

Historicizing the Determinants of the Catholic Evangelization in Western Part of Kenya, 1902- 1978

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This study aimed to investigate the determinants of evangelization in the Western part of Kenya from 1902 to 1978. Literature review helped identify gaps, and Emile Durkheim's functionalism theory and Arnold Toynbee's Challenge and Response theory provided the theoretical framework. A historical research design was used to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence from the past. The target population was one million Catholic faithful; with a sample size of 384 Catholic Christians determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table. Data collection tools included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and secondary sources. Qualitative analysis was performed on the data. Research ethics were followed for authenticity and objectivity. The study found that evangelization in the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega (CDKK) employed a kerygmatic approach rather than Fr. Arnold Witlox's previous approach. It recommended a revision of the CDKK's history from 1904 onwards. In summary, this study explored evangelization determinants in Western Kenya, using theoretical frameworks and a historical research design. The findings emphasized the shift in the CDKK's approach and suggested a reassessment of its historical reconstruction.

Introduction

To understand the present, historians must dig back into the past to provide information that enables them to reconstruct the current situation. In that way, this study established the continuities and discontinuities in evangelization determinants that enhanced the interrogation of the evangelization in the study area. While using the given theoretical framework (which combines two theories: Functionalism Theory and the Challenge and Response Theory), this study endeavoured to illustrate the various determinants that influenced evangelization in the region. In 1902, the first Catholic Missionaries arrived in Western Kenya, and in 1978 is when the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega was carved from the Catholic Diocese of Kisumu. At that time the Diocese encompassed the entire former Western Province of Kenya (Now Vihiga, Kakamega, Busia and Bungoma counties).

There were a series of events that formed the historical benchmarks in this study. These events included: Opening of mission stations, World War One (1914-1918), the inter-war period (1919-1939), World War Two (1939-1945), the fight for

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independence (1945-1963), and the Vatican II Council (1962-1965). In the same breath, the study unraveled several factors and strategies that influenced the Mill Hill Missionary (MHM) evangelization in Western Kenya. They included: 7 missionary friendship with local leaders, the contribution of Chief Sudi Namachanja, involvement of lay people in evangelization, creation of catechumenates, the charisma of the MHM, the beatification of Uganda Martyrs, and the hatred of the Nabongo Mumias' appointees. The MHM also applied diverse strategies to evangelize this region. This study identified the following strategies: planting the faith through Kerygma, baptisms, catechesis, creating catechumenate, education for literacy, house visitations, and learning of local languages. The Laity, especially in Isuka –Idakho regions were influenced by Fr. Arnold Witlox's style of evangelization as his style embraced the local culture. The Catechists, mostly from Uganda, intensified the creation of the catechumenate classes.

This study was premised on the fact that; evangelization in western Kenya can be understood within the evangelization that took place in the larger East Africa. The study traces the catholic evangelization in the region from 1902 to 1978 by interrogating the specific objective of the study, which was to historicize the determinants of the catholic evangelization in the western part of Kenya from 1902 to 1978. The task was to assess the determinants of Catholic evangelization in Western Kenya before 1978.

Literature Review

To assist in situating and interrogating the lacunae for this study are the following: J. Baur (1994), V. M. Mukokho (2016), D. Muwemba (2014), H. Burgman (1990), Frants Groot (1984), P. Sulumeti (1970), among others. To understand the historicity of evangelization in the area of study, it is important to note that by the 15th century, the Portuguese tried to evangelize East Africa, but they ended up dismally.¹ The same idea is held by J. Baur that no any other European Nation had attempted to introduce catholicism in this region apart from the Portuguese.² The Portuguese efforts to spread Christianity were marred by baptism *en mass* without catechesis, conversions of convenience, gender insensitivity whereby they ignored women, and above all they lacked necessary evangelization tactics. Furthermore, they were not good models; in fact their attitudes and emotions towards the people at the East Coast of Africa were inhibitive to effective

1. D. Muwemba, *Op. Cit.*, p. 39; P. Sulumeti, (1970), *Church Missionary in Kenya in the Light of Vatican II council*, PhD dissertation in Canon Law in Pontificium Universitas Urbaniana, (Unpublished Thesis), Rome, p.112.

2. J. Baur, (1994), *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*. 2nd Ed., Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa Ltd., p.76.

evangelization.³ In addition, their evangelization was with little success because the Portuguese failed to make the people at the Coast imitate them and accept Christianity. This was compounded by their destruction of the thriving Indian Ocean trade that made the locals to hate them. D. Muwemba retorts that, the Portuguese had no idea that the Muslims would later reverse their penetration by destroying houses of worship. Even those local people who were previously converted to Christianity were forcibly returned to the Islamic faith.⁴ The Muslims challenged them, and the *'ius patronatus'*⁵ system did not work in their favour; their evangelization was instead hotchpotch, and, therefore, the Portuguese failed to evangelize East Africa.⁶ Their lives and atrocities also failed to convert people to Christianity. The Portuguese caused many conflicts on the Kenyan Coast, making Christianity a disgrace.⁷ Notwithstanding their missionary failure, the Portuguese were the first to introduce the idea of Christianity along the East African Coas.⁸ The modernization theory explains that Europeans came to Africa to civilize, improve, and teach Christianity.⁹ The historical evidence to illustrate the Portuguese presence includes the Vasco da Gama pillar in Malindi, Fort Jesus in Mombasa, The Mombasa Martyrs, and the Indian Ocean trade that made the Portuguese come over and control of the East Coast of Africa. The putting up of Fort Jesus was a response to the challenge of Islamic attack. Thus, the Portuguese used Fort Jesus as a hiding place.¹⁰ Literature on the Portuguese is significant to this study because their failure to evangelize became a lesson to the missionaries who came after them. The way the MHM, Consolata, Augustinians and White Fathers strategized their evangelization strategies was an apparent lessons learned.

According to Hans Burgman, Catholicism was strongly felt in Kenya on the arrival of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Mill Hill Fathers in the late 1880s, and

3. A. Bandura (1965), "Influence of Models' Reinforcement Contingencies on the Acquisition of imitative Responses." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1 (6), pp. 589-602. pp. 589-602.

4. D. Muwemba, (2014), *A Short African Church History*. Kampala: Angel Agencies Ltd., p.16

5. The right of patronage in Roman Catholic Canon law is set of rights and obligations of someone, known as the patron in connection with a gift of land (benefice). It is a grant made by the church out gratitude towards a benefactor.

6. cf. A. Z. Mash, & W. G. Kingsnorth, (1965). *An Introduction to the History of East Africa*, 3rd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 14.

7. Ibid, p.18.

8. Mwaura, Philomena Njeri. "African instituted churches in East Africa." *Studies in World Christianity* 10, no. 2 (2004): 160-184.

