into an overflowing river" (Van Den Hoek Annewies 1988:25). This therefore implies that Christianity

is like a river which receives tributaries from all sides and indeed Christianity has been shaped and influenced in many ways by the cultures through which it has penetrated or passed.

In explaining the role culture (his own culture) and philosophy can play in Christian faith, Clement of Alexandria continues to present (Van Den Hoek 1988:23) several imageries in the fifteenth paragraph of his book *Stromata* he insists on making good use of what is best in philosophy and preparatory (host culture) culture. He goes further to state that watered with the thoughts of the Greeks, the earth will receive the spiritual seed cast upon it and cause the seed to grow. He also compares preparatory culture (local culture) and philosophy to showers of rain that rain everywhere, on good and bad lands alike and because of rapid growth caused by these showers then both grains and weeds spring up vigorously (also see Quasten1997:13). This is the exact philosophy that saw the merging of both Orthodox philosophy and Banyore culture.

Gospel and culture: an Orthodox perspective

Having discussed some of the details of culture, and its dialogue with the gospel, the Orthodox Church, was the first Church to share all the experiences and encounters of different cultures, which has been previously discussed, it kept on assuming the characteristics of every culture it came across. First its move from the Judaic culture and its intermarriage within the Hellenic culture, Russian culture, and then its move from these traditionally Orthodox countries to less Orthodox cultures such as those in Africa and how it uses its past encounters to fuse within these cultures is some thing to be admired and echoed.

Through out its history, the Orthodox Church has been striving to lead the gospel in various circumstances; it has often found itself from democratic to communist, to dictatorial States. Even in traditionally Orthodox countries like Greece, Orthodoxy is now being confronted with the challenge of learning to live with foreign cultures brought by globalisation and pluralism (Clapsis 2000:151). Even if Orthodoxy had a desire to abstain from dialogue, dialogue with the cultures in various fields it comes across is inevitable in order to take root in them.

The issue of dialogue between the Orthodox faith and local culture of any region is no longer a missionary imperative but everyone's' duty, as it has been through out the history of the Orthodox Church, it has been confronted by new challenges and situations of life and by its response it has become a witness to the gospel for many people in many places at different times. In some places this witness has been well timed while in others it has been blown out.

The Orthodox presence in Bunyore and in Africa as a whole had to seek the relationship elements of local culture that are comparable to Orthodoxy. This kind of dialogue has been successful, as it has made Orthodoxy comfortable in African lands among the local populations as well as among the immigrants. The Orthodox missionary philosophy is not to convert but to be first converted to the culture and use this conversion to convert the people of culture to Orthodoxy.

This dialogic relationship between Orthodoxy and culture especially in Bunyore was not aimed at consuming the Orthodox Church and elevating culture above Christ but to promote a safe environment in which the Orthodox Christian community could build a relationship of co-existence and cooperation with the

other. Orthodox being a member of the ecumenical movement has also used this method to co exist with other faiths through a common witness. This in itself is a strong witness, for Orthodox Christianity is not interested in gaining numbers but witnessing its presence and the matter of conversion remains a choice of the people themselves.

There has been a double response: one being that the Orthodox Church in Africa either has been incarnated within the culture or it has been amongst the immigrants (especially the Greeks) who in respect to their own '*ethnismos*' have dared not to touch it, hence keeping it to themselves, thus becoming a community of the private and introverted, which produces its Orthodox faith quietly amongst its own immigrant communities. This kind of practice has been commonly called 'ethnicity' and by this practice in some corners Orthodoxy has been looked upon as an ethnic faith preserved for special people, similar to the way Judaism was for the Jews the special nation of God. However, this has been a human error which ought not to be attributed to Orthodoxy as a faith, for as we have seen Orthodoxy is not controlled by the ethnic groups that it happens to meet with but it controls them all, making them subject to the universal will of God, receiving Christ as its own but at the same time recognising that this same Christ is also present and can be received by others as well.

The Church therefore realised her mission through the culture of sacraments, the most central one being the Eucharist. In the Eucharist we experience the subsequent transformation and changes as century's advance with all the things the church permeates in all the new spaces of the world. It will be true that after a

total experience of this, that the church through the Eucharist respects dialogues and even transforms human cultures when it is necessary to do so.

Though ethnicity has been condemned a great deal, I feel that because of its introversion, ethnicity seems to respect tradition so much that it fears to challenge it, In this respect even when Orthodoxy turns to dialogue with other cultures it does so with respect and this unconditional dialogue leads the Orthodox Church to reside side by side with local cultures without any tension and fear of the unknown. Orthodoxy has wisely been able to condemn some cultural practices that are not in harmony with the gospel for example, though in Bunyore it tolerated polygamy but did not advocate this way of life for the next generation but rather discouraged it.

Orthodox theology practice within the parameters of its missionary endeavour allows the Orthodox missionary churches established in countries that are not predominantly Orthodox to develop ways of expressing the gospel through their indigenous cultures. For example the special prayers designed specifically for Banyore funeral night vigils, boys circumcision, traditional wedding rituals, use of drums at certain points, use of religious hymns with African traditional tones etc.. However, this is not done without caution because it should not *jeopardise the communion of the local church with the other Orthodox Churches* (Clapsis: 2000:152).

A good example can be depicted from the missionaries Cyril and Methodius who when they entered the Slavic lands refused the three language heresy (that Latin, Hebrew and Greek were the only legitimate languages for Christians) and

directed the Slavs to learn the gospel in the Slavonic language (Interview Christakis 2003: Dec). This took great courage at the time, as no one was supposed to learn or read the Bible outside of the three languages. St Nicholas of Japan, when he first went to Japan he had to learn Japanese, in recent times missionaries in Kenya like Archbishop Anastasios (now of Albania) Archbishop Makarios of Kenya, Archbishop Seraphim (now of Johannesburg and Pretoria), Archimandrites Johannes Eko and Archimandrite Themistocles among many others, have not only learned the language and customs of the people but those who are hierarchs have ordained the local people and helped and trained them so that in a short time they have translated all the services in to local languages. Most of the time they have conducted pastoral visits to many rural areas, eaten the traditional food, danced traditional to songs, attended traditional ceremonies and this has meant a lot to many people particularly as some of the other missionaries did not do so. This quick response has helped the Orthodox Church in many regions of Kenya to open up dialogue with the local cultures, respect them, understand them and condemn some of the cultural practices that need the healing and transforming grace of God (interviews: Johannes Eko, Archimandrite Themistocles, Archbishop Makarios of Kenya, Archbishop Seraphim of Johannesburg and Pretoria: 2003 Dec and the Late Fr Eleftherios Ndwaru: 2000 June).

It seems to me as an Orthodox Christian that culture reveals God's grace, hence affirming that God's universal grace and presence may be found in every culture, and so it is the duty of the Orthodox Church as Fr Clapsis says, to seek those

elements within every culture we comes across, that depicts the presence of God and those that need transformation (Clapsis 2000: 152).

However, it is a characteristic of the Orthodox Church that whenever it encounters situations in life that need a new interpretation of the gospel, in the light of these new challenges, it seeks the richness of the uninterrupted Tradition of the Church, and this is how the Orthodox Church regulates the dialogue with other cultures (Clapsis 2000:152).

The gospel message reflected from the Apostolic Church, to be able to extend from the Jews to the Gentiles has to project the gospel through the use of images and symbols that the local people or Gentiles can comprehend.

The incarnation of Orthodoxy among the people of Kenya, in particular the people of Bunyore, is just a continuation of the tradition that has been there since the apostolic period. During the apologetic period the gospel, which was born in Jewish culture, found itself being accepted in masses within the gentile community of Greeks, and in its struggle for survival it incarnated itself into Hellenic culture and philosophy and it was within this culture and philosophy that it was preserved during its persecution. It is within this cultural incarnation that the Greeks received the gospel as their own with pride and hope.

Therefore from the above examples, we can conclude that in order for the faith to produce authentic fruits and dynamic human cooperation with God, it needs to be indigenised so that the indigenous communities can have the capacity to receive the gospel and to be transformed. We know that God is active in every community by His divine attribute of omnipresence.

Although the term culture may have been defined, I think we have not heard how Orthodoxy defines culture, according to Fr Clapsis, an Orthodox theologian and scholar, culture may be defined as the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs symbols, institutions and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population by which people construct their world (Clapsis 2000:153). Orthodoxy therefore asserts that every one has culture and it is this culture that forms the centre of his or her existence, even their understanding of the Supreme is woven within their culture.

The Orthodox Church by this definition becomes the first to reject the old definition of culture which associated culture with Western civilisation and education and which many Western missionaries adopted as their mission aid in Africa. Orthodox theology in theory and practice has rejected the identification of culture with European civilisation that separates Greeks from barbarians, civilised from uncivilised. All human communities and cultures have their own civilisation because each human community and culture, however primitive it may appear, provides for its own people a “meaning and cohesiveness of the community’s life” (Clapsis 2000:154).

There is also evidence today that there is not a pure culture which has not been influenced by elements of other cultures because of migration and mass communication thus making the whole world a multicultural cosmos. This became the basis of every Orthodox missionary, and even the local converts who thought culture could not be emphasised at the expense of the gospel, there was a need for clear communication between the two in order to find a harmonious,

coexistence or incarnation.

In most cases Christianity has failed, especially among the Banyore people because messengers of the gospel have created an impression among the local people that there is no difference between Christianity and European or Western imperialism which has been a significant weapon for the imposition and enhancement of colonialism and its policies among subjugated people and thus calling it civilisation. This kind of impression created a misunderstanding of Christianity being a branch of colonialism, even to this day when black people refer to other black people as civilised, they measure them according to European standards.

It is true therefore, that reflecting on the above theory and practice, and at the same time focusing on the persecuted Church for persecuted people and culture, the Orthodox Church as a persecuted Church used a different approach through which it explored and recognised existing culture, worked with it, and through local civilisation Orthodox culture was filtered within the local community. Every culture ought to be respected, as it is an achievement of every unique community, says Clapsis (2000:154).

Though I support dialogue with culture wholeheartedly, it does not imply that culture is infallible since it is human we expect to find some unbecoming elements thus making it at one point constructive to the life of the community and to another extent destructive of the life of its community. Cultural negatives can be used to justify evil and injustices, for worshipping hence turning it into idol worship and many other negatives. Dialogue in my argument does not mean that

Orthodoxy in Bunyore or elsewhere has ratified the elements of evil and injustices within every culture we came across; culture is not above Christ, and so if turned into idols, it replaces Christ with ethnicity (we will later have the definition of ethnicity).

Orthodoxy within Kenya and in particular within Bunyore reveals an encounter of two unfamiliar cultures which at the beginning finds it very hard to detect any positives and creativeness in each other because of their strangeness and differences, yet it is this unfamiliarity and strangeness which sets the ground for conversation hence leading to a full development of both cultures. If dialogue is avoided in such circumstances, one culture is forced to reject the wholeness of the other culture finally resulting in isolation, oppression of a less powerful culture and retaliation by defiance of a defeated culture.

This is clear in Kenya especially in Bunyore that when the differences were not properly addressed through dialogue by the Protestant and other missionaries, there arose a reduction of local culture's dignity by the visitors, and in return retaliation from the host which led to the formation of many Independent Churches like Dini ya Musambwa, the African Israel Nineveh Church, and the African Divine Church just to name a few Independent Churches in Bunyore. It is also evident that a Church like the Salvation Army though it arrived late succeeded in Bunyore because it avoided many imperialistic prejudices.

Open dialogue, full of openness and honesty has led to the communal perceptions and symbolic interpretations of life and to the discovery of how each particular context of culture has shaped the views of its adherents and therefore

at one place being compelled to modify and change distorted and repressive understanding of the other (see Clapsis 2000:155).

Orthodoxy appreciates culture and that is why it dialogues with every culture it comes across simply because: God by his providential love sustains His creation by the power of His *Agio Pneuma*. By this fact, God's glory is circulated everywhere both in heaven and earth, to triumphant and militants alike.

When we refer to this we will discover that the world is not evil and dark and void and that other human faiths and ideologies contains elements of truth although the fullness of the truth is found in Jesus Christ through the Church. At this level we are led to the discernment of God's presence in whatever contributes to the uplifting of humanity and to the glory of God.

According to the book of the Acts of the Apostles 10:35, a man from any nation that fears God and does what is right is acceptable before God even if he comes from what we may refer to as a primitive culture. God has allowed many nations to go their own way for many ages yet despite different directions and cultures each nation has gone, God has not left without any clue of Him (Acts 14: 16-17).

There was among the Banyore as among the Athenians, the craving and yearning for the unknown God and the search for the God who is not far from each one of them, for in him we all live and move and exist (Acts 17:21)

Orthodoxy having been rooted in the Greek lands by St Paul through his famous Areopagus speech at the Parthenon, we find the theology of worshipping God without knowing and this is found in many cultures and traditions outside of

Christianity. Orthodoxy seeks to unveil this unknown God to the nations and communities. With these characteristics, Orthodoxy seems to be one of the few churches, if not the only one, that understands the secret behind other cultures and how to handle them. Bunyore is not an exception in this recipe.

According to St Augustine of Hippo, God was present in the world since the beginning of the Word and reason and later came to be known in the Bible as the Son of God (Augustine-Logos Spermatikos, see also Clapsis 2000:157). In this context we believe that all who lived by the Logos are Christians even though they are regarded as atheists. This factor underscores the fact that even though we may not elevate some key members of a certain community to the level of saints, we always recognise their effort in preserving life and promoting the virtues of life even though they did not hear about Christianity.

This recognition is the beginning of dialogue as it implies our recognition as Orthodox Christians that whenever we go we do not start from nothing but on a foundation laid by the pre-Christian fathers and mothers of a particular community. Anything good and promoted by ancestors, medicine men, kings, headmen (Amakuru) philosophers, and just the common people of traditional antiquity, is taken as a pioneer's mission for Christ; they are the forerunners of Christ even though they did this unknowingly.

Orthodox theology and philosophy in relation to anthropology looks at man as a whole and the whole world as one community irrespective of the differences in life styles, worship, cultures and traditions. There is no tribe or culture in the world that does not need transformation, likewise there is not a completely evil

culture that is beyond transformation yet also there is not a culture that does not comprise of God's blessedness, all these forms are God created tribes united in diversity yet one in Spirit and descent.

Clement of Alexandria an educator and one of the Orthodox Church fathers, sees the whole of mankind as a unity and he asserts that apart from Israel, God also spoke in fragmentary and varied ways some not familiar to the way he revealed Himself to the Israelites (Hebrews 1:1ff, quoted by Clapsis 2000:157). Gregory of Nyssa praises Greek philosophers like Plato and Socrates whose philosophy had a great impact on Christianity. Such philosophers caught a glimpse of the Holy Spirit for even though they existed several centuries before Christianity they projected the same message of salvation, which made it easier for their communities to understand Christianity.

There is only one God who has revealed Himself in various ways and economies of the universe, some fathomable and some unfathomable. The Holy Fathers and Holy Mothers understood that God is not a caged animal caged in one area, under the control of one nation, culture or ethnic group, he is a mobile God, permeating all the spaces and making at least a part of His presence felt in every culture and religion.

The gospel in Bunyore existed long before Christianity not only because of the origin of the Banyore people as stated earlier, but also because Christianity was reserved in advance in the symbols and images of the Banyore people. These are the elements that came to be revealed and later written when Christianity came. The rituals and ceremonies, feasts and fasts exposes the unwritten gospel

of these people and once discovered and not down trodden it offers a great foundation to the establishment of Christianity, as it did in Bunyore. Dialogue is a tool that gives Orthodoxy and the Church as a whole its totality, identity, in a given culture at a given time in a given space hence leading to guiltless evangelisation and sincere mission in mind, body and soul.

When arriving in a new culture, the gospel message is received, interpreted and communicated differently without compromising the salvific message through Jesus Christ. Dialogue does not seek uniformity and conformity, instead the pursuing of uniformity and conformity leads to breaking away and forming independent churches. The dialogue is of culture to gospel and gospel to culture, the gospel recognises the presence and power of God in the culture, and also the culture takes out its ethnic pride and recognises within the gospel (Church) hopes and visions concerning life, hence accepting the Christian message as the life giver and transformer. The gospel reminds the culture of the kingdom of God and challenges it to free itself (culture) from those elements of corruption and death through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen this miracle happen in Kenya where the Orthodox Church in Bunyore is unique with indigenous expressions yet still in line with Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition. Orthodox services and practices are not looked upon as foreign any more but they have been internalised by local Christians. An example is that in many places during the service, worshippers cannot sing the service without the books, but in Kenya especially the Bunyore Orthodox Christians can chant and sing the entire two hour Orthros (Morning service proceeding liturgy)

and Divine Liturgy with no service books, and every one enjoys participating. This joy and pride for the Orthodox prayers that seems to be very difficult yet sung from memory by even the uneducated in Bunyore is a sign of how this faith has incarnated itself and dialogued with the lives of the people.

While the church dialogues, it does not temper its relation with apostolicity, catholicity and holiness of the entire Church; it does it in a careful way so that it remains a family of all the other Orthodox families in the world. This kind of preservation appealed to the Banyore people who respect the community's spirit and support the connection with the past and present through ancestors, and those yet to be born. Whoever cuts himself or herself off from this tradition is considered an outcast, and loses even the privilege of a decent burial and other important ceremonies.

Though the Church contains the absolute truth it always views the faith as a dynamic force whose story still unfolds age by age. In the New Testament the people of Israel always expected that God would do some thing new every time and season, this kept them praying and expecting (Isaiah 43:19). In the New Testament Jesus tells his listeners about more things to come about him revealed to them by the Father through the Holy Spirit (John 16: 12-13). In the book of Acts the Jewish Christians, who were conservative, expected every Christian to be a Jew and if not to get circumcised as the Jews law required before becoming a Christian, but the response at the Council of Jerusalem in AD 49 Gentiles had a different view on this and refused to be circumcised for it was not a Christian custom but a Jewish ethnic custom. They wanted to be Christian

gentiles not Jewish Gentiles (Acts 15:28).

Jesus himself was open to diverse cultures and dialogued with them in a diverse way, he responded to new situations in new ways, he used different parables and stories in response to different situations, and so the Church has continued this tradition for the last two thousand years as a sign of God's presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit.

As Clapsis (2000:16) puts it, the Orthodox teaching is that the missionaries do not bring God to any one but God is always present and is ahead of them in the local people. This does not therefore qualify us to assume that Jesus Christ is not necessary; he is the fullness of God. Caution is taken that this dialogue does not make Christianity like another cultural and religious system. For some truths are found even in other religions and cultures, but Jesus Christ remains a unique factor only in Christianity. To be able to recognise the difference between our Christian faith and other faiths and cultures, Orthodox teaching has some guidelines that our dialogue should emphasise, the biblical story of God's relationship with the world as revealed in the birth, life, ministry, crucifixion death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ This is a universal reality that all Christians should accept as a constitutive and normative element of their identity expressed in remembrance, and proclamation.

The dialogue should not reduce the gospel to some thing else, for the gospel cannot be reduced just to what God has done for us through Jesus Christ, and His active involvement in the world through Jesus Christ but also it reveals the identity and unity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit with God, this truth has been

revealed and defined by the decisions of the ecumenical councils and synods.

The rule of faith, which gives us the main body of the truth, helps us to understand what the scripture says about God's activity in the world. This can be the unity of all Christians despite their diverse cultural, national, social and even doctrinal and denominational differences. The life of chastity and celebration at the Lord's supper, by which the community of believers united by Christ in the Holy Spirit experience sacramentally what the world will become in God's reign. This remains normative for every Orthodox Christian approaching an unorthodox culture. We dialogue yet we know where we stand, and what we believe.

Each cultural expression in the Christian faith must be unique while remaining bonded in the essential unity with all other expressions. The recognition of contextuality leads to a profound solidarity in faith, hope, and love, between the different expressions grounded in life, witness and teachings of the early Church (Clapsis 2000:164).

The apostolic faith is both transcultural and transhistorical in nature implying that the whole truth of the Christian story as it was understood and interpreted by the early Church continues to be relevant to all people regardless of their historical contexts.

Clapsis continues to narrate that contextual expression must continue to have the same orientation as apostolic and patristic tradition. It should relate to a life of worship, and lead all to doxology.

It should be noted that the community does not derive its identity from a

particular culture, but it is grounded upon the new heaven and new earth that God has promised to His people and made already active in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. It is the coming reign of God that challenges all cultures to open themselves to the renewing grace of God (Clapsis 2000:163).

Schmemmann (1979:195) adds that Christianity cannot arbitrarily be interpreted without reference to the history of which it is part, which acts as a caution that dialogue should not sideline the history of the Church, for the Church is a historical Church and is part of history, at the same time living the past and the future in the present.

It should be understood that the history of the Orthodox Church in mission lands took a diverse turn and style compared to that of Protestants and the West. This style of approach may have been what made the Orthodox mission, though small but powerful, in any land the Orthodox Church touched, it left an impact. In this context Schmemmann (1979:209) states that the Orthodox theology of mission looks at mission as a fruit of the total being of the Church and not a mere speciality for those who receive a particular missionary calling. The Orthodox Church sent assigned simple monks and clergy and lay people who with their simple life were able to identify with the local people and local cultures and as such let the faith be spread among the local people by the local people themselves. They always acted behind the scenes. That is why in most cases you will find the Orthodox Faith was projected, developed, and discovered by the local people themselves, though this does not imply there was not a missionary from outside, it confirms that trust was put in the local people who after learning

from the missionary, became a missionary to their own people hence playing a central role in mission. Sometimes some of the local people who had discovered the faith would then invite some missionaries from outside to teach them more.

When people become missionaries in their simple understanding, they look at the church as part of them hence this philosophy encourages them to grow strong day by day in the Church. With this spirit, the Orthodox Church has been regarded as non-missionary by some other faiths. For example, the Pentecostal Assembly Church of Bunyore, always have regarded the Orthodox Church as a dormant church. This is because Orthodox missionaries are the locals themselves, and in most cases Orthodox missionaries from other areas do a good job but behind the scenes, while in other churches like the Pentecostals, the missionaries always show off, they are always seen and heard more than the people they are evangelising.

Can a church whose life is centred almost exclusively on the liturgy and sacraments, whose spirituality is primarily mystical and ascetically, be at the same time missional and in dialogue with other churches? Yes!

The Orthodox Church looks at the church as a God-created and God-given reality, the presence of Christ's life, the manifestation of the new "aeon" of the Holy Spirit. The Church is a divine gift that compels our response to be in an appreciative way, as a gift it needs to be extended to all and for all. Its purpose is to reveal and manifest, actualise in this world the 'eschaton' and the ultimate reality of salvation and redemption and this way we say that the Orthodox Church is very missional and has been successful in its endeavour for mission, not

looking for quantity but quality.

The Orthodox success in mission is not based on numbers but on the quality of spirituality it has given to those around it, the kind of witness it has left for those around, both those who have converted and those who have chosen to witness this in their own churches, homes, faiths. We have even Protestants who have come across the Orthodox faith and while in their denominations, have been influenced by Orthodoxy and become a very good Protestant, or Catholic Christian.

Our mission is not to create a mentality that we come to the Orthodox Church to be a good and spiritual Christian, but with what we already are and have, can even influence those around you. Another practical aspect is that even when Orthodoxy provides the basic material needs for the needy, it does not do so for only those who are its own members the Church encourages help for everyone in need irrespective of what religion, creed, race he or she is and she or he can go to her own Church, faith, religion and thank God from there. This has given the Orthodox faith a good name and caused many to admire Orthodoxy in Bunyore, it has also enabled it to coexist with other denominations without any suspicion of sheep stealing (theological and missional vandalism). At this point I will be quick to point out that Orthodox Church in Bunyore being part of the worldwide Eastern Orthodox family, believes in ecumenical movement and dialogue, coexistence with other faiths and religions. The ecumenical spirit which is found within the Orthodox Church in the World Council of Churches, in the All African Conference of Churches, exists in Bunyore, and there is a proper reconciliation between the

Orthodox family Church in Bunyore, and other Churches, other eligions and with the local culture.

Both churches have stepped up when necessary to condemn some of the cultural practices that seems oppressive and un christian. For example polygamy is not accepted at all levels, wife inheritance, rules that seems to degrade women and children as properties of the man subject to his mercy, and even now we have women chiefs and assistant chiefs a position before could not be held by a woman. Women can inherit tfrom their parents especially when they are not married but even when they are married. All children are treated the same girls are just as important as boys. these are just but just few examples of what has been done on the side of reconciliation.

As the Kingdom, God communicates and is communicated to men. The inseparability of the church visible and the church invisible is the criterion that unites us all to God. It is also the response to our divine gift that increases our growth in faith, love, knowledge and communion. This response is in two parts: first God-centred where, according to St. Seraphim of Sarov the church's sanctification and growth of both individual and community, by the acquisition of the Holy Spirit as an ultimate goal of the Christian life (St Seraphim of Sarov died 1836). It includes the slow transformation of the old Adam into the new one, restoration of man's beauty lost in sin, it is also a slow victory over the demonic powers of the world, thus slowly leading us to becoming partakers of God's Kingdom.

Christian life and ministry is mystical in nature, hidden with Christ in God

expressed through monasticism as an expression of the belongingness in the world to come (Schmemmann 1979: 213).

Secondly, it is man or world centred, which gives us the notion of understanding the Church as a being left in the world in its time, space, history, with a specific task or mission. The Church is fullness and its home is in heaven. This fullness is given to the world as its salvation and redemption. Its eschatological nature is not in opposition to the world 'passé' but instead it is the affirmation and acceptance of the world as an object of divine love (God's love to the world), which becomes the Church's mission into the world.

From the above we can see that the Orthodox Church from antiquity has never mirrored itself as a self-centred but as a missionary community, whose purpose is salvation not from the world but of the world. Therefore the Church's sacraments make it possible for the church's mission (Schmemmann 1979:215). These are the two most important criteria that every Orthodox missionary bases on when in every culture.

Orthodoxy understands that nothing can be added to the Church as its fullness is Christ himself, on the other way, Orthodoxy accepts that the manifestation and communication of this fullness constitutes the very life of the church and its mission. It is the mission that gives the Church its real significance and to history its meaning. It is mission that gives human response in the Church its validity hence making us real co-workers in the work of Christ (Schmemmann 1979:214).

thus we look at ourselves not as experts in mission but co-workers with those we

have been sent to.

The relation between the Church as the fullness and Church as mission is the Eucharist, which acts as the central act in the church's liturgy (work of the people) offered for all and on behalf of all. This understanding, that whatever we do, we not only offer for ourselves and those who belong to us but for all and on behalf of all irrespective of their religious, cultural or racial affiliation, upon this principle we base our stand on dialogue. This includes the reconciliation of the whole creation with God, sacrifice of the whole world to God and intercession of the world to God (Schmemmann 1979:215).

After receiving and seeing the true light as the hymn at the end of our Divine Liturgy says, we are called upon to depart and go outside the Church in peace to proclaim this true light and peace we have received. Departing in peace and taking this peace to the world is the mission of every Christian, which we call the Liturgy after the Liturgy, and Eucharist of the Eucharist this is why we say that our mission is based and rooted in the Eucharist for without it, we count ourselves as having nothing to offer and witness. This kind of theology teaches that the Eucharist opens the Church into mission and dialogue. Below I will briefly state and explain some of the Orthodox objectives for mission within which we have dialogue with other cultures.

The object of mission is man and the world. This means that we do not look at man alone as a religious being in isolation from the Cosmos and also we do not see the world as an entity of which man would be nothing but part. However man comes first as an essential object of mission and dialogue thus is making,

“Orthodox evangelism free from individualistic and spiritualistic connotation”(Schmemmann 1979:216).

The church as the sacrament of Christ is neither a society of converts nor an organisation to satisfy the religious needs of humanity. It is a new life that redeems the whole life of a total being. This wholeness of life is the world in which and by which humankind lives. Culture is a “complex of values, norms, and ideas by which man evaluates his life” (Schmemmann 1979:119). In Russia, Serbia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Greece, (these are some of the typical traditionally Orthodox countries) in some sense Orthodoxy is related to the culture, for example in Russia and Europe, the Orthodox Church has adapted itself to the Slavic cultural environment. And at the same time it is extremely in harmony with the Church’s worldview. This is because in times of suffering and persecution, the cultures of these countries were shaped and preserved by the Church from extinction, and also during the Church’s persecution, the culture preserved the faith that was endangered.

For countries in Africa (except Ethiopia) and in places like the USA it is different and in some ways makes it difficult for a missionary from the traditional Orthodox countries to respond and at the same time it in other ways makes it easy for him or her. The Church is called upon to be the real connection between the tradition of the church and real life, assuming the acceptance of the faith by the faithful. Real Church and real man in the Church, care about the situations of humankind from cultural to a social point of view.

From the apostles like St Paul and missionaries like St Nicholas of Japan,

Methodius and Cyril, missionaries to the Slavs, the mission of the Orthodox Church has actually involved dialogue with the culture and the self-identification of the missionary with those whom he has been sent to without the sacrifice of personal attachment and values. We have often witnessed the fact that the universal truth of the Church, with a naïve superiority complex, with arrogance and self-righteousness and with a childish certitude that everyone ought to share our own enthusiasm for the splendours of Byzantium (Schmemmann 1979:125). Schmemmann goes on to say that this kind of witness has been a weakness of the Orthodox mission to the non-Greek countries, and has also limited Orthodox mission abroad to the immigrants from the traditional Orthodox countries without keeping in touch with the local people. This will be elaborated on in the theme of ethnicity and culture, its hindrance and promotion of dialogue

The great obstacle for Orthodoxy to be accepted in many spheres of its mission abroad has not been its theology but the provincialism of ethnicity, human pride and self-righteousness, and complete lack of humility. On the contrary self-criticism and humility are the very essence of the Orthodox mystical and missiological theology of dialogue with the different cultures it has found itself a part of.

There is a great difference between being proud of Christ and being proud of Orthodoxy for the latter denies us the doors for humility hence the truth that we preach is shattered. In order to dialogue with culture and promote our mission, Schmemmann (1979: 125), says that we are called upon to transcend the self righteous spirit which is very alien to Orthodox theology but without denying the

genuine value of our Orthodox cultural and spiritual heritage, open ourselves towards others and their cultures, making our own whatever in it “is True” whatever is honourable, whatever is pure, whatever is just, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious (Philippians 4:8).

The Orthodox dialogue with other cultures, which actually is the core meaning of its mission, emphasises the Truth as the only genuine ground for our dialogue and real openness to search for religious and peaceful coexistence not actually conversion and to be obedient and open to all the Truth wherever it is found (Schmemmann 1979:125).

The Orthodox theology of dialogue with other cultures is always prophetic in that it not only announces future events but also reminds the people of the culture of their true mission that involves the denial of their betrayals of the divine will.

Having been nurtured in the lands where the Orthodox faith has been faced with occupations from military and atheistic regimes, it gets a clear understanding of the suffering people whose main survival and understanding includes being listened to, appreciated and loved.

The other success also lies on the hierarchical connection with the real needs of the people like spiritual and material needs. The connection of the hierarchy who are also missionaries, with missionaries, both lay and clergy, and lay people promoted such as, Bishops George (Arthur) Gathuna of Nitria, the first local bishop of Kenya, Spartas (Christophoros) the first local bishop from Uganda, is evidence of Orthodox dialogue in the mission field.

It should be realised that the Orthodox effort to dialogue with other cultures particularly the Banyore culture, was not and has not been to make the Orthodox faith a majority Christian faith in the region, show off with its attachment to the few ancient and colourful customs, this is not the duty of the missionary. It goes deeper than this triumphalism to witnessing the real faith and not a denomination.

As I have analysed the Orthodox theology of mission and dialogue and how it has helped it to fit in every culture it has succeeded without losing its identity and goal, we may have discovered that there exists a mutual understanding between the Orthodox faith and every culture it has evangelised, this has nurtured Orthodoxy as a faith and strengthened its relationship to the world, though being in the world but not of it.

As mentioned earlier, at times Orthodoxy has been stuck in the past without a proper relationship of the past to the present, at times its power to transform and save has been diminished. However, this behaviour is not the theology of Orthodoxy, it is an innovation invented, as Schmemmann states, it is one thing to rediscover the fathers and their teaching and vision and it is another thing to relate their vision to a concrete life, shaped and conditioned by a totally different vision. The latter is what the Orthodox preservation of the teachings of the fathers on mission is and it is the one that makes the fathers relevant to the needs and challenges of mission in contemporary society (Schmemmann 1979:127).

The Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church should be presented as a living element in operation. The fathers by their theology exercised, transformed and

Christianised the world and through this they opposed any culture that opposed or went against the gospel. Orthodoxy's progressive theology of mission in relation to the fathers as the first missiologists does not look at the fathers as thinkers, working concepts and ideas as an elaboration of a self contained and self-explanatory system. It is therefore inappropriate to quote the fathers for the formal justification of ideas, affirmations and even justification of theologies whose affirmation and argument may have nothing to do with the Orthodox faith and its mission to the world.

In relation to culture that is also representative of world, holy fathers looked at the church as an experience. This experience is the source but also the end to which theology bears witness, whose reality, whose transforming and saving power it proclaims, announces, reveals and defends (Schmemmann 1979:20).

The Church fathers, as missionaries and experts in dialogue with other cultures, did and do not theologise about the Church, since according to them the Church is not an object to be studied and investigated but a subject, the reality that makes it possible to know God and in Him man and creation will know Truth and reality. In the dialogue with culture, they use philosophical and cultural categories of the world which surrounds them and of which they are an integral part. They speak the language of the time.

This is the Orthodox position on its mission to other regions and cultures which involves a considerable dialogue, which also formed a great part of the Orthodox establishment in Bunyore. A combination of all the above Orthodox theological principles have contributed to the successful dialogue which has produced an

acceptance of the Orthodox faith among the Banyore people, and the pride of those Banyore people who are Orthodox and with this the future is bright. With its preserved teachings from Christ through his apostles, through his holy fathers, saints and holy mothers of the Orthodox mission and relation to other cultures it is very sound and controlled, we do not invent any thing for dialogue for everything had been set for us two thousand years ago when the Church came into existence.

Orthodox theology appreciates culture, and every aspect of the Bible message is portrayed in this context. An example is seen on the depiction and understanding of saints. Their icons are depicted in their context; they are dressed in the clothing of their world of their culture. This as Fr Dr Fitzgerald narrates, helps us in understand that there are people who lived in a particular time in a particular culture, hence underscoring the fact that the living God was and is still at work in the saints' lives in particular cultures and places (Clapsis2004: 139).

The true fact is that every culture can produce saints, and that saints are just like us though perfected in faith and served God in the midst of their synergy with circumstances that existed around the lives of their time. They were not disconnected from culture, hence leaving us with a moral obligation that in our effort to dialogue with culture Christianity should be spread in every place in every language. Bearing in mind that the Church has a wider and deeper wisdom than our local ethnic parish, we cannot take with us everywhere we go our ethnic mentality and ideologies and impose them on people who do not understand them or who may find them irrelevant based on the circumstances surrounding

them.

This kind of mentality leads to fear and resentment from those who feel that their culture is being threatened by a new culture in the name of religion.

The Church is a community of faith that brings together persons from diverse cultures, nations and races, however, it should not be reduced to just an ethnic club or as a multinational business organisation (Clapsis 2004:140, also see 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 2: 22).

Our identities such as our race and nationality are not destroyed by our relationship with Christ but because race and nationality are a part of our identity they express our deepest relationship with Christ. Once transfigured through Christ, they contribute to our salvation. Whenever, for one reason or another the God-centeredness and identity of one is not recognised then dialogue ceases to exist; Christianity becomes an invasion and catastrophe to the individual and to the community as a whole.

I may seem to be saying that culture and Christianity are synonymous, they are not, Christianity is above culture, yet for it to find its roots within culture, it has to enter that culture, transform it, carefully eradicating what is unbecoming and using what seems compatible to enhance its purpose of salvation to the people belonging to that very culture. There is no other way that the message of Christ can be internalized within the local people without this way which as this thesis states dialogue with Culture, culture makes people and so to reach them we have to go through their culture rather than imposing ours.

A human being as the image of God has dignity and a value that is because of, but does not depend on, ethnic identity, moral purity, physical attributes or fulfilment of religious laws. This argument demonstrates an equality between the missionary and the evangelised, hence creating a sound basis for dialogue.

Though ethnicity is part of us, 'ethnicism' has been condemned especially by the ecumenical movement and its misuse as a measure to judge how correct or how wrong a Christian might be, has been seen as barbaric. Below I quote the statement; " any form of national egotism whereby the love of one's own people leads to suppression of other nationalities or national minorities, or the failure to respect and appreciate the gifts of other people is sin and rebellion against God, who is the creator and Lord of all peoples" George Tsetsis says (in Clapsis 2004:149).

In conclusion of this section there are several yet related definitions of the term ethnicity that can be found from several scholars and theologians.

According to G. Tsetsis (in Clapsis 2004:149), ethnicity and nationalism overlap because they both come from the word '**Ethnos**' literally meaning '**nation**'.

Nationality corresponds with '**ethnikotes**' nationalism corresponds with '**ethnikismos**' while ethnicity corresponds with '**ethnismos**. He goes further to expose other scholars and ethicists who have tried to define the term.

Schermerhon Rochard (Clapsis 2004:149) in a pioneer study of ethnic relations refers to an ethnic group as a collective within a large society, with common ancestry, common memory of a historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as an epitome of their peoplehood, e.g. kinship

patterns, physical continuity, language, nationality, consciousness of kin among members of the group'

Joshua Fishman (Clapsis 2004:149) brings out ethnicity as a kinship phenomenon and continuity within self and within those who share an intergenerational common link from generation to generation, from past to present from ancestors to the future.

Fredrick Bath (Clapsis 2004:149) explicates an ethnic group as a population that is largely biological, self perpetuating, that shares fundamental cultural values, and has a membership which identifies itself as constituting a category distinguished from other categories of people.

Steve Fenton (Clapsis 2004:149) defines ethnicity as a social phenomenon embedded in social, political and economic structures that form an important element of both.

The international relation dictionary defines a nation as a social group that shares a common ideology, common institutions, common customs, sense of homogeneity, sense of being associated with a certain territory considered to be peculiarly its own while Ernest Renan defines a nation as that grounded into common history, language, and culture. It denotes a soul, spiritual principle, the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion.

Joseph Stalin defined a nation as a historically constituted community of people and not a tribal or racial entity. A community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, psychological make up manifested

into a common culture. Clifford Geertz drives this further by stating that another basic component of a nation includes religion and custom (Clapsis 2004:149).⁹

It may be summarised that ethnicity may include a collective group's consciousness that is defined by reference to a configuration of elements like language, homeland, descent, religion and values. However, religion is a key factor that shapes the identity and character of a community on the basis of doctrines, rituals, code of behaviours, and ethical values. This sums up what culture is. In this case I know you will agree with me that we cannot avoid ethnicity and nationalism when we talk about, culture and religion or culture and Orthodoxy, or we cannot avoid nationality and ethnicity, when we talk about people their culture and religion and this is why I deemed it necessary to have a specific section discussing ethnicity and nationality. I may be right to say that violating one's ethnos may be violating one's right to live at the expense of religion, striking a balance may be the secret behind our success in mission as a Church.

Personal conclusion

We have to understand, as stated earlier, that although ethnicity has been misused to an extent, its great role in the penetration of Christianity among gentile communities has diminished, it remains a necessary evil that we cannot avoid when talking about Christian mission to the local populations of Africa and elsewhere. The message is received within an ethnic community, which

⁹ Clapsis has been quoted several times continuously because in his book of 2004, he has presentations of different modern scholars who participated and contributed in the conference

assimilates and receives it ethnically.

The Banyore received Orthodoxy as an Ethnic group or clan then as a nation.

Ethnicity helps us to receive Christianity as our own yet it does not restrict us from humility or tempt us to the sin of pride believing that we are unique, it rather allows us to be open, through the message of Christ to other ethnic groups which enables us to realise that we are just another ethnic group among other ethnic groups but in our diversity we can form one big Christian ethnic group.

The Orthodox people saw themselves as Banyore and then as Kenyans that is why they rushed to translate the service into their own languages using their own syntaxes.

regarding the issue of Ethnicity. Their different papers have been compiled by Clapsis. So he is just not quoting them but compiled all they said.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Orthodox faith and culture

Since the coming of Christianity, actually at the time of the Apostles after the Ascension, there arose a confusion of whether becoming a Christian meant forsaking one's own culture. This dilemma is addressed by St Paul in his speech that in Christ there is no Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised. However even after this, the quest continued in the following centuries of Christianity's survival.

The term Orthodox faith and culture a subtitle related to this discussion of dialogue and culture, has raised a lot of historical questions in regard to the Orthodox faith and its relation to local cultures. This is simply due to the early Orthodox Church's attitude towards local cultures that this question arose. We will not dwell at large on the tensions that may have existed but rather on how those tensions came to be healed and by this attitude of healing Orthodoxy thrived in Bunyore.

The challenge of the Orthodox faith and how it may relate to culture is not a present phenomenon but something that has grown from the past, it was a burning issue in the early church as well. Currently we may experience part of it when sometimes some of us due to human weakness tend to associate Christianity with ethnicity or language, but again this is not a thing that emerged in the present. There was the declaration from St Paul, that Christianity is not about race and culture and many centuries later, Tertullian expressed that Athens had nothing to do with Jerusalem. This gives us a clear example of the

tension and the fear that arose when Christianity spread its wings beyond the Palestinian borders to the Greco-Roman world, with a different worldview and culture.

During this time Christianity had quickly spread in to this new world of the so called Gentiles whose very thought and existence was permeated with polytheism and by a system whose thinking has left a great opportunity for metaphysical speculation (Vrame et al 2003:3).

As the polytheism and relative freedom was the context of the new world (Greco-Roman) in which Christianity had found itself, it also posed a threat to the Hebraic culture of monotheism in which Christianity had been born. Another tension came from the Hebraic religious foundation and that was the emphasis on the superiority of divine revelation and prophets versus the Greco-Roman emphasis on the freely exercised logic of human mind, otherwise philosophy.

This created a strong tradition of pagan literature and learning as antithetical to the Christian tradition. This should not be seen as a surprise because there had been a similar resentment from many Christians who saw it as inappropriate to admit human figures such as icons in Christian decorative arts even though this came to be accepted later on. According to Vrame et al (2003:4), the tradition of Christian hatred of pagan culture was very strong among the Orthodox Christian monastic communities who are seen as the true custodians of Orthodox Christian purity. For example St John Psychaites a 9th, century hagiographer, says that there is no need for knowledge of the agreement of words, phrases and details of language (grammar). He goes on to state that he cannot lose himself in

grammatical minutiae or learning the nonsense of Homer. According to him, there is no profit in all this pagan learning and tradition as they are both fictions and satanic inventions. He concludes by stating that he has no need of the lies of the orators about things like astronomy, arithmetic and geometry, which were considered among the many other pagan practices of the time (Vrame et al 2003:4).

There was also at that time the belief among Christians that philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and others went straight to hell as they were seen as pagans who abandoned Christ. A certain monk by the name of Constantine was one of the pioneers of this idea, that philosophers were people who with their ideals and teachings belonged to the devil (Vrame et al 2003: 4).

Things were not easy for local cultures of both the Greeks and the Romans in the early years of Christianity. The ancient Greek and Roman systems of education (egkyklios paideia) and thought were indiscriminately attacked by many of the Byzantine Empire churchmen. We can cite an example at the very end of the Byzantine Empire when Patriarch Genadios Scholarios burned the works of Pletho in which Pletho had laid out a plan to revive pagan religion among the Greeks. Parallel to this anti-Hellenism within the Orthodox Church of the time, there also came a very powerful current of what I can call “ the sympathisers or fiends of Hellenism” (Philhellenism) which on the contrary promoted and expressed a great love and exercise of ancient Greek literature and education (Vrame et al 2003:5).

This new movement opened the way for the Church to start looking differently at

local Greek cultures and to find a way of accommodating it rather than radically opposing it. This helped to promote the mission of salvation to which the Church is called for and to promote unity among its members who otherwise might have been divided with some supporting Hellenism.

By the end of the 4th century, the fathers of the Orthodox Church met to discuss the challenge of the contemporary culture as it had seemed inevitable. In their meeting they decided to accommodate the older Greek pagan culture in their own Judeo-Christian culture. In so doing they found a working compromise which allowed the co-existence of both in varying degrees but which at the same time greatly changed both traditions within Byzantine civilisation. This gave birth to what we can now call Christianity and culture or dialogue of faith and culture.

One of the decisions taken was to present the Christian message, which though seen as a pagan language, in the language of the people. It was also the language that carried along with it the entire philosophical civilisation (see also Vrame et al 2003:6). This approach became of much benefit for the church itself and its theology. For example the apologists from the School of Alexandria which as the heir to the tradition of Hellenic scholarship allied to the Greek philological and interpretative scholarship helped in the formulation of Christian dogma and holy texts and ends with what we can call, Christian humanism of the Cappadocian fathers (Vrame et al 2003:6).

The Cappadocians, especially Basil the Great, became the shapers and advocates of this initiative among the flock.

Basil in addressing young children about learning pagan literature says;” O

children, we do not consider any human life to be of any value, nor is it good. For its utility is limited to this period of life. Moreover we do not consider great or desirable bodily strength, beauty, size honours, not even imperial rule itself, or indeed any other human matters, nor do we esteem those who possess them. For we go far beyond these things in our hopes and we make all our preparations for another life. That which is of advantage to us in this (other life) we say it is necessary to love and to pursue with all our strength and that we should dispose of all those things which do not lead to that other life". He continues; (Vrame et al 2003:6.) "Accordingly we can profit from pagan literature according to the image of the bee. For they (bees) neither alight on all flowers, nor do they attempt to take away everything from those flowers on which they do alight, but having taken away whatever is correct for their labour, they bid farewell to the rest." (Vrame et al 2003:11).

Basil's intention here is to let his listeners know that there are also good elements within the local culture and literature of the Greeks which should be taken and put into use for the salvation and even in preparation of being a good Christian. In order to study the Holy Mysteries, he recommends that maturity and preparatory education are needed and so one, especially his audience the youth, must begin with studying non-religious writings. He goes further to actually direct them on how to select what is best for them.

St Basil gives an example of Moses who learned the science of the Egyptians before embarking upon the contemplation of God, Daniel who learned the wisdom of the Chaldeans before devoting himself to divine teaching.

He concludes by comparing some of the pagan philosophies with Christianity and also tries to give similarities. He proves that not all pagan philosophy was satanic.

He says that Socrates was physically and violently beaten about the face by a drunkard. The philosopher did not resist the drunk, but allowed him to proceed with his violence. After having allowed the inebriated assailant to transform his face, Socrates satisfied himself merely by placing a sign to his forehead, much as sculptors did on their statues, to identify who 'sculpted me'. The end of the story explains that this action of Socrates, who was a pagan philosopher, is parallel to the biblical statement of turning the other cheek (Vrame et al 2003: 11).

Conclusion

We learn that as we will see and have seen so far that the Orthodox encounter as with Orthodoxy in Bunyore and other areas outside of the Judeo-Graeco Roman regions was faced with the same cultural dilemmas which led to the church collectively finding away to enable then to evangelise and this way was to dialogue with the culture it found itself in and this includes Banyore culture and ofcourse the formation of a movement through which all the churches including Orthodox could come together to confront this challenge. This movement is widely known as the ecumenical movement. Through this movement all the churches with their particularity come together and while retaining their own uniqueness find ways to confront common issues including cultural dilemmas that I had mentioned before.

In order to arrive at the principal point of real inter-religious, and cultural dialogue, there should be an element of cultural symbiosis begotten by mutual trust and readiness to compromise, in which people belonging to a number of different desperate worlds and wish to be excluded from none. The embracing of the local and religious culture for example in Bunyore by the Orthodox missionaries mentioned in the introduction, bridged humans from isolation to intimacy. It is only through this experience that we can understand what according to St Paul is truly human, goodness, beauty, wonder and joy, civility and justice, truth and unity, love and compassion (Colossians 3:12-15) without which there can be no harmony between indigenous and Christian culture which may be referred to as, "Cultural Aeropause of Hope" (Prior -2002: 210).

Therefore as God's chosen people, Holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have with against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect family. Let the Peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace and be thankful (Col:3:12-15).

Threatened local cultures close upon themselves, withdrawing from the encroaching domination and exploitation from outside in a vain attempt to avoid control by others; this begets ethnicity, creation of a sub-culture of fear, coercion and fascism. At large these have been brought by the missionaries' attempt to evangelise areas outside of their sphere.

The threat of a minority culture or an oppressed majority culture becomes a state of mental isolation and cultural encapsulation. The outcome is losing flexibility and compassionate humanity for the victims, leading to aggressiveness and brutality. A good example is illustrated by Githieya, it may be that the war between the missionaries and local people in Kenya led to the formation of African Independent Churches (AICs) from which the Orthodox Church was formed.

Through this conflict there always comes a tendency of religious fanaticism and a frantic scramble staking a claim in society through status, achievements and possessions both cumulating in despair. Without a true sense of belonging, culture becomes empty and pointless, and the gospel becomes a religious colonialism, despotism and imperialism and cultural grabbing hence individuals and the community becomes hurt and damaged making it difficult to evangelise the true gospel already distorted by the above mentioned discrepancies.

. The Orthodox faith among the Banyore after its introduction sunk into the very roots of Banyore cultural values especially its liturgical music, which assumed local tones.

Local cosmic cultures are full of potent spiritual infrastructures found in living myths, stories (Narratives), poems, dances, riddles, tongue twisters patterns and paradigms that inspire its adherents. Refusing to dialogue with them is a direct slap in the face to the local people, after which no real evangelisation can take place. Such local values emphasise a thriving group which may be the Orthodox understanding of the ecclesia as the body of Christ, where the whole is united

and kept together, work together through a common participation in the sacraments and frequent participation in the Eucharist. As a tribe is united by one chief, and values plus goal, church members are united by one baptism, one chief who is God expressed in the trinity.

An individual can thrive alone outside of the community of believers and that is why we have communal prayers, the same applies in Banyore community values where one cannot thrive alone outside of the society, of course existence outside of the community is considered as a curse in Banyore cultural values and as a protest, anathema, excommunication in the church setting. It is only through dialogue that such things can be discovered.

To thrive in a group is strengthened by a cooperative spirit among the tribal members, which when dialogues with the Orthodox praxis and theology, may be unity and cooperation through the Eucharistic community of baptised Christians, of both the triumphant and militant church, united in "koinonia" of faith and working together towards salvation. The "soteriology" of the church is realised in the communal prayers, the way the cultural "soteriology" is found by the unity of the tribe, of both living and departed members.

The local values are also sensitive to the welfare of others with a vibrant civil society at village level (Amataala in Lunyore and Miji in Swahili) under a head man (Omwami, Liku'ru) through dialogue one will realise the same characteristic within the Orthodox Christian community where the sense of service (Diaconal) and love (Agape) at a local church under Christ represented by the Bishop (Episcopos). The small scale decentralised society represent the local church

centred around the Bishop as Saint Ignatius (Quasten 1997: 66-68) said that, where there is no Bishop, there is no church, I can take this to mean that a local tribe without the ruler or king is not a full tribe or a tribe, for the king becomes the centre.

The Banyore local culture has unlimited and an unrestricted ability to adapt to changing exigencies and absorbing the incoming creative culture from outside. Dialogue is possible when we notice what is human among other cultures and religions, be genuinely open to transcendent. The truth remains that antireligious dialogue has been bruised by mono-religious monologue by which the local cultures, true Christian spiritual culture have been thwarted by systematic marginalisation of the onslaught of neoliberal globalisation (MacDonaldisation). The result of this neoliberal globalisation has had a devastating impact on the religious cultures, daily life, every day traditions, social role, and organisation. This has also impacted upon their deepest human values religious significance, upon their ethos and worldview.

A global materialistic world, is threshing away the spiritual, moral, compassionate and composite culture of both Banyore and Orthodox culture. Through dialogue for example between the Banyore and the Orthodox faith, the fight against the negative impact of globalisation will be won. The neo-capitalistic culture is turning people and nature into instruments of the global market place, even African mission has become a matter of global place, which states a reason why Christianity is not gaining deep roots in some areas (Prior 2002: 211).

If we believe that our life on earth is a pilgrimage, we have a responsibility to

prepare through dialogue, a better world for our children and great, great grand children. We always recall that we are just walking in an intertwining of multiple streams of ancestry, memory, shadow and light. We experience the continuity while reaching out to the future, we need not cling to a fabled past except for the apostolic past rooted in the *evangelion* as expressed by the early Christians, martyrs and Holy fathers and mothers who lived the gospel within the multicultural communities of their time, nor reject an unassimilated Holy Tradition. In this way, we are able to face our vulnerability, fragility and limitations. There is a great poignancy and pathos when we rediscover the riches of our faith in the depth of another's' tradition, and this is the sweetness of dialogue with culture.

It is with this understanding of the Holy Tradition (the past), that Orthodox missionaries like Fr. Gathuna were able to integrate the Banyore past in preparation for the future. The dialogue with the Banyore past shaped the present and the future of Orthodoxy as well as the Banyore culture we can see today.

Dialogue leads us to the fact that truth is hospitable to differences, and genuine faith comes out of a transparent conversation between self and the other. The true self of a Christian is seen through embracing others, and openness to other cultures. This creates a common sense of creating contrasting cultures, where human values have a space to breathe. The history of the many missions set up in Kenya, especially in Bunyore, will indicate that African culture was denied a space to breath and this lead to the forceful seeking and recovery of this lost freedom. Dialogue helps us to listen to imaginative local suggestions, artistic

images, and poetic statements as a way that leads us back to the truth and a wonderful adventure of discovery.

In response to the above, the Bunyore mission was unique in the sense that it was started by Africans from the same country but a slightly different culture. The openness of Fr. Gathuna, who was a Kikuyu, to the Banyore culture, openness of Obadiah, who was a Ugandan, to the Banyore culture and many other missionaries that came to Bunyore cleared the way for dialogue and acceptance not only of the missionaries mentioned but also of their culture and vice versa. I recall hearing some members from Bunyore who visited Kiambu (Gathuna's province) chanting the trisagion in Kikuyu and Kikuyus could sing Lord have Mercy in Lunyore hence creating what I can refer to harmonious expression and demonstration Orthodoxy, Banyore and Kikuyu cultures.

This openness reflects an ability to be a living faith community, rooted in tradition while remaining open to a contemporary environment through evolving languages to articulate experience, feelings and life itself. It is true that to affirm the local culture which is restless until it rests in the divine, that it is only by embracing it that it will be able to find rest in the divine and this is a challenge for any missionary. With this comes a divine restlessness that brings forth a continual longing and struggle to meet Christ. We have to create this longing by dialoguing with culture. The Church without dialogue loses its contact with one another and the wider environment, natural, cultural and religious gradually losing depth and diversity in presence. What remains of such a Church is just a convention of rituals and rhetoric. Faith becomes culture and culture is ensiled in

faith in four dimensions of work, power, imagination and religious dialogue.

Culture is most expressive and demonstrative; it is always at play, shaping human kind's deepest hopes and 'thauma' (wonder) and 'aesthetic' (beauty). It displays what people want and how they should achieve or receive it. This is why I feel that dialogue will pave the way to real spirituality. The dialogue between faith and culture can be successful if the receiving culture and the incoming faith have established identities. However, I cannot but point out that missiological arrogance, added to globalisation has undermined the establishment and encouragement of cultural identities. We have several identities some as indicated below:

It is also true that as missionaries being sent to foreign lands, we do not have any idea of what to expect from the people we are taking Christianity to, and therefore dialogue becomes an instrument appropriate to culture, its ethos, which at large expresses to us the mentality of the local community. It is this careful style that leads us to preparing an appropriate missiological syllabus not written on a paper but inscribed in our hearts and minds, one that cannot be erased by water or cannot be stolen.

When I arrived in South Africa several years ago as a missionary and posted to the township of Soshanguve in Tshwane, I had a western mentality not even a Kenya mentality. I had spent most of my time in America where things were run in a western way. I was used to typing all the announcements or in other words to prepare a church bulletin. This was the best way I thought I could be in contact with the people, however in the process I realised that people were leaving the

bulletins on the pews and only few had read them. I would at times become frustrated because of the time I had wasted as well as the paper and ink. My frustration was high although I did not complain. So one day I discussed this with my elder who told me that people want to hear me talk to them, they do not mind about language but they want interaction. They do not appreciate being sent letters and they particularly do not like a written sermon and so I changed and could announce after every service what I had to say and this made a great difference. I just had to have some one to translate for me.

My many years in the West had made me forget that even my Banyore culture is not a reading culture but an oral culture. Orthodoxy in Bunyore and in many areas in Africa was transmitted orally through teachings and stories and rituals.

I also realised that the South African people had a very rich culture, for example a very interesting and meaningful tradition regarding funerals where they had night vigils, in marriage like lobolo (dowry) payment and other rituals. I knew this because as a priest I could be invited to the night vigils, to the dowry negotiations and traditional weddings as well as the many other rituals that I attended. This closeness although it took me time to learn about them helped me to adjust, and to see the similarities between my own Banyore culture and South African culture (Which is diverse anyway) and Orthodox culture. Both cultures, though, took several routes, they had similarities such as, oral, rituals and the use of riddles and stories. Orthodox faith is not intellectual it revolves around stories about Jesus Christ, his followers and the saints, and it is because of these stories that people can relate to Christianity.

The question of dialogue is not limited to a priest or a missionary in the field but extends to the seminaries that nurture future missiologists and custodians of faith. Having the mission vision in mind, the seminaries, nurture the seminarians, and produce pastors and theologians as people of culture, who have rooted themselves in culture, and will be ready to reach out multi-religiously. I had explained in brief about my encounter with the Tswana tradition of marriage, burial etc and my involvement in them, brought me in contact not with Orthodox people alone but with people from other religions as well as other denominations. This is one of the ways we can reach out multi-religiously.

As Cardinal Arinze (Amato. 2003: 29-27) mentions, Christianity in African culture, its evangelisation and implantation succeeded because it presented in the correct manner, fulfilled the dreams and unconscious searching of the traditional religion. This traditional religion had for example prayers, names honouring God, Spirits and ancestors etc. Cardinal Arinze's point drives home the reason why many Africans especially the Banyore joined the Orthodox Church even though it had no political and material backing. Many Banyore found spiritual satisfaction in Orthodox prayers which was reflected in the celebration of the Eucharist and occasional ecclesiastical celebrations known as feasts. Unlike other missions such as the Church of God who were critical and arrogant. The Orthodox Church took a different approach, to be humble with its attitude, teachings and life to accommodate and dialogue with the Abanyole people, thus preparing fertile ground for deep rooting and thriving of the Christian message among them, and a deep inner spiritual transformation of the entire Banyore (see Amato 2003:29-

37).

The Church of God used to chase away polygamists and drunkards without teaching them. It did not allow them to step into the church. The Orthodox Church welcomed everyone with his or her baggage and through teachings and repentance they became full members of the Church, since Christ came for the lost (Conversation with the late Reader John Mabinda Khoyi: April 1995 at St Mathew Orthodox Church, Esabwali, Bunyore.)

Dialogue enabled the locals to learn that within in their culture, they have discovered what they have been looking for without realising it was there all the time and was brought to light by evangelisation and mission. Christ from this example is seen as the one who does not extinguish culture but instead brightens it, thus fulfilling what culture started and preserved. It is culture that preserved, fulfilled and sustained the religious and spiritual quest of the people. Previously, the same culture was revealed into Christ as fulfilled with hope, faith and protection. Christianity and Orthodoxy in particular has never been a threat to Banyore or even African culture, in general neither has Banyore culture been a threat to Orthodox Christianity.

The religion established by Jesus Christ over two thousand years ago fulfilled the deepest century old unconscious desires which St Paul calls the "Areopagus discovery". The caution is that although dialogue with culture is a sure way to mission, it does not indicate that traditional culture is superior to Christianity because Christianity reveals a supernatural God who exists in Trinity yet retains one nature, who incarnates and becomes one of us (John1: 1ff)" In the beginning

was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

The God who dwells among us, He died, rose and ascends into heaven after commanding evangelisation to the Apostles He had chosen who together with their successors had become pillars of faith. This God is greater than all, we cannot compare Him with our cultures. Dialogue, especially between Orthodoxy and Banyore culture, has led to the discovery that the Banyore people have a profound religious sense of sacred, of existence of Nyassaye (God), the creator and the Spiritual world. According to the late Elder (Village headman) Markos Omulama, he was present when Gathuna was visiting and he said that the interaction between Gathuna and the Banyore people helped him in particular to realise that Banyore culture though important, was not superior to God (Nyassaye), and that most of the traditions seems to have been passed down by Nyassaye through the ancestors for there was not such a great difference. He cited an example of the cleansing ceremony after birth, it is said it is almost the same as the after birth prayers of the Orthodox faith (Omulama 12/2000).

The reality of sin in its individual and social form is very much present in the unconsciousness of the Banyore people. We discover this through the dialogue with their rites of purification and expiation (Okhubiita, Okhwelwatsa nende okhusiiya.) As Christians insists on the purity and sacredness of marriage, importance of children, we find the same in the religious mind and practice of the indigenous people where they emphasis the importance of family, acceptance of life and children as the gifts of God (Abaana esihanwa sia Nyassaye). In Banyore

culture, the veneration of the ancestors as our pioneers in the other world, intercessors for the Superpower, respect for the elderly and the family and a strong sense of solidarity and community life (Amato 2003:42).

Life is considered as the matrix of traditional African values, it is sacred because it is received from on high, respected and developed hence putting the Banyore people in communion with history. In Banyore culture faith, morality and worship are the pillars of traditional religion, which is full of rituals (Emilukha) and found in rituals, feasts, stories, proverbs and conveyed through attitudes, customs and codes of conduct. Moral conduct is regarded as that which has been handed down from past generations (which fits in the Orthodox theology of apostolic succession) sanctioned by Wele Khakaba (God) through the spirits through the leaders and elders.²⁶

Religion should not be imposed but proposed as an expression of religious freedom of diversity. It should be a free response to God's call recognised by the conscience of the truth about the creator and the cosmos. Through dialogue it also ensured that minority religions are not threatened and those who belong to the religious majority are not to deny the religious minority the very freedom of religion that they claim from their co religionists in other countries where they are the minority, treating others, as we want them to do for us (Amato 2003:44).

The Banyore culture is still the possible space within which a human person (Abanyole) encounters Nyassaye (God). It is the cultural Nyassaye that provided the Banyore with the basic understanding of Orthodox theology and it is because of Nyassaye that they moved towards the Orthodox Church. This is the cultural

God that led them to discovering Orthodoxy as a safe haven and a place to feel at home. During the translation of the Bible into Lunyore, the name of God (Theos) remained Nyassaye. We cannot isolate culture from mission since culture is a language through which God has spoken or speaks to His people. It includes people's views of the world, history, experiences, values, hopes, aspiration and anxieties.

These are the foundational elements that provide a Munyore with the local inspiration and accommodation within society and faith in Jesus Christ, as the identity and the roots of every human being are found within culture. With this sense, any trial to uproot culture cripples and disarms the candidate who without these roots cannot discover the roots in Christianity hence creating what I may refer to as a spirituality of mass destruction rather than that of mass construction.

We can easily identify this by the mentality of Gathuna and Obadiah plus other missionaries who came to Bunyore. When they arrived in Bunyore to spread Orthodoxy, the first thing they realised was that there was an existence of consciousness in the Banyore people. This consciousness rested in their rituals, like circumcision, naming, marriage birth, and in the overall authority of the council of elders, also in poetry, songs, dance, worship, narratives, proverbs, dirges, riddles and the codes of conduct that bound every Munyore. To succeed these wise men capitalised on these elements as their guideline and in doing this they captured the attention of the Banyore people and this interest created a space for Orthodoxy. At this point Orthodoxy had passed the test of being the religion of the people and not of the government (colonial).

Selecting from the above, we come to our Prototype Jesus Christ who was a man from a culture, a fact that made him a man of culture besides being the Messiah. Both of his (Jesus') parents were Jews and brought up the young Jesus as a typical Jew, even while in Egypt as refugees, they did not forget their culture. Jesus spoke as a Jew, ate as a Jew, and observed the Jewish political, religious and social festivals and feasts. He did everything in accordance with Jewish tradition and culture. Some Pharisees and scribes who were opposed to his Messiahship identity did not in any way question his cultural identity (Christ's). In contrast, Christ was only counter-cultural to whatever was dehumanising within his own culture.²⁹

As a human Christ was a Jew, the community's faith in him assumed specific expressions from within its own culture, which is obviously different from the expressions in another area's culture. For example some of the Christian expressions in the church of Antioch in Syria were different from that of the Church of Jerusalem and Alexandria. This can be witnessed in the theology of the Theanthropy between the two schools of Alexandria and Antioch where one emphasised his divinity while the other emphasised his humanity. As Jacob Kavunkal would say there are life styles of worship, theology, structures and missions in every local area (Kavunakal 2002: 901-905).

This applied in Bunyore in such a coherent way that, even though it was introduced by people from other tribes i.e. Kikuyu and Baganda, it was actually received by the Banyore people and practised within the parameters local cultures, for example, liturgical music came had a unique tune which comprised

of both Byzantine and Banyore melodies all mingled together and so Banyore music is unique with a blend of official Byzantine and new local tunes and this has applied in every tribe in Kenya where Orthodoxy has reached. You will always learn something new in chanting at every local church you visit.

Orthodoxy has been embraced and now it is in the blood streams of the locals.

The foundation of the Church cannot be laid outside the character of dialogue because right from the beginning in Genesis God is involved in dialogue with all His people. After Adam and Eve fell, God dialogued with them, and from the dialogue we learn that it was not because of sin that they were expelled but because of their failure to acknowledge their mistake and repent. It was due to their pride, that each of them shifted the blame to each other. Christ in his mission of redemption did not impose his mission but engaged all his audience in dialogue.

The divine conception of the Theotokos (Mother of God) involved dialogue even though it was a direct order from God. God did not become angry or feel challenged when Mary (Theotokos) asked the Angel Gabriel who was sent to her and how this conception was to take place. God through the Angel Gabriel humbled Himself and explained to her the mystery and the uniqueness of her conception (Luke 1:26-38). The Holy Annunciation (Evangelismos) marks the beginning and departure points of mission.

It is our duty as followers of Christ to accept with question and wonder other cultures. The more we question the other cultures validity the more we should also be open to questions seeking our identity, validity and our sincerity as

missionaries and how mission is positively different from their local way of life (Matt: 28: 18-28).

According to Archbishop Anastasios¹⁰ of Albania, mission is a genetic material, a fixed element in DNA, a gift of grace organically fused to the Church.

Nourished as it is by the Eucharistic community and always renewed by the apostolic calling.

Based on my research of Bunyore Orthodox Christianity, and biblical texts such as the one just quoted in the previous paragraph, it is imperative that the mission of the Church should project its salvific message across multi-cultural, multi-ethnic spheres and the only way to reach this end safely is through dialogue. I remember that when Gathuna visited Bunyore as a missionary, he had to dance to the Banyore Esikuti (traditional drum) dance, eat omurele (Banyore special vegetables) share in the traditional beer, and through this common sharing, he had already demonstrated the Orthodox understanding of a Eucharistic community and this helped very much for both teaching and receiving the Eucharist itself among the converts. They had discovered that this was similar to the communion that they have when they are gathered around for traditional beer and drank from the same pot with straws (Fr Cosmas Akunda:2005:June).

While culture has been noted as an important factor that enriched the gospel mission among the indigenous regions, sources lament that the death of culture was not killed by the missionaries and people from the West as we are made to

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believe but by the local people themselves. Indigenous scholars killed their own culture, those who have been trained under Western influence upon returning to their native countries have become ambassadors of their European schools (Holter 2004: 2).

In support of Holter's statement, my findings in Bunyore say that, Orthodoxy thrived in Bunyore because it was planted by simple men like Fr. Gathuna, Obadiah among many others and of course some women like Jeridah Pwana. Also it was planted by those who were regarded as sinners like polygamists paramount chief Akhahukwa, the late John Apwoka among many. These people had less Western education and therefore we can say they had not been corrupted.

The Orthodox missionaries identified themselves with the Banyore people especially the poor, illiterate and sidelined etc, who were the majority and quickly this population saw something relevant to them and their culture in Orthodoxy and so Orthodoxy became there next home away from home. Orthodoxy may have thrived because besides being presented to the simple people by simple people it was also presented in a simple language and form (Theologian Lwabi Akunda 2006:July). Everywhere the Orthodoxy mission has been projected by simple monks, not men of influence, for example Father Cosmas in the Congo, Fr Sarantopoulos among the East African people and many others (Interview Archbishop Makarios of Kenya 2006: June).

At times, I find that as we rejoice in Western education and theology, today educated missionaries and theologians do not have the same zeal and spirit

these uneducated missionaries of the past had and that is why as much as we can see Orthodoxy growing in Bunyore, compared to those days it is not growing. We have many priests, if not all the priests, catechists and theologians who are well educated in Orthodox theology. Also presently we see the Church is financially more able yet this does not help compared to the time when the people could only contribute themselves and walk long distances yet despite the poverty Orthodoxy spread like fire. The following paragraph explains in brief the great rift between the theology and the daily spiritual and general needs of the ordinary people especially in Bunyore.

However this should not be construed that Orthodoxy is against theological education or academia but Orthodoxy becomes very worried if the learned cannot be able to be incarnated into the lives and needs of the ordinary people of all levels.

This kind of attitude portrayed by African scholars as outlined by Holter, has developed a great rift between academic reading of the Bible and the needs of the ordinary people. African socio-cultural concerns are not addressed or even reflected in this academic style of looking at the bible by scholars.

The Word of God, which emerged through history, is a divine response to the needs of human beings, it is enacted and formulated by them who have been involved in its dynamics. This has awarded the Word of God power and relevance in every community it goes to.

Most of the African Initiated Church (AICs) and African Orthodox Churches, had a great success of drawing a large number of people into their faith because of

the rift that was created between the theological and academic reading of the Bible and its failure to interact with the people on the ground, to such an extent that the African people especially the Banyore people felt that they were just scrap yards of imports, alongside colonial administration projects, structural adjustment programs, postmodernism (generally Western culture) and even now we can add globalisation performed in the name of the Bible (see also Nurnberger: 10/2003: 498. I: 367).

(AICs) and African Orthodoxy because of the similarities of their rural cultures understood that mission among local people included a careful analysis of every new and concrete situation that would lead into a discovery of tangible needs, that were physical, psychological, spiritual, economical, social and communal, and the need for acceptability, meaning and authority.

When people face rejection, hunger, humiliation, and oppression, they realise and ask themselves if God is with or against them, and if there really is God. If as missionaries we are not sensitive we may project the wrong message to either of those questions that God is either for them or is against them.

An example of this is, when I arrived in South Africa, like many other African countries ancestral reverence was very prevalent and no one would listen to anyone else, especially those from outside South Africa like me a visitor who did not recognise the ancestors. I met some young people in a taxi and in a conversation that started from nowhere the two young men told me that most of them had resolved to stay at home rather than go to church on Sunday simply because the “Mudimo” (God) of the Church is racist, Western and did not

recognise African ancestors only Western ancestors who have been nicknamed saints. This was prevalent among many people even the Orthodox converts. This led me to find a way to appreciate their ancestors and as an African I could compare the saints to their ancestors. We could provide memorial services for their loved ones even if they were not from the Orthodox Church. I could visit the graveyards indiscriminately and could commemorate them during the preparatory worship called in Orthodoxy liturgical terms 'Proskomide'.

We had to have some time on Sundays to discuss the differences and similarities between ancestors and saints and even show them some African saints like St. Moses of Ethiopia, St. Anthony, St. Athanasius and many others. We came to the conclusion that in the Church there are ways that enables one to become a saint. Not everyone can become a saint and also in African society, especially in the South African context, those who lived against the norms like murderers, etc could be forgotten completely when they died and therefore technically they could not be revered as ancestors. This is because ancestors are believed to be intercessors between people and 'Mudimo' but this depends entirely on the lives they lived while still on earth. They could be either women or men. This kind of discussion opened up a new understanding of the veneration of saints by the Church and their tradition of ancestral veneration. In both we learned that we all need role models especially among those who have passed successfully from this life who are saints and ancestors.

In many cases Africans have been made to believe that God is totally against them and all their ways of life and the only way to receive favour is to behave like

Europeans who are the children of salvation and civilisation and to influence others to do so. This is why even those Africans who become scholars sometimes try to make their people live and behave like Western people by using Western idioms and styles of administration and teaching. Culture becomes a rotten thing of the past. This is one of the reasons that I am trying to link Christianity with civilisation, the Protestants modernised Christianity and hence it lost contact with the local culture of the indigenous people.

In Eastern and Southern African world perspectives, the reality includes the waves of power that are experienced through divination and rituals, this is a very important consideration when evangelising in these regions. In relation to the Orthodox understanding of the encounter with the power of God through sacred art and sacrament with rituals this made possible its dialogue with those cultures.

The African structure of an uninterrupted life force running from the past to present to the future, which survives through the male lineage from the ancestors through the living to the unborn, reveals also the Orthodox lineage of apostolic succession that is why Orthodox culture found ground among the local chiefs and their kingdoms in Africa.

The hierarchical structure of the African people through extended families, clans and tribes is a culture that dialogued with the ancient Russian and Greek cultures both reflecting the connection with the past and due to this many Africans who valued their uninterrupted ancestral tradition found it easy to dialogue with the Orthodox faith. This is a characteristic that is universal among many of the African territories that Orthodoxy entered and is not only for Bunyore. Many

factors that may have led to the dialogue between Orthodox culture and Banyore culture, are experienced in many African areas and therefore it becomes very hard to discuss Banyore in isolation as Banyore has an uninterrupted tradition from the past. To know Banyore one has to mirror through other African or Kenyan tribes for most of the tribes share the same origins. This explains why it may seem that this thesis is not addressing the title; however, it is addressing the title of dialogue with Banyore culture but in the light of other cultures related to Banyore.

Within many African cultures especially among the Bantu tribes, ancestors are seen as being closer to the higher being (God) and this is why they are believed to have higher power and authority over the living, and that always the community goes through them for intercessions. This culture is almost similar to the Orthodox culture of which departed Christians, especially those whose lives were exemplary, become saints and more powerful than the militant due to their closeness to God. They are always venerated. In both cultures, the children born and with Orthodoxy those baptised assume new names from those who have physically passed on, especially the saints and ancestors. This is one of the strongest dialogues, that though not the same, unites both Orthodox and Banyore culture, of which the changing of names is very important. From this we all have seen how dialogue can lead us to identifying the similarities that we have, as well as dissimilarities.

The strength of the Orthodox mission and culture is that it actually plants Orthodoxy within the host culture, for instance the Banyore culture, without

uprooting the local culture totally and therefore instead of uprooting culture it actually transforms it. For example instead of condemning to hell the polygamists and drunkards they found a way to transform the culture of polygamy and respect of monogamous marriage and also shared the dangers of being a drunkard. All these people were invited in to the church fold unconditionally and as time went on the polygamists were used to educate about monogamous marriages and up to now ninety nine percent in the Orthodox Church members in Bunyore who are married are monogamist yet when the church started, ninety nine percent of its members were polygamists more than thirty plus years ago.

Drunkards transformed and turned into missionaries to their fellow drunkards in the Bunyore area and there is a great change. One of my resources told me that the Orthodox Church was humiliated as the Church of the sinners, yet at present it is one of the best churches because the drunkards and polygamists have transformed while in the other Protestant Churches they have many drunkards now despite the fact that they condemn it everyday aggressively (Fred Akanga 2004:January).

The result of this unpopular Orthodox approach, Bunyore Orthodox Church has never had defectors to the African Independent Church like African Israel Nineveh, Dini Ya Msambwa (Church of the sanctuary) among many others. This brings me to the conclusion that as some missionaries such as the Orthodox missionaries saw light within the tunnel of Banyore culture, others such as the Protestant missionaries with their policies did not see anything good that could come out of African culture and therefore there was no need to even dialogue

with them.

This is supported below by Mugambi, who says that the; “patterns of behaviour, institutions including Churches, attitudes and values passed on to the black people whose dominant culture has been reduced to a subculture and replaced by a foreign culture, must be looked through the mirror of historical experience of black people” (AACC 1997:41-64).

However, Protestant churches for example, have adjusted their mission to an extent that at the moment a great following among the local population, and all majority local leaders, the hymns and songs adjusted to local tunes and now though Orthodox has grown, they command the moment great majority of the local population.

Religious dimension of culture

While I’m still discussing dialogue and culture, I will also bring forth the religious dimension of culture, which is a good link to the aim of the thesis. Culture has a great religious impact as we have seen in many areas in the past chapters.

It (culture) has a religious dimension and the development of religion within culture provides a good ground for our argument that culture develops our awareness of God’s presence among all people both during the pre Christian and the present Christian period. Culture is an aid to the Holy One but with its shortcomings it cannot be equal to God and so it should not be worshipped and turned into an idol or weapon of destruction.

For example in Bunyore, when Orthodoxy was brought, it immediately realised that Banyore had the concept of God in their practices and to an extent way of

life. Through sacrifices they realised that God accepted their prayers, that the righteous ancestors became the link between the living and the dead and the Supreme God (Nyassaye). All the rituals practised were seen as sacred and could not be violated, for example marriage.

The result of the above was that most of the traditional sacred names were adopted and included into the translation of Orthodox worship either from English or Greek to the Lunyore Language. For example obwali (Place of traditional sacrifice) became the translation of the term altar, or sanctuary, Nyassaye became God, Emilukha became traditions or rituals (The word has a double meaning) Holy Communion or Eucharist became Lisabo and many others. In this context therefore the Banyore culture played a very vital role in the assimilation of Orthodox Christianity among the Banyore people thus forming a partnership of the Orthodox Church of Bunyore (OCB).

Since culture cannot cleanse itself from its impurity, it needs Christianity to cleanse it although this cleansing has been misunderstood and therefore at the end we have seen existing culture being replaced by a more tyrannical one.

Since through history God has spoken to many of us through culture especially in Africa, there is a need to dialogue with culture, converting this transformed culture into a vessel of peace and salvation.

It is true that many mushrooming Churches in Africa and Bunyore in particular, are due to the expression of the suppressed people's culture, rooted in African minds and culture, some of them promote divisions and negative ethnicity some inherited denominational diversity. This division is one of the reasons that left

people, especially the people of Bunyore, no choice but to join the Orthodox Church which is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

It is also true that through dialogue with culture, God encounters people from where they are, Africans as African and Europeans as European, when this freedom is denied then there is a problem of religion and culture. The gospel is incarnated within the locality of its new people without jeopardising its authenticity, hence realising the relation between Christianity and the cosmology of the people receiving the faith.

This is how culture is very strong, and how we should not under estimate any thing from the soil of the people.³⁰

In mentioning the religious dimension of culture, we cannot escape the fact that within this realm comes the aspects of evangelisation and conversation.

Evangelisation and conversation between the Western religions and African culture has taken twists and at times rested on the satirical nature of conversion where some have accepted Western religion especially Christianity simply as a compliance to colonial rule. However, as I have pointed out through out this text Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore is exceptional because it was not established on this foundation, it was established by the oppressed for the oppressed, who worshipped in simple tents (houses), open fields etc, had no luxuries or subsidies from the government or any other sources and had less or no supported schools started by themselves. In this context they were not coerced to Orthodoxy but they came because they liked it and saw it as suitable spiritual home.

The religious change among the African people of whom Bunyore is part, was

not a choice but a sort of manipulation, propaganda, loss of individual self control and sense of community, lack of will power and behind all this was political mobilisation. Brian (2003) states clearly that the above led to side effects some of which still affects Africa today. In the first place this kind of set up revealed directly that European religions were considered superior and this thrived well in colonial times and has even continued until now. The baby born out of this was colonisation of the mind and capitulation to Western culture and ideologies.

In many cases the missionaries' speeches, which were predetermined, and pre-regulated were presentations that left no choice to the listener thus, colonising the consciousness and reinforcing the conviction of the opponent who in this case was African traditional religions and beliefs. "African conversion rather than being a positive outcome of dialogue-unthinkable per-se- came to be the sole position the Africans could take in order to survive as human beings" (Brian 2003:317).

In confirmation of the above, my informant from Bunyore Amwayi Okwachi (Traditional healer), narrated to me how the missionaries used threats, incentives, propaganda, to tempt them to the new religion. "When some one perceives you as uninformed, he or she does not leave room for dialogue rather gives room for you to listen and follow, for uninformed people have nothing to give. This is how the missionaries and even colonial masters perceived us," He said (Interview at Ebukhubi 20 June 2006).

The threats referred to were not violent threats but verbal threats telling people, of burning in hell if they did not conform to Christianity, then they were going to

suffer forever hence presenting a God who is angry, unforgiving and unloving. If they did not attend the Church regularly, put on their uniform, accept Jesus as a personal saviour and change their traditional ways, then they will face the wrath of God. A colonial God was presented, who was a dictator, who was out to get them and instil change by force.

Incentives included promises of jobs, further education sponsorship and food and clothes, which were given to those who had converted and those who were willing to convert. People like Gathuna and Obadiah did not use any of these when evangelising the Banyore people although this character entered into the Orthodox Church when we had missionaries from outside Africa from countries like Greece, America and Finland from where people were flooded with clothes and many other things. However, I cannot say that it was because they wanted to convert them because the faith had already been established but they were just responding to the social needs. Of course we have a few cases of those who took advantage of this, especially the new people who joined the Church just because they saw that the clothes were being given not because they liked the Church. However, because of the strong foundation that had been made by Gathuna and others, this did not create any tension but strengthened the Orthodox Church in Bunyore.

Conclusion

In a matter of self criticism the dominance of materialism in current Orthodoxy anywhere in Africa has changed the face of Orthodoxy from the Orthodoxy of the past, both its clergy and laity and to a small extent the integration of the material,

spiritual and cultural worlds has weakened just a little.

The general assumption of the new culture imposed upon the African people and their old native culture created an eruption between the two cultures and thus the local culture was assimilated by the alien culture in the name of Christianity.

The overview of my research shows that the Orthodox mission in Bunyore was preceded by conversation (dialogue) before conversion as supported below by Jean Comaroff.

Jean and John Comaroff had analysed a 19th Century missionary society who clearly stated that conversion and conversation are the only cardinal tools of true evangelisation. They agree that the London Missionary Society (LMS) saw themselves as the gentle soldiers of God's kingdom, but later on they fell into the temptation of making subjects, finally becoming the storm troopers of colonialism. Colonisation of consciousness was not due to dialogue but because it was all stage-managed. By this I mean that through missionaries, Africans were reformed by the involvement of their fellow Africans into arguments whose terms the missionaries regulated. This became the dialogue of the deaf and later came to be regarded as blind democracy (Brian 2003:318).

In the regard also one may ask about women, women on the Orthodox church in Bunyore played vital roles, women like Jeridah Pwana, Eglon Akhahukwa the young wife of Chief Akhahukwa, and many others were fund raisers and the mission succeeded because of them. It is a fact that the Orthodox Church does not ordain women, but three quarters of the duties in the church. Women hold very important positions in the Church and in Bunoyore we have women

who are chanters, parish council chairpersons.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Cultural anthropology, dialogue and mission

Having studied much about the dialogue between gospel and culture, we are led to the point of focusing on man and his relation not only to God but also to the entire cosmos. The status of man and his unique position with all the other creatures whether he is a Christian or not gives us a proper analysis and interpretation of culture and mission.

This will summarise my argument of a theology of dialogue as an important tool for the establishment of any Christian community in a foreign land based on my findings. However it is also vital that while in the process of analysing and specifically defining culture and anthropology, it would be vital to understand that the Western definition of anthropology is different from the Eastern and this has been corrupted by the English language. Due to this, the term *anthropos* in the West has been used to refer to 'male' while in the East the term has been used to refer to 'man' thus both female and male since the Greek language has two words 'anthropos' for mankind and 'aner' for male. Therefore Western anthropology tends to reject the use of the word *anthropos* for both male and female and instead prefer to use the term humankind. We have also to understand that we have cultural anthropology being the culture of man and the theological anthropology being the doctrine of man.

While introducing this fact, I have deemed it necessary to first define some of the terms like culture, anthropology, mission and missions. Anthropology comes from two Greek words "anthropos" meaning man (male and female) which is different

from referring to man as male. In the English translation we do not have this difference as I had explained earlier. "Logos" refers to study. So anthropology in this case refers to the study of man. From the Orthodox Christian theological understanding, the term "man" which is used for both the Greek words "anthropos" and for "aner" which refers to males only.

Since we are dealing with culture we cannot avoid investigating about man who is the central character and the catalyst of this theme.

Mission and missions

According to the mission scholar George Peters (Grunlan 1979:22), mission is the total biblical teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ while missions are the local assemblies or groups of assemblies sending authorised persons to other cultures to evangelise and plant indigenous assemblies. Missions are only one aspect of mission where the basic of missions is the Church in one culture sending workers to another culture to evangelise and disciple. This definition of missions is going to be our main focus when discussing dialogue as an aspect of moving from one culture to another. This does not refer to nations because national boundaries are just artificial lines drawn on maps by politicians while cultures are realities in geographical localities. Missions can be adjusted to every culture we take mission to but mission cannot be changed under any circumstances (Grunlan 1979:22).

Orthodox theology does not distinguish between the two words, it applies them both and both were used in establishing the Orthodox mission in Bunyore.

Culture is in the blood veins of humankind and to separate man from his or her

culture is almost impossible and if possible it leaves the victim helpless like a fish out of water. This separation is like taking water and fire from the brick then you are no longer left with a brick, only soil that may not be any good for construction.

I can also say in relation to the above paragraph that, Gathuna being a Kikuyu with an African culture, while relating to Banyore culture, he had in perspective his own Kikuyu culture while in conversation with the Banyore people. He related the Orthodoxy he knew from his culture and then used this to dialogue and plant Orthodoxy among the Banyore people without imposing his own Kikuyu culture or uprooting them from their culture.

Cultural anthropology

The reason for linking anthropology to culture and religion is that anthropology is a holistic science for it does reflect the theology of man as a cosmos as defined by St Paul, that man is an 'Ecclesia' of God. From the study of anthropology and the theology of St Paul's ecclesiology in humankind, we realise how there is holiness in everyone whether exposed to Christianity or not, there is this element in every man we meet that needs to be investigated and dialogued with.

Anthropology also becomes a holistic science because it displays the whole of the human condition encompassed in the past, present and future. Without anthropology, culture is always grossly neglected and so grossly misunderstood.

The concept of culture defines humans as animals with a difference and what makes man different from other animals is what we may refer to as culture. This regulates them to do things that have to be done in every day life in a particular environment. People throughout history have learned to think symbolically in

order to learn and manipulate language, to employ tools and other products of their cultural tradition in organising their lives and adapting to their environment.

Changing all this suddenly may lead to failure.

Cultural anthropology and theological anthropology

Within this anthropology there is what we refer to as theological anthropology which to my own understanding looks at all humanity equally based on the principle that all are created in the image and likeness of God. In this case social, cultural, racial and ethnic status does not count. On the other end we have social anthropology which also I may define as anthropology that looks at the person according to how society defines him or her. Society classifies people as poor, rich, civilised and uncivilised, religious and non-religious and with this comes different levels of respect according the status described above.

All humans share the belongingness and connection to culture though they live in different cultures thus conditioned by their different cultural systems. All of us grew up in the presence of rules and patterns of behaviour that compose our particular cultural tradition.

According to the emic (one becomes part of the community in order to learn about them) approach culture is a mental or ideational that can only be described by getting into the heads of the people being studied. According to emical theory, a missionary cannot learn about people's culture unless he or she incarnates into the community, this cannot be possible if the missionary or even an anthropologist undermines the host culture over his or her own culture.

This theory helps one to understand how people think about, view and categorise

the world, how they use and manipulate shared rules for behaviour, conceptualising and explaining the behaviour (Kottak1974: 6-7).

An anthropologist always seeks the viewpoint of the native relying on culture bearers or actors to judge whether what these natives do is wrong or right. This anthropological strategy may be proper for missions in a foreign culture and may be achieved through dialogue with the natives' cultures without imposing the minority culture on the majority.

Another approach is the etic approach in which the culture of a people is studied not by consulting them as in the emic approach but the visitor relies on his scientific and training expertise to study the local people. He or she takes a less involved, but more impartial and larger view of what is going on. An etical anthropologist or missionary realises that the local people who are the culture bearers are often too involved in what they are doing to evaluate their culture impartially, as a result an etic disciple does not need any dialogue with the host culture but relies on his own knowledge and himself.

The missionaries who have assumed an etic strategy have ended up judging or applying their own values in judging the behaviour and attitudes of the people raised in other cultural or ethnic traditions which I may refer to as a missiological imperialism and dictatorship.

In support of the emic approach an Orthodox scholar and theologian the late Makrakis {1830-1906} in his book *Hellenism and Unfinished Revolution* states that; "We must not rush to embark on the task before understanding its nature with exactness" (Makrakis:1956:15).

It is vital to understand culture before deciding to discard it. There has been a temptation by some of us send to other cultures especially from developed nations such as Europe and the United States or generally Western countries, coming to other places thinking more as Europeans or Americans than as Christians. When the European side dominates their Christian side, it becomes a danger to missions and to the people whose culture I can say has been invaded without any cause. This is so because they do not become servants but the Europeanisms becomes superior to the local cultures in this case African culture specifically Banyore culture and values not mentioning even the colour.

This mentality shifted many of the Western missionaries from an evangelistic goal to a political civilisation goal of making the converts think like them because if one thinks like a European (It does not matter whether that white man is a thief, a colonialist or a missionary) then it is presumed that he is behaving like Christ himself. How far this is true remains a matter for debate. I recall one American missionary nurse who when giving a lecture to the village people of Bunyore and later to the priests and youth of Kiambu and Nairobi Bishopric in 1993, she arrogantly said that HIV/Aids was brought by Africans because they (Africans) sleep with monkeys. She did not realise that we have some areas where we do not have monkeys, and she did not have a cultural understanding of the values governing sex and the misuse of sex within African culture. This was an insult by this American missionary who instead of giving hope destroyed even the little hope she found. This was because she wanted people to think as Americans, like her and so to avoid problems. I still do not understand how she arrived at that

theory. But this is only one case among many that I have witnessed personally.

To this one may add that that many Western authors define culture as civilisation, in this case civilisation meaning being like them not improving on what you have. This lady missionary was proved wrong because she got divorced and married a black man, one of those whom she referred to as sleeping with monkeys. This kind of approach and judgement without dialogue distorts anthropological vision and creates a neo culture of confusion and lack of identity.

Christian missionaries' attitude of intolerance in 1914 opened an antagonism towards pagan superstitions and other African creeds, thus by European standards, African culture and morality were inferior and unacceptable. Let us also remember the period between 1880 and 1914, which was dark period for Africa when the new imperialism and scramble for Africa by settlers, colonisers and even missionaries was in progress. Under this arrogance the European missionaries remained with little opportunity to immerse themselves into the African worldview, knowing nothing regarding the functions of the African traditional religions before they discarded them as diabolical.

Africans embraced Christianity with all their hearts, as it had been presented to them, but by the subconscious alarm at the assault on their society, by the direct attack, target on their culture, they started to question not only the validity of the gospel but also the motive behind their unexpected visitors from Europe and other parts of the world.

The outcome of this was the demolition of African community structures, land

and property, ancestral intercession, laws and taboos. Traditional religious concepts were mocked, magical concepts were termed superstitious and ritual worship was attacked as pagan and to an extent vernacular use was forbidden. This invasion corrupted and killed the aspirations of African society. By the introduction of the new religion, the place of traditional religions was left vacant creating what I may call a religious void.

When we follow this carefully, we can predict the outcome even before we are told. We can predict the wide spread uncertainty, and insecurity, the loss of hope, frustration and resentment. Their social complex was destroyed by the white expansion in their faces. The worst of this is that there was no dialogue from each side especially the side of the victims to express their feelings in a very logical way, hence resulting into a very illogical means which by then was the only logical language to be understood (Barrett1970:26).

My research in Bunyore on this matter brings to attention the similarities between the Banyore of western Kenya and the Kikuyu of central Kenya the demonisation of their cultural structures and practices like circumcision, undermining of their traditional education and finally the effort by the government and the missionary Churches to thwart their independent thinking led to the formation of Karing'a, KISA (In central Kenya) which led to the formation of the African Orthodox Church as an Independent Church of Africans for Africans. We had also in the western province an association called Kavirondo. The most excellent point that helped a Kikuyu missionary in Bunyore was that Kikuyus and Banyore almost share the same culture practices like polygamy, circumcision except

clitoridectomy only practised among the Kikuyu. These are the areas that created the cultural conflicts that left Gathuna and others with a feeling that their culture had been invaded and was being wiped out and in the process of preserving their culture they found Orthodoxy the true Church.

It is also through all these episodes that the African realised that the missionaries had misrepresented the Bible message by adding their own cultural bias to it, promoting their own cultures within and in the name of the Holy Bible. This led to the extreme thinking that the missionaries fabricated the dogmas, formalised doctrines, taught abstract theology, gave complex liturgical regulations plus harsh ecclesiastical discipline as introductions from Europe and used this to suppress the locals, thus creating theological colonialism and dependency.

Through the AICs (African Independent Churches), Africans managed their own affairs.

There was also a division between the illiterate and literate classes thus creating a need for their own African Church and religious movement to cater for the emotional peculiarities arising from social marginality (Barrett 1970:28). The most affected were the illiterate who found themselves marginalised. Most of the African Independent Churches were formed due many reasons one of them being this chasm between the educated and illiterate. Protestant mission Churches emphasised education and civilisation, if I may put it in another way round, and so the majority of the people who were illiterate according to Western standards found themselves marginalised in terms of leadership, attention and many other things and this led to the formation of their own churches. Though I

have not had this confirmed but based on the tone of the time, the Orthodox Church of Kenya and Bunyore in particular may have come into existence because of this since many of the pioneer converts were uneducated people.

While still discussing cultural anthropology and dialogue, the following thoughts express my personal feeling about conversion and mission to the people of culture. To start with, the theory of conversion by the missionaries though positive in itself, it is greeted with a gloomy smile because of its lack of genuineness this is hypocrisy. Its real intention is not actually to convert people for Christ but to European culture, slaves and serfs. A mission was very much influenced by the political and social structures of the dark period of colonialism in Africa.

Bunyore culture and Orthodoxy

Bunyore Orthodox Christian mission was different and the Banyore people did not look at the Orthodox faith as Western fabricated doctrines to colonise them because the faith was introduced to them by Kenyans or rather by fellow Africans, the headquarters was in Africa (in Egypt) and so they felt that they were in control of their new faith and anyone who came from outside later on found an already established Orthodox Church. The Orthodox missionaries (from outside Europe or America) in both Kikuyu and Bunyore had less influence in the already established Orthodox Christian community. This is the difference between Orthodoxy and other Christian Churches and this is one of the reasons that earned Orthodoxy respect among the Banyore people and all the other Kenyan tribes that embraced it.

This political and mission confusion did not start in Africa; it was only extended in Africa. It started in Europe where the European converts to Christianity became baptised.

To further this point, I will refer to Hoffman (1968:1-21), who in his article 'Conversion and Mission of the Church' explains that Christianity in Europe involved compulsion, coercion, and promises of threats as a proper and suitable means of conversion.

The Orthodox mission on the other hand accepted the people they way they were, for example the polygamists who were found could not be forced to drop one wife in order to become Christian. They were welcomed into the new religious freedom and by being there without conditions many of them could feel the love and could instil change within themselves.

Close alliance between the State and the Church, religion and politics established by the building of the Frankish kingdom explains the whole notion of conversion which arose within the Church in Europe and then to other mission Churches founded abroad. Likewise in Bunyore, the conversion to Christianity in many cases was due to the above three elements thus those who wanted to have peace with the colonial government had to become Christians. Coercion and promises of gifts and favours would be offered as a way to lure them to Christianity. For example many of those who were educated, got jobs were either those who had converted to Christianity or their children. And as we saw earlier that somewhere in central Kenya people were forced to abandon their culture to become Christian also in Bunyore there was no dialogue, people were to become

Christian on condition that they abandoned their traditions like polygamy, and some missions went as far as to condemn male circumcision, funeral rituals etc. There was no opportunity offered for dialogue, and then Orthodoxy arrived and took these people who were like orphans.

To slander Orthodoxy the Protestant missions nicknamed Orthodoxy the pagan religion of drunkards and polygamist. For example my grandmother used to be a Church of God member and every time there was a baptism they would pass near to my home on the way to the river singing what they had been taught, “we are being dipped in to the water and the traditions we desert and follow God” but this did not actually specify which traditions, it may have included even night vigils, slaughtering of a cows at funerals, payment of dowry, traditional weddings, naming ceremonies, traditional songs, proverbs, riddles, symbols feasts and fasts etc which had no problem with the gospel. “Whinikhuungwa muumaatsi nemiluukha khwachilekha khulondaanga Nyassaye” This is how the phrase goes in Lunyore.

This is the notion that arose in the history of Christianity in Europe leading to a clear misunderstanding of mission as a part of the mission of Christ. This misunderstanding followed the European Christians who were sending missionaries to other countries outside Europe. They took along this mentality with them especially when they came to Africa. They had to apply the same strategy that was used for them thus, force, coercion, threats, rewards (bribes), etc to lead Africans to Christianity. To enforce Christianity, they went through the colonial governments of the time. There has been coercion and compulsion and

dialogue has been limited, it has remained a game of the powerful wins, the powerful being the one with political and financial support, not spiritual support.

There is no question that the mission of the Church as discussed in the above context was to convert the whole of mankind to Christ and that those who were not Christians were subject to the damnation in Jehanam. A critical look at the gospel presents Jesus, not as the master who sends his disciples to *Ethni* (Nations) to convert, but to teach and make disciples thus making a very great distinction between evangelisation and conversion. The Church fathers did not use the word conversion because they considered the whole world was under Christian domain even though Church members were still in the minority. In this case conversion should not be imposed upon people but God's grace works through dialogue.

Orthodoxy and cultural chauvinism

Misconceptions in early mission efforts created many problems including the theological syndrome where, for example in the Middle Ages the idea of mass conversion emerged, this was what an honest historian will refer to as socio-political rather than religious. The misconception of mass conversion resulted in the imposition of the faith on those who seemed reluctant to accept it. However, in this case there were also exceptions like Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus who though he had a mass baptism of about five thousand, these people had prepared or rather had been prepared earlier by Gathuna and others. Because of the scarcity of clergy this was an opportunity. But the same cannot be said from St. Vladimir's conversion, since he was the leader of the Russian people, his

conversion was not of choice and that is why many accepted Orthodoxy not because they had a choice but rather to follow the footsteps of their leader in order to be safe. Again this does not mean that all of them had the same reasons for joining the Church, the majority of the converts had a genuine reason to join the Orthodox Church and maybe we can say that this is the reason why Russia has one of the largest Orthodox Christian populations.

Due to the existing relationship between the Church and the State, the idea that all citizens must be Catholics, Orthodox, and Anglicans (Episcopalians) came into existence in Rome, Constantinople and later in Britain.

Yes I may seem to contradicting myself when I say that the Church's mission is to convert, but this does not mean conversion in the sense of increasing the membership, but conversion in this case goes deeper than this it means an emphasis on Christ, a spiritual and moral transformation. If this conversion route is assumed then we will eliminate the temptation of the demonisation of non-Christian religions and traditions bearing in mind that God has the right to judge other people's religious practices, with this we are able to promote religious tolerance and dialogue. As missionaries, we have to be aware that some people may join us while others may decline. We cannot convert the whole world in one day it is a life long process especially to convert ones' mind, spirit, attitude and body and soul.

It was therefore estimated that every religion ran a risk of falling into the temptation of creating religious imperialism. Of course the main stream churches like the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church and especially the Greek

Orthodox Church cannot be isolated from this obvious vice. It is evident that most of the Greek immigrants, who may unofficially be called missionaries of Orthodoxy in many nations outside of Greece and Cyprus, have used the Church to promote Hellenism and preservation of Hellenic culture.

The Orthodox Church has not been focused on belonging to other people but for immigrants it enables them to remind themselves about their motherland through the Greek Orthodox Church. At times there has been a very big problem of being able to distinguish between secular and religious Greek culture within the Church. Everything, even that which is secular from Greece, is regarded as religious and anything religious without a Greek connection is secular therefore subject to total elimination. Converts to the Greek Orthodox Church though impressed by the beauty of the faith have found a very uncomfortable space and unwelcoming atmosphere.

However, this does not undermine the great effort that was made by the Greek Orthodox Christians from both Europe and those residing in Africa to enhance Orthodoxy among Africans through the supply of the necessary infrastructure and missionaries as well. It is something to be cherished with the whole heart. As much as we have had those who have preferred their own culture over other cultures, many of them have equally accepted the legitimacy and existence of other cultures outside of their own, thus learning to learn with them.

This mentality is slowly declining as the world continues to call for salvation, holiness and wholeness; it is only recently that the Orthodox Church has been clearly embarking on mission to other nations, as a continuation of the work of St

Cyril and Methodios to the Slavs. Though rapidly expanding, it is also true that it is going to take time before all the ghettos are removed and all the unnecessary security locks discarded, because we still have those who keep the tradition of living in the past while in the present, they do not observe the concept of time and its signs.

I have used the Orthodox family as an example because I am part of this world wide family of Greeks, Russians, Romanians, Africans, Serbians and Americans etc. The vice is also found within the Catholic, Protestant and other Christian missions. For instance, many Catholics cannot forget the history of the Irish in their Catholic mission, especially in the United States. We cannot miss these same elements within the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. There is a time that when you are in the Roman Catholic Church you feel as though you are occupying the Roman Empire while in the Anglican Church you may feel that you are in England or Wales.

It is also true that most of their converts and spiritual transformation, especially among the poor, has not been acquired through dialogue but they have converted due to what I may refer to as missiological tension and compressed forces that may be summarised as political and material propaganda. In many of the Churches where people have converted due to material wooing rather than spiritual transformation, have remained empty once the material support has been withdrawn. The critical analysis I have completed among the Banyore people reveals that converts in many of the missionary founded Churches are not free to express themselves, there was no dialogue to discover any connection

between their culture and the Gospel, so they have pretended for the sake of material gain. If this is true then we cannot refer to this as mission but in my own words a religion of pagans and heretics (interview with Akanga 2000: Dec at Ebubaayi Mwilonje).

This lack of dialogue in gospel mission has infected the African led mission Churches and African Independent Churches, where the sense of community has been affected by nepotism, clanism and tribalism. You may find that in one Church, some clan or family may always claim leadership and may try their best to bar other families outside of their own, for example I come from the Ambeba clan, if I go to the church that is dominated by the clan of Asubwe, I will not be treated as a one of them, this extends even to tribes. This sense of division and classing of Christians was introduced by missionaries and later on imitated by the locals.

This cultural insensitivity has led to a poor cultural anthropological approach to mission. Though currently everyone including the churches and other religious organisations emphasis the virtues of equality, human rights and political freedom, in most organisations even in churches this remains a talking of the talk rather than a walking of the walk.

Even though the churches have improved by the translation of many services in local languages, ordination of local clergy etc, the flavour of segregation and cultural tension still lingers in the holy corridors of some of the churches if not all of them. A few voices that have advocated change and transformation in mission, which is actual mission of true revival, have had tremendous support but also

very hostile responses from the conservatives, persecuted by their own brothers and sisters.

Dialogue is not possible when we still have this cultural superiority and inferiority. None of the world's cultures is either superior nor inferior but through dialogue one culture can complement and correct another hence bringing wholeness and holiness and reflecting the oneness of man as a special cosmos of God.

Dialogue does not mean that one should give up one's own culture and cling to another culture, but dialogue is like a mirror where one can mirror oneself and one's culture, as I may say, we know much about ourselves through other people but keeping to ourselves sometimes may deceive by thinking that we are special, powerful or weak and useless.

The history of the introduction of Orthodoxy to Bunyore and my own research of the Banyore Orthodox people shows there was no culture of either inferiority or superiority amongst the Orthodox Christian people of Bunyore simply because at its inception, there was a level growth for both culture and Orthodox Christian religion. Through careful evangelising by Gathuna, Obadiah, and Sparta, and many others, the Kikuyu, Baganda and Banyore cultures complemented each other and there was no competition and rivalry among them. Another reason may be because the mission was started by Africans themselves who for years had lived side by side and understood each others cultures.

Mahatma Gandhi once challenged the Christian missions, instead of them rushing for external conversion, they should focus first on the reshaping of a person to a better one from where he or she is. Christians for example should not

aim at gaining the multitudes of followers, which may lead to forcing those who may not be willing, but should instead make Christians better Christians and Muslims better Muslims and Hindus better Hindus etc. We know that by our way of life we can create change, even if those who have changed may not come to be part of our group, but they remain part of the sheep that is outside the fold. I do not agree with Gandhi, because you cannot make a Muslim a better Muslim with Christian teaching since sometimes Islamic teachings differ from Christian teachings. A well-done internal conversion is a gateway to a true external conversion.

Ethnic tensions and Bunyore mission

The topic of cultural anthropology in mission is a field that many missionaries have ignored and left it to anthropologists, however, I feel that each missionary is an anthropologist he/she is a servant of God through mankind whom he/she needs to have a proper understanding. Unless as a missionary I know about human beings especially in the area of my service, then I won't be able to serve them appropriately thus failing in my mission of serving God. God (Theos) is reflected among the 'prosopoi' of the 'anthropoi' (faces of men).

With the courage to face anthropology from all directions we may be helped to turn away from directionless apologists to Christian apologists who are ready to face criticism, unfriendly as those criticisms may be, the apologists will patiently move on to seek any validity within the criticism and this is dialogue and true mission. By anthropology as new apologists we are able not only to dialogue but also to listening even though what we may be listening to may be hurtful to us.

In our dialogue we realise that as we study man we come to understand that our mission is not to destroy what is sacred and holy for even Jesus even though he was not happy with the Pharisees' way of worshipping, he never went ahead to the Holy of Holies to destroy, he kept what was sacred and its secrecy.

Conversion is a mission of man, it is a sacred mission of Christ, which may in the spiritual sense mean "Metanoia" change of mind, turn around to the mark once missed because of sin, it does not literally refer to the physical turn around but it refers to inner change. For it to touch the whole anthropos, it should commence from the inside of mankind to the outside, thus turning round of the whole man by mind, body and soul.

Referring to one woman who complained that her husband was not always at home and when he was at home was not really at home, I may link this to our mission as missionaries, that at times we may think that by conversion and increasing our following we bring people back home, however the opposite may be true: that even though we see these people in our churches and think that they are at home, they may not be at home. Others may not be seen at home when actually they are at home with us (being out of the church when you are in the church).

Linking the above to my findings in Bunyore, I realised that in Bunyore the Orthodox mission in particular did not go without a spot of criticism. There were criticisms in regard to polygamy even from within among the monogamists and polygamists, there were tribal sentiments, for example Gathuna being a Kikuyu and it was suggested that the Kikuyus were taking over Bunyore and Obadiah

being a Ugandan. However, success came because Gathuna listened and was patient and willing to learn and as time went on, the Banyore people did not feel threatened by these visitors, but they took them as their own and even wanted them to stay longer. The tension was healed not by suppression but by dialogue.

The study of cultural anthropology in mission will teach us that we do not need to create a large number in order to be seen as good missionaries, for even in the Old Testament we see the minority Israel influencing the whole world. In the New Testament the visible Church is intended to be the minority while the invisible Church is intended to be the majority. This reminds me of the fact that it is not always that the Church of the majority giving the true gospel some times the Church of the majority is far away from the gospel nearing the zenith of its spiritual downfall. This is reflected in the Lord Jesus Christ's theology of the narrow and the broad road, one leading to heaven and the other leading to hell.

This statement is true because the radical nature of the church which radically embraces all, cannot be the in the majority since it is a square that many won't feel comfortable to be part of due to its demands. This discomfort is very different from the discomfort discussed earlier regarding culture and lack of dialogue.

If the missionary is doing an honest job, then they should not expect to convert a majority for even Christ himself did not convert a majority from his own community.⁴³

"The attitude of our Lord towards conversion as observed by the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes can be seen in his reproaching them as hypocrites for going around land and sea to make but one convert. It was not their desire to

make converts that Jesus condemned, but their lack of the right motive in making converts. He reproached them not for missionary zeal but because this zeal was animated less by the desire of promoting God's glory than the desire of self aggrandisement and boasting in the number of their sect" (Hoffman1998: 4).

In the context of the patristic fathers, who were great missionaries, there is no reference to 'conversion' in the sense of external conversion to the church community. Perhaps the reason is that they did not discuss the matter because they (Fathers) took for granted that the church had already expanded throughout the whole world, mostly they looked at the world around the Mediterranean as a representative of the whole world.

Regardless of its rapid expansion, the church remained a minority in the Roman Empire during the early centuries. Origen points out that in his day there was no city that was entirely Christian, the number of Christians was small and there were nations within and outside the empire that the gospel had not reached.

The fact is that the fathers did not consider a numerical minority as compatible to the universality of the Church. Patristic theology does not render to chance, that the conversion of the whole world or the majority of the entire empire was not the goal vision of the universal mission of the Church (Hoffman1968:6).

Cultural aberrations in Christian mission history

However, both past and present missionaries cannot be totally blamed for their poor methodologies of mission since the reason for these unorthodox mission methodologies were neither based on scripture nor holy tradition but was based on political and social considerations. The style of winning masses of people in

the church as presented by Hoffman seems to have started in the middle ages when the Church undertook the task of evangelisation and the Christianisation of the Celtic and Germanic tribes of northern Europe. The historical facts of the early Church seem not to have a thoughtful outlay and outlook, hence remaining passive and overpowered by historical and political reasons.

In the case of the Germanic tribes which may also apply to Africans, the change of mission strategies was due to the relation of the Germanic people to their leaders which among other things demanded the submission of their will to that of the leaders in every respect even in religious matters. This may be the reason that the early missions did not aim at winning individuals rather than focusing on the conversion of the whole community, seeking first the conversion of the kings and princes e.g. Prince Vladimir of Kiev, Emperor Constantine the Great among many others.

The same method was applied in the Orthodox mission in Bunyore, where the traditional leaders like Paramount chief Charles Akhahukwa together with his wife, business man cum community leader John Apwoka and his family and many others, were converted and so this may also have coerced their subjects to submit to the faith. Because during those days people regarded the faith the leader had chosen to be the best as many leaders did not trust any religion especially Christianity.

This conversion then promoted or rather portrayed social cohesiveness and unity where the people of Bunyore together with their chief had been promoted from not only being a kingdom of Chiefdom of Bunyore, but to being a household

(Oikoumene) and Chiefdom of God. So instead of breaking the social unity that existed, the Orthodox Church made this unity and communion even stronger.

As the unity of the Byzantine Empire sustained the Orthodox faith and its people for centuries before the fall of Constantinople, the same kind of unity in Bunyore sustained the Orthodox Christians, even in times of colonial turmoil and political instability, it gave them hope even when their leaders like Gathuna were in jail.

During this time the church provided an effective principle of social unity in the Middle Ages. This may be the reason for the notion that all the people in Europe were expected to be Christian especially Catholics, Heretics and schismatics were regarded as dangerous and destructive for social and religious unity. This unity bonded closely the church and the state. It is evident by the few examples from Hoffman that this thinking affected and influenced the outlook of all those engaged in missionary activity after the age of the discovery of Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Another view I found was that Orthodoxy in Bunyore was not founded by Kings but by Peasants and simple people like Gathuna. John Khoi, etc but it was received by chiefs like Charles Akhahukwa in humility and reverence, it was nurtured by these simple people in a simple manner with the chiefs submitting themselves to the Will of God confirming Bloom's explanation that, Christ's humanity marks the beginning of our missiological anthropology. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom talks beautifully about this in his book 'God and Man' in which he is featured dialoguing with an atheist, and in his explanation he dissects the anthropology of Jesus and how this relates to all humanity.

He begins by quoting St John Chrysostom saying that if anyone wants to know how great God is he or she should not turn to Kings in palaces or great men but look up towards the throne of God and they will see the Son of man seated on the right hand of the Father. "Man therefore whether churchd or unchurchd is the final greatest vision and greatest value of all the creation of God" (Bloom 1983: 50).

There is a clear indication from my research that the Protestant mission in Bunyore undermined the local culture and forced people to abandon much of their tradition without any validation, whether it was evil or not. I have earlier given an example of polygamy but there was also an issue of traditional herbalists and traditional medicine men which was viewed as the power of witchcraft. These acts and many others towards the cultural practices of the people had sustained them for years, that it had bonded them as a community of both militant and triumphant did not go down well and as a result many who had converted decided to stay at home, while others chose to remain non Christians rather than abandon some of these elements I just mentioned.

The arrival of the Orthodox mission was like a sigh of relief to many of them if not all of them, they finally found a home that would listen to them and take them, giving them time to adjust to the new religion and time to contemplate their own culture and where change was needed.

Christianity is a culture itself that has been nurtured within several cultures and so it cannot survive outside of the local culture in the land it is entering. Its power is above culture but its survival and incarnation into the new community is

determined with its relation to local culture. This is what I concluded with regard to my findings.

As Bloom states, Orthodoxy could not survive if it looked at all aspects of the Banyore way of life as below the mark. In this he says that, today's society represents a collective vision of man and the empirical man is forced or convinced into becoming an integral and harmonious part of society. In our efforts to change our society we may be tempted to look at this society and its individual members as far as below the mark. It is society that is the collective man, and the individual man must fit in like a tile in a vast and complex mosaic.

We may not be able to change man because he or she has a right to be what he or she is and to become whatever they will. Therefore every one is allowed to be themselves whatever they are, hence confirming the ideology that if everyone is allowed to be themselves, unhampered the final results will be perfect harmony (Bloom 1983:51).

Without a considerable love for mankind and a proper understanding of man, especially one regarded to be of lowest status, we find ourselves to have a lack of standards and reference. This results in consoling ourselves by building our own ideals, which we build out of our imaginations for what we desire.

He goes on to clear the misunderstanding that may be gathered from his argument, by saying that, he does not mean that the missionary is not there to change but the change he desires can be achieved through dialogue thus making the change internal and permanent.

"Man should be broken, must be changed and must be brought-a blood offering and make him as part of the whole which is greater than him" (51-52) Our role is not to bring people into our small ghettos of ethnicity but to a whole which is greater than all of us which is to God, real humanity and sanity that restores man as an icon of God in the face of the earth and of the angels.

The verb break as used by Bloom indicates the fact that when you break something, you remould it using the same material not foreign material in a different manner than before.

Using Bloom's description above, I will say that Orthodoxy in Bunyore was not planted into the Banyore peoples' mind as isolated ideals but on the societal ground of the Banyore people of which culture was the main catalyst. It is on this societal ground of the Banyore people that strong Orthodoxy was planted and despite changes in society Orthodoxy remains a pillar in their society.

This does not mean that there was not remoulding, there was but this remoulding did not involve the use of all the foreign material only local material some of which came from the culture of the Banyore people. The breaking and remoulding of the Banyore people into Orthodox Christianity was done so carefully not to interfere with the cultural fibre that bound them, and with which they used to understand anything else new that came or was brought to them like Christianity.

In the creed Christ is confessed as a true man and true God. He is a true man because first he was and is the true God; this has not made him a man alien to us. He is also so different from us that he has only the same shape and the same

name while in reality he has nothing in common with us. On the other hand we proclaim that being a true man means to be a revelation of man in his fulfilment. This statement of Christ's humanity affirms that to be united with the God head does not change man's nature but it is only through Christ's humanity that man is united with him the God head (Bloom-1983: 53ff).

Therefore mankind becomes truly human when he is united to the God head, that he (mankind) is revealed in his full possibility because man as a specimen of natural history is not a man in the sense in which we tend to believe him to be, truly human. He becomes a true man when he is united with the Godhead, deeply, infinitely inseparably to the extent that the fullness of the Godhead abides in him.

The Orthodox Church in its entirety is a hierarchical church whose adherents gather around the person of Christ represented by the clergy (bishops who are in turn assisted by priests and deacons) and his teachings and functions (worship) with this understanding, the Church approaches new fields like Banyore with an understanding that these people (in this context the Banyore) are the way they are because of their culture and around this culture is wisdom, people (leaders) functions like rituals, worship and feasts which regulate their seasons.

To get the Banyore people to accept the message of Christ, the missionaries that went there penetrated carefully, using part of their hierarchical structure to explain the Church's hierarchical structure and also respecting the local Banyore hierarchical structure with its tentacles. Because the Church did not shut down

their culture they did not shut down the message of Christ.

The most important caution though is that culture is human and Christ is divine there is no way we can put them on an equal footing but it is only through this human culture that human beings reach and relate to God anthropomorphologically.

The Orthodox Church as a society of men gathered around their saviour and his teachings. When they went to proclaim to the society of men in Bunyore, they gathered around their chief and their culture and with this relationship the two realised that they needed each other in order to meet their goal which was salvation and unity. Bloom (1983:53) expands this point by saying that it is also logical to think about the Church in sociological terms, that it is a society of men gathered around a teaching, around a person, around certain functions of which some are lyrical worship or some are acts of God-sacraments but which always belong to a human society directed God-ward, however, Metropolitan Bloom describes this understanding of the Church as an insufficient vision of change that in turn affects mission and its missions.

Physical and spiritual unity with the Logos of God through participation and adoption makes us the sons and daughters of the Father. The Church in this case makes it an organism, both equally human and divine, containing the fulness of God and the fulness of man including as well the frailty, brokenness and insufficiency of man and in this sense as Christians we become simultaneously already at home while in the Church, in terms of our relatedness to God through the way we are already grafted on to God, and still we have not

reached the fullness of where we are going.

The Church through its mission to all nations participates in the transcendence of Christ through history by bringing into history a dimension that is not to be imprisoned in time and space, the dimension of infinity, eternity, profundity, and as members we are found to be participating in these qualities that are God Himself.

Coming back to Christ's humanity we find a true human, he had commonality with us, he was born, lived, and died. Thinking of the way he participates in our life, we find out that he is not only a partaker of the glories of mankind but also he firmly identifies himself with everyone, both rich and poor, who have an eternal soul and destiny. He (Christ) identifies himself with those who are in glory, justice, righteousness and sainthood, and also equally identifies with those who are in need of salvation or help. In conclusion, Christ identifies himself with everyone irrespective of who he or she is, from all walks of life. The fact that of all the people he identifies with the wealthy, who are often condemned and nobody wants to move near them, gives us another perspective of mission and dialogue in the mission field, where by most of the missionaries from rich countries do not address the gospel to the wealthy but always rush to the poor. It should be realised that even the rich have eternal souls and a destiny and are beloved sons and daughters of God. To preach the gospel discriminately to the poor and not to the rich is not correct because while the gospel teaches patience to the poor it teaches justice to the rich (Bloom 1983:54.).

The above paragraphs are relevant to the Orthodox mission in Bunyore in such a

way that the Banyore community being a community of simple people, it was easy for them to identify with Christ who was presented to them as simple but wise. Therefore in this regard the Orthodox missionaries in Bunyore neither set themselves nor did they see themselves above the Banyore People, to whom they had taken the gospel, either in their life styles, faith and tribe. They lived simple lives full of sacrifices, most of them were poor men who had no wealth. However by the example of their way of life a thousand around them were saved.

As an "anthropos" Christ identifies himself with us in our stability and instability and in our mystery. He hungered with us, he was born rejected and there was no place for him except in the manger, out side of the society of man. He was surrounded with murder on the first day of his birth. He was tired, he was abandoned, hated, lonely, despised etc. He also accepted the company of groups whose company others did not want, sinners, and all those who were despised. He went further to accept solidarity with us in death. He chose to become a man and had to die in order to share with us in the suffering of death.

Christ is the Son of God because he accepted a total unreserved, unlimited solidarity in all of man's conditions, accepting all the consequences yet not participating in evil. By his cry on the cross, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" He was crying out in the words of humanity who had lost God, he was participating in everything, that is the only real tragedy in humanity, all the rest are the consequences of this tragedy. The loss of God is death, forlornness, hunger and separation. All the tragedy of man is Godlessness, and it is at this point that Christ as man and the first missionary participates in our Godlessness

in order to bring us to Godliness. He dialogues in action with our weakness in order to bring us to a dynamic relationship with him.

By descending to hell, he accepted the consequences of our Godlessness by going to a place where God is not, a place of final disaster. Bloom says that even for an atheist there is a time that he or she has experienced the depth of the Godlessness that the Son of God became man and died for. Christ himself knows what it means to be without God. These are a few examples to underscore the point that even Christ set an example by dialoguing with the society of the time and how by this we assume that he is still in dialogue with us. He permeated the hearts of everyone at every level in all the forms he could see would be appropriate be it verbal, signal etc. If Christ did this and he was God with full powers, then as his imitators and successors we have no choice but to do what he did, for the same problems he faced in his time are still the same problems facing mankind to date. We have no choice but to follow our master who has sent us as his ambassadors. Therefore in our mission endeavour we live in situations with people, encounter situations at their face value, see people apparently as they are and one day spot the goodness in all this, but we cannot spot it without patience and dialogue plus listening. Blessed is the ear that is quick to listen that the ear that is quick to be listened to.

Conclusion

In this whole chapter Bloom has been our director and most of the things if not all of them are exactly what happened in Bunyore mission. That a true Christian is able to dialogue even with those he or she sees as the worst sinners. That in our

mission we need to understand the particularity of each of us as an individual and as a community and with this we approach each within this particularity with dignity yet with a means to understand this particularity and make use of some of it to reach our goal. The Orthodox missionaries in Bunyore took advantage of the Banyore's particularity and capitalised on it to drive Orthodoxy home. Bloom's explanation is very important as it emphasises that the understanding of our particularities, brokenness, and diversity through dialogue and use dialogue for discovering our points of agreement and points of toleration.

CHAPTER 9

ORTHODOX MISSION IN ALASKA, IN COMPARISON TO ORTHODOX CHURCH IN BUNYORE

Orthodox Christian mission came to Alaska from Russia when Alaska was a Russian colony although it had been predicted by the shamans several centuries back (Oleksa1992:124). Alaska was discovered in 1741 by Russia and was occupied by its discoverer until 1867 when it was sold to the United States and became part of the United States.

During the time of occupation by the Russians, they tried to infiltrate their influence on the Alaskans. One of the greatest influences was the introduction of Orthodoxy to the people of Alaska. Orthodoxy was the native religion of the Russians after it was discovered by Prince Vladimir. However it was not until fifty years later that the reality of Orthodoxy came true.

Since there was no clergy at that time, the catechism and other initiatory rites were provided by Russian laymen who happened to be working in Alaska where Russia had invested a lot in factories.

According to Bishop Innocent, the laymen despite their efforts to spread Orthodoxy amongst the native Alaskans, also had hidden motives. To enhance what they had started, the company that had been established in Alaska by the Russians, opened up a religious mission that was funded by them and so in 1794 the first ten official Orthodox missionaries were sent from Russia to Alaska. The

party comprised eight monks, and two novices all sent to Kodiak Island in Alaska. This how the vigorous work of the Orthodox mission began in Alaska and now Orthodoxy in Alaska is no longer a Russian mission but an indigenous mission. Perhaps the single most important characteristic of Orthodoxy in Alaska today is that wherever the communities survive, the Church is viewed by the congregation as 'our'" (Smith 1980:22).

Bishop Innocent

His name before becoming a bishop was Fr. John Veniaminov. He was a married priest and sent to Alaska as a missionary in 1824. He was also the first native to be ordained, his father was a Russian and his mother was an Alaskan. He replaced Fr Afanasy who had returned to Russia after his term as a missionary in Alaska expired.

Fr. John's wife passed on and so Fr John took monastic vows, which led him to being elevated to the office of bishop. He became the Bishop of the diocese of Komchatka-Kurile and the Aleutian Islands. For eighteen years he supervised the rapid growth of the Church and its mission work in his diocese, which covered the interior, north and coast of Alaska. He laid down the missionary rules for mission in a foreign land which have become the pillar of the Orthodox mission every where especially in African countries. He was canonised as a saint through the recommendation of the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia in 1977 (See Smith1980:11-15).

His mission was interrupted when he was elevated to the office of the metropolitan and returned to Russia as the Metropolitan of Moscow in 1866.

Unlike in Bunyore where Orthodoxy was founded by the people themselves, who later invited overseas missionaries, the Orthodox mission in Alaska was established by people from outside and as Oleksa (1998: 41) points out, these people or missionaries who brought Orthodoxy to Alaska were Russian. Since the Church was being introduced by foreigners some of them did not understand how to handle the local population during their mission, rules had to be laid down in order to guide them and future missionaries. This came to be known as the 'Instructions of the most Reverend Metropolitan Innocent'. I have copied them the way they are from Smith (1980:29-34).

Instructions of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Innocent

Several years before 1860s Metropolitan Innocent who had served Alaska for 34 years produced Missionary Instructions titled "Instructions". These instructions were published in 1899 by Bishop Tikhon as a guide to all missionaries and pastors labouring in Alaska, but many centuries later they became applicable in mission in Bunyore. They are very important for as I proceeded with my research on this topic; I found them being applicable in all areas. I will conclude this by providing some of these instructions that may be relevant to the success of mission in Bunyore and Africa as a whole and perhaps they may be a guide to future mission in Bunyore and all other areas coming under Orthodoxy.

They are:

Part Second: Special directions concerning instructions, public worship, the treatment of natives, etc

1. "Thou shalt not proceed to administer holy baptism to natives before they have been thoroughly instructed by thee in the above-named matters, nor then, unless

they shall have expressed the wish to receive it

2. On arriving in some settlement of savages, though shall on no account say that thou art sent by any government, or give thyself out for some kind of official functionary, but appear disguised of poor wanderer, a sincere well-wisher to his fellow-men, who has come for a single purpose of showing them the means to attain prosperity and, as far as possible, guiding them to their quest

3. From the moment thou first interest on thy duties, do thou strive, by conduct and by virtue becoming thy dignity, to win the good opinion and respect not alone of natives, but of the civilized residents as well. Good opinion breeds respect and one who is not respected will not be listened to.

4. On no account show open contempt for their manner of living, customs, etc., however these may appear deserving of it, for nothing insults and irritates savages so much as showing them open contempt and making fun of them and anything belonging to them.

5. From the first interview with the natives, do thy best to win their confidence and friendly regard, not by gifts or flattery, but by wise kindness, by constant readiness to help in every way, by good and sensible advice and sincerity. For who will open his heart to thee, unless he trust thee?

6. In giving instructions to natives generally, be gentle, pleasant, simple, and in no way assume an overbearing, didactic manner, for so doing thou canst seriously jeopardize the success of thy labours.

7. When a native speak to thee, hear him out attentively, courteously and kindly;

for question asked by a native on spiritual subject is a matter of great importance to the preacher, since it may be an indication both of state of questioner's soul and his capacity, as well as his desire, to learn. But by not answering him even only once, or answering in a way which he can take offence, he may be silenced forever.

8.Those who show no wish to receive holy baptism, even after repeated persuasion, should not in any way be vexed, or especially, coerced....

9.Among some savage tribes in those parts, polygamy is to be met with, but only among the rich and powerful. Therefore, while striving to incline them to monogamy, do thou proceed with caution and tact, never in a masterful spirit, but so as not to anger and embitter them...

10.The nature of these countries makes it impossible for the inhabitants to observe fasts after the usual manner, i.e. changing the animal flesh to a wholly vegetable diet, and their fasting can more conveniently modify not so much quality as quantity of food and the time of taking it. Therefore they should not be compelled to observe the fasts by change of diet; but they should according to circumstances, diminish the quantity of food they take, and not take that in the early hours of the day.

11.Attendance at the ordinary services, with the exception of the liturgy, should not be made an absolute duty. Hence, In the course of thy travels in the remoter localities, when those whom thou dost visit are bound to confess and receive sacrament, thou must not make it absolutely incumbent on them to go to church during the whole week, as customary with us, but only so much as circumstances

will permit. For such converts, instruction in the word of God is always a better preparation for the partaking of the sacrament than reciting the usual psalms and prayers, because none of them will, for a very long time yet, understand what is read and recited in church.

12. Ancient customs, so long as they are not contrary to Christianity, need not to be too abruptly broken up; but it should be explained to converts that they are merely tolerated.

13. Natives who have not received holy baptism, if only there is no reason to fear that they may in any way commit sacrilege or violent decorum, should not be forbidden from being present at our services-such as vespers, matins, or night vigils (midnight services)- if they so wish, but should be invited to attend. As regards the liturgy, it is against church rules to allow their presence in the liturgy of the faithful. Still, as the envoys of St Vladimir in Constantinople were permitted, though heathens, to remain during the entire liturgy, to the unspeakable benefit of all Russia, thou also mayest grant the same favour, in hope that the sacred act may have a salutary effect on hearts as yet unenlightened.

14. No matrimonial unions or contracts entered into before baptism must be considered as hindrances to the administration of the sacrament; and no marriages contracted before baptism (With exception of such incestuous ones as scarcely occur at all), must be annulled nor must such marriages be inquired into" (Smith 1980:-28-30).

These instructions became very useful again in Alaska in recent times, when

Alaska had been invaded by evangelical Protestant missions who it is claimed tried through their mission to wipe out Orthodoxy. I quoted them as an example of what made Orthodoxy successful in Bunyore in the midst of all the other faiths that had arrived before, and what has made it remain strong today despite the fact that many other denominations preaching honey and milk have arrived in Bunyore. Because of them we can underline some of the sensitive areas observed by the Orthodox mission that made it easy for the natives. However, it should be realised that it did not take one day for the Orthodoxy to achieve this, either in Bunyore or Alaska, it took time with a lot of failures but what matters is that the Orthodox mission had to outweigh its arrogance and begin to change who and each one of us is. Let us remember that in this case, the success of mission was not the gospel since all the parties came in the name of the gospel, but how the gospel was presented and this created a great difference in how local people weighed and evaluated each Christian mission that came to them and finally became a deciding factor to where they could comfortably join and become part.

Similarities

There are many similarities between the two establishments. First of all we see that from Oleksa's (1998:13) explanation, the Alaskan people like the Banyore people had a basic religious foundation supported by myths, legends, stories, feasts, sacred arts and sacred places. Through these elements they defined themselves, and their morality. Orthodox Christianity arrived in their midst and found a sound platform on which to start its dialogue with the two cultures.

As we have seen through out the study of the introduction of Orthodox Christianity to the Banyore people, in Alaska Orthodox Christians used the same tool of empowering indigenous people to enhance their own mission, this came through encouragement and the translation of liturgical texts into the local languages, and training local people for clergy and other offices of the Church. The Church incarnated itself within the local culture hence forming what we can call a tripartite alliance (God, People, and Surroundings). The local lay leaders were empowered to do many religious rites as there were few or in some cases no priests.

In Alaska, the Orthodox missionaries who were mostly monks from Russia, had a hard time with the political administration simply because they could not support the oppression suffered by the locals (Oleksa 1998: 109). There was a conflict between the monks and Baranov who was one of the administrators. In Bunyore as in all other areas of Kenya, the missionaries though local had a very hard time with the colonial administration for they could not agree with the oppression that was implemented by the Government and condoned by the other mission Churches in the name of Christianity and a result we see in the arrest of George (Arthur) Gathuna.

The Orthodox mission in Alaska was creating Orthodox Christianity with Alaskans without actually making them little Russians, the same in Bunyore where despite the fact that we had some missionaries from outside, or rather when the entire Orthodox Church of Kenya was received into the canonical Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, the Bunyore Church remained

Bunyore not a little Greece. Archbishop Makarios Tillyrides (Interview 2007:June) asserted that they received them the way they were and used what was familiar to them to teach them about Orthodoxy and they were free to express Orthodoxy in a way natural for them.

If it was not for the way of life of the missionary, dedication, humility, poverty, selflessness and courage that surrounded the missionaries in both areas, Orthodox Christianity would not be as strong in both Alaska and Bunyore. People looked at their missionaries before they listened to what they were saying. An example is St. Innocent who by his simplicity was admired by Alaskan people and Gathuna and Obadiah who also because of their selfless, sacrifice etc remained beacons of hope for the Orthodox Mission in Bunyore even up to this date.

We know that to communicate the gospel in any indigenous language and culture, we need to adopt terms and concepts that people are familiar with, for example among the Banyore the word ' Wele Khakaba, (one who distributes), Omwami (Lord) were some of the familiar terms that were adopted by the Church as whole when translating the services into Lunyore. The use of drums, especially during communion and after the Divine Liturgy, the recognition of some rites of passage and circumcision and the designing of prayers for them to use for blessing tombstones, payment of bride price, etc came to be made part of the services. There was also the use of local tunes when singing Orthodox Christian Hymns. The night vigils at funerals were connected to the Orthodox Christian panikhidas (Night Vigils) hence forming indigenous Orthodox Christian

funeral night vigils. Weddings for Orthodox Christians are always silent after the sacrament where people can go and relax, but in Banyore culture after the sacrament there is always dancing, and celebrating on the road, with decorations leading to the couple's home, there is the slaughter of an animal, and all the other traditional rituals that are practised. All these have been accepted and integrated within the Church and the Church always gives way for local cultural procedures so long as these do not contradict the Christian faith. The same happens with funeral rites as well.

In the Alaskan mission as in Bunyore, several elements have been adopted and received in the Orthodox mission hence forming an Indigenous Orthodox Christianity of Alaska. Therefore in both cases Orthodox Christianity became native institutions. E.g. the word 'Nestov' is a pre Christian word, which has been adopted to refer to the concept of the deity who is God (Oleksa1998:192), the practice of 'starring' (selaviq) which is a traditional practice, here the memorial feast is conducted with speeches, feasting, traditional dancing and gift giving. It has been included in Alaskan Orthodox singing and practices whereby the singers gather around a large pin-wheel style star singing the verse from the gospel of St Luke (Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill to men--). It has become a well-known Christmas carol. The practice of 'starring' includes a house to house visitation while singing the same hymn in Slavonic. This has amalgamated the Alaskan traditional celebration with the Orthodox Christmas celebration.

The practice of 'masking' or 'masquerading' is another traditional practice that

has been inherited by the Orthodox Church in Alaska. In this case disguised participants gather in the community hall during which each tries to guess the identity of the other, almost like American Halloween. In other instances the masked participants tend to go door to door for the residents of each house to identify them. The biblical meaning that has been given to this is that this disguise represents the soldiers who disguised themselves and went to massacre innocent children two years and older under the order of Herod (Oleksa1998:190-91). These are but a few examples of how the marriage between Orthodox Christianity and Alaskan culture has worked perfectly as it did in Bunyore.

As in Bunyore, the Orthodox Christian mission in Alaska in order to ensure that the faith was rooted within the culture of the Alaskan people, Russian missionaries embarked on the task of preparing locals and as a result we had a majority of the faithful and clergy being native Alaskans. By the fact that in both cases there was no funding for their ministry from anywhere else except from members' dedication and commitment it made the mission very strong (Oleksa1998:27). In Alaska we see that they funded themselves and in Bunyore as well we see that the missionaries even from outside had no transport except the fare contributed by the hosts. They did not have to rely on handouts to carry out their ministry, but because of their love and dedication they sacrificed whatever they had and that is why the Church was stronger then than now. In Bunyore sometimes we had some visitors bringing in things like clothes etc but we did not rely on them.

In both missions if we read through the mission directives of St Innocent, we see that the missionaries did not use material incentives, or gifts to bribe people to the church but by the example of their lives, many came to the faith.

In Alaska the mission was carried out by local lay preachers who became catechists and served many regions that did not have priests. Many conferences and seminars for teaching took place, many rites were provided by lay preachers (Oleksa1998:27). Another interesting point I found in the two incidents is the activeness of oral tradition in spreading the faith. In Alaska, the teaching and services about Orthodoxy were passed from one village to another in the native language by word of mouth, until later when publications were provided. In Bunyore even until now most of the teaching is done by oral transmission from one person to another from catechists and clergy to different villages. We did not have catechism books but we had catechists whose hearts and heads were catechism themselves. They taught everything orally including Church music until publications were available. There were several things I learned myself by memory till I went to the seminary. Even now if you attend the services in Bunyore, very few people have hymn books; the congregations sing everything by heart. In December of 2007 I visited St Gerasmos which now has been changed to St Andrew and was amazed at how well those people from the village know the order of the services without books and they all sing including the children.

There were also some slight differences, for example in Alaska the Orthodox Christian mission was brought by Russian missionaries; Alaskans did not look for

it but it was brought to them. We know from Oleksa that the Alaskans learned about Jesus Christ for the first time from Orthodox Christian Russians (Oleksa1992:41). However at this point, also we learn that the coming of Orthodoxy to the Alaskan people had been predicted by the shamans, who in their prediction cited the arrival of monks who would advise people and urge people that when that time comes, they should welcome these visitors and listen to them (Oleksa1992:124). This is the reason why when Orthodox missionaries arrived in Alaska, they were well received.

The Alaskan people did not flee from them as they had with other strangers. On the other hand while Orthodoxy was not predicted previously in Bunyore, the Orthodox faith was not brought by the missionaries but from the evidence in the text, people themselves found out about it, and became the first missionaries by themselves, Gathuna a Kenyan from central province became a missionary in Bunyore and instead of missionaries from overseas bringing Orthodoxy, they were invited by the locals to tell them more about the Orthodox Christianity they had self discovered.

In Alaska, the Orthodox mission found no other denomination whilst in Bunyore by the time Orthodoxy arrived there were other Christian denominations well established like Church of God, Anglican, later on independent Churches like African Israel Nineveh, African Divine Church.

However, the encounter of the Orthodox faith in Alaska with the protestant mission years later, after Alaska became part of America, was far worse than that of Bunyore even though the same tactics were used. For example, we are told

that the Baptist missionaries abducted Orthodox children and put them by force into Protestant boarding schools with the reason of developing an Anglo-Saxon frame of mind and civilising them. The Protestants actually did not recognise Orthodoxy as a Christian faith so they did their evangelising in the midst of Orthodoxy, they co-operated with the American government of the time which supported the Protestant mission using any means to impress the Aleut Orthodox children into Protestantism. As mentioned above the best way to do this was to lure them into boarding schools, hence as a result breaking the Aleut family system (Oleksa1992:172).

CHAPTER TEN

How the mission strategy used in Alaska worked in Bunyore

This chapter will enhance on what has been said in the previous section outlining mostly the reasons behind the success of the Orthodox mission in Bunyore and still comparing it to the Orthodox mission of Alaska. We will seek the similarities between the Alaskan and Bunyore Mission approach and of course in areas where the Alaskan approach could not work in Bunyore. This will take us back to the Mission instructions of St. Innocent, which we just quoted, in the previous chapter.

Why Orthodoxy has survived in Bunyore

Orthodoxy in Bunyore, unlike many other missions was not introduced by missionaries from Europe or elsewhere, it was done by the local people themselves. They themselves invited the missionaries from overseas and based on this the mission becomes locally controlled and well received without any suspicion.

Bunyore mission in comparison with St. Innocent's of Alaska's instructions.

1. Administration of sacraments especially for adults, was done after thorough instruction, for example before baptism the candidates had to undergo instruction. This in itself as in Alaska became a success as members became aware of the faith and therefore the decision made was firm thus leading to less numbers leaving the Orthodox Church after baptism. This kind of approach is given by St. Innocent as an instruction. The same worked in Bunyore, even

though we see to an extent those who came because of material gains, (I'm speaking years later after Gathuna, when the Church was receiving many foreign missionaries who showered people with material gifts) left the Church to go back to their former denominations or go back to being traditionalists. This happened among the adults not young people.

2. There was an openness in the manner and customs of the people of Bunyore, in which case they did not feel offended by the visitors (Missionaries) this in itself promoted the establishment of Orthodoxy in the area and corresponded with the Instruction of St. Innocent that "Ancient customs, so long as they are not contrary to Christianity, need not be too abruptly broken up, but it should be explained to converts that they are merely tolerated" (Smith 1980:30). The only difference here is that in Bunyore, many of the Banyore customs were not merely tolerated but became part of Orthodoxy. e.g. Dowry negotiations, traditional weddings, circumcisions, exorcism against evil eyes, witchcraft etc.

3. Those who were baptised and those who were not, all of them were allowed to attend worship, although the catechumen could not receive Holy Communion but in this case baptism was not imposed.

4. Most of the people received into Bunyore Orthodoxy were either polygamists or those who had married outside the Church, as the St. Innocent's Instruction goes, they were recognised by the Church and were administered sacraments like baptism and their marriages were sealed by the Church.

5. The missionaries in Bunyore entered as simple people and did not represent any government or speak on behalf of any government, this put them on an

equal footing with their hosts, hence making it easy and flexible for both parties to operate hence leading to the establishment of Orthodoxy in Bunyore. The instruction says, “On arriving on some settlement of savages, thou shall on no account say that thou art sent by any government, or give thyself out for some kind of official functionary but appear in guise of poor wanderer—“ (Smith1980:28).

6. Besides a few short-term overseas missionaries, the Orthodox mission in Bunyore though under the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa has been sustained by local laity and clergymen. Its strength lay in the fact that during conversion, its traditional leaders like Charles Akhahukwa were converted together with their families hence creating a huge following from the subjects. This worked in Orthodoxy’s favour in Bunyore as it created strong synergy and harmony between the Church and the entire community of the Banyore people. In brief there was great confidence in Orthodoxy because people believed that since their leaders are divinely appointed it means that what they choose or in this case the religion they choose should be the right one.

7. Orthodox mission in Bunyore through its missionaries, was tolerant and humane towards the Banyore culture especially tolerant towards polygamy amongst many other traditional feasts and ceremonies that were not contrary to the basic principles of the Christian faith. e.g. dowry payment, circumcision, traditional healing, traditional burial rites, night vigils at funerals, etc. All these rites were treated with liberality, through the virtues of patience, humility, and simplicity. The summary of these points is that the Orthodox mission avoided at

all costs the excessive zeal that had once driven many people from Protestant Churches and schools to African initiated ones. The exact same approach was used in Alaska (See Smith 1980:29).

8. Worshipping hours were made flexible though Orthodox services take up the whole day, the whole week, the converts were not obliged to attend each and every service so many of the people could be seen on Saturdays and Sundays and this made it easier. It corresponded with their custom that during the week they had to work in their fields for their daily bread and so had no time for worship every day. And as in Bishop Innocent's instructions (Smith1980:29) the instruction given was basically to prepare them for Holy Communion not to make them recite every reading and prayer.

According to my findings, the Orthodox mission in Alaska became a shaping line for Orthodoxy in Bunyore and this has been revealed through several points I have mentioned in the past two chapters.

Besides this, there were also other cultural issues that may have led to the growth of Orthodoxy. These cultures and practices in one way or another corresponded with Orthodox culture and organisational structure.

The Banyore people adored their ancestral line uninterrupted, whereby the family was preserved through the male lineage, hierarchy was very important, and everybody outside the line of succession was counted an outcast. The life that survived from the ancestors through the living uninterrupted, where the past and present to future life force was experienced. This found itself within the Orthodox culture of apostolic succession where the Orthodox family is kept intact with an

uninterrupted line of apostolic succession that links the saints and the living.

The Banyore people cannot decide anything without going to the past and seeing how decisions were reached at, and none has a right to decide for the whole community, he/she needs the consultation of the elders who before they decide consults the wisdom of the ancestors. In the Orthodox Church one is not allowed to decide anything on behalf of the Church without the local Bishop, the Holy Synod, who before they decide has to consult the deposits of the past councils and what the early Christians did about the issue in question. This puts Orthodoxy and Banyore on the same page of cultural similarities hence promoting dialogue (I interviewed several people about this, about their way of life and tradition of ancestors and from there I linked it to Orthodoxy).

Any church or religion that tries to separate local people from their tradition, from their ancestors, and from an uninterrupted genealogy or succession, is considered a killer and oppressor however sweet it may seem, even if it offers them gifts.

The Banyore people feel very strongly about this and their Christian belief is strengthened along this line, however, this does not mean that they worship two Gods, despite the fact that the ancestors is not an Idol to them but aids them in understanding God as some one who does not segregate.

A closer look at the Banyore will reveal a hierarchical structure of operation which is revealed through extended families, clans and houses (Tsinyumba), people are not perceived as individuals alone but are perceived as individual members within the corridors of their individual clans or houses.

When colonialism came, this kind of unit system was a threat, since it made the members to think together, so through the churches, this system was broken, and replaced by the family of the church, which put people from different clans together and as much as it had advantages, its disadvantage was that it disrupted the normal functioning of the people and the clans and extended families were dispersed. We remember very well in the previous chapter how it disorganised Aleut people when their children were separated from them to stay at boarding schools where they were taught and raised differently to an extent that when they came back they appeared strangers to their customs, people and even to themselves (Oleksa1992:172, 175,180).

Conclusion

This was a culture that can be realised among the ancient Greek and Russian communities, and Orthodoxy being from these countries, always had this in mind and became sensitive to it. This seems not to be a direct dialogue but it is another strong dialogue as per the respect for tradition and culture. It also signifies how both communities have similarities in culture though practised differently. Note that by mentioning Greek and Russia and culture I'm not trying put Greek and Russian and Banyore culture on an equal footing, but I'm trying to portray how these cultures who have nurtured the gospel have a lot to tell us on how to handle scripture in the face of local cultures that want to embrace it.

One's relation ship to a higher being is defined within a community's rituals, rites, fasts and feats. Every aspect of the culture of the Munyore was marked by a ritual, like we had burial rituals, which included the slaughter of an animal,

burning of fire, dancing, and putting on mourning clothes, rituals for birth, rituals for marriage and generally every step in life was marked by ritual. Life was celebrated in full, yet without caution that it was not an end, there is always tomorrow in the other world and so everyone had to make sure he or she is prepared for the other world by strengthening his or her relationship with the higher being through things like rituals.

Rituals also portrayed the koinonia of the community, through which the individual once again pledged their allegiance to the community, and once joined together, felt protected and loved. Beside this there were excommunications and penances for those who had violated the rules of society, for example according to my father Obukuyi (reposed in the Lord in 1996 April) and my own observance, any one who happened to fall in love with a girl or a boy from the same clan or village, or one who was used to taking other men's wives from the village was not allowed to take milk or meat whenever there was a ritual. They were not supposed to participate and if pardon was granted, it was to be given through a cleansing ritual. One who killed was uprooted from the community and chased, he became an outcast and his name was scrapped from the community. Everyone was guided by the same rules and everyone was supposed to know them.

In the Orthodox faith, rituals and mysteries like sacraments, play a very important role in the life of a Christian and signify the unity of Christians as the body of Christ. Errant members are either excommunicated or given a penance and all are guided by same canon, no one is judged out of emotion but by the

same rules that guide society.

I would say that the secret behind the success of the Orthodox faith among the Banyore people is what Magnus Lundberg said, that the goal of propaganda is to persuade people to become exactly what the propagandists want them to be, whereas the purpose of Church mission is to help every human being to find his or her own way or goal. It is not trying to make Europeans out of Greeks or Africans (Lundberg: 2002:290-291).

Bunyore as a community suffering from poverty and colonialism, needed a religion like Orthodoxy that had gone through a lot of persecution and so they quickly identified with it. A place to call a home is a very important thing in a Munyore, and the acceptance of the Banyore people as they were, into the Orthodox Church was a great achievement.

When I talked with my late grandmother who was a Protestant belonging to the Church of God (C of G) she told me that when the denomination arrived those who were drinking and polygamists were not allowed in the Church or were regarded as the lost. The majority of men, especially leaders, had to have many wives as tradition dictated. Polygamy was a status in the Banyore community. As these people were sidelined, they started questioning the type of God the Christians were worshipping, who was totally against them, this created resentment among the Banyore people.

When Orthodoxy arrived, it embraced everyone, for it was based in the theology that the Son of Man came for the lost. The first converts in Bunyore who became very powerful and faithful were polygamists, like the late Charles Akhahukwa,

who was the Chief of the Banyore people. He gave the land where the church building is in now and all his wives were invited and became members. The late Apwoka among many others who was a very successful businessman finally got a place after long years. The children from polygamists' families who had become embarrassed to join the other churches because of their parents' status, once again joined their parents and the Orthodox Church was full.

Drinking local brew was a problem for many people but it was also a status symbol and many traditional rituals was accompanied by traditional beer so sidelining people involved in this meant that almost nobody could be seen in the church.

It should be known that as the Eucharist is a covenant meal between a Christian and their God, the beer in Banyore was a covenant drink, there was no covenant between people themselves or their ancestors of Nyassaye without traditional beer being drunk.

The Orthodox Church received them equally, gave them positions and taught them and as time went by these people started to watch their drinking, they could not drink in public and those who converted with many wives were all baptised and advised not to divorce any of the wives. The young ones who converted before getting married were advised to be monogamous. And now there is no polygamous Orthodox family in Bunyore and nobody forced them but it went away slowly by slowly by the older generation who upon discovering their weaknesses worked hard to make a strong foundation of faith for their children.

Nobody wanted to listen to the theology of the Banyore people on polygamy. It

may be seen that though the church avoided polygamy, it was replaced with adultery, where one has one wife to show and many mistresses, now things have got out of hand and we have HIV spreading and many other diseases and the rate of divorce is high compared to the time of our forefathers. The only thing Orthodoxy did was that these polygamists who were received, could not be ordained but could hold any other office, but they were used to prepare young people for ordination some of them their sons.

Another research according to Hayes, (1994:383-398) says that the openness of the Orthodox Church towards the local people created an enmity between the colonialists and the Orthodox missionaries, for according to colonial mentality, Africans were entitled to know just enough to make them submissive. This enmity may have triggered the mass movements and the acceptance of Orthodoxy in many regions of Kenya including Bunyore. The Orthodox Church was burned and its schools closed by the colonial regime, even some churches were burned down and clergy put into seclusion which Hayes calls concentration camps (Githieya 181:1992). This put Orthodoxy in a position to find acceptance among the Banyore people. Some of the Banyore Orthodox leaders went into hiding and practised underground Orthodoxy.

This is why Hayes (1994: 383-398) says that in many cases like Bunyore instead of Orthodox missionaries from elsewhere seeking people for Orthodoxy, people themselves seek Orthodoxy and these are the people who have maintained the Orthodox Church.

Looking at Orthodoxy in countries like Greece, ethnicity is not distinguished from

the faith and even in diaspora, the Greeks proudly project who they are. This kind of Spirit though may seem irrelevant, to the struggling people of Bunyore, who had been denied their pride, it meant a lot and encouraged a lot. It was true to the spirit of Africans where religious life was not separate from the entire life of the community. The Banyore people as all other people under occupation whose ethnic pride and heritage had been humiliated by both mission church, disintegrated by colonial oppression and choked up by illogical politically correct policies. Orthodoxy seemed to be the answer to their plight. For Orthodoxy even in its entry did not separate life from religion, and this is rooted in its teachings and monastic life. That a strong ethnicity should be the one rooted in religion and not separated from it.

Ethnicity truly rooted in religion is able at all times to appreciate other ethnics even if they may seem different to it. This even gave the religious leaders an answer for why to fight, not only for their political freedom but also for their ethnic freedom. People like Archbishop Makarios, the first president of Cyprus was such an inspiration. In times of suffering, ethnicity put people together to fight a common enemy, and within ethnicity culture is preserved and religion is safe. This applies mostly in desperate situations even though some times it may get blown out of proportion.

Ethnicity in the Greek Church was and is respected because during the time of persecution, Christianity in both Greece and Russia and even many other former communist countries was preserved and hidden within culture and became part of the ethnic ethos. During the time of cultural persecution, when the people's

identity was almost wiped from history the Church through monasteries became a spokesperson and preserver of culture. By this I have to underscore the point that although ethnicity's landing into the wrong hands has turned out to be catastrophic, I cannot rule out that religion could not survive and be accepted among the local people without the recognition of this point. It was easy for the Greeks to identify themselves with the African people due to their historical background and their strong feeling about their ethnicity.

Though Christianity is not an ethnic religion, it cannot survive in anywhere where it is not ethnically accepted. When we cannot become ethnic sensitive, we tend to lose the flavour and the delicacy of the local people to whom we go to preach to and so we produce good Christians on Sundays and during the day but very good traditionalists during the night. When we try to impose our ethnicity to others without recognising that they have their own ethnicity we lose the battle for mission. To avoid this hide and seek game, we need to address the issue of identity carefully and this will lead to the success of Orthodoxy in Bunyore.

The most important point to note on this issue is that ethnicity, national identity matters a lot in the sphere of life that has dictated and directed people's whole system of operation from social, religious, economical, political and philosophical. In many cases many missionaries who had their national ethnic pride, were tempted to turn a blind eye to other ethnic spaces, failed to respect them, to listen to them, but instead wanted to force their own ethnicity on to their converts, the worst is that even the missionaries who did this, did this by intention because they believed that their ethnic backgrounds were holy and favourable for

transforming all other ethnicities.

Another factor that is vital in Orthodox spirituality is the issue of obedience (*epakoi*). Obedience is a very important tool especially between the clergy and laity. In the Banyore community respect and obedience were a defining factor and sometimes the gate to success and blessings. The elders were highly respected, and their orders some times were followed with no objection for they were viewed as the custodians of the community's wisdom. Even after death, the community continued to interact with them.

This issue does not relate only to obedience but also to the understanding of saints in our Church, and the Church fathers and mothers. It reflects the Church not only as community comprising of the living but of the triumphant as well. The unity of both the living and the dead in Banyore society acted for the protection of society in general and for the individuals who comprise of that community, thus forming what we in Orthodox Christianity call a Eucharistic community.

The question whether Orthodox Christianity can be spread among people of a particular culture by dialogue with the host culture(s) has been confirmed through the investigation that we have just found and so it is true that dialogue with the Banyore culture was one of the greatest influences for their entry into the Orthodox Church.

Another piece of evidence that we have discovered is that Orthodoxy dialogue with Banyore culture was not unique in the history of the Church as a whole, and that is why the liturgical set up from the beginning of Christianity had cultural sensitivity in consideration.

From the whole examination of the Orthodox dialogue with culture through all the other cultural developments we have discussed we can agree with Wurzel (1988:7) that “when we force people of another culture to make adjustment to ours, by that much we are destroying the integrity of their realities. When too many adjustments of this kind are required too fast, the personality disintegrates and the result is an alienated, disassociated individual who cannot feel really at home in either culture” However the dialogue with culture results in an attitude of enquiry and willingness to withhold thoughtless judgement”.

Finally, we have learned that culture is knowledge, and since it is knowledge it is dynamic and developmental, with a proper approach through dialogue it is willing to change where it is wrong. Culture has never been static. Religion, in this case Orthodox Christianity proclaims a God who is living and dynamic not dead and static hence qualifying it to be dynamic and developmental.

Accepting the need to learn from others and to teach others, discovering that not all that it is accumulated through history is dogmatic and in some cases accept inquiry, the questioning of information and not the rejection of everything as dogmatic or absolutes. This is what happened between Banyore culture and Orthodoxy and at the end common ground was found which led to the entry and acceptance of Orthodoxy among the Banyore people of Western Kenya.

I have confirmed through my investigation that dialogue with the local culture is very important and use of the positive elements of culture that are compatible with Christianity in our mission to the locals, is the best tool to spread Christianity among locals, without uprooting them from their cultural heritage, helping them to

appreciate themselves, who they are through Christ for the Spirit of God dwells and abides everywhere even in a dirty manger.

Through the study of the Orthodox Church in Alaska and Bunyore, we come to learn that Orthodox theology of mission and its practicality, is consistent with the ancient faith and tradition of One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church (Oleksa1998:29) but at the same time remains enriching and meaningful to the natives. It identifies with each one of us at a level we can comprehend, in a language that we can understand, within the space that is familiar to us yet it does not lose the focus of calling all of us to salvation through Jesus Christ. This is because Orthodox Christianity is not scared of culture but is ready to engage in dialogue with it, as it happened in Bunyore.

Learning from the above points, a true missionary is not a winner, but helps other people to win, we do not go as missionaries to compete, for sometimes our winning may be disastrous to the gospel and to the people, we do not win but we become victorious. Mission reminds us that we can become victorious even without winning, this was the way of the saints, this was the way of Cyril and Methodios, this was the way of Sts Innocent, Tikhons, Fr Nikodemus Sarikas, and many others who took the gospel beyond their motherland.

I will conclude with the words of Smith again which I believe represents the Orthodox understanding of the spread of faith among people of other cultures other than our own.

Orthodoxy and its missionary endeavours throughout the centuries, has consistently tried to reserve among its

converts their unique cultural and linguistic heritages. ---It is possible for a great many cultural forms to become expressions of our Christian life and faith. The Church believes that it is perfectly possible for that faith to be expressed in a multitude of cultural traditions in fact she prefers it...(Smith 1980:31).

This is what created the great success of Orthodoxy in Bunyore and elsewhere in Africa. As we learn from our saint, John Chrysostom, that the teachings of the fishermen and tent makers penetrated and was received with joy, shines more than the sun and has created more eagerness among the different languages, traditions and cultures of the barbarians (Oleksa1992:35). Therefore this unveils the legitimacy of multi-lingual, multi-cultural worship as a an ancient tradition of the Church, which has sustained the Church throughout its mission to the world and so this is the same tradition that has sustained Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore making Orthodoxy the religion of the people by the people, Trinitarian God of the people, who though physically absent, He dwells invisibly with His people always.

GLOSSARY

Abakuka: Ancestors, forefathers.

Abandu Abanyole- Banyore language referring to the “ People of Bunyore”

ADC-African Divine Church

Africa. In the texts, it has been used to refer not only to a specific race, but to all those born in it.

Agape- (Greek) Love but not romantic love which is referred to as Eros

Agio Pneuma-(Gr)- Holy Spirit

AIC-African Independent Churches/ African initiated churches.

AINC-African Israel Nineveh Church

Anthropoi: Men the term is inclusive of both feminine and masculine

Anthropos: Mankind. , Man (male and female)

AOC- African Orthodox Church

AOCB-African Orthodox Church of Bunyore

Archdiocese- Archbishop’s See. The archbishop is the head of the diocese and all the bishops and priest and lay people under the jurisdiction are under his guidance. It is made up of several dioceses and individual parishes.

ATR- African Traditional Religion

Bunyore Location, Banyore-inhabitants-Lunyore-Language.

C of G: Church of God.

Catechesis: Teaching.

Congni, Convegno: (Latin) Conference.

Cosmos: World/ creation.

CPK: Church of the Province of Kenya, the Anglican Church in Kenya.

Cristo nell’ Art Bizantina e Postbizantina: (Latin) Christ in the Byzantine and Post Byzantine art.

Culture: As used in this context it represents people.

Diakonia: Service, Deacon; Servant.

Dialogue: Not exactly to compromise/ conversion but sometimes unity in diversity

Diocese is part of the Archdiocese several of them make up the Archdiocese

Egwaride; lunyore term actually borrowed from Swahili to refer to what we call in Greek a 'panigyri' of procession.

Emakombe: Lunyore referring to Hades.

Emic: English word referring to the incarnation into one another culture.

Emilukha: Rituals

Episkopos: (Greek) Title for the Bishop, meaning an overseer.

Ergo: Greek word for work.

Ethnikismos (Greek)-Nationalism.

Ethnikotes. (Greek)- Nationality.

Ethnismos. (Greek)-Ethnicity.

Ethnos (Greek)-Nation

Etic: English word means Relying on scientific and training expertise to learn another person and his/her culture. Opposite of Emic.

Gikuyu, some times pronounced as Kikuyu: Tribe in Kenya.

GOC: Greek Orthodox Church

Graeco-Roman: Greek - Roman

Gr-Greek.

H/C. Holy Cross

Hara: (Greek) means joy.

Homing Principle; Principle rooted in cultural values.

Isis: An Egyptian god

Karing'a: Kikuyu original word for meaning Pure, straight. This is a synonym of the term Orthodox which means something pure and true.

Kerygma: Greek word for proclamation or preaching.

Kidea: Greek word for Funeral it also means celebration.

KISA: Kikuyu Independent school Association, or Kikuyu Initiated Schools Association.

Laos: Greek word for People.

Litourgia: Liturgy-Litos and Ergos: Work of the people.

Luhya: Tribe in Kenya. Banyore are the sub branch of the Luhya.

Martyr: Dying or suffering of any kind for one's faith.

Mathetes: (Gr)-Disciple, or follower. One who is learning. Sometimes it may mean companion.

Mau Mau: Mzungu Aende Ulaya, Mwafrika Apate Uhuru. (Swahili freedom fighting slogan. (Whiteman to return to Europe, an African to be free)

Metamorphosis: Transfiguration.

Metanoia: Change of Mind, turn around/ repentance.

Mwana wa Mungu: Child of God/ Son of God.

Mysticism: Unfathomable by human mind

NCCCK: National Christian Council of Churches of Kenya.

Ngai: Gikuyu name for God.

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version.

Obusuma: like Ugali, Pap. Banyore Stable meal. Bread made from Maize meal, eaten with vegetable, meat stew.

Obwali: Sanctuary, altar. Place of sacrifice.

Okhubiita: Traditional Blessing of the Banyore done by a priest during the sacrifice.

Omutsienukhu: Holy

Omwoyo: Lunyore refers to Spirit, soul or heart.

Orthodox: pure, straight, correct. glory, praise.

Orthokoinonia: Correct communion

Orthopraxia: Correct acts

Orthros: the Orthodox Church's morning worship, sometimes called Matins; it mostly precedes the Divine Liturgy.

Parousia: Second coming

Phos: Greek word meaning Light .

Phronima: Morale, conviction.

Primitive: In this context uncorrupted, Original.

Prosopoi: face/ Appearance.

Pub.: Publication.

Ref. Reference

Revd.: Reverend

Settembre: September.

SMT: Swedish Missiological Themes.

Solar Scriptura: Scripture alone.

Soteria: Salvation (Soteriology)

SVP: St Vladimir Seminary Press.

Synod: Governing body of the Orthodox Church

Thaumastos: Wonder, amazing.

Theanthropy: God man

Tsinyumba: House holds, or also used to indicate clans.

UMM: United Methodist Mission

Venezia: Venice.

Welle Khakaba: Luhya name for God.

Yup'ik Eskimos: Tribe found in Western Alaska.

Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΣΤΗ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΚΑΙ ΜΕΤΑΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΤΕΧΝΗ: Christ in the Byzantine and Post Byzantine Art.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Bunyore Dialogue with Orthodoxy

Questions for Orthodox Christians

Personal Questions

1. What is your name?
2. When were you born? (How old are you)?
3. Where were born?
4. Where did you grow? What was it like?
5. Where do you live now, and how long have you lived here/
6. Which is your parish, and who is your priest?
7. When were you baptised into the Orthodox Church and in which parish?
8. Who was the first member of your family to become Orthodox, and how are they related?
9. When did the first member of your family join the Orthodox Church?
10. Describe briefly, if you know, how that person came to join the Orthodox Church, or how you joined the Orthodox Church if you were the first?
11. Did you belong to any other Christian denomination before you became Orthodox? If so, which ones, and when?
12. Which language do you speak?
13. Which languages can you speak and write?
14. Have you been to school? Which year did you finish? What was the last school you attended? Where was the School? Who ran it? What language was used for instruction? How many years did you attend school?

Bunyore traditional Culture

1. What is the meaning of Banyore?

2. Where did the Banyore people come from before they settled here?
3. Before the coming of Christianity, how did the Banyore worship?
4. What was the name of God among the Banyore?
5. How did the Banyore view God, and other Divinities?
6. Were there mystical powers? If so, how would you describe them?
7. How did one become a full member of the community? What initiation rites were there?
8. Were these rites different for boys and girls?
9. How many stages did one have to go through before becoming a mature member?
10. Was there any instruction associated with these stages or rites? If so, who was responsible for giving it?
11. Have you yourself undergone any of these rites? If so, when?
12. What was the attitude of those who prepared people for initiation towards Christianity in general, and the Orthodox Church in particular?
13. Were there particular rituals and festivals associated with particular seasons?
14. Have you personally taken part in any of these rituals? If so, how would you describe them? What was their purpose?
15. Were there particular rituals for events like birth, and marriage? Can you describe them?
16. Before the coming of Christianity, how were the sick people dealt with? Who did they go to for healing?
17. If a person did something wrong, how could they confess?
18. Was there a punishment? If so, what?
19. Were there people who were regarded as witches or sorcerers, who harmed others? If so, what were they called, and how did they harm other people?
20. If a witch harmed someone, who would the people go to put the harm right? What

action would the community take?

21. Were there any rituals with water? Did the water have special meaning and significance for the people?

22. Were any special spiritual leaders, responsible for leading rituals, healing sickness or helping people with problems? What names were given to these leaders and what did they do?

23. Did they have special clothes or ceremonial objects? What were these objects called, and what was their significance?

24. How were practical, social and political life related?

25. Can you remember any genealogy of the Banyore, or of your own family? If so, please give the information for one or more pedigree charts, starting with yourself.

26. How were the Banyore governed? Who were the leaders and what power did they have?

The coming of Christianity to the Banyore

1. When did Christianity first come to Bunyore?

2. Who were the first missionaries? Which places were they? Which Christian denomination did they belong to? Where did they come from?

3. Can you remember any of them? If so, what were they like?

4. If you were old enough to remember when you first became a Christian, can you remember who first told you about the Christian faith? Who taught you?

5. What did you find attractive in Christianity?

6. How did other people receive Christianity?

7. Were there any things in Banyore culture and customs that the first missionaries and teachers did not like, and they encouraged people to stop doing? If so, what were these things and what were their objections to them?

8. Did you think that their objections were valid?

9. Were there any similarities between the Banyore Traditional way of life and Christian teaching? If so, what?

The coming of Orthodoxy to the Banyore People

1. How did you first hear about the Orthodox Christian faith? Who told you about it, and where did that person come from?

2. Who were the first missionaries in Bunyore? Where did they come from? When did they come?

3. Do you remember any of the Orthodox missionaries? What did they do? Are any of them still alive?

4. What attracted you to Orthodoxy? What made you join the Orthodox Church?

5. Do you think there are any aspects of traditional Bunyore that are incompatible with Orthodox Christianity?

6. If you remember becoming an Orthodox Christian, what did you find most difficult about being Orthodox?

7. Did you, or do you find anything foreign in Orthodoxy, or any foreign political influences, how did you deal with it?

8. Are there any aspects of Banyore traditional culture that you find reflected in Orthodoxy? Which ones?

9. How do you view the future of Orthodoxy in Bunyore?

10. How do you think Bunyore rituals reflect life, and do you see any similarity between this and the Orthodox rituals and sacraments? How are they similar and how are they different?

11. Do African Symbols, rituals, and practices have a sacramental approach to life similar to that of Orthodoxy?

12. Have the Banyore people who have become Orthodox changed their initiation practices, and their birth and marriage rituals? If so, how? Have they substituted the Orthodox practices for the traditional ones or do they practice both?

13. What similarities or differences do you see between Banyore traditional initiation and naming practices and Orthodoxy ones?

14. What similarities or differences do you see in the understanding of marriage?

15. What similarities or differences do you see in the understanding and use of water?

16. How is sacrifice understood in Banyore Culture? In what ways is this similar to or different from the Orthodox understanding?

17. Do any Orthodox Christians that you know believe that they have been harmed by a witch or sorcerer? If so, what do they do about the problem? Who do they go to for help?

Questions for non-Christians

Bunyore Traditional Culture

1. What is the meaning of?

2. Where did the Banyore come from before they settled here?

3. Before the coming of Christianity, how did the Banyore worship?

4. What was the name of God among the Banyore?

5. How did the Banyore view God, how did they worship?

6. Were there mystical powers? If so, how would you describe them?

7. How did the Banyore view God and the other divinities and spirits?

8. How did one become a full member of the community? What initiation rites were there?

9. Were these rites different for boys and girls?

10. How many stages did one have to go through before becoming a mature member?

11. Have the initiation rites changed since the coming of Christianity? If so how?

12. Is there any instruction associated with these stages or rites? If so, who is responsible for giving it?

13. Have you yourself undergone any of these rites? If so, when?

14. Have you personally taken part in any of these rituals? If so, how would you describe

them? What was their purpose?

15. Before the coming of Christianity, how were sick people dealt with? Who did they go to for healing? Has the way in which sick people are dealt with changed since the coming of Christianity? If so, how?

16. If a person did some thing wrong, how would he or she confess it?

17. Was there a punishment? If so, what?

18. Are there any rituals associated with water? Does water have a special significance for people? Are there any ceremonies associated with rain, pools or rivers? Who performs the ceremonies and when?

19. Are there any spiritual leaders, responsible for leading rituals, healing sickness, or helping people with problems? What names were given to these leaders, and what did they do?

20. Did they have special clothes or ceremonial objects? What were the objects called, and what was their significance?

21. How was practical, social and political life?

View of Christianity

1. What is your view of Christianity and Christians?

2. Have you heard of Orthodox Church?

3. Do you know any Orthodox Christian?

4. Do you think there are any differences in the way the Orthodox Christians and other Christian groups see Bunyore traditional culture? If so, what differences do you see?

5. What problems do you think that people have in their lives that can only be healed in Bunyore traditional culture, and not by the Orthodox Church?

Questions for Non-Orthodox Christians

1. Which Christian denomination do you belong?

2. What is your view of Bunyore traditional Culture?

3. Are there any aspects of Banyore traditional culture that are compatible with

Christianity?

4. Which aspects of Banyore culture do you think are not compatible with Christianity?

5. What do you know of the Orthodox Church?

6. Do you know any Orthodox Christians?

7. How do you think the attitude of the Orthodox Church towards Banyore traditional culture differs from the attitude of your own denomination?

Instructions:

1. During my interviews I encouraged my informants to elaborate answers other than just yes or no. (Not all questions were answered; some times they dodged some of the questions)

2. The summary was recorded on a separate sheet that will also be drafted as it was replied to by the respondents. (I met many people but I interviewed maybe four or three extensively and these are the ones whose names have been mentioned others asked to remain anonymous).

3. Sometimes because of language problems I could be forced to translate the questions in to local Lunyore dialect.

Interviews and responses

Personal questions

1. Josphat Lwabi A.

2 Born in July 1945.

3. I was at Ebusiratsi Ebukhubi in Bunyore (Western Kenya)

4. I grow up in the same place. It was busy, quiet, and bushy with scanty people

6. St Mathew Orthodox Parish in Esabwali under Fr Demetrios Okubasu.

7. I was baptised Orthodox in 1976 in the same above mentioned parish.

8. I and we have intact family relationship.

9. The first member of my family joined Orthodox Church in 1976.

10.I just woke up in the morning of one Sunday and marched to the nearest Church to my home, and this was the Orthodox Church. This is how I joined the Orthodox Church. I had no prior knowledge of Orthodoxy at all.

11.I belonged to the most dominant denomination in Bunyore by then “Church of God” before I became Orthodox.

12.My mother tongue is Lunyore (Sub dialect of Luhya Language). I also speak, read and write English our official language and Swahili our commercial language.

13.I can speak, write and read all the above languages without any trouble.

14. Yes I have been to school. Oh! My school was amazing. I joined it for the first time in 1954 when I was just nine years. Learning in those days was basically forcefully instilled: caning, suspensions, dismissals and all types of abuses done in the name of discipline marked the order of every learning day. Most emphasis was put on Religious Education, numeracy, handwork, (technical skills), hygiene, writing and reading, agriculture and Physical Education (PE). My school was a few miles from home. All the schools in our area were run by the Mission Churches based on denominations and mother tongue was a medium of instruction in primary schools while English was applied in secondary school (Forms one to forms six) My last school was Eburnangwe High School (located in Bunyore) in 1956, although my whole education just ended in 1985 after I left St Tikhons theological seminary.

Bunyore traditional culture

1.Bunyore is named after the name of the founder of the tribe Anyore who was the father of the Banyore people.

2.It is believed that they came from Uganda, related to the Banyoro people of Uganda, It is also speculated that this Banyoro including the Banyore people migrated from Egypt.

3.Before the coming of Christianity, the Banyore people had their own way of worship. This included the reverence to the sun, spirits, ancestors, and invisible almighty God. They had shrines, altars, in homes, had also sacred sites and objects for sacrificial offering. They also observed natural movements and affirmaments. Had sacred trees, animals, birds, and they consulted and sought the advice of sacred men.

4.The names of God which also subscribed to His attributes were: Nyassaye (Shared with the neighbouring Luo people), Khakaba (Meaning Provider, one who distributes), Omwami (One who rules)

5.The Banyore basing on their daily experience and encounters had their own view of God, Spirits and other divinities. They viewed God as Omnipresent, Omnipotent, God was perceived as a Man, basing on the Male dominance and power of the Society by then, God was unapproachable, other Divinities were mediators, that bridged the living and God

6.Yes, of course there were mystical powers. These were referred to as magic. This is because they were beyond ordinary men, and were mainly spirit –oriented.

7.One became a full Munyore by birth, adoption, marriage, initiations (naming, circumcision, removal of the tooth, tattooing,/laceration)

8.All the rites were to be undergone by both boys and girls with an exception of circumcision that was specifically and categorically reserved for boys only.

9.One had to undergo three major stages in order to be considered mature. These were: birth, naming, (came immediately after birth included cutting of the umbilical chord, shaving, introduction of the baby into society) initiations that led to marriage the climax of maturity.

10.There was instruction (catechisms) associated with all these rites mentioned. They were done by specially selected individuals, mature, of good moral standing, who had undergone the same rites, men or women set aside as holy or ethical.

11.Yes, I have also undergone one of these rites, of course naming and its process when I was a baby and circumcision, which took place in 1955.

12.The general attitude towards Christianity in those days was that Christianity though it came smiling, was not up to no good. It supplanted these people their duties, simply because at times preached against these rites and initiations, thus degrading its importance and value.

13.There were several rituals and festivals associated with particular seasons. For instance, rituals and celebrations associated with planting, harvesting, drought and rain.

14. Yes I have, these rituals and festivals were aimed at the invocation of the God/spirits/deities in order to bring peace, life and prosperity. To give thanks to God for His providence, to appease God and other divinities for the offence done by an individual or the whole community.

15. Yes: there were. At birth members gathered to share meals, give protective charms to the new life. The placenta was buried at a particular secure place, the umbilical chord was kept safe in a ceremonious way. The hair of the infant was shaved to take away old life that was to be replaced by the new life. Naming of the child was done ritually, water from the front roof of the house trickling on the baby as a sign of blessings. These are just but a few events that took place and in some cases some still take place even today.

At marriage, the ceremony included the giving of gifts, protective charms to expectant married women, other rituals could be performed as way to ask God for fertility to newly wedded couple. Fertility relied mostly at the bringing forth of children

16. The sick and suffering were treated with herbs, also through sacrifices to appease the spirits, especially if it was suspected that the suffering was as a result of angered spirits. Also consulted mediums, medicine men, diviners and healers.

17. If anybody did something wrong, there was both the way to confess and also there was punishment if the elders saw it necessary. The offender could be expected to apologise directly to the victim, or before a group of elders, or through some intermediaries.

18. As said in the above interview, yes there was also punishment. The punishments could take various forms from physical (Corporal) to social humiliation) Physical infliction, curses, bewitching, denial of food and other social amenities to the offender, Ostracism, mockery, nicknaming, marginalization.

19. Yes, there were witches and sorcerers (*abalosi*). They used their magic powers for harm rather than for good. They had power that was kind of remote controlled to harm the person they felt was an enemy, or unwanted in their site. In other words, they invoked evil spirits to intervene and harm.

20. The above could only be treated by the help of diviners, medicine men, and even other witches. The witch who did the harm could be ostracised, or at times killed through mob

justice.

21. Water was very important in every aspect be it spiritual, cultural or normal use. Water acted as a cleansing agent, life giver, and was regarded as a sanctified liquid. Water did not need to be sanctified before use in any sacrifice, it was considered sanctified that is why it was called the sanctified liquid. Beside this, water was used at birth where it was poured on the baby after birth; it was also sprinkled on the child during the naming ceremony as a sign of blessing. Earlier we had seen that the dripping water from the room mostly front of the house was let to drip on the baby as a sign of blessings and cleansing and protection of the infant against the evil one. The dead up to the present are washed before burial, the bereaved wash them after burial, immediately they arrive from the cemetery as a sign of removing all the impurities. Circumcised boys go to the stream at dawn to bath with cold water as a way to drive out bad spirits. Also possessed people either go to the waterfalls to shower with cold water, or simply use cold water to drive away bad spirits. Rain signifies blessings (Tsikhabi). It was also believed that a bewitched individual could get well after drinking the water in which the traditional healer had cleansed by washing his or her hands in.

22. Yes, there were special spiritual leaders responsible for leading rituals, healing sicknesses and solving many other problems. The fact is that it was difficult to differentiate, all African specialists acted as spiritual leaders as well and also local leaders acted as spiritual leaders. there was no difference between a spiritual leader and a political leader for both were believed to have received their callings from Khakaba (God)

23. Yes, there were special ornaments, attires robes that were worn with these special people of the Banyore people. These attires distinguished them from the rest as people who had been set apart. Some had special robes (Etsikanzo) which may be like our cassocks, even political leaders also wore this robes. In addition also some wore goat or sheep, cow etc skin, had special staff, and mitre (Ekofia) which simplified the glory of leadership endowed to them during their enthronement) especially the chiefs. Special bracelets and bangles worn all over the angles, wrists, and necks especially among women with special roles like healing. Also ceremonial objects especially for healing

sorcery were like goat horn, a special knife or razor etc.

24. There was a great interrelatedness between practical, social, and political life, in a sense that people's opinion formed a kind of social stance and political atmosphere. All leaders were to show an exemplary life to their subjects.

25. Yes, it is a responsibility of every male especially to know the history and genealogy of his clan and where he fits. My genealogy which links to Banyore people is : Me Lwabi Akunda, I'm the son of Obukuyi, who is the son of Lwabi, son of Esikundu (Mbandu), son of Ambeba, son of Ekhubi, son of Chitwa (Matakho) son of Anyole who is the father of Banyore people. (Anyole-Chitwa (Matakho)-Ekhubi- Ambeba (Mbandu)-Esikundu-Lwabi, Obukuyi, Akunda-----.

26. The Banyore people had their own well systematised government (They had one chief, (Omwami) and village headmen (Amakuru) who oversaw one village.) There were elected pious and mature leaders who had their advisors or helpers. Their duties included to unite people, protect the community from outside invasions, protection of the ideals and values of the society and ensure that they are kept by every inhabitant, they had also to settle disputes, allocate land to the people, sanction ceremonies, like marriage, set aside days for celebrations, all that you expect a leader to have. Banyore community was almost like an Israelite nation that was theocratic in a sense that a political leader was in one way also as a spiritual leader; in case of calamities he led the communities in sacrificing etc.

The coming of Christianity in Bunyore

1. Christianity first arrived in Bunyore in 1905.

2. The denomination was the Church of God, brought by the Americans under a man known as Anderson. They stationed at Kima where they established a mission centre, a theological college, a hospital, and a Girls secondary school and even primary school. These institutions are still in existence now. Some people will say that it was Anglican but the truth is that Church of God came first as I heard from my mother. My mother was known as Petinah Anindo a strong member of Church of God. There is mentioned that after the establishment there was a missionary from South Africa by the name Johanna Mbila who was sent here to evangelise the Banyore people. This is the first missionary as

far as I know. But there were many others that have not been mentioned.

4. I first became a Christian when I was five years old that is in 1950. I was taught and introduced to it by my mother.

5. What I found attractive by then in Christianity as a child by that time were the pictures of Jesus Christ, and also the pictures of white children whom I guess they were Christians and we were supposed to follow their example.

6. Christianity as I explained earlier at the beginning created a conflict between the traditional set up and Christian set up, despite of its appealing message, it was some how received negatively but later it became part of life and everyone almost got used to it even though some could practice both one leg in Christianity and another in African traditional beliefs and practices.

7. The missionaries and teachers did not like many aspects in the Banyore culture like herbal medicine, African dances and instruments, customary marriage, (Elopement). The reason for rejecting was simply because according to them these things and practices were primitive.

8. I think to myself that their idea was not superb and in away according to what they taught we could not see any difference, I cannot be convinced only their Western ideas which they hid in Christianity were as superb as they claimed. I also object because what they condemned had kept these people of Bunyore for centuries and through them God was replying and supplying to them.

9. There were many similarities between Christianity and the African way of life, many Africans realised this when they started reading the scripture by themselves. The way the missionaries taught at times signified as it is said that Banyore traditional way of life is like Rome and the Christian way of life like Jerusalem and that the two could not be put together. However, the similarities were that in both God is transcendent, in both the worship was done facing East, both encouraged respect and obedience to the creator and the elders, and leaders both spiritual and civil. (Sometimes Christians (Missionaries) only respected the colonial or Christian leaders, but showed less respect to the traditional leaders.

The coming of Orthodox Christianity in Bunyore

1. I heard about the Orthodox Church from my elder sister who had heard from the neighbours. The neighbourhood was full of Orthodoxy.
2. The first missionaries were black people I can remember Otunga from the neighbouring Luo land (Nyanza province), Gathuna and others from Kikuyu land (Central Kenya) and two from Uganda. Sparta and Obadiah. This was in early 1940s.
3. No all the mentioned above have reposed in faith. They baptised people, taught scripture and gathered people together.
4. What attracted me is what attracted everybody else and that is that Orthodoxy was pro-African traditions and customs. Another personal reason was of the convenience that the church was close to my home, so I could just walk in, go there any time I want, any day to pray.
5. There are some aspects of Banyore culture and traditions that are incompatible with Orthodoxy. Orthodox Christianity for example, the idea of election to the throne of anyone irrespective of age and wisdom, the idea of human God born of the mother, and the idea of passive worship and danceless music.
6. The most difficult thing I encountered in becoming Orthodox was the idea of icons and all the teachings behind them and also the issue of dogmas. It took along time for me to come to a clue of what they meant.
7. The major thing I found foreign was the issue of the whites could not feel free to share communion with the black, they preferred to go first, if the black went first, they boycotted communion for that day. I experienced this much when I visited one of the cathedrals in Nairobi. There were cases even the Orthodox missionaries especially the white could underrate black ideas about culture, however in all these I and others who witnessed this, conceded reluctantly. But slowly by slowly the situation improved and this time we hardly have such behaviours in Kenya especially in Bunyore. When the white missionaries including the bishop himself visit they eat with us and share with black people the Eucharist
8. There are several aspects of Banyore culture that are reflected within Orthodoxy. For

instance, Eucharistic meal is a reflection of the African beer party where each partaker dipped the straw into the common pot as a sign of solidarity.

- Vestments for the clergy reflect the robes specially worn by African traditional leaders and specialists.

- Ordination of men only is an archetype of the Banyore's strict leadership vested in males where females only play subordinate roles in social life.

9. I can speak for whole country for now. As much as we can see that much progress has been made, with many local clergy, many churches, etc, in Banyore, the future of the Church is somehow in moribund, since as Banyore we do not have self-expression, self identity etc in the worship. The future is very bright I'm optimistic but at the same time to realize that, some revamping has to be done.

10. The main differences here are that Orthodoxy is formality while African rituals are practical.

- Orthodoxy is more of one or few days' rituals unlike everyday- all time African rituals.

- Orthodoxy reveres and celebrates few feasts, in a few days of the week, few months of the year; all the days are holy and are impressed by Africans. (Banyore People)

The similarities are: The baptismal rituals are similar to the Banyore cleansing ceremonies.

- Sacrament of the Holy Orders in the Orthodox Church is similar to the installation of an African (Banyore) leader.

- Matrimonial sacrament concurs with our Banyore understanding of marriage, with both stressing on life-long, permanency, faithfulness, submissiveness etc.

12. The Banyore people who have become Orthodox have not changed from their initiation practices, but in a way they have modified some and some of them practice both. However Orthodoxy takes priority. E.g... Marriage is mostly done in an African way, e.g. the payment of dowry, the traditional wedding, and then lastly sealed through the Church. Circumcision is still done both locally and in the hospital, and the only thing is that nowadays it is done to young boys and not when they have reached the age to get

married as it was done before. At times the pastor prays for the boys who are going to be circumcised and prays also for them when they come back after circumcision. The circumcision house where the initiates stay is called 'Erumbi' which may be termed in English as seclusion. Circumcision also has changed in that the initiates do not have to stay at a special place all of them but some even stay with their individual parents, who look for Omutili (some one to instruct, and care for them).

- In naming even after baptism, a traditional name precedes the Christian one. E.g. John Khoyi. People are mostly identified with their last names. The birth is usually done locally with all the traditional stuff done and then after the priest comes to say his prayers, which in one way or another seems to coincide.

13. There are similarities as well as differences between the Banyore initiation and naming, versus Orthodox practices whereas baptismal names are apparently levied given, the traditional names are freely and lavishly given. Traditional names even to day have a great impact on the child, parents and the community those Christian names that are seen as foreign, and unknown, at times baseless. African names the dead relatives who are known to everyone who saw them, (they should be relatives who lived a good and virtuous life). As this may seem to correspond with the Christian names that are named after those who lived exemplary lives, some times these names are not known to the parents, except what is read as stories about the people behind them. The worst thing is that the Orthodox names the children even after the living.

-Initiation of Orthodoxy is an individual responsibility covered under the umbrella of the community, while African initiation in its true sense is corporate initiation of the whole Banyore community. It does not only become the responsibility of a sponsor to see that the god child gets spiritual nourishment, but it is a responsibility of every member of the community to see that the one who has been initiated grows.

14. There are several similarities as well as differences as per the understanding of marriage in both Orthodoxy and Banyore tradition. To start with marriage is aimed to be permanent in both, and both agree on divorce on the condition of infidelity/ adultery only.

- Marriage is for males and females alone, homosexuality is not seen as marriage.

-Marriage is aimed at comforting and procreating in both institutions.

-No marriage between close relations is allowed in both.

On the other hand marriage seems to be more individualistic in Orthodoxy than it is in Banyore society.

-Marriage of the Church means leaving ones' own parents and forming his or her own home in the Church, while in the Banyore, Marriage is another means of extending the family circle.

While dowry seals marriage in the Banyore culture, in the Orthodox Church it is sealed by a ring and marriage certificate, this is why the commitments do not last and we have many divorces. In other cases African couples seal themselves with both and the Church accepts this procedure.

15. The use of water has many similarities in both:

- Water is sanctified

-Water is life

-Water is a cleansing agent.

The only difference is that Orthodoxy blesses water while Banyore believes that blessings are from water, this is made clear by the idea that rain brings blessings.

16.Sacrifice (omusango, obwali-altar) among the Banyore culture is for strengthening man's relationship with the spirits and God and with his fellowmen and creation as a whole It is to pacify ones' mind, body and soul (Esoteric and exoteric salvation). This is the same case in the Orthodoxy's purpose of a sacrifice.

Non-Christians

This section has been answered in the section on Banyore traditional culture. Except for a few that I will deal with.

10. Yes, some initiations have changed since Christianity, many have fallen into disuse for example removal of tooth, tattooing and laceration. Circumcision has become less ritualistic compared to olden times.

18. Yes, like rain making which is done ritually either to attract rain or block it. Rain makers are known as 'Abachimbi'. He is a well-known rainmaker and is known as 'Omulako' comes from Ebusiekwe in South Bunyore. The family of Omulako and the clan is feared nobody ever dares to confront them for when they get angry, they can stop rain, or can bring a hail storm which can destroy everything.

There is also drinking of the dirty water which the medicine man has washed in, but also drinking the water that the witch who may be suspected to have bewitched the victim has washed his hands in.

- Initiates were washed in the river with water to signify sanctity of water and its power to heal.

- coming of the rain was welcome

21. Yes, there was both political, social and practical relations because the leaders were chosen by the society and so they became everything for all the people. At times one leader could not have all the gifts and so there was a need to have many of them so that they could supplement each other for the common good of the community.

General view about Christianity.

1. Christianity brought a lot of good things which have changed our society and way of looking at life in general. However its introduction of Western education has driven many graduates from their ancestral homes forsaking their ancestral jobs in the village. Village jobs like farming are dirty jobs for the failures. Because white collar jobs are limited, many have resorted into crime, and now the same Church that almost crucified those who did not want Western schooling and idolised Western education is complaining of crimes.

2. Introduction of boarding school did much harm to Africans. The children were separated from their families, missed traditional family set up and when they came out had no moral uprightness and the Church that started this, is blaming and crying that parents are not teaching their children to respect God, when the church taught them not to respect their ancestors. Even they were made to devalue their mother languages and instead bow for English and other colonial languages.

3. Regarding medicine, African medicine was denied through the propaganda of

missionaries with the support of the colonial governments, yet now there are no medicines in the hospitals for African diseases, then people gradually die in the hospitals because African herbs (Amaholotso) cannot be allowed. Christianity still has some elements and dictators of colonialism, it still has imperialism, and under looks those who do not join it as sinful and evil.

It has also brought a lot of hypocrisy, people marry one wife yet they have many concubines and live in fear that they can be ostracized and this has led to many diseases, yet the Church has come out to condemn immorality and immoral life styles.

Christians live the best on a Sunday and sin the whole week expecting to repent on Sunday or feast days. With African culture everyone was a believer through out the week, month, and year, everywhere at all times. It tells us not to keep treasures for ourselves here on earth yet the Church is one of the richest institutions that hardly helps anyone, except in a few cases of those who only become Christian. It is talking about justice, and equality yet never practices it, there are many divisions among themselves, many injustices like racism, etc, some times Church workers are the most oppressed in the world.

4. However, Christianity has made the world a global village where we no longer have a tribal individualistic way of life, but we are brothers and sisters irrespective of race, nationality etc. We are all one clan, and through language we can all understand each other better and through Christianity we have been able to come out of our closets and learn also about other people, we have also realised that we are not perfect and our culture is not perfect but we can be better by learning from others. Christianity has made us to discover many similarities between different cultures hence showing our relatedness to each other through out the world. Christianity has in many ways told us not to forget our culture but to make it better for the benefit and for the good of all who embrace it, putting any thing else in the name of culture which may become a thorn in the flesh for our real culture and people.

INTERVIEW WITH HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS OF KENYA ON THE 30TH, AUGUST 2007 AT 9.00 PM AT HIS RESIDENCE IN NAIROBI.

Question: 1. Your Eminence, what can you say about the Orthodox Church and African culture?

1. Having been in Kenya for almost all your life as a missionary and teacher what can you suggest was the reason that attracted many African people in the Orthodox Church basing on the fact that the Orthodox Church compared to others was not as popular as such?

Reply1: Actually the colonial regime of the time forced many people especially those who wanted to be safe with the law to be Protestants and because of this fact Orthodoxy was not known to them.

I can say that Orthodoxy dropped from heaven because no foreign missionary can claim to have introduced it, but Africans themselves discovered this faith through what I can call the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. After the discovery of Orthodoxy many African converts felt relieved that they had received what they had been searching for a long time.

I visited as a catechist every Thursday at Kagira in Kenya. One time I asked the elders (Wazees) who were there how Orthodoxy came to them. According to their reply, Orthodoxy is the real Christian religion and that is why having learned about it they joined it.

Struggle time, people who fought for freedom were the followers of the Orthodox Church. Looking at this as a threat, the colonial Government closed all the church's schools and then arrested and only revived after freedom in 12th December 1963.

In those days there was no Orthodox Archdiocese here, only later was it introduced as the Metropolis of East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania)

The British knowing the history of Orthodoxy through the Church of Cyprus whose country was also under the occupation of the British were afraid and so did all they could to suppress any thing to do with Orthodoxy. For example according to the archives in

London which myself I consulted, when Nicholaos was enthroned as the first Metropolitan of East Africa a spy was sent by the British Government to spy on what the Greek Archbishop was up to, if he was of any danger this is because in those days Archbishop Makarios who later became the president of Cyprus was in exile. These spies were clergymen but when they met the Metropolitan they found that he was such a humble person who could not cause any harm unlike Makarios, so they went back and reported.

2 What drifted Africans to Orthodoxy are many factors but there are two major ones.

Liturgy: In the African culture there is a lot of symbolism and their significance. So icons, incense, Christianity and ancient tradition which could not be found in any other Christian religion invited them to Orthodoxy.

Culture; Orthodoxy was friendly with the local cultures and I think this affected all the Orthodox Churches from all the sections of Kenya including Bunyore. Orthodoxy was not against the African cultures and rites. I have an example for this, One day I went to Nandi in Western Kenya, where I had the my first experience in a circumcision ceremony. Though according to culture the uncircumcised person could not be allowed, I was allowed in because I was a bishop. The elders drinking the local beer from the same pot using straws invited me to bless the boy who was to be circumcised. Feeling uneasy basing on the fact that they knew they were against Christian teaching, they asked me to say something.

I remembered the ancient Greeks, and how serious they were with their customs and civilization.. And at times they (Greeks) understood Christianity brought to them by St Paul in line with their custom and tradition. That is why St Epiphanes Archbishop of Salami decided to put 25th December which was a big pagan feast to be the birthday of Jesus Christ, and due to this many Greeks identified with Christianity. (25th is not the real date of the birth of Jesus Christ) Many things of the Greeks came from ancient Greek civilization and when they became Christians many of these things were as well included into Christianity and given Christian meaning.

Having said all this I concluded by telling them to respect the history of their culture and that personally I saw no offence in being present it was a great honour for me and I

respect their culture. They were very happy.

Orthodoxy accepted people as they were unlike other Christian denominations. This is because according to the circumstances that the African people found themselves in, we could not treat them as we treated the Orthodox Christians in Greece and other Orthodox countries. By having this in mind we are not violating the canon law at all. For example in Greece, it is forbidden for a man to have many wives, it is nonnegotiable but then we cannot bring this and force them on Africans whose culture dictates that they have many wives, however, it is something that we can slowly by slowly with patience and understanding initiate. In my own experience, the first Maasai came to the Orthodox Church with his five wives, if we followed what other religions did we could not have even listened to him, and if it was in Greece, he was not even supposed to come in. We accepted him as he was and allowed God to fulfil His plan and finally he was baptised and through him we have a very strong church in Maasai with many monogamous families and one of his sons is a priest married to one wife and another one is also in the seminary.

About dialogue with other religions, I do support it because having been in Africa and gone to every part of it especially in Kenya, we know proselytise is not permitted however evangelization is accepted as a means of attracting, and if we do not dialogue, how are they going to know about us, and how do we claim to have the right faith, which we do not have the courage to share and talk about it with others and also how do we know how fortunate we are unless we also dialogue with others.

I believe that love attracts all to Christ, let us have love for everyone even those who do not belong to our faith and this true love will attract them to us.

Right now the Church has grown among the black people and well organized in all aspects, with young mother's organizations, many secondary schools, colleges, etc and we have many people educated by us in high positions both in government, corporate world and the Church as well and we are proud of this.

My short biography:

1. Born Andrea Tillyrides in 1945 from Limassol Cyprus.

2. Studied Theology at St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris 1968-1972.
3. Received my Doctorate in Philosophy from Oxford University in London in 1976.
4. In 1977 January I came to Kenya for the first time having been sent by the Late Archbishop of Cyprus Makarios to organize and open the Orthodox Seminary in Nairobi Kenya.
5. On 19th July 1992 I was ordained as a deacon from the Church of St Nicholas and Anastasios at Riruta satellite in Kenya and I took the name Makarios
6. On the 20th I became a priest.
7. 25th July 1992, I was consecrated a bishop of Riruta at the Seminary chapel in Nairobi.
8. 1998-2001 I was the Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and
9. In 2001 I became the Metropolitan of Kenya.

Among many achievements, His Eminence, helped in the translation of all the liturgical services into the local languages of the people, he also played a role to heal the Kenyan Church that had been divided for almost 30 years with old and new calendar coming together, this problem officially ended 19th January 2004.

He speaks many Kenya tribal dialects and languages beside Greek, French, Russian, English and Italian.

Interviewees

Fr Petros Kulali, and other priests of Bunyore, Theologian Lwabi, Josphat Akunda about Orthodoxy in Bunyore, Others I had interviewed before the start of this project, the late John Khoyi, the late Jeridah Pwana, the late Eglen Akhahukwa among many pious people.

On not Orthodox Christian I got one who asked to remain anonymous only known to me.

Akunda Lwabi also helped me on the Banyore Traditional culture, also helped me

to consult other elder people. Rev Deacon. Dr Stephen Methodios Hayes, Mama Susan Pekane (both of South Africa) the late Very Reverend Archmandrite Johannes Eko, and His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, and His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim (Both servants in our Church in Africa). The very reverend Archmandrite Byakatonda Innokentios (Deputy Dean of Makarios III ecclesiastical School in Nairobi Kenya). Also Elder Amwayi the traditional healer in Bunyore who is not a Christian. Many things I learned from my grand parents and experienced them since I grew up in the community and I'm a Munyore.

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