

The Significance of Inculturation for Evangelism:

A case study of The Anglican Church in the Diocese of Masasi, Tanzania.

By

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Abstract

This thesis presents the process of inculturation as an effective means to render the Christian faith more meaningful and practical to people in their local cultures. The historical survey of the evangelization process among the Makua people and many Tanzanian cultures indicates that their religious and cultural worldviews are not given due recognition during the evangelization process. Christian converts are obliged to forsake their cultural identity. However, since the first Anglican missionaries in Masasi could not dissociate themselves completely from their religious and cultural beliefs, they tended to blend the Christian faith with Makua traditional religious beliefs, even if in some areas like witchcraft contradicts the Christian faith. This thesis argues that, it is the demand of inculturation to root the Christian faith into cultures so that Christ becomes the principle that guides decisions and transforms the lives of people. When the Christian faith is integrated into Makua cultures it purifies them, and the wholesome elements found in them are incorporated into the life of the Church. This gives uniqueness to the Church of Masasi and also enrichment to the church in Tanzania at large. As such, effective inculturation would create a church in Masasi that is truly Christian and truly African. However, this thesis does not intend to equate the Makua religious and cultural beliefs to Christian faith. While inculturation is only effective through the collaboration of all agents of the local Church, the theologians and Christian anthropologists have an urgent task to carefully study and recommend those cultural elements which could possibly be incorporated into the Christian faith but without obliterating the essential elements of the Christian faith.

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Introduction

The Anglican Church Diocese of Masasi is one of 28 dioceses within the Anglican Church of Tanzania. The diocese is located in Masasi district where the Makua people are found, which was created in 1926 and its first bishop was William Lucas. Another, in 1960-1968, was Trevor Huddleston. The previous bishop was Patrick Mwachiko and the current bishop, James Almasi, who was consecrated on 29 September 2014. “Masasi is one of the six districts of the Mtwara Region of Tanzania. It is bordered to the north by the Lindi Region, to the east by the Newala District, to the south by the Ruvuma River and Mozambique and to the west by Nanyumbu District.”¹

Communication between human cultures can only take place effectively through dialogue and participation, through listening and through readiness to learn what another community holds. Dialogue between Christian Religions and Traditional Religions based in local areas leads to a better self-identification and hope for convergence or growth towards a common horizon of truth. It is only through interdependence in cooperation, and congruence that conversions can successfully take place. There is an emerging consensus that culture is a developing process in which there is and there must be a continuous dialogue between faith and culture. This thesis highlights practical inculturation which can be relevant to many dioceses of the Anglican Church in Tanzania, which has been Christianized and to areas where the Gospel has been proclaimed.

In Christianity, inculturation is the adaptation of the way Church teachings are presented to other, mostly non-Christian, cultures and, in turn, the influence of those cultures on the evolution of these teachings. Dennis Doyle says that, “Inculturation denotes a process of engagement between

¹William Vincent Lucas, “Africa: Journal of the International,” *African Institute*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Jan., 1946), 49-49 Accessed March 11, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diocese_of_Masasi.

the Christian Gospel, and a particular culture.”² If faith is presented to a culture, then in inculturation dialogue must take place. The available evidence shows that the Roman Catholic official teaching on inculturation is that all cultures have the right to an independent existence within Christianity and that the introduction of Christian teachings in a new culture must involve an adoption that preserves the essential integrity of culture, its values, institutions, and customs. However, despite the Anglican Church’s stand on the theology of inculturation, it has proved difficult to make the Gospel a reality in most Tanzanian cultures. Marcel Uwineza says, “For the theologian and for the Church in various parts of Africa the challenge is to identify which cultural values can be useful for the service of the Gospel and for bringing salvation to African cultures”³

Inculturation is still more a theoretical issue rather than a practical one. This thesis answers some questions of whether the Anglican Church is adopting authentic Masasi’s cultural beliefs and practices into its teachings. Have some aspects of cultures been ignored? Have some aspects of cultures remained pertinent and needs to be addressed urgently to save most of the Masasi Churches.? Inculturation subject to Makua people is a process by which the culture of a population is folded into the message of Christianity for the purpose of spreading the Gospel for a fruitful evangelism. However, the impact of inculturation has not been felt inmost not only to the Anglican Churches in the Diocese of Masasi but also to other Christian denominations in Tanzania. Inculturation was of paramount importance in the transmission of Christianity in Makua community which had its own culture and tradition. Here inculturation produced a wholesome Christianity, which adequately met the spiritual needs of the Makua communities being evangelized. Lack of

²Dennis Doyle, “The Concept of Inculturation in Roman Catholicism,”*A Theological Consideration* 2012,87, accessed March 10th, 2021, <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent>.

³Marcel Uwineza, *Inculturation in Africa: Challenges and Prospects*, Fri, Jan 17th 2020. Accessed on March 11,2021. <http://www.godgossip.org/article/inculturation-in-africa-challenges-and-prospects>.

inculturation, however, would have rendered Christianity ineffective in the lives of the recipient communities. The main focus of this study is, therefore, to investigate the process of inculturation of Christianity in Masasi. However, Anglican Missionaries, in their evangelization efforts, did not condemn the entire Makua religion-cultural heritage. The process consisted of a theological integration procedure in which the indigenous cultural elements, which were compatible with the Gospel were incorporated into Christianity.

The issue of inculturation has led me as a researcher to encourage the church to rethink the role played by the first Anglican missionaries who came first to Masasi in their Anglican traditional churches in making inculturation a reality. I would like to insist that there is an organic and constitutive link between Christianity and culture and that the synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith.

This thesis project has investigated the theology of inculturation and the Anglican Church Diocese of Masasi among the Makua. Specifically, the study sets out to examine the demand and relevance of inculturation for cultural development, assess the inculturation message to Masasi Diocese, determine the role of the first Anglican Missionary in Masasi and examine the impact of inculturation in Tanzania Church. The study was based on both primary and secondary data collected for a period of 5 months. The study was principally qualitative in nature based on qualitative techniques of data analysis. This approach has led to successful inculturation especially in areas of liturgy, moral theology, Tanzania leadership and the Church-as-family.

As the Gospel started spreading into new Masasi land, The Anglican missionaries had need and opportunity for fresh conceptions and formulations of the faith. The process of inculturation began when Anglican missionaries first arrived in Masasi region where Christianity had not yet existed and the instruction of converts (catechesis) took place. Gradually, after perhaps experiencing

more strongly an initial rupture with their previous culture, those who entered the Christian faith started to give it a more local expression. Despite the challenges, an intentional model of inculturation led to fruitful evangelization in the Anglican Church of Tanzania in the Diocese of Masasi. It is vital for evangelists and missionaries today to understand culture, languages, customs, and tradition in order to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to communities which have not yet received the Good News. One of the most urgent problems in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in the Diocese of Masasi is how to relate Christianity in a relevant and meaningful way.

The inculturation of the faith will be considered first from a philosophical viewpoint examining nature, culture, and grace. Then it is necessary to explore inculturation in the history of salvation. For this still poses considerable problems for theological reflection and pastoral action. How may one harmonize the spontaneous expressions of the religiosity of peoples with faith? What attitude should be adopted by evangelists and missionaries towards non-Christian religions, especially those seeking to move beyond cultural and traditional boundaries.

The purpose of this study is to help Evangelists and Missionaries understand the Church's responsibility in practicing relevant enculturated ministry. This project will focus on the centrality of the gospel and its trans-cultural essence in the practice of ministry and evangelism for relevant Church leadership. I hope to raise a consciousness within the Church, which will inspire evangelists and missionaries to be culturally relevant in understanding of leadership in appreciation of cultural rites of passages, which will then act as an integral part of Christian ministry.

The goal of this thesis is to explore the place of inculturation in contemporary evangelism seeking to understand inculturation as a systematic process, to assess the ethical implications of inculturation and evangelism through the lens of Scripture, and to provide teaching materials which enhance evangelism through effective inculturation. This paper investigates the theology of

inculturation and the Tanzanian Church. Specifically, the study sets out to examine the demand and relevance of inculturation for cultural development, assess inculturation message to the diocese of Masasi. The approach highlighted will lead to successful inculturation especially in areas of liturgy, moral theology, Tanzanian leadership and the Church-as-family.

Every culture has its own values, the value of the host culture needs to be recognized, appreciated, respected, and incorporated. Establishing good relationship, trust with indigenous people makes possible for effective evangelism not only in the diocese of Masasi but also to other dioceses in Tanzania. Trust is a precursor to relationship and relationship opens channels of communication among the people who are interesting. Without good relationship the first missionaries would have had difficulties to have effective evangelism. The missionaries did build trust with Makua people. The Makua people felt they had been accepted by the missionaries. They felt they were valued not like slaves but as human beings.

This paper suggests some attitudes, models and methods needed among priests, deacons, and evangelists who practice cross-cultural theological education in colleges. Christian pastors, deacons, and all church leaders, have the privilege of partnering with God in the drama of salvation and the providential preparation of all his people. Not only is it a privilege, but it is a spiritual responsibility to teach the members that make up our congregations about God's kingdom perspective regarding cultural diversity. Priests, deacons and evangelists need to have a knowledge of this pastoral approach to culture especially during this time when the world experiences globalization, and a time of science and technology. In service to the proclamation of the Good News and thus to man's destiny in God's plan, the pastoral approach to changing culture emanates from the very mission of the Church in our times. The awareness of the present cultural dimension of human existence brings with it a particular attention for this field of pastoral work.

Education contains a central challenge for the future: to allow various cultural expressions to co-exist and to promote dialogue so as to foster a peaceful society. Priests, deacons and evangelists in schools have a great responsibility in the field of inculturation, they are called as they are to develop intercultural dialogue in their pedagogical vision. This is a difficult goal, not easy to achieve, and yet it is necessary. Education, by its nature, requires both openness to other cultures, without the loss of one's own identity, and they are to learn accepting of the other person's culture, to avoid the risk of a limited culture, closed in on itself. Therefore, through their experience of school and study, priests, deacons and evangelists in theological colleges will acquire theoretical and practical tools for amassing greater knowledge both of others and of themselves, as well as greater knowledge of the values both of their own culture and of other cultures.

Chapter 1: The Local Context for Evangelism

Understanding the Makua People and their Culture

The Makua are Bantu originating from the Congo and the majority resides in Masasi District. A few people can be found at the Mnanje and Nanguruwe areas of Newala District in Mtwara region and Tudor District in Ruvuma region in southern Tanzania. The Makua people have chiefs, but they do not regard them as the center of authority and do not regard them as chiefs but experts of law and order, initiations, medicine, and farming. There are many aspects of culture of the Makua people based on birth, puberty, marriage, eldership, initiation and death. This paper argues on initiation, and marriage rites since these two aspects carry more theological significance for the inculturation.

Understanding the Culture and Traditions of the Makua

The Makua people have their own culture different from other people's culture. According to Kathryn Tanner "the word culture is not new, it has quiet old linguistic roots in Latin term having to do originally with the care and tending of crops or animals."⁴ General culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts. Cultures do differ according to different localities. The Makua people have some commonalities with other surrounding tribes like the Yao, and the Makonde who also live in Masasi region. The Makua are considered to be subgroup of the Yao, and therefore, some Makua cultures and traditions have been borrowed from their neighbors. They do not hold sufficient beliefs, traditions and cultures of their own. The way the Makua people dance, speak, wear and believe is somehow the same with the Yao and the Makonde. Terrance Ranger says, "The most of the

⁴Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture A New Agenda for Theories* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 3.

dominant analysis depend upon the idea of smallest of scale of traditional African religion and consequent redundancy of local religion in the face of wide-ranging social change.”⁵ A slew of festivals happens throughout the year with Makua, the Yao and Makonde traditionalists featuring traditional dress and dance. Despite the introduction of Islam and the Christian religion still all these three tribes (the Makua, the Yao and the Makonde people) practice their traditional religions such ancestor’ worship.



Fig.1 Makua Traditional Dance

The Makua languages in particular have a very unique basis and are spoken by a relatively large portion of areas in Africa. There are three main names for the Makua language: Makhuwa, Macua, and Makua. It is known to be the primary language in the Bantu category that is spoken in the northern parts of Mozambique. Chris Hannis says, “The Makua language in Masasi is spoken by 4 million people in the Makua tribes, this language is widely spoken even in Mozambique and written throughout the Bantu tribes in the Southern part of Tanzania. The Makua or Macua are well known for holding tight to their traditional African worship and their unique white “musiro” facial mask.”⁶ John S. Mbiti defines worship broadly as “man’s act or acts of turning to God.”⁷ These acts

⁵Terrance Ranger, *Conversion to Christianity: The Local and the Global in Southern African Religious History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 65.

⁶Chris Hannis, “Interesting Facts about the Makua Languages.” Accessed December 8, 2020 <https://www.networklanguages.com/interesting-fact-about-the-makua-language>.

⁷John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970),178.

may be formal or informal, communal or individual, ritual or ceremonial through word or deeds. The act of worship goes hand in hand with sacrifices and offerings. Priests in the Makua tribe are formally trained and commissioned as done in Christianity. Their duties are mainly making sacrifices, and offerings, and prayers, conducting both public and private rites and ceremonies, giving advice, caring for the shrines and other sacred places. Also, the duties for traditional priest are fulfilling their office as religious intermediaries between men and God. There are also some Makua people in some cases, whose sacrifice or offering was made to God alone after strong evangelism. In others it was to God, the spirits, and the departed. In others it was only to the spirits and departed who were considered intermediaries between God and men. Makua Kgatelopele says, “For the Makua people sacrifice and offerings are acts and occasions for making and renewing the relationship between God and man, the ancestors or spirits and man.”⁸

The Makua people are polytheist, people who have a belief in the existence of spirits separable from bodies, the belief in or worship of more than one god. As Kgatelopele says, “they regard nature, the planet, and the universe as one and part and parcel of God and thus they treat all these as one and the source of life.”⁹ Sacrifice is used where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal or part of it to God, supernatural beings, spirits or the departed. Also, offering is one of the strong traditions of the Makua people. Offering is used to refer to all the other cases in which animals are not killed, and in which items like food stuffs, utensils, maize, millet, and sorghum are offered. This act of is also offering is seen in Genesis 4. Cain who was a tiller of the ground brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground. When Christianity was introduced

⁸Makua Kgatelopele, “Know the Makua People” in *Skills Universe: Exploring the New World of Work*.”2020. Accessed December 11, 2020 <https://www.skills-universe.com/2012/12/19/know-the-makua-people>

⁹ Kgatelopele, “Know”

in Masasi some Makua people became Christians but still retained their traditional way of offering. The Makua people believe in spiritual beings that take the form of nature spirits or the spirits of dead ancestors. Powerful cults of the dead are the dominant feature of religious life. The dead are regarded as heads of their families. Kgatelopele says, “Once the livings have left their human bodies, they are thought to possess additional powers, and therefore, the offering of millet, maize and other food stuffs are done to the living dead.”¹⁰

Makua people respect their departed brothers and sisters. They are believed to play great roles in their societies. As Mbiti says, “The departed may also be expected to rely on human requests. There are many references to the cult or activities connected with the departed, the living-dead constitute the largest group of intermediaries in many African societies. This explains to a great extent, the reason why African respect for the departed is so deeply rooted in African life and thought.”¹¹ Every clan in Makua had this respect for the departed, although, after the introduction of Christianity, many people have shrine where they worship God, and they worship God in the churches. Makua Kgatelopele says, “Those shrines were normally under “Msoro” that is under trees and not at any other place. This place was normally kept clean and the Msoro tree was normally wrapped up with a piece of a new “Nakoto” cloth made from the bark of a “Mpakala” tree to warn the worshippers that the place was holy.”¹² Every morning worshipper gathered at the “Msoro” tree to say their morning prayers and ask God their God for his protection during the day. After the prayers they go away to continue with their daily activities.

¹⁰ Kgatelopele, “Know”

¹¹ Mbiti, *Concepts of God*, 178.

¹² Kgatelopele, “Know”

Traditionally, in the Makua tribe children are not allowed to come to the shrines. However, there are special or important situations when each Makua has to bring special offerings to God, especially before the planting or harvesting season. Other major occasions or situations where offerings are given to God are after the outbreak of an epidemic or prolonged period of drought. On each of such occasion many varied sacrifices are brought to the “Msoro” tree and placed at the disposal of God. Kgatelopele says, “Those who bring the sacrifices at the place of worship are important or distinguished men like “Mwene” (In Makua language “Mwene” means chief. Normally, it is the chief of the clan who leads the people including the boys to be circumcised to the circumcision place) the best hunters or famous farmers and warriors. These people have to squat at the shrine and call their “Mluku” (God) by the customary names intended to give honor to him. The problem facing the villagers was normally mention and God are asked to help or avert problems. Makua people believe that God is the creator of the world and mankind and that there is nothing above Him. God is normally called by several customary names in Makua tribe.”¹³ God is believed to be the only who pays every person according to his merit. God is the savior, governor, protector, supreme and guardian of mankind.

In the Makua tribe, circumcision is part and parcel of their culture and tradition, and it is mandatory. When a boy attains the age of 12 years his parents make arrangements for his circumcision. The local chief commonly known as the Mwene or Rabadia normally summons his top advisor and a date is normally set for the circumcision ceremony. It is the responsibility of Mwene to appoint two people who are specialized in circumcision work. When all arrangements are ready the parents have a final assignment to accomplish. They have to build a hut to accommodate the children. The hut is normally built on the eve of the circumcision ceremony. On

¹³Kgatelopele, “Know”

this day all parents and their relatives and friends get into a festive mood and bring ngomas (drums) which will be played throughout the night. The boy to be circumcised must shave his hair. As Kgatelopele says, “in the evening all boys to be circumcised must be sent to the Mwene who prays to God and to the ancestors to protect the children and avert all shortcomings while they are away from their parents.”¹⁴ When the prayers of Mwene are over the children were/are never allowed to get back to their homes. They are normally housed or grouped in one selected room. From there each boy will be under the close eye of his Namku (a person charged with the task of taking care of the boy while away from his parents). It is the task of Namku to take the boy to the circumcision ground commonly known as manava. The circumcision ground is actually set near the m’mera (hut) the ultimate residence of the children. As a rule, the boys must have a heavy meal with a cock before their departure but are warned never to eat its skin or break a bone. When the meals are over the boys are immediately put under a strict guard and every namku gets hold of his boy. At this stage the boys are advised to go and ease up themselves before being ushered to the circumcision ground.

It is the chief of the clan (mwene) who normally leads the people including the boys to be circumcised to the circumcision place. The boys are actually deceived that when they arrive there will enjoy or eat honey. The Makua circumcision exercise is normally brutal and cruel. What takes place is that the boy is stripped of his loin cloth and is forced to lie on the ground when the (ngaliba) pulls up the skin of the penis and chops off the skin with a sharp knife and the wound is dressed with either local medicine of flavone. From here the boy is forced to drink cold water and placed to rest in the hut specially built for him. After a week in the bush where they are not allowed to meet with women the boys start intensive training on Makua traditions. Songs are sung and the boys are instructed to behave as grown-up and discard their old way of life. “If for any reason a Makua is

¹⁴Kgatelopele, “Know”

not circumcised, he cannot expect to marry a wife among the Makua. The boys will stay away from their mothers for at least a month after which they are sent back to their homes.”¹⁵

Makua do not circumcise girls. As Kgatelopele says, “but after the age 12 the young girls are initiated and are taken away to their chiputu or thupa-ntlo places. Two elders are chosen to train the girls in Makua traditions. The girls normally stay away from their parents for two weeks.”¹⁶ When a girl reaches puberty, she must undergo training for her future life. When her mother or aunt gets information from their daughter, they fix the matengusi date and invites relative who normally take part, in training the girl, an exercise which takes the whole day. Makua Kgatelopele says that, “Matengusi does not involve circumcision, but education and training pertaining to motherhood and attendant responsibilities.”¹⁷ The girl is warned never to have an affair with a man and is asked to protect her virginity if she is to get a husband. No Makua girl will take a man in marriage before puberty. It is the responsibility of the mother to instruct and guide her daughter so that she may not fall a victim to the traps set by men. If a girl become pregnant before she is traditionally married, she is treated as an outcast and her presence is a bad omen. Her mother in turn, is looked upon as an irresponsible. For this reason, special precautions were normally taken. Kgatelopele says, “as soon a girl attains the puberty stage and after the Matengusi education, she is taken to a specially room, until she gets a sweetheart. From then onwards she is ready for marriage.”¹⁸

In Makua tribe marriage is also part and parcel of their tradition. Makua traditional customs call for marriages to be arranged by the parents of the bride and groom, although such arrangements are becoming less common, particularly in urban settings. In patrilineal ethnic groups traditional

¹⁵Kgatelopele, “Know”

¹⁶Kgatelopele, “Know”

¹⁷Kgatelopele, “Know”

¹⁸Kgatelopele, “Know”

marriage customs often include the presentation of a dowry or bride price to the wife's family by the bridegroom. When a young man thinks he is ready to take a wife he makes his intentions known to his parents. If his parents are no longer living, he contacts his uncle or his nearest relatives who will want to know how much money, he has. If he is financially resourceful (and provided he is of age) his father will approve the plan. Friends and relative will be informed of the son's noble plan to own a family. The parents or relatives tell the man to look for a young girl of untarnished character. Beauty is not the deciding factor but good character, family history, and background are important. The man's uncle is normally responsible for establishing contact with the parents of the girl. As a rule, a date is set on which the parties will meet on the appointed day. The man must go to his in-laws to be accompanied with his uncle and few friends loaded with a good amount of money. When they reach at the girl's house one of the elders accompanying the husband would start the conversation in proverbs. As soon as the father of the girl understands to the purpose of the mission, the hostess serves food for the guest. After the meal is over, the father calls his daughter who will appear putting on an air of indifference. All eyes are now focused on the girl's father who asks her daughter whether she is prepared to take the man as her husband. If she accepts and confirms that she loves the man, then her father mentions the dowry price, but if she turns down the offer the matter ends there. The husband to be will spend the night at his in- laws and may go back to his home the next day. The dowry must be paid in full by the husband to the uncle before they depart for home. From here on the young couple are considered as husband and wife.

Makua people fear death and there is no death which is not believed to be connected with witchcraft. As soon as a person becomes critically ill relatives and friends of the sick person try to get the best herbalists in the area. The medicine-men will normally work hard and do everything in their power to cure the sick person. Some of the medicine-men demand instant payment before they

start their treatment but other medicine-men refrain from taking anything as treatment fees until the patient gets cured. This is done as a gesture of public relations and such medicine-men are trusted and respected. If the patient is seriously ill/he/she is as a rule confined in a special hut commonly known as “Ichishako”. Kgatelopele says that,

only trusted close relative are allowed to enter or come near “Ichishako” for security reason. If the sick-person is a chief (Mwene) only “Mamwene” are allowed to do nursing. But if the patient is a commoner his wife or her husband may do nursing. If efforts to save the patient’s life appear futile, trusted close relatives arrange a meeting to deliberate on the patient’s fate. They will normally decide to invite an “Ihako” specialist, whose main duty is normally to tell the relatives of the sick person why the person is sick. It is from here that the witchcraft belief crops-up. The “Ihako” specialist after thanking his God for bringing to him customer; asks his God to help him open his eyes and finally identify the enemy who is about to kill his beloved patient.¹⁹

The Makua regards death as unwanted, accidental and a called for event and caused by bad spirits or man. They believe that God never created a man as his beloved sons and daughter only to kill him/her in the end. They also believe that there are strong forces or spirits which are more powerful than God Himself and that is why Makua as other people lose their lives and die. There is no death in Makua which is not connected with witchcraft or bad spirits. The living dead as Mbiti says, “occupy the intermediate position between men and the spirits and God. The living dead speak a bilingual language of human beings whom they recently left through physical death, and of the spirits to whom they are joined or God to whom they are now nearer than they were physical men.”²⁰

¹⁹Kgatelopele, “Know”

²⁰Mbiti, *Concepts of God*, 230.

Chapter 2. Inculturation and Evangelism: The Bible and Mission in Masasi

The historical background of the Anglican Church Diocese of Masasi woven with the history of The Universities' Mission to Central Africa (1857 - 1965) which was a missionary society established by members of the Anglican Church within the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and Dublin. “The society had two major goals: to establish a mission presence in Central Africa, and to actively oppose the slave trade.”²¹ The Anglican Church Diocese of Masasi was firmly in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church, and the first to devolve authority to a bishop in the field rather than to a home committee. Founded in response to a plea by David Livingstone, the Society established the mission stations that grew to be the bishoprics of Zanzibar and Nyasaland (Malawi), and pioneered the training of black African priests. The society's foundation was inspired by lectures that Livingstone gave on his return from Africa in 1857. Though named to reflect its university origins, from the outset it welcomed contributions from well-wishers unaffiliated to those institutions.

To advance the missions goals, the mission society sought to send a mission led by Bishop Mackenzie into Central Africa; the bishop was duly consecrated in 1860 and led an expedition in 1861 up the Zambezi into the Shire Highlands, and settled in Malawi. One of the great challenges that the missionaries faced in Lake Nyasa was malaria sickness, and this problem led Mackenzie's successor, Bishop Tozer, to relocate the Society's base to Zanzibar in 1864. Here they enjoyed much greater success, receiving a cordial welcome from the island's Arab and African residents, and establishing a number of operations, including a mission school St Andrew's at Kiungani. The mission's early work in Zanzibar substantially involved caring for and schooling children rescued

²¹Wilson, George Herbert, “History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa,” Ayer. P.3, 1971, Accessed January 22, 2021.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universities%27_Mission.

from slavery, and establishing a settlement at Mbweni which was founded in 1871 as home for the released slaves. On Christmas Day, 1873, as Robert Keable says, “the foundation stone of Christ Church was laid in the grounds of the former slave market, closed only six months earlier.”²²

In 1875 while in Zanzibar Bishop Steere was preparing himself to get suitable position for some of the freed slaves living at Mbweni in Zanzibar. He decided to take up the work which was connected with his expedition to the Nyasa where the freed slaves had been taken. On the 6th of October Bishop Steere left Zanzibar, accompanied by the Rev. W.P. Johnson, Mr. Beardall, four of the old scholars from Kiungani, seventy porters and fifty-five of the Mbweni people, thirty-one men and twenty-four women, including two girls who accompanied their mothers. Some of these people had already been baptized and they were under Christian instruction, and “they had as many native leaders John Almas and Sarah Lozi, one of the best of the baptized couples”²³. As Bishop Steere and the freed slaves were travelling the forests were thick, and so matted together with old thorny creepers, that it would have taken months to clear a road. They chose an easier way through the hill range and so they then followed up the line of a small river, the Ukeredi, which flows into Lindi harbors. They then walked for ten days and arrived at Masasi. Upon arriving at Masasi Bishop Steere got some new friends who had been freed from slavery by Dr. David Livingstone and Bishop Mackenzie. One of the freed slaves was Chuma so the caravan was joined by other new freed slaves who had also been in Zanzibar. The site for the mission village at Masasi was reportedly chosen by African converts whom the missionaries were attempting to lead back to the homes from which

²²Robert Keable, *Darkness or Light: a history of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. Universities' Mission to Central Africa* (London: S.W. Partridge & Paternoster Row, 1912), 91.

²³Keable, *Darkness or Light*, 189.

they had been captured by slavers. Herbert says “The site (Masasi) was not original home of the freed slaves but, it resembled to their original home to settle.”²⁴



Fig 2: Site of the first church built in 1881 this part of Masasi.

The plat form in the left picture shown above was erected in that church on November 28th 1881 by the Reverend Chauncy Maples to be the place from which the word of God should be read to all willing to hear. In 1955 charterhouse gave this plaque in memory of Maples who was a pupil there from 1865-1869. The wooden cross on the right side still stands there even today since it was planted hundred years ago.

Bishop Steere with the freed slaves determined upon the site of a new station, when they got permission from a chief named Namkumba who was a great smelter and worker in iron to settle on a place Bishop Steere and the freed slaves had chosen. Bishop Steere made presents of calico and brass wire and ornamental cloths to Namkumba and to a number of his relatives, and this increased friendship between the two parties. Without fear Bishop Steere and other freed slaves at once entered into the spirit of the village at Masasi and began without delay to build and to cultivate. Every couple had a house.

²⁴Herbert, *History of the Universities*, 42.

The Missionaries' methods used for fruitful inculturation

In every mission, inculturation is a "never ending process because of its dynamic nature in each culture that has a continuous encounter between the Gospel and the local cultures. It is a “give” and “take” process that the Christian message has assimilated into the local culture that has automatically become their part and parcel of their lifestyles.”²⁵ Every culture has its own values and good elements in it. Therefore, the value of the host culture needs to be respected and including elements such as language, music, customs, traditions, dress, rituals and lifestyles. During evangelism, it is important to know the language of a particular culture. Words are symbols, symbols have meanings, and meaning is assigned to symbols by the culture in which one lives. Therefore, communication in the acts of evangelism only takes place as the two trying to communicate assign the same meaning to the symbol being used. David Livermore says, “Language is central to effective cross-cultural communication.”²⁶ The first missionaries who reached Masasi used strategies to communicate with the Makua people in ways that were respectful. The missionaries did not disrespect the indigenous language. The missionaries taught Africans English by sending them to schools, and then those Africans became translators who were able to use the vernacular in church services. Evangelism as done by these first missionaries in Masasi diocese was welcomed by Makua people because the missionaries understood the Makua’s culture. While the message does not change (Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord), the methodology of doing evangelism must change from culture to culture.

²⁵Joseph Mattam and Sebastian Kim. ed." Mission as Inculturation”, in Dimension of Mission in India (Bombay: ST PAULS, 1995), 156.

²⁶David Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.2009),115.

Establishing a good relationship with the indigenous made it possible for effective evangelism to happen in the diocese of Masasi. Marvin Mayers says, “Trust is a precursor to relationship and relationship opens channels of communication.”²⁷ The missionaries did build trust with Makua people, the Makua people felt they had been accepted by the missionaries, they felt they were valued as human beings. After trust was established, there was a greater likelihood that people, among themselves shared important information the way how trust was built.

The first method used by the first Anglican missionaries when they arrived in Masasi was to create an environment of friendship with Makua chiefs and other Makua people. The Anglican missionaries as opposed to German and Italian missionaries during their inculturation process were less imperialistic. The Germans and the Italian missionaries did not adequately encourage inculturation. Bishop Steere with the freed slaves made presents of calico and brass wire and ornamental cloths to Namkumba and to a number of his relatives, and this increased friendship between the two parties. Because of this friendship, the missionaries got permission from the local chief to build some churches, for example a church at Mkomaindo and a cathedral Mtandi which stands under the beautiful hill. This was an early priority but later when the missionaries overcame their various difficulties, they found enough resources and energy to build schools where local leaders were taught to read and write. Mkomaindo hospital and other health centers were built in Masasi where indigenous people went for treatment. The missionaries continued to attempt to build communities and provide what they considered to be the best spiritual and educational opportunities for indigenous chiefs and local leaders. After creating good environment with chiefs and local

²⁷Marvin Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 35-40.

leaders by making the local leaders church elders Mayers says that, “it was easy for the first missionaries to learn the tradition of the Makua people.”²⁸

An example of a Chief who played a great role in the evangelization of the Gospel was Akumbemba Chief of Mtandi who was converted to Christianity. Reid says that, “One reason for the choice of this site (for the church) was that the Akumbemba of those days was the only chief in the whole Masasi district who showed any wish to become a Christian.”²⁹ He was a regular attendant at the service held on Sundays in the Yao language which is also spoken by the Yao people who also live in Masasi district. He went to receive additional instruction in the elements of Christianity. In the year 1886 the Chief was ready to receive the Cross and become a catechumen. The chief was very friendly, glad to have the missionaries in their midst, and pleased that their children were to be taught by the missionaries. The Makua people had shown hitherto little or no personal interest in the spiritual side of the missionaries’ work.

Through local leaders who were then made lay church leaders, missionaries learned how Makua people were peace-loving, industrious, and kind people. Missionaries learned that the Makua people were well organized, united, and cooperative. The Makua people were taught about the importance of family care, community services, leadership and keeping their traditions and values. Boys had their special teachings and instructions, they were taught about hunting, burying the dead, and those who were willing to marry or being married received some important teachings during their initiation ceremonies (Jando) where they were taught on how to live with a woman. Girls were taught on how to take care of the house, handle their husband when they got married. Special people were trained to conduct traditional initiation ceremonies who had already received Christian

²⁸Mayers, *Christian Confronts Culture*, 36.

²⁹Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, 67.

teachings, integrated with catechesis, priests and deacons. Local tradition leaders allowed church leaders to include Christian teachings in their local training areas where initiations took place. Two things were done where traditional ceremonies took place. The Jando ceremony took place for three months, and immediately after the traditional teachings, all the people who went for jando were baptized. After the baptism, Christian teachings continued until they received confirmation, official marriage in the church was accompanied by the tradition of the Makua people.

Anglican Missionaries, by respecting and incorporating the culture and tradition of the Makua people had opened room for acceptance and mutual understanding. Realizing the value of the Makua people, missionaries further nourished the value of the Christian message among the indigenous. The Christian message cannot be forced into one's culture. It has to be rooted in cultural, social, economic, religious and political realities which act as an active agent of inculturation. The process of inculturation begins when missionaries first arrive in a region in which Christianity does not exist and the instruction of converts takes place. Gradually, after perhaps experiencing more strongly an initial rupture with their previous culture, those who enter the Christian faith start to give it a more local expression.

For Church as a part of mission, indigenization in the liturgical worship becomes an important element. Linguistic adaptation engaging in translations, formation of local clergy, sociological adaptation, and artistic expression are part of the process of indigenization which bring the local atmosphere particularly into the worship. From the beginning of the early missionary activities in Masasi, the Gospel was implanted deep into the life and culture of the Makua tribe in socio-economic -religious development. The socio-cultural life of the Makua people was very much dependent on the Christian message.

The movement of evangelism changed the Makua people who had their original traditional religion. The story of evangelism in the history of Masasi church is the history of the church which was spread by the missionaries and some of the freed slaves who had been left free and decided to settle in Masasi. The evangelism movement consumed with love, respect, solidarity, friendship to the people whom the Lord had sent. Through effective evangelism new missions advanced, church-planting movements, believer's unleashed evangelism in a new and effective ways. Even today the church in Tanzania should stand in dire need of such movement, a movement driven by a heart for the gospel.

On the basis of biblical terms and considering the practice of the early church of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first missionaries who arrived in Masasi evangelized to all Makua people who had their traditional religion and put their trust on God. As Alvin Reid says, “To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Him, to accept Him as their savior, and serve Him as their Lord in the fellowship of the church.”³⁰ The great work of evangelism in Masasi took place at the Old Mission Station and village planted by Bishop Steere in 1876 and broken up by the Magwangwara raid in 1882. The Magwangwara were the Nguni speaking people who went north-eastwards towards Kilwa, Masasi and Rufiji capturing and raiding people’s properties along the coastal areas. Because of the raid from the Magwangwara it was thought wise to remove the village to a comparatively new station of Newala. Robert Heanley says, “About the same time or somewhat later, it was decided also to remove the site of the Mission Station for the Masasi district from the

³⁰Alvin Reid, *Evangelism Handbook Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville, Tennessee: B &H Publishing Group, 2009), 29.

foot of Mkomahindo to its present position at the foot of Mtandi where currently is the headquarter of the Diocese of Masasi.”³¹



Fig 3. The Anglican Church Diocese of Masasi at Mtandi built by freed slaves in 1926.

Challenges that Missionaries Faced during Evangelism

For travel Bishop Steere and other people took their personal luggage, and food for the journey. The Bishop also took with him a portable altar table. It took nearly a week to hire the necessary additional men, to buy food and get it prepared for use on the way and to distribute the guns and axes and hoes. All people who moved from Mbweni had to carry a hoe, and an axe, because of the clearing that would be necessary as they were travelling. The journey was difficult especially when the Bishop's companions broke down and some people of Lindi did all they could to hinder his journey.

However, the Tanzanians later realized that the acquisition of colonies was something different from what they expected from the white missionaries. Tanzanians interpreted as a way of

³¹Robert M. Heanley, *Central Africa, A Monthly Record of the Work Universities' Mission to Central Africa, Vol. VIII 1890*. (London: Wells Gardner Darton & Co. Peternoster Building, 1876),23.

attaining raw materials, and maintain cheap labor which was not accepted by some people in Tanzania. The effect of this agreement was the abolition of the Slave Trade, which increased the number of freed slaves that the missions would take care of. To meet the demand from the South of the mainland the UMCA extended their missions to Newala and Masasi between 1875-76 where they opened a similar 'Christian Village' when Bishop Steere (successor of Tozer) brought apart of 55 freed slaves from Zanzibar under the care of four European missionaries. In late 1876 Ngoni raiders captured the Masasi community. This disturbed the missionaries who finally concluded that forming a "Christian village" also meant governing it, judging it, punishing it and even rescuing it when it was carried off in a raid.

Another challenge which the first Anglican Missionaries faced when they arrived in Masasi was cultural shock. John Macionis, defines cultural shock as “an experience a person may have when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one’s own; it is also the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply transition to another type of life.”³² One of the most common causes of culture shock for the first missionaries who arrived in Masasi was a foreign environment. Language is the basic tool of communication among people. Individuals who choose to minister cross-culturally but do not learn the language will always be excluded from a deep understanding of local culture. People adjusting to a new culture often feel lonely and homesick because they are not yet used to the new environment and meet people with whom they are not familiar every day. Training in the English language for Makua priests, deacons

³²John Macionis, and Linda Gerber, *Sociology*. 7th edition ed. (Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada Inc., 2010), 54.

and evangelists helped the missionaries to understand better the Makua people and started them in the process of slowly learning the indigenous languages.

Theological Implication/ Importance of Inculturation

The importance of inculturation when evangelizing cannot be underestimated. The whole purpose of inculturation is to make evangelization the influence of the Good News- more effective in human development. An integral human development necessarily includes cultural development and that cultural development is epitomized by inculturation. Inculturation is the double process of the Christian faith taking roots into a local culture and being expressed in local forms and ways, while the values of this local culture enter into strong Christian faith. The church's inculturation in Masasi began with an honest dialogue between the missionaries and the Makua people regarding local culture. The conversation exchange took sometimes not a year and inherited separately from both the church and the traditionalists Makua people. This dialogue between the church and the Makua would be relevant to the 21st century. If both parties clearly understood their position and vision, and were willing to accept each other's differences, then any dispute or unrealistic approach to inculturation could be avoided, paving the way for a positive, natural and solid inculturation. This kind of dialogue benefited both parties without making any sacrifices, thus creating a mutual relationship based on trust. There were also other missionaries apart from the Anglican missionaries who went to Masasi, but their approaches during their evangelism were different. The German missionaries were also one of the missionaries who went to Masasi and built their mission station at Ndanda, but they did not appreciate the Makua, the Yao culture and traditions. The German missionaries did not successfully win many people in the coastal areas because they disliked and despised indigenous culture as a result they were not easily welcomed. When the Anglican missionaries managed to win a lot of converts, evangelism process was on its channel.

Inculturation becomes meaningfully when missionaries, pastors, evangelists immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent, moving beyond their own cultural limitations. Hence they must learn the language of the place in which they work, become familiar with the most important expressions of the local culture, and discover its values through direct experience. Only if they have this kind of awareness will they be able to bring to people the knowledge of the hidden mystery in a credible and fruitful way. It is not of course a matter of missionaries, pastors, deacons, and evangelists renouncing their own culture.

Every Believer in Christ is obliged to obey this Great Commission; Anglican missionaries had to preach in homes, on the streets, in classrooms, in the buses, and wherever people were. Evangelism was something important taught to Makua people because Jesus commanded it (Matt. 16:15), and the apostles also commanded it (2 Tim. 4:2, 5). Through evangelism many people were encouraged; because the gospel is the Good News. During the inculturation process the first white Anglican missionaries got an opportunity to work directly with (and for) God (Lk. 10:2). Evangelism precedes baptism and salvation (Mk. 16:16), it proves our love for our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:12-14), it opens the door for healing to take place (Luke 10:9), and it is the gateway of repentance and remission of sins (Lk. 24:47). Evangelism brings understanding of Scriptures unto humanity (Acts 8:30) and it causes the Holy Spirit to move (Acts 10:44). It is a fruit of righteousness (Pro. 11:30), unites all nations, races, tribes, and cultures by reconciling all humanity to God through Christ. Evangelism is actually the work Jesus would do if He had not ascended into Heaven. Our Savior, and Lord has put His Holy Spirit in us to live His life here on earth and thus to draw many into the Kingdom of heaven. Evangelism opens the door for healing to take place (Luke 10:9). It is the gateway of repentance and remission of sins (Lk. 24:47) It brings understanding of Scriptures unto humanity (Acts 8:30) Evangelism is not an option for a Christian,

however. The Great Commission includes the expectation that Christians will evangelize and disciple some from every ethnic group. Historically, this has meant leaving the familiar and entering into foreign cultures (Matt. 28:18-20). In Acts 1:8, Jesus said that after the Holy Spirit came upon Christians, they would witness of Him at home, in somewhat foreign contexts and in totally foreign environments. Jesus promised Peter and Andrew that He would make them "fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Fishermen do not normally wait for fish to come to them but go searching for them with bait. Another biblical analogy describes Christians as "ambassadors," whose work is peacemaking--between God and individuals (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Normally non-Christians do not seek out Christians in order to find God. When we see someone, who is headed for hell, we cannot pretend before God that we did not perceive this. Instead, we form a rescue party, including intercessors (Prov. 24:11-12)

Evangelism may be one of the greatest ways we can obey these two commandments. We love God by glorifying Him with our sacrificial obedience in laying down our lives to witness to others. We love God by honoring Him with the gospel that we preach, a gospel which puts His glory, His character, His achievements, and His promises at the center. We love our neighbor by being willing to pay any price and bear any burden in order that they may hear this message. We are willing to risk ridicule, rejection, loss of job, threats to our families, physical attacks, imprisonment, torture, and even death that some of them may have eternal life. I can hardly think of anything else in the Christian life which more perfectly obeys these two great commandments than evangelism. This is enough motivation for us: glory for God, compassion for the lost.

Furthermore, Christ has given (at least five times) the "great Commission": Matthew 28:18-20 "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Mark 16:15-16 “He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.'" Luke 24:46-49 "He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. (John 20:21-23) Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'" And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Chapter 3: Teaching Materials

To achieve the academic materials for priests, deacons, pastors, and evangelists studying at St. Mark's Theological College, and also other theological colleges, I shall explore the nature and relevance of inculturation by examining the objectives of the course, methodology, culture and faith. Students also will learn the importance of inculturation for effective evangelization, and the four different models for effective evangelization employed by the Church over the centuries. It shall be implied throughout this work that, inculturation is a Christocentric enterprise; it has its foundation in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I shall conclude in this chapter that, the agents of inculturation are not only the specialist priests, pastors, evangelists, expatriates' missionaries or the indigenous clergy; inculturated evangelization is the work of the entire local Church.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the course to theological college to examine the Theology of inculturation in the church of Tanzania. Specifically, the course will enable students to meet the following;

- (a) Examine the demand and relevance of inculturation for cultural development.
- (b) Assess inculturation message to Tanzania.
- (c) Determine the role of priests, deacons, and evangelists in inculturation for effective evangelization in the church of Tanzania.
- (d) Examine the model of inculturation in Tanzanian Church, and the agents of inculturation.

The information contained here comes from two sources: first, library research, and second, field research conducted between June 2020, and December 2021. Primary data was derived from first-hand information through personal interviews, observation, questionnaire and document analysis methods. Primary data was the core of my data, which was supplemented with secondary data from relevant library data gathered from published books, unpublished books, articles, archival materials, and local dailies. Masasi district in Tanzania was my focus of study. The study confined itself on the Anglican Church as an agent of inculturation.

The interaction of cultures is part of the normal pattern of cultural development. All cultures, throughout history, have undergone some form of change in which the structures of society and its patterns of thought have remained intact or changed. Bediak K, says, “a Christian approach to any culture cannot be adequately elaborated outside that culture”³³ This is not to say that culture super-cedes the Gospel, but it does mean that, when the Gospel is transmitted and received within a culture, one begins to appreciate the true nature and the contours of a Christian approach to that culture. In other words, Sussy Gumo says, “the question of a Christian approach to culture is always a dynamic process, which starts with the Gospel taking people as they are when it encounters them and continues to transform their worldview, their habits and actions and relationships into the image of Christ.”³⁴

Evangelization is in the process addressed to human individuals who belong to clearly defined social groupings and who are profoundly linked to a cultural tradition. The Gospel cannot, therefore, be transmitted to or from people independently of their culture. In one-way or another, a

²⁰ Asare K. Bediak K, *The Relevance of a Christian Approach in Africa* (London: Routledge, 1992),30.

³⁴ Sussy Gumo, “The theology of inculturation and the African church” October 2009, accessed March 11,2021, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228760345> -The theology of inculturation.

culture is evangelized, along with its adepts. John Bowen says, “people come to Christian faith gradually, through a series of influences, and over a period of time which may take months or years. Jesus’ own frequent use of the imagery of sowing and reaping is sufficient testimony to the accuracy and usefulness of the concept of process evangelism”³⁵ The conversion of the heart, which is the aim of evangelization, involves change at the deepest levels of cultural identity. The Church and its Gospel message is thus a catalyst of structural change.

Culture and Faith

Priests, pastors and theologians in colleges must understand that inculturation is a befitting evangelization model that can help the church in Tanzania to live and express the gospel message in an authentic way in their context. Inculturation will make the church in Tanzanian church truly Tanzanian and truly Christian. Inculturation involves a relationship between the church as the carrier of the gospel message and cultures. Religious faith is an important dimension of every culture. Faith is an un-coerced response to God’s revelation. Christian faith is founded on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The source of faith is God; God takes the initiative and the duty of man is to respond. Unlike culture, faith is not a human product, even though one has to be responsible for his or her assent. Faith implies a relationship with Christ; a relationship which involves faithfulness to the teachings of Christ and the tradition of the church. Faith is lived, expressed and communicated in and through culture. Both culture and faith require each other to flourish as Pope John Paul II says,

Culture is inseparable from religion faith in as much as God is the author, sustainer, and final goal of human existence. Religion often represents the transcendent dimension of the culture

³⁵John Bowen, “Process Evangelism and The Significance of Questions in The Gospel of John” April 8, 2002, accessed March 11th, 2021. <http://institute.wycliffecollege.ca/2002/04/process-evangelism-and-the-significance-of-questions-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

itself. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude a person takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God.³⁶

Understanding faith and culture in the process of inculturation is very important in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Inculturation denotes the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture. Dennis Doyle defines inculturation as “to denote a process of engagement between the Christian Gospel and a particular culture. The term is intended conceptually both to safeguard the integrity of the Gospel and to encourage sensitivity to various cultural contexts.”³⁷ In Christianity, inculturation is the adaptation of the way Church teachings are presented to other, mostly non-Christian, cultures and, in turn, the influence of those cultures on the evolution of these teachings as R. Crollius, says,

The integration of the Christian experience of a local church into the culture of its people in such a way that the experience not only express itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion not only within the culture in question, but also as an enrichment of the church universal.³⁸

Some Christians whom I interviewed in the diocese of Masasi support the view that the agents of evangelization are only for foreign missionaries as it was done when the first Anglican missionaries did in Masasi. However, it was found during the research that most of the foreign missionaries who went to evangelize in Masasi diocese found it difficult to adapt to the culture of Makua people. They lacked patience and discernment to dialogue with the indigenous. The task of inculturation during the evangelism process should be also in the hands of native priests, deacons, evangelists, and laity in context. The indigenous are better equipped to evangelize their own culture and that they have

³⁶Allen. Dulles, “John Paul II as a Theologian of Culture” *Logos Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*1:2 1997, 19

³⁷Dennis M. Doyle, “The Concept of inculturation in Roman Catholicism” *A Theological Consideration*. Accessed February 3, 2021.https://economics.udayton.edu/cgi/view_content.

³⁸Hugues R. Crollius, *Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Progress* (Nairobi: Pauline, 1986), 43.

the potentials to express and live the gospel message in their own way with their own people in their context.

Inculturation

The Tanzanian Swahili word inculturation is translated as utamadunisho. The prefix “u” refers to a situation of being or acting. The word “tamaduni” in ordinary Swahili, the word simply refers to a culture. Thus, utamadunisho literally refers to the condition of making culture. To church leaders in Tanzania generally, inculturation is primarily about living the message of Christ or the Gospel. The inculturation involves the adaptation of the liturgy to different cultures and the tolerance of various pagan practices that are deemed part of the traditional culture. Any time the gospel is presented in a new culture, the matter of inculturation must be addressed. When the apostle Paul tried to evangelize the Greeks in Athens, he was involved in inculturation to a certain extent (Acts 17:22–33). In the late Twentieth Century Ross Kane says, inculturation became a favored term for identifying how various peoples adapt the Christian Gospel to their culture.”³⁹ Paul began by noting that the Greeks had an altar dedicated to the unknown gods at which they worshiped. In this way Paul related to the Greeks and their culture. From there he moved to the truth about their “unknown” deity, proclaiming the reality of the God who created them and provided for their salvation. Paul also quoted some philosophers of the day (Acts 17:28) in order to further bolster his message. Paul’s inculturation or contextualization of the gospel began with taking the Greeks’ understanding that there was a God, although they did not know Him, and building on that limited knowledge. Paul tapped in to the universal knowledge of God’s existence (Romans 1:19–20) and explained that God is the Creator (Acts 17:24), that He is self-sufficient (verse 25), and that He

³⁹Ross Kane, *Syncretism and Christian Tradition: Race and Revelation in the study of Religious Mixture* (Oso: Oxford University Press USA, 2020), 87.

ordains the means for men to come to the knowledge of Him (verses 26–27). He went on to explain God’s providence in the matter of salvation and then went to the heart of the matter—the future judgment of the world through Jesus Christ, who was resurrected from the dead, and the need for all men to repent (verses 30–31). When the Greeks heard about the resurrection, the results were mixed: some of them mocked, some put him off until later, and some believed (verses 32–34). Inculturation is the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture. It results in the creative reinterpretation of both, without being unfaithful to either. Specifically, Madu Ejikemeuwa says that,⁴⁰

it refers to a movement for the Africanisation or indigenization of Christianity in some parts of Africa particularly Tanzania. This became necessary, following the failure of the European missionaries to 'root the gospel message solidly unto the African word of meaning, reality-structure, survival thrust or the African conceptual framework', a failure, which resulted in a seemingly alienation and estrangement of the Christianity on African soil. This failure also made it difficult for Africans to 'separate the gem of Christianity from the chaffs or accidents of it.’⁴¹

Inculturation is of paramount importance in the transmission of Christianity in a cross-cultural setting. Gitonga Nahashon says that, “inculturation is necessarily the case because inculturation produces a wholesome Christianity, which adequately meets the spiritual needs of the communities being evangelized.”⁴² Gerald Artuckle says, “inculturation is a dialectical interaction between Christian faith and cultures in which these cultures are challenged, affirmed, and transformed toward the reign of God, and in which Christian faith is likewise challenged, affirmed, and enhanced by this experience.”⁴³ Inculturation describes the Christian Gospel

⁴⁰Gitonga, Nahashon, “The Process of Inculturation of Christianity in Kenya: a case study of Kaaga Methodist Synod, Meru”, accessed March 10th, 2021. <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle>.

⁴¹Madu Ejikemeuwa, *Honest to African cultural heritage* (Anambra: Coskan Associates Printers and Publishers, 2004), 59.

⁴²Ejikemeuwa, *Honest to Africa*, 59.

⁴³Gerald Artuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2010), 118.

becoming implanted within a locality in ways does not contradict with the culture in any particular context. Lack of inculturation, however, renders Christianity ineffective in the lives of the recipient communities. Inculturation is important and necessary for Africa because the gospel must be deeply rooted in the life and culture of the people. This will enable Africans to wholeheartedly accept Christianity as their own not as a foreign religion. Thus, inculturation is both important and necessary because Tanzanians want to be truly Tanzanian Christians in a truly Tanzanian Church. In order for inculturation to achieve this important and necessary function, it has to involve every aspect of Tanzanian life.

In Tanzania Magesa found many church leaders considering inculturation insufficiently implemented with too much control wielded by church authorities and too little control at the grassroots. He was touching on a general problem that has affected the process of inculturation in Tanzania. Due to great education given in colleges and also in churches a good number of theologians now accept that inculturation is a task for all the faithful. Laurent Magesa says, “Church leaders in Africa, and not Vatican official, should be ones to lead the process of integrating of the Christian faith into the local socio-religious realities”⁴⁴ Because of the tight grip the leaders in churches have, ordinary Christians have learned their own views on the process of inculturation, and rely on what the leaders of the church say. Christians have learned to be passive recipients of the church teachings and not active participants and agents of change in their own church.

Also, understanding the culture of a particular place is very important for inculturation as Mbachu H. says that, “it a good understanding of the culture of a place is necessary for

⁴⁴Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (New York: Orbis, 2014),117.

effective inculturation. Briefly stated: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society"⁴⁵ The basic book of life for Christians is the Bible. As Christians, therefore, it is important for us to go to the bible for direction, instruction and correction in every aspect of human life for a perfect inculturation at any place where the Bible is preached. John Waliggo M. says that, "The Bible remains the first and powerful source and principle of any inculturation"⁴⁶

The Five Different Models of Inculturation for Effective Evangelization

I use the term 'model' to describe how the Christian community throughout its history had related with people of other faith and culture. Thus, the attitudes are abstracted into models of interacting with the Makua traditionalist who among them are Muslim communities in Masasi district. These models are expansion, diakonia, presence and dialogue. I then propose the model of kenosis as the relevant and most effective model for the Tanzania situation.

The first mode is the model of expansion that seeks to spread Christianity through its geographical area and or numerical strength. The main focus is the idea of converting individuals and incorporating them into the church as Timothy Yates says that "this tradition has long since been articulated from the early beginning of the Acts of the Apostles and the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome."⁴⁷ This has been the predominant model of relating to non-Christians throughout the history of the Tanzanians with the convictions of missionaries that they were called to 'go and make disciples of all nations. This was also influenced by the spread of Islam as

⁴⁵Mbachu, H. *Inculturation Theology of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15: An Interpretation for the Igbo Church* (Bern: Peter Lang Frankfurt, 1995), 34.

⁴⁶John Waliggo, M. 1986. *Making A Church that is Truly African. In Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*, (Nairobi: St Paul's Publications Africa, 1986), 20.

⁴⁷Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7.

evangelization was in the context of a perceived competition with Islam which was expanding in the coastal areas of Tanzania. Considering the efforts of expansion, Frederiks submits that in the context of Gambia, “given Christianity being less than 10% of the population after 550 years of missionary toil, the model has not been very successful in Gambia. It is also devoid of a genuine encounter with the other person since it only perceived the other as one to be evangelized.”⁴⁸ The story of Peter and Cornelius however denotes the continuity, rather than a fresh start, of a person who already has a religion and a grasp of God. This happened when some people sent by Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, to Peter. It was unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God had shown Peter in a vision that he should not call anyone profane or unclean. Peter went to meet Cornelius without any objection because God is a God of all people. (Acts 10:24-33)

The second model of inculturation is diakonia which is rooted in and influenced by the scripture of reconciliation. Lucinda Ellen Mosher says, “It is our Christian conviction that reconciliation among people and with the world cannot be separated from reconciliation offered in Jesus Christ”⁴⁹ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). The church thus identifies with God’s ministry of reconciliation of the world and serves the other person whether Christian or non-Christian as a fellow human being. This concept stems from both the Old Testament and the New Testament with its ultimate manifestation in life. The ministry of Jesus Christ as the great ‘diakonos’, as J. A. B. Jongeneel says, “has played a significant role in mission history and often taken the form of

⁴⁸ Wilma Frederiks, *We have Toiled all Night*, 122.

⁴⁹ Lucinda Ellen Mosher, *Towards Our Mutual Flourish: The Episcopal Church, Interreligious Relations and Theologies of Religious Manyness* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 34.

‘missionary service, education, medical, welfare and relief work and development projects.’⁵⁰ This understanding gradually evolved and came to mean not only the idea of service to individuals but also to the Church’s participation in the ministries of reconciliation, liberation and social change.

The third model of inculturation was the model of presence. The model of presence comes with the understanding of witnessing among people through the silent testimony of living and working with the people. It has a conscious respectful approach to the faith, beliefs, traditions and cultures of the other with the attempt to witness in a non-confrontational way by sharing life. This is how the first Anglican missionaries did when they arrived in Masasi as Frederiks says, “The old tradition of presence is traced back to the monastic tradition of exemplifying actions like that of Francis of Assisi stressing the idea of the value of presence in a Muslim society⁵¹. This model led many Muslims to join Christianity, and in one family it has been found that some are Christians and others are Muslims. Missionaries were therefore instructed to go and live among Muslims, adopting their culture, their dress, their food and their language in order to gain their confidence, creating the atmosphere for future witnessing. Max Warren speaks of presence as taking the form of friendship, as he summaries “being present among people with a presence willed and intended as a witness of the love of Christ.”⁵² The model was practiced by the first Anglican Missionaries, and their examples were followed by many missionaries practicing the approach in predominantly Muslim population living in the coastal areas of Lindi region.

⁵⁰Jan Arie Bastiaan Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science and Theology of Mission in the 19th and 20th centuries, II*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 123.

⁵¹Frederiks, *We have Toiled*, 126.

⁵²Max Warren, “*The Meaning of Identification*’ in G.H. Anderson, *The Theology of Christian Mission*” (London: SCM Press, 1961). 128.

The fourth model of inculturation was dialogue. This model encourages an open attitude and respect to people of non-Christian faith with the willingness to be challenged and changed through the encounter within an organized or religiously pluralistic setting. There is the common understanding of the non-Christian and the Christian alike as fellow pilgrims in the journey of life and faith in God. Lucinda Ellen Mosher says, “Mutual understanding, respect, and trust, makes collaborative community service possible and can be a vehicle for authentic witness.”⁵³ And Yates agrees, saying, “True dialogue with a man of another faith requires a concern both for the gospel and for the other man. Without the first, dialogue becomes a pleasant conversation. Without the second, it becomes irrelevant, unconvincing or arrogant”⁵⁴. Dialogue with people of other faith particularly the Muslim communities in the coastal areas of Tanzania fostered efforts for effective evangelization.

The fifth model for inculturation in the model of kenosis. Jesus Christ emptied himself by sharing our humanity and by living among us in a shared humanity as modeled by Christ becomes the blue print for Christian witness. To show the love of God for humankind in Philippians 2:5-11, Jesus’ self-emptying act in the incarnation is the model of kenosis.

This self-emptying act entails a radical contextualization for identity, which encompasses culture (inculturation), religion (interreligious dialogue) and the social political setting (liberation). It is highly relational and interactive in nature within the context of the community and thus carries an attitude of flexibility and adjustment centered on people rather than the rigid and uncompromising maintenance of structures, institutions, policies and theologies.⁵⁵

⁵³Lucinda Ellen Mosher, *Towards Our Mutual Flourish*, 18.

⁵⁴Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 165-167.

⁵⁵Frederiks, *We Have Toiled all Night*, 406.

In Tanzania there is the reality of a shared humanity between Christians, Muslims and African Traditional and Cultural believers. It is the basic common participation of the same daily activities like going to school together, naming ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and working together that relationships, friendships and faith is built and shared. In this shared human experience kenosis becomes a radical self-emptying as a necessity to establishing meaningful relationships with people of other faiths and cultures. It is through this approach that the village catechist and evangelists live and work on the land, teaches in the school, eat the same food and visit the neighbor. Their presence in the village and participation in the village life is in itself a sign of the love of God and attracts many people from other faith to join Christianity. Inculturation and interreligious dialogue therefore are not just optional for the interested few, but according to the model of kenosis, they belong to the core of the Christian calling to imitate Christ in his self-emptying love for people which brings a deep appreciation of the culture, religion and socio-political framework of the other.

From the five models of inculturation John Pobee coins the term *skenosis* to mean, “The ‘tabernacling’ of the one and eternal word of God which must be active in each particular culture with no deemed normative for the mission of the Gospel.”⁵⁶ It holds us to a non-negotiable word of God, which transcends time and place but must nevertheless be translated to become comprehensible in new times and contexts, and must be attentive to the living stream of tradition of the living communities of faith. Like all true prophecy the word of God contains, words of hope as well as of condemnation. I argue that one can conclude that the context of the scripture is merely presenting the entrance of God in human form in the person of Jesus into the world. Thus, the gospel in *skenosis*, is not only about its entrance into the world, as some may limitedly understand,

⁵⁶ John Pobee, *West Africa Christ Would Be an African Too, Gospel and Culture Pamphlet 9* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996), 141.

but an entrance and full existence temporally within an area at every given time and space. Again, at the apex of the Makua people is the divine who is involved in all things, directs, critiques and guides, and is in whom all things are fulfilled. With all these aspects at work skenosis can be fully interpreted in this context with the reciprocal engagement of the Makua and the gospel. The contextual indigenized interpretation and understanding of skenosis, is already inculturation at work.

Conclusion

Understanding the agents of the inculturation process is very important. The principal agent of evangelization is the Holy Spirit who sows the seed in the heart of humanity and guides us to perfection. However, understanding the role of priests, deacons, and evangelists who are theologians, and as human agents is indispensable to rekindle in man's heart the fire which has already been lighted by the Holy Spirit. Human agents called by God have the task to proclaim the good news and reconcile all peoples to Christ. The process of inculturated evangelization is not the task only of foreign missionaries but every individual priest, deacon, evangelist in every place where one is sent to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There should be appropriate ways of evangelism in the Masasi context and elsewhere in Tanzania. Priests, deacons, and evangelists, should be conscious that they are on a mission, and that one of their roles is to pray for the lost and for opportunities to share the Gospel. They should be friendly and engaging, to let people know that they are really Christians, share a tract, their stories, and gospel as the opportunity arises. Inculturation for fruitful evangelism involves converting people to Christianity. It often goes hand in hand with the activities of missionaries. Some Christians feel that they should take on this role as they believe that they can help people to discover their real purpose in life. Inculturation in any context for effective evangelization should involve converting people to Christianity, and it should go hand in hand with the activities of missionaries. Some Christians feel that they should take on this role as they believe that they can help people to discover their real purpose in life.

The idea of the church as our mother strengthens the family of God. Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task. It raises the challenges to the question of the church's fidelity to the Gospel and Apostolic tradition amidst evolution of cultures. Hence inculturation is an ongoing

process within the criteria of compatibility with the Christian message on one hand and communion with the universal church on the other. Inculturation includes the whole life of the church and structures; theology, liturgy, church's life and structures. Hence a need for research on Tanzanian cultures and all their complexity. The practical inculturation should be on caring of others, solidarity, healthy relationships, acceptance dialogue and trust.

The word that comes from the mouth of God is living and active and never returns to him in vain. The written word of God is a matter of one's interpretation but it should be authentically interpreted by the church. In order that the Word of God may be known and preserved in the hearts of the faithful access to the sacred scriptures must be accelerated. Also there need for scriptural formation of the clergy, religious and the laity in general. In brief we must put sacred Scriptures into the hands of all the faithful. Inculturation therefore must follow proper logic of the mystery of the redemption; the paschal mystery. "Unless a grain of wheat falls and dies. Only then will it bear fruit" (Jn 12:32). This self-emptying (kenosis) is necessary for exaltation (Phil 2:6-9). Every culture therefore needs to be transformed by Gospel values in the light of the paschal mystery. Only through the incarnation and redemption mysteries can the counter-values of cultures be discerned. Just as Jesus was like us in everything but sin, so also inculturation takes all authentic human values, purifying them from sin and restoring them to their full meaning. Inculturation takes all authentic human values purifying them from sin and restoring them to their full meaning.

Although inculturation has greatly contributed to the rapid growth of Christianity in Masasi and elsewhere in Tanzania, there are looms a danger of losing these gains if nothing is done to the models of doing this inculturation. The Tanzanian Church has become so complex that sticking to the traditional models may not be an action in the right direction. This calls for African theologians to become more innovative and increasingly engage in remodeling as a continuous process.

Evangelization and inculturation cannot be separated, they are all important for the salvation of souls. It may be likened to the process of communication which remains incomplete until it has been received and assimilated by the receiver. For good communication to take place, there is a shared responsibility in which the sender is careful to ensure that the message gets to the receiver and in a decodable form and, the receiver also has to listen well and be open to receive the message sent. Therefore, the argument of this paper is that, evangelization is the communication of Christ and the message for the souls of all men and women, from every nation, tribe and peoples. This communication cannot be complete if it is not inculturated. Evangelization cannot take place in its depth if it is not properly received by the process of inculturation. More so, while for the most time, many Tanzanians think that to be Christian is to lose one's Tanzanian identity, this paper argues that the only authentic faith the church in Tanzania can ever have is the faith that is mediated through the Tanzania's culture and with a transforming effect.

Teachers at theological colleges in Tanzania should continue to conscientize priests, deacons, and evangelists in their respectfully colleges on the important role culture plays in holistic development. Evangelization should be carried on by the agents of the same up to the end of the ages (Mt 28:20). Only inculturation realized by local Churches can bring about the transformation of the universal Church and civil society. Theological institutions should take seriously the socio-cultural situations in which the faithful and theologians live, think and act. Therefore, such a contact with concrete socio-cultural situations in the light of Gospel values at different levels can bring about greater service to humanity.

Indeed, there is much discussion about making the Gospel message relevant to the Tanzanians today. The Church should adopt an alternative adequate approach which can produce a favorable effect in encounter with the indigenous people concerning their culture to avoid conflict.

The Church in Tanzania should re-examine some of the cultural practices and identify good morals found in them, so as to employ them for an effective catechism. The Church should encourage the Gospel according to the experiences and needs of the people of God in their localities. Christian leadership in Tanzania should be well equipped to help the Christian in responding simultaneously to the demands of the Gospel and the demands of their culture.

The process of the inculturation into other cultures is costly in time. It is not a matter of purely external adaptation, for inculturation means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures. The process is thus a profound and all-embracing one, which involves the Christian message and also the Church's reflection and practice. At the same time, it is a difficult process, as the attraction to compromise the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian faith is strong.

The Church identifies with biblical culture, but this is ever further from its own living culture of today. The cultures of the first century CE are, in fact, cultures which are not naturally occurring in modern society. The reason for emphasis on biblical culture is because it belongs to the humanity and historicity of Jesus himself, who is the subject of evangelization/inculturation. People of every culture have to do this and it is part of the reality of inculturation itself, especially where these elements are essential to Christian identity. Inculturation is a slow journey which accompanies the whole of missionary life. It involves those working in the Church's mission and the Christian communities as they develop. It is an integral component to evangelism. For this reason, inculturation is essential to the current church in the west however is not ideal for a longer-term plan for the church.

As church leaders today we should appreciate culture identity among people in different cultures, and the priests, deacons and evangelists in general cannot achieved their ministerial goals

without inculturation. Inculturation is a prerequisite to rooting the gospel into the hearts of particular cultures so that Jesus Christ himself becomes the motivating factor that guides and orients these cultures, not from without but from within. Inculturation is the efficient means to bring Christ into cultures and also to elevate these cultures to perfection in Christ through purification and transformation. This encounter creates unique Christian identity which is sustained only through continuous and permanent contact with Christ. As such, church ministers should understand that inculturation must necessarily be a continuous adventure and not just a one-day event.

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