9. Lee, Robert D. *Religion and politics in the Middle East: Identity, ideology, institutions, and attitudes*. Routledge, 2018

10. Headrick, Daniel R. *Power over peoples: Technology, environments, and Western imperialism, 1400 to the present*. Vol. 31. Princeton University Press, 2012.

later the Consolata Missionaries.¹¹ In the same pipeline Philip Sulumeti states that, the Holy Ghost missionary institute was the first to be entrusted with '*ius commissionis*'¹² empowering them by the Holy See to evangelize Eastern Africa.¹³ Baur holds the same view in his study of the history of Christianity in Africa.¹⁴ He further notes that in 1883, the Prefecture of Zanzibar was raised to the status of a Vicariate Apostolic. The western boundary of the Vicariate of Zanzibar was then drawn. These regions were confided to the care of the White Fathers in the Vicariate of Nyanza and the Vicariate of Tanganyika. The two vicariates embraced Uganda and central Tanganyika. Cardinal Lavigerie, the founder of the Missionary Society of White Fathers in 1868, had sent his missionaries to work in the Buganda kingdom and Central Tanganyika. The presence of the White Fathers in Uganda eventually affected and influenced the evangelization of Western Kenya.¹⁵ This is because, before 1902, the Western part of Kenya from Naivasha belonged to Uganda.¹⁶ According to B. A. Ogot, the boundaries of Kenya were transferred from Naivasha to Malaba as more fertile lands were discovered to the west of Nairobi. This was because the land in this region was fertile and thus suitable for sustainable white settlement as Sir Charles Eliot (the Governor of Kenya, 1900-1904) had envisioned.¹⁷

Baur underscore that the catholic evangelisation of inland Kenya was shared among the missionary societies; the Holy Ghost Fathers (HGF) advanced from the Coast towards the Ukambani and Kikuyu land, the Mill Hill Missionaries expanded from Uganda into Kenya, and the Consolata Fathers settled around Mount Kenya.¹⁸ In Mumias Town, the first evangelizing mission in the CDKK was formally launched on October 26, 1903. From 1888 to 1949, Mumias operated as a caravan route, the Wanga Kingdom's administrative center, and Nabongo Mumia's home. Mumias was more pleasant for the early missionaries since Baganda Catholics already lived and worked there and welcomed them.¹⁹ From Mumias and Mukumu, Catholicism spread to other parts of Buluyia: Kibabii, Nangina, Butula, Butsotso, Idakho, Maragoli, Kabras, Marama, Kisa and later on in Lugari region. According to Baur,²⁰ early Catholic missionaries had new

11. H. Burgman, (1990), *The way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*, London: Missions Book Service Ltd., p. 30.

12. Given responsibility to evangelize the people

13. Philip Sulumeti, (1970), *Op. Cit.*, p. 114.

14. J. Baur, (1994). *Op. Cit.*, p. 72.

15. Kollman, Paul, and Cynthia Toms Smedley. *Understanding World Christianity: Eastern Africa*. Fortress Press, 2018.

16. J. Baur (1994), pp. 123-124.

17. B. A. Ogot, (1974). *Kenya Under the British Rule 1895-1963. Zamani: A Survey of East African History*. Nairobi, KE: East African Publishing House, pp. 255-289.

18. J. Baur, (1994). *Op. Cit.*, p. 76.

19. *Ibid*, p. 62.

20. J. Baur, (1994). *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.

evangelisation methods ranging from setting up schools and hospitals and, later on, economic development. They were more concerned with creating a small elite group of convinced believers. The missionaries passed from one village to another, erecting a school or a prayer house and entrusted it to catechists. They picked up regional tongues to make evangelizing simpler. When hunger periodically plagued Mumias, Fr. Nicholas Stam (later to become Bishop) supplied grain, which led to the conversion of a large number of people. It is important to understand from the previous part that the Mill Hill Catholic Missionaries traveled from Kampala through Kisumu, Mumias, and finally Kakamega before arriving in Kenya (Mukumu). Their efforts in evangelisation, catechesis, and sacramental life affected and united the populace. The development of hospitals and schools helped to maintain the community's overall social order. Such structures, in Durkheim's opinion, aid in evangelisation because they served as gathering points for people, which allowed missionaries to instruct them in the faith.

Although Uganda is not in the scope of this study, its mention is for the good of understanding evangelization in Western Kenya. The events in Uganda prompted the coming of the Mill-Hill Fathers, who later received the mandate to evangelize Western Kenya. Philip Sulumeti posits that Protestantism, Islamism, and Catholicism reached Western Kenya from Uganda.²¹ Western Kenya was Christianized and Islamized from Uganda because, in their imperialistic motives, the Arabs and the Europeans targeted the King and his Kingdom, the centre of power by then. They believed that the entire Kingdom or area would be converted once the King was converted to their Religion, because he could easily convince the subjects to be converted.²² Since Western Kenya fell under Uganda and the dominating Kingdom in the area was Buganda, the Europeans and Arabs strived to reach Buganda to convert the Kabaka, whom they believed would subsequently influence the subjects to convert to Christianity or Islam.²³ Before the arrival of Christians in Uganda, the Muslims were already settled. Kabaka Suna had welcomed them into his Kingdom in the early 1840s.²⁴ The presence of these Muslims later had negative impacts on the evangelisation process in Buganda and later on in Mumias-Kenya.

21. Philip Sulumeti, (1970). *Op. Cit.*, pp. 123-124.

22. Mazrui, Ali A. "Ethnic tensions and political stratification in Uganda." In *Ethnicity in Modern Africa*, pp. 47-68. Routledge, 2019.

23. Ward, Kevin. "A history of Christianity in Uganda." *From mission to church: A handbook of christianity in East Africa* (1991): 81-112. Low, Donald Anthony. *Buganda in modern history*. Univ of California Press, 1971.

24. Brierley, Jean, and Thomas Spear. "Mutesa, the missionaries, and Christian conversion in Buganda." *The International journal of African historical studies* 21, no. 4 (1988): 601-618. Sperling, David, and Jose Kagabo. "The coastal hinterland and interior of East Africa." Ohio University press, 2015.

Hans Burgman spent twelve years conducting research in both Kenya and other countries for his book, *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*. The book covers the time span from the arrival of the Mill Hill Missionaries (MHM) from Uganda at the turn of the century to the establishment of the first mission stations in Kisumu (1902), Mumias (1904), and Mukumu (1906), as well as the time after the Second World War (1939-1945) when the local Church could be said to have taken root.²⁵ The book offers a comprehensive analysis of Western Kenya's early Catholic missionary efforts.²⁶ Burgman provides a vivid account of the early struggles faced by the first missionaries, the circumstances in which they traveled and lived, as well as a glimpse into the personalities of those involved and the political climate of the time. He also discusses how the locals responded to the evangelisation. The Bishop emeritus of Kakamega, Philip Sulumeti, refers to the MHM as "Our Fathers in Faith" and urged readers to honor, respect, love, and cherish them.²⁷ Burgman's work is quite content-rich, particularly before 1978. The second benefit was that Burgman's work laid the groundwork for comprehending the Kakamega people, their customs, early difficulties, and opportunities that facilitated conversion.²⁸ Third, up to this point, this is the only major work (primary text) that provides an accurate chronology of historical occurrences from 1895 to 1977, prior to the establishment of the Diocese. Burgman praises the Vatican II Council (1962–1965) for reestablishing the Church's connection to modernity after she had lost it in the 20th century.²⁹ Fifth, Burgman's book's methodological component was primarily helpful to the investigation. The information was written rationally and chronologically. Impressive is the careful blending of materials, particularly the utilization of secondary, primary, and archival sources from Kenya, Uganda, and England. Burgman's outstanding command of the languages, including English, Kiswahili, Latin, Luyia, Dholuo, Ateso, Dhoadhola, Lumasaba, Lusoga, and Luganda, allows him to articulate his thoughts on the Mill Hill Fathers and the evangelizing of the area well. The current study borrowed much of these methodological approaches. Burgman averred that when Philip Sulumeti assumed the throne of Kisumu on March 19, 1977, it was evident that a new era had begun.³⁰ This explains why the present study covers the period between 1902 and 1978, with the erection of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega and Bishop Philip Sulumeti as the first Bishop.

In his PhD dissertation, Philip Sulumeti made an effort to demonstrate the establishment of a local church in Kenya. The dissertation is based on the reforms made by Vatican Council II, which took place between 1962 and 1965. This council is undoubtedly one of the most important milestones in the current

25. Ibid, p. 25.

26. H. Burgman, (1990). *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.

27. Ibid, p. 3.

28. Ibid, p. 3.

29. Ibid, p. 305.

30. Ibid, p. 285.

research on the historicization of the evangelizations determinants of western Kenya.

The first two chapters of the dissertation focused primarily on the theological and legal foundations of church missionary effort. Sulumeti's dissertation emphasizes that the evangelisation for each area was carried out by a specific missionary institute entrusted by the Holy See. Sulumeti brings out clearly the role of the Church as an instrument in continuing the mission of her founder, Jesus Christ, to humankind at two levels: Mission "*Ad intra*" and Mission "*Ad extra*." Sulumeti tries to illustrate the change to the sacred hierarchy in mission territory in chapter two. He details the development of the Kenyan Catholic Dioceses. At the same time, he makes an effort to describe the various evangelizing tactics and strategies used by Catholic missionaries to evangelize Kenya throughout the colonial era. This study has revisited these strategies and how the affected catholic evangelization in western Kenya.

Sulumeti's dissertation provides significant contributions to the current research on historicizing the determinants of evangelization in the development of Western Kenya. In chapter three, Sulumeti highlights that the evangelization of Kenya was entrusted to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the Society of the Mill Hill Fathers, and the Society of the Consolata Fathers. Chapter four emphasizes the establishment of the sacred hierarchy in 1953, which marked the beginnings of the local Church in Kenya. This dissertation proves beneficial for the present study in multiple ways. Firstly, it offers comprehensive insights into the development of Catholicism in Kakamega, Kenya, and the broader East African region. Secondly, it explores the evangelizing tactics and strategies employed by missionaries, along with the history of the Diocese of Kisumu, which led to the formation of the Diocese of Kakamega. Furthermore, Sulumeti's research draws attention to the marginalization of the laity in the Church's apostolate, prompting the current study to examine the role played by the laity in the evangelization process within the diocese. Additionally, the dissertation discusses the concepts of inculturation, adaptability, and indigenization within the local Church in Kenya, addressing prejudices and barriers in these areas. This investigation fills a gap, particularly regarding the role of inculturation in the evangelization efforts of the Diocese. Lastly, Sulumeti's work stands out due to the incorporation of diverse sources, including scriptures, Church and secular history, ecclesiology, papal writings, patrology, canon law, as well as archival and secondary sources. This rich collection of materials makes Sulumeti's dissertation a valuable resource for reconstructing the history of evangelism and understanding the evolving trends and changes in the growth of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega.

However, the study does have some limitations. Firstly, the author neglected to translate the extensive use of Latin and Italian terminologies, making it challenging for readers without a background in these languages to fully understand the dissertation. While there were only a few Latin statements in the

study, they were translated for the reader's convenience. Secondly, the research does not mention the utilization of oral sources. Considering that there are individuals within the Catholic Church who possess knowledge on the subject, the researcher did not explain the reason for not consulting oral sources.

Frans Groot explored the life and missionary activities of Nicholas Stam, one of the Great Mill Hillers and a well-respected Apostle of Western Kenya, in his book *Stam of Mumias; The Hagiography*. The author shows how Fr. Nicholas Stam became a successful missionary in Kenya by a combination of his skills and values, including zeal, love, sincerity, dreaming, endurance, perseverance, painting and drawing, building, and language proficiency.³¹ Six chapters make up the two hundred and forty-five page book. The author provides in-depth information on Nicholas Stam's formative years, the realities of missionary life, challenges and opportunities in Stam's evangelisation mission, how he came to recognize Western Kenya as a fertile field for the Lord of the harvest, how he rose to become the Bishop of the Vicariate of Kisumu (Western Kenya), and how he ultimately passed away on Ascension Day, May 26, 1949, at St. John's Hospital in Holland. The author used a historical approach, placing Stam's life's events in chronological sequence; this approach has been used in the current study.

Even though the book is *hagiographical*, it is a source that provides a wealth of historical information on how the Mill Hill Missionaries arrived in Western Kenya, strategies applied by Nicolas Stam and other MHM to evangelize western Kenya, the challenges and opportunities in Stam's evangelizing mission, initial steps towards inculturation as evidenced in Stam's evangelisation road map, planting of the faith in Western Kenya and most importantly, the resuscitation of Mumias Catholic Mission, the primacy of the catechumenate approach to evangelisation and how Stam worked in collaboration with the local leaders.

Furthermore, Frans Groot's book is also essential to the present study because of the sources he consulted to obtain data. The author relied on Nicolas Stam's letters, diaries, memories, and stories that have been preserved in the Mill Hill archives, the Work of Hans Burgman titled "*The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*," oral and written traditions of the Mill Hill Missionaries.³² These sources are important and relevant to the current study. Therefore, the book helps the current study identify and access the relevant sources for reconstructing the history of evangelisation in CDKK.

Groot's work acknowledges the challenges and opportunities encountered by the MHM in their evangelization efforts, including language barriers, dangerous wildlife, illnesses, difficult terrain, hostility from local figures, cultural differences, transportation limitations, and the complexities of Islamic law and traditional religions. Building on these insights, the current study seeks to explore the determinants of evangelization in western Kenya from 1902 to 1978 by

31. Frans Groot, (1984). *Stam of Mumias; The Hagiography*, S&C, Lee Foundation, p. 9.

32. *Ibid*, p. 10.

focusing on the opportunities that arose. However, a notable flaw in Groot's work is the absence of a comprehensive list of sources, a bibliography, or the identification of witnesses for oral history. To address this, the present study on the paradigm shift in the historical growth of the CDKK has made a deliberate effort to provide an extensive list of references, maps, and testimonies, ensuring transparency and eliminating any doubts about the sources used. Moreover, while Groot's work emphasizes religious aspects, there are concerns regarding its depth and breadth. In contrast, the current study offers a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of religious features, events, and the individuals involved. While employing historical methods, this research provides a thorough exploration of the religious aspects related to the development of the CDKK. In summary, Groot's work highlights challenges and opportunities in MHM's evangelization, and the current study builds upon these findings to examine the determinants of evangelization in western Kenya. The study addresses the shortcomings of Groot's work by providing comprehensive references and testimonies. Additionally, it offers a more comprehensive analysis of religious aspects compared to the narrower focus of Groot's work. It was observed that, Groot has not hinted at the negative character of Stam, who has been described as somewhat 'crude' by some of his colleagues as reported by Burgman.³³

Methodology

According to Babbie and Morton, research methodology focuses on the precise tasks and methods that are performed and used during research.³⁴ The study employed a historical research design, which is essentially descriptive.³⁵ Strydom, Fouche, and Delpont³⁶ define a research design as a specification of the adequate operations to be performed to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition. The primary purpose is to give a complete account of participants' reports and observations in response to the guiding research question. This study was carried out in the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega, which was established on

33. Ibid, p.80.

34. E. Babbie and J. Mouton, (2002). *The Practice of Social Research*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press: p. 72.

35. P. G. Okoth (2012). "Research as a Cornerstone of quality Assurance in University Education with Specific Reference to Uganda Martyrs University." *Journal of Science and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 5, pp. 37-55.

36. H. Strydom, C. Fouche and B. C. Delpont, (2002). *Research at Grassroots Level*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, p. 137.

27th February 1978.³⁷ The Diocese has 44 parishes (see Table 1.2) distributed in two counties of Vihiga and Kakamega, which are further divided into five Deaneries.

Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan provide a table that helped the researcher reach a sample of 384. According to the table, when the target population is over 1,000,000, Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan say that the sample size is 384.³⁸ The data was collected through questionnaires, interview schedules, Focus Group Discussions, observations, and archival and secondary material, which provided important information on evangelization paradigm shift. The research instruments were validated in terms of content and face validity.³⁹ Thus study relied on the qualitative method to collect and analyze data, where the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants regarding the evangelization process in the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega were taken into consideration. During this study, the following ethical issues were observed: informed consent, right to anonymity, beneficence, and respect for participants. Two areas were significant to situate the place of ethical considerations in this study. These are: general ethical considerations and the researchers' "positionality" in this study.⁴⁰

37. H. Burgman, (1990). *Op. Cit.*, p. 238. & P. Sulumeti Key Informant Interview, at his Residence Bishop Emeritus house-Kakamega on 28th March, 4th June, 12th August 2021.

38. R. V. Krejcie & D. W. Morgan, (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30 (3), pp. 607-610.

39. H. H. M. Uys, & A. A. Basson, (2000). *Research Methodology*, Cape Town: Kegiso Tertiary, p. 80.

40. A. L. A. Lusambili, B. Sadig & K. Muchanga, (2020). Positionality Access to the Social and Place of Research: *Narratives from Research in Low Resource Settings in People, Place and Policy* 14/1. pp. 35-54.

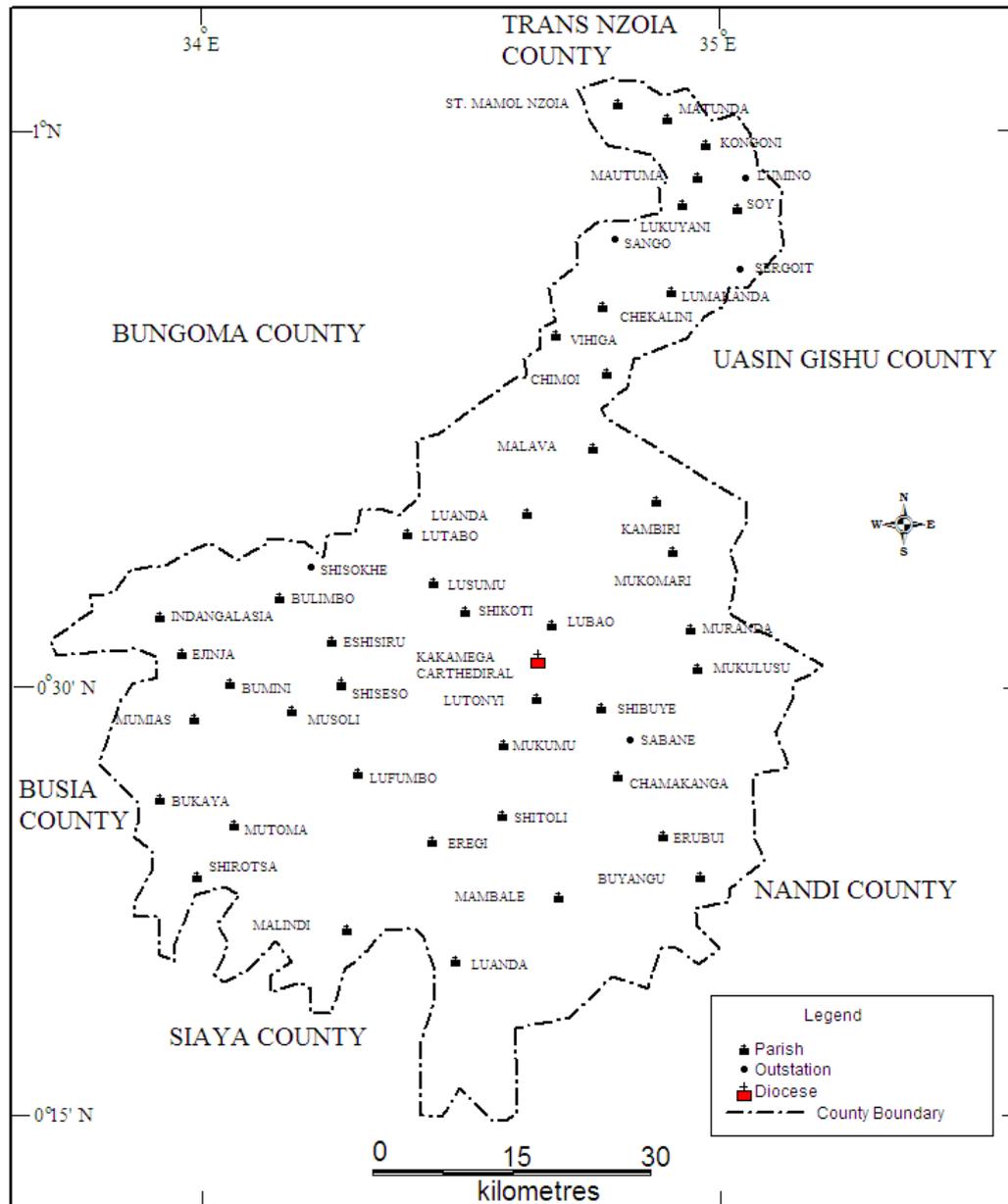


Figure 1. Map Showing Diocese of Kakamega and its Parishes
 Source: Moi University Geography Department GIS Laboratory.

Discussion and Findings

This study identified a number of determinants for evangelisation in western Kenya from 1902-1978. Kerygmatic or proclamation of the good news featured prominently in the study.⁴¹ Kerygmatic approach was purely the apostles' strategy of evangelizing the people in the early Church. The missionaries used the Kerygmatic approach for evangelization and converted many people to Catholicism. According to Bonaventure Luchidio, the Kerygmatic strategy dominated missionary evangelization in Africa right from the onset.⁴² The Good News of the gospel formed the content of Kerygma.⁴³ Through this strategy, the Church was planted in Buluyia by the MHM, resulting in the establishment of several missions and related institutions from 1907 to 1978.⁴⁴ Moreover, the FGD of the Catechists informed this study that, the preaching of the missionaries, accompanied by word and deeds (testimony), attracted the people to the faith.⁴⁵ The same idea was held by Ogutu.⁴⁶ Frans Groot writes that a priest was a combination of a preacher, a protector, a provider, a teacher, and nearly everything to the people he served.⁴⁷ The respondents' averred that witnessing by the Mill Hill Missionaries was a major factor in evangelizing western Kenya. One of the informants, Petro Lubulela, said that many Mill Hill Missionaries were good shepherds: they loved the flock, sacrificed for the flock, and remained available to the flock.⁴⁸ Their faith and morals impacted the people, hence leading to numerous conversions. Once Fr. Nicholas Stam said, as a missionary he did not

41. Tutu, Osei-Acheampong Desmond, and Robert Osei-Bonsu. "Kerygma and History in the Theology of Rudolf Karl Bultmann: A Biblical-Theological Study." *Religion* 24 (2008): 171-81. Westby, Eric J. "Renewing the Kerygmatic Moment: The Centrality of the Kerygma in the 2020 Directory for Catechesis and the Implications for Forming Clergy and Parish Staffs." *International Journal of Evangelization and Catechetics* 3, no. 2 (2022): 135-147.

42. Bonaventure Luchidio, Key Informant Interview, at Kitisuru Woods -Nairobi, on 30th October, 2021.

43. Croatto, J. Severino. "Jesus, prophet like Elijah, and prophet-teacher like Moses in Luke-Acts." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 3 (2005): 451-465. Betz, Otto. "The Kerygma of Luke." *Interpretation* 22, no. 2 (1968): 131-146. Rissi, Mathias. "The kerygma of the Revelation to John." *Interpretation* 22, no. 1 (1968): 3-17.

44. M. S. Sikolia, (1993). *Factors of Development in the Catholic Church in Kakamega: from Father Agt to Bishop Sulumeti (1907-1992)*. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

45. FGD Of the Catechists interviewed at at St. Annes Parish- Eshisiru.

46. G. E. M. Ogutu, (1981). "Origins and Growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Western Kenya 1895-1952. PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, p.78.

47. F. Groot, *Op. Cit.*, p.101.

48. Petro Lubulela (88 Years, a Renown Retired Trade Unionist and a lay Church leader- Mukumu Parish), Oral Interview, at his home-Burimbuli, on 4th March, 2021.

live his own life but lived for other many people under his custodianship.⁴⁹ Their exemplary lives attracted many indigenous people to the faith.

Notwithstanding the many different dialects (tower of Babel) in Buluyia that could have been a barrier to evangelization, the missionaries employed the strategy of learning the *lingua franca* of those to be evangelized.⁵⁰ The ability of the MHM to learn and master the Lusamia, Lukhayo, Luwanga, Lubukusu, Lunyala, Lukhekhe, lutsoso, Lwidakho, Lwisukha Teso, Luo, and Kalenjin languages was a big boost in their evangelization in the area of.⁵¹ The missionaries were able to speak, write, and preach in the indigenous dialects of the area of study. The Bible and other liturgical books were translated into local languages to help in converting the local people easily. After learning, some missionaries spoke and wrote letters in the local language than the locals themselves. Fr. Stam is reported to have encouraged the newly posted priest, Fr. Coeren, not to waste anytime but immediately learn the local language to be more relevant in his missionary work.⁵² At Mumias, Fr. Stam, realizing that the Luo and the Baganda were working in police and civil services, made an effort to invite them and their families to come to the mission for lessons in their local languages. Learning and knowledge of more languages is an added advantage to the agents of evangelization,⁵³ especially in traversing and preaching to diverse people from various cultures.⁵⁴ Learning and speaking peoples' language makes the agents of evangelization to be accepted and appreciated.⁵⁵ The MHM were able to permeate peoples' culture and create a greater understanding of the people, which promoted integration

49. F. Groot, *Op. Cit.*, p.150.

50. *Ibid*, p.150.

51. Healey, Joseph, Febian Pikiti, and Rose Musimba. "The Experience of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in Eastern Africa (AMECEA Region) in Light of the African Year of Reconciliation (AYR) from 29 July, 2015 to 29 July, 2016." (2015). Wekesa, Peter Wafula. *History, Identity and the Bukusu-Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2023. De Wolf, Jan Jacob. *Religious innovation and social change among the Bukusu*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom), 1971.

52. Cf. Billings, Alan. *Lost Church: Why We Must Find It Again*. SPCK, 2013. Coren, Michael. *The Future of Catholicism*. Signal, 2014.

53. Nelson Christoph, Julie. "Each one teach one: The legacy of evangelism in adult literacy education." *Written Communication* 26, no. 1 (2009): 77-110. Eke, Hyginus Ikechukwu. "Training of lay catechists and new evangelization in Igbo Land Nigeria, problems and prospects." PhD diss., Universität Tübingen, 2018.

54. The Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Sserunjogi is a rector of St. Mbaaga seminary Ggaba-Uganda. He speaks over ten international languages and teaches Canon Law in the Mbaaga seminary.

55. Kalusa, Walima T. "Language, medical auxiliaries, and the re-interpretation of missionary medicine in Colonial Mwinilunga, Zambia, 1922–51." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 1 (2007): 57-78. Wario, Damicha. "Effective Communication for Evangelisation Among the Borana People of Southern Ethiopia." (2005).

and greater tolerance. The FGD of the Sisters of Mary of Kakamega observed that people were attracted to the missions because they were surprised to see a white “*musungu*” missionary speak their language. In the process, they became converted.⁵⁶ Some priests also found it hard to learn the local language fast, which was a great challenge. The study established that Mumias Mission station closed again in 1910 because Fr. Francis Van Agt could not speak the local language. Thus, the station had to close, notwithstanding other factors, until a priest who could speak Kiwanga was found. It became obvious that, to evangelize a tribe, the missionaries had first to learn the language of that tribe.⁵⁷

After planting the faith and creating the Missions, the MHM embarked on Catechesis.⁵⁸ Catechesis is the process of teaching the faith at different levels at all times to people of different ages, sex, and status.⁵⁹ Also, Catechesis is the instruction by a series of questions and answers from a book containing such instructions on the religious doctrine of the Christian Church to initiate people to the Catholic faith.⁶⁰ The study established that the MHM, with the help of the indigenous catechists and the graduated catechumens, did tremendous work in catechizing to initiate and convert the people to the faith in western Kenya.⁶¹ By 1902, the MHM had begun visiting Buluyia, and Baganda catechists accompanied them.⁶² The Baganda were already providing catechists to accompany the missionaries because, by 1879, the Baganda were already undergoing evangelization.⁶³ Thus, the presence of the Baganda significantly influenced the indigenous people in Mumias and other areas of Buluhya to become Catholics. Also, at Mumias, there were the Goans. The Goans had received evangelization

56. FGD, Sisters of Mary of Kakamega (SMK), at Nairobi Convent, on 30th October, 2021.

57. P. Sulumeti, (1970). *Op. Cit.*, p.136.

58. Namatsi, Beatrice A. "Pre-colonial traditional organization of the people of Vihiga and their early response to Friends' African Mission's Educational Initiatives in Kenya." (2013). Sikolia, Mulievi S. "Factors of development in the catholic church in Kakamega: from father Agt to bishop Sulumeti (1907-1992)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 1993.

59. Vincent Likunda(Priest of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega and Dean of Mumias Deanery and a former Director of the Catechetical Centre –Mumisa) , Key Informant Interview, at St Charles Lwanga Parish-Lutaso, on 6th August 2021.

60. Arnold, Clinton E. "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians'classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 1 (2004): 39. Buchanan, Michael T. "Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education." *Religious Education* 100, no. 1 (2005): 20-37.

61. Maurice Kigame, Key Informant Interview, at Christ the King Parish-Amalemba, on 12th August 2021.

62. H. Burgman, (1991). *Op. Cit.*, p.9.

63. Brierley, Jean, and Thomas Spear. "Mutesa, the missionaries, and Christian conversion in Buganda." *The International journal of African historical studies* 21, no. 4 (1988): 601-618. Kitoolo, John Vianney. "Evangelization and planting of the Church in Buganda." (2022).

as early as the time of St. Francis Xavier when he arrived at Goa as a missionary in AD 1541. From that time, many Goans became Catholics. Therefore, with the railway construction from Mombasa to Kisumu, the Goans settled along the railway. That is how they arrived at Kisumu, Mumias, and later at Kampala with their Catholic faith. Apart from the catechists, the presence of the Baganda, who were already Catholics, also enhanced the interests of the people of Buluyia to accept Christianity because they saw other Africans, the Baganda, who were already Catholics. Research already done in this area demonstrates that they formed classes for the catechism and literacy immediately after the priests arrived in these mission stations.⁶⁴ The classes were called "Readers" classes, 'Basomi bidiini.'. By 1907, Fr. Francis van Agt and Fr. Brandsma were already teaching catechism in Mumias and Mukumu.⁶⁵ Frs. Arnold Witlox, Gerard Meading, and the Baganda catechists taught the first "Readers" in Mukumu catechism.

Catechesis has been underscored as one of the major evangelization used by the missionaries. The catechesis instructions led to the creation of catechumenates. Catechumenate comes from the word Catechumen, a person who receives instruction in Christian religion to be baptized.⁶⁶ Thus, the catechumenates were schools or centres where the catechumens stayed as they underwent catechism classes in preparation for baptism. The use of catechumenate was one of the main strategies of evangelization used by MHM.⁶⁷ Many catechumenates were created in Buluyia, and some respondents who attended these catechumenates were part of the respondents in this study. According to Sikolia (1993), although the newly baptized opened up the catechumenates, they remained under the white priest's directorship and apprenticeship.⁶⁸ The missionaries were particular on which catechumenates were to remain to do catechesis "attachment." Those who were primarily obedient, performed well in writing, memorized prayers in local and Latin languages, had the best Bible reading skills, and spoke fluent English were highly retained.⁶⁹ In essence, they became monitorial teachers. The Egyptians,

64. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p. 9.

65. S. M. Mulievi S. "Factors of development in the catholic church in Kakamega: from father Agt to bishop Sulumeti (1907-1992)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 1993.

66. Arnold, Clinton E. "Early Church Catechesis and New Christians' classes in Contemporary Evangelicalism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 1 (2004): 39. Folkemer, Lawrence D. "A Study of the Catechumenate." *Church History* 15, no. 4 (1946): 286-307.

67. Tuma, AD Tom. *The Introduction and Growth of Christianity in Busoga 1890-1940 With Particular Reference to the Roles of the Basoga Clergy, Catechists and Chiefs*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom), 1973. De Wolf, Jan Jacob. *Religious innovation and social change among the Bukusu*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom), 1971.

68. Sikolia, Mulievi S. "Factors of development in the catholic church in Kakamega: from father Agt to bishop Sulumeti (1907-1992)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 1993.

69. Cf. Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual disciplines for the Christian life*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014.

Greeks, and Romans widely used the monitorial system in their education system during ancient times. It is a system where the abler pupils are used as “helpers” to the teacher for passing on the knowledge they have learned to other students. The research established that the Mill Hill Missionaries identified the best out of the neophyte Christians for evangelization in this system. Those who were catechized and initiated in the Church contributed immensely to the evangelization of Buluyia land. For example, the newly baptized in the Mukumu mission in 1908 were sent out (commissioned) to evangelize and teach catechism in different areas of the mission.⁷⁰ They opened up catechumenates in Idakho, Butso, Maragoli, Marama, and Bunyala areas of Buluyia. After they were baptized, they stayed at the mission for some time to be inducted into the pedagogies to carry out catechism.⁷¹ They went through some religious apprenticeships under the tutelage of the priests. Vincent Likunda averred that;

According to Fr. Stam, Catechumens were those who had been taught for one year and were retained at the parish to be trained on how to teach others. Fr Stam delegated those bright and had performed well to the centres of faith to teach catechism. They were likened to monitorial teachers.⁷²

Fr. Nicholas Stam personally instructed the catechumens before baptism. He strongly felt that these young men and women would be able to help him to evangelize the region, for he had thought of an interesting system of multiplying catechumenates.⁷³ Stam planned to send his newly baptized readers to the recently opened schools, where their task would be to teach the new readers prayers and the words of the catechism. Soon he ruled that the newly baptized Christians were to give a year of their lives to teach Religion as a token of gratitude to God for the gift of the new life they had received. This made for a quick spread of the faith, and soon, there were dozens of small schools.⁷⁴ Particularly successful was a young man from Marachi called Laurenti Ongoma, who from 1917 taught at the

70. Brief History of Mukumu Written by parishoners in 1956, in an exercise book (Archives).

71. Grimshaw:” Some notes especially on the daily life of the missions (Archives).

72. Vincent Likunda(Priest of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega and Dean of Mumias Deanery and a former Director of the Catechetical Centre –Mumisa), Key Informant Interview, at St Charles Lwanga Parish-Lutaso, on 6th August 2021.

73. K. L. Lusambili, and P. G. Okoth. "Factors influencing evangelisation paradigm shift in the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega since 1978." *Steadfast Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2022). Brash, Donald James. *Pastoral authority in the churches of the first and second centuries*. Drew University, 1987. Sifuna, Daniel N. "The Mill Hill Fathers and the Establishment of Western Education in Westrn Kenya 1900–1924: Some Reflections." *Transafrican Journal of History* 6 (1977): 112-128.

74. Shelley, Bruce. *Church history in plain language*. Zondervan Academic, 2013. Garrison, V. David. *Church planting movements: How God is redeeming a lost world*. WIGTake Resources, 2007.

catechumenate in Butula, which later became a flourishing outstation of Mumias and eventually became a mission. It was indeed the challenge of the local language to the missionaries that they responded by recruiting the newly baptized to help evangelization be easily understood and facilitated. The local catechists had a mastery of their indigenous language. The presence of the newly baptized in teaching catechesis also attracted the local people to attend catechism classes. Moreover, the use of the freshly catechized demonstrated that the missionaries had a good interest in the indigenous people. According to Bishop Sulumeti, the catechumenates' role was critical because, in the areas where catechumates were created, they later became future mission stations (what today are parishes).⁷⁵ For example: Musoli, Kibabii, Butula, Amukura, Shikoti, Lutaso, Buyangu, Chamakanga, Nangina, Kiminini and Port Victoria.⁷⁶ The catechumens (Readers) gathered in these catechumenates to receive catechism, and they were later baptized and added to the pool of human power of evangelizers.⁷⁷ Through catechumates' strategy of evangelization, many followers of Catholicism were converted. Burgman posits that:

Fr. Nicholas Stam hit upon an interesting system of multiplying catechumenate. He selected six newly baptized readers and sent them out to start catechumenate, in which they had to teach prayers and the words of catechism to new readers. The following generation of baptized were directed to do a year's teaching of Religion as a token of gratitude to God for the grace of baptism. This made for a rapid spread of the faith, and soon he had fifty catechumenates going.⁷⁸

The Buluyia region greatly benefited from the adult catechism compared to the school batch. Fr. Witlox and his strategy greatly favoured the adult catechism.⁷⁹ As they came with their Bulls to fight and participate in the dance, the adults were too given catechism classes. Adult catechism greatly enhanced the evangelization of families and communities at Mukumu Mission.⁸⁰ Unlike the school batch, the adult catechumens became catechists to their families, children, relatives, and the surrounding families. Mukumu mission station, according to Burgman, was heavily dependent on the adult catechism, and that explains why other missions blossomed more than the Mumias mission. Adult catechesis was

75. Philip Sulumeti (84 years, Emeritus Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega), Key Informant Interview, at St. Phillips Emeritii House-Kakamega, on 12th August 2021.

76. Philip Sulumeti (84 years, Emeritus Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega), Key Informant Interview, at St. Phillips Emeritii House-Kakamega, on 12th August 2021.

77. Life in Missions in the Earliest Days Taken from the missionary Letters (Archives).

78. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p. 97.

79. Sikolia, Mulievi S. "Factors of development in the catholic church in Kakamega: from father Agt to bishop Sulumeti (1907-1992)." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 1993.

80. K. L. Muchanga, (2006). *Op, Cit.*, p.41.

very important. After all, they addressed a person who had greater responsibility and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.⁸¹

Among the strategies of attracting more "Readers" to the missions or the catechumenate, the missions introduced literacy learning alongside catechism.⁸² For instance, when Fr. Francis van Agt moved to Mumias in 1907 as the superior of the station, he introduced the "Readers" classes in which reading, writing, and arithmetic (3R's)⁸³ were taught.⁸⁴ To Church Mission Society (*siemusi*, as the locals pronounced), somebody learning to become a Christian was called "a reader." "To pray and to read" became synonyms in several African languages.⁸⁵ The missionaries were part and parcel of the civilizing mission under the banner of introducing Civilization, Commerce, and Christianity (the famous 3Cs).⁸⁶ Nkomazana asserts, "according to T.F Baxton, the only way to end the slave trade in Africa was by civilizing the Africans, introducing legitimate trade, and converting Africans into Christianity."⁸⁷ Education was part of the colonial package to modernize and civilize the Africans. This assertion emanated from the exploitative general imperialistic thought, where African resources were channelled to Europe.⁸⁸ The so-called legitimate trade was simply a strategy to make the Africans be slaved at home in Africa. Instead of being ferried across the oceans to work on farms in the Americas, they had to provide labour on white farms established in Africa.⁸⁹ Therefore, initiating legitimate trade was not a civilizing strategy, as Baxton asserts. According to Walter Rodney, nearly all

81. Pope John Paul II, (1997). *On Catechesis in Our Time* (No. 654). Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, p.31.

82. Annual Reports of the Diocese in Mukumu Archives.

83. Sometimes Religion was added on the 3Rs to read as Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion (4Rs).

84. M. S Sikolia, *Op. Cit.*, p.67.

85. Vincent Likunda Priest of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega and Dean of Mumias Deanery and a former Director of the Catechetical Centre (Mumisa), Key Informant Interview, at St Charles Lwanga Parish-Lutaso, on 6th August 2021.

86. Gachihi, Margaret Wangui. "Faith and Nationalism: Mau Mau and Christianity in Kikuyuland." PhD dissertation, University of Nairobi, 2014. Turnbull, John. *A Voyage Round the World, in the Years 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, and 1804: In Which the Author Visited Madeira, the Brazils, Cape of Good Hope, the English Settlements of Botany Bay and Norfolk Island, and the Principal Islands in the Pacific Ocean*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

87. F. Nkomazana, (1988). Livingstones Idea of Christianity, Commerce and Civilization in Botswana *Journal of African studies*, vol. 12 issue 1 & 2 p.47.

88. Viaene, Vincent. "King Leopold's imperialism and the origins of the Belgian colonial party, 1860–1905." *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 4 (2008): 741-790. Betts, Raymond F. *Assimilation and association in French colonial theory, 1890-1914*. U of Nebraska Press, 2005.

89. R. Law, ed., (1995). *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce: The Commercial Transition in 19th Century West Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.70.

imperialistic civilizing strategies were for the underdevelopment of Africa.⁹⁰ George Muhoho avers that, from the very beginning, the missionaries started with schools as means of evangelization. As late as 1911, the government started taking an interest in African education when the educational department was established.⁹¹

In 1912 when Mumias station was re-opened again, a school for the sons of the chiefs was opened.⁹² This was a mega strategy to appease and bring closer the local leadership to the mission. It was a strategy advanced in creating an enabling environment for planting the Church and eventual evangelization. Most of the local chiefs were delighted to have their sons go to mission schools to acquire literacy and be able to speak the language of the missionaries. The introduction of schools for the sons of chiefs permeated most of the mission stations in Buluyia.⁹³ According to Petro Lubulela, such a school was introduced in Mukumu (St. Machungwa) to intensify catechism and literacy learning in the 3Rs.⁹⁴ It was a way of enticing the chiefs, elders, and the local people to influence and cooperate with missionaries in planting the faith and evangelization of Buluyia. In the process of sons of chiefs turning up for literacy, they were also catechized and baptized, cementing the relationship between the missionaries and the local leadership. The "educated" and the baptized sons of chiefs also helped evangelize their parents and peers.⁹⁵ From these schools, the sons of chiefs were given gifts like books, pens, and cotton clothes, and they could speak fluent English, *Lufuotfuot* or *Lulumba* or *Lunjerese* as the locals preferred to refer to English.

Thus, the other children in the village were attracted to join missionary schools to enjoy the same treatment. If not, they joined the catechumenates. Therefore, providing elementary literacy with catechism greatly boosted evangelization in the study area.⁹⁶ Modernization Theory explains the process of modernization within society. One of the ways society can be modernized is through education. The missionaries and the colonialists embraced education to enlighten the Africans and bring about a civilization by opening up remote

90. W. Rodney, (1972). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Verso Books, p.84.

91. K. G. Muhoho, (1970). "The Church's Role in the Development of Educational Policy in the Pluralistic Society in Kenya" Unpublished PhD thesis in Pontifica Universitas Urbaniana, Rome, p.57.

92. Furley, O. W. "Education and the chiefs in East Africa in the inter-war period." *Transafrican Journal of History* 1, no. 1 (1971): 60-83.

93. Box XI: Mumias Diary 1 May 1916 till November 1920(135 numbered pages) by Nicholas Stam. (Archives).

94. Petro Lubulela, Oral interview, at his home-Burimbuli, on 4th March 2021.

95. Ibid.

96. F. Groot, *Op. Cit.*, pp.102-103.

areas.⁹⁷ Education is a catalyst for social change and development in general. The missionaries provided elementary literacy and, later on, elite education created a class of the “educated” who embraced Western ways of doing things. Later, in the 1940s, they became the vanguard of nationalism because they could articulate African grievances.⁹⁸ Thus, in as much as the missionaries provided elementary education to facilitate evangelization, it ended up fostering modernization in Western Kenya. Of importance to note was the erection of sub-parish councils in the region of study that contributed to evangelization. For example, in Mumias, the Christians of each locality were to hold a monthly meeting led by a headman and four ‘jury-men’ approved for settling cases. Their sentences were put in a ‘Baraza-book,’ and the priest added his signature later to make them valid. Apart from settling cases amicably, the meeting was to see to it that the preaching of the faith in that area was done well.⁹⁹ According to one informant, Peter Itebete, sub-parish councils cooperated with the mission priest to consolidate evangelization in the mission. Also, each member of the sub-parish council ensured that his family and the neighbourhoods were converted to the Catholic faith.¹⁰⁰ In this situation, the principle of subsidiarity worked out well in that the priest left the council to perform some of the activities at the mission and in the villages while he himself concentrated on the administration of the word of God and the administration of the sacraments. This was a model of lay involvement and collaboration in the Apostolate.

The study further unraveled that some Mill Hill missionaries associated well with civil authorities. Over the years, the Catholic Church believed that involving local leaders and elders enhances the spread of the faith. The example of the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the 3rd century A.D. remains a benchmark for the Church working in collaboration with the civic leaders.¹⁰¹ Fr. Stam’s rapport with the civil authorities enabled him to get security and any help for his flock. During World War I, Stam made an effort to introduce himself to the colonial administrator and the important men in the Township of Mumias. In Mukumu, Fr. Witlox related well with Chiefs Shivachi of the Idakho and Milimu of the Isukha. Apart from local authorities, the missionaries related well with the

97. Cf. Taiwo, Olufemi. *How colonialism preempted modernity in Africa*. Indiana University Press, 2010. Dunch, Ryan. "Beyond cultural imperialism: Cultural theory, Christian missions, and global modernity." *History and Theory* 41, no. 3 (2002): 301-325.

98. Larmer, Miles. "Social movement struggles in Africa." *Review of African political economy* 37, no. 125 (2010): 251-262. Cooper, Frederick. *Africa since 1940: the past of the present*. Vol. 13. Cambridge University Press, 2019. Furedi, Frank. "The African Crowd in Nairobi: Popular Movements and Élite Politics." *The Journal of African History* 14, no. 2 (1973): 275-290.

99. *Ibid*, p.146.

100. Peter Itebete, Key Informant Interview, on 10th August 2021, at Muraka.

101. Cf. Sanneh, Lamin. *Translating the message: The missionary impact on culture*. No. 42. Orbis Books, 2015.

colonial government. It has been argued by some scholars that the missionaries and the colonial officers were one and the same thing.¹⁰² That guaranteed the missionary security and land to erect the churches, hospitals, and schools, which became avenues of evangelization.

In this context, security was a challenge, and the response was to work hand in hand with the colonial government and the local authorities. Some local leaders were converted to Catholicism, and the chiefs' sons were educated at the missions¹⁰³This was to enhance the friendship and create an enabling environment for evangelizing the area.¹⁰⁴ The study indicated that the MHM related well with the civil authorities. For example, Fr. Stam associated himself with the local leaders in Busia, which made the local leaders give him their sons to join the *Catechumate* classes at Mumias. The relationship made even children born on the day he visited Busia to be called *Sitamu*, the local way of pronouncing Stam. The MHM were cognizant that once the local leaders were befriended and converted, the easier the conversion of their subjects.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the MHM identified themselves with the sufferings of the local people, for instance during the Banyala floods, and were charitable to the displaced persons. The grateful fishermen of the region never forgot what Fr. Nicholas Stam did for them. He protected the fishermen from the pirates, freebooters, and the little tyrants in the area to the government. The study established that Chief Sudi Namachanja of the Bukusu was a formidable factor in the Catholic evangelization of Western Kenya. He was a local man, not one of Chief Mumia's appointees, and his authority among his people, the Bukusu, was great. As early as 1916, Stam had found out that Sudi had taken a personal interest in the Christian readers at Syoya and even drilled the military style. In 1918, Sudi cooperated with the building of a church at Kibabii, and for a while, there was even a talk of transferring the Mumias mission to Kibabii in Sudi's territory. Later, Chief Sudi's son, Maurice Michael Otunga, joined the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1950, consecrated a bishop in 1957, and created Cardinal in 1973 by Pope Paul VI.¹⁰⁶ He retired as the Archbishop of Nairobi and died in 2003. The Pope has declared him the "Servant

102. Porter, Andrew. "Cultural imperialism and protestant missionary enterprise, 1780–1914." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 367-391. Mani, Lata. *Contentious traditions: The debate on sati in colonial India*. Univ of California Press, 1998.

103. Berman, Edward H. "African responses to Christian mission education." *African Studies Review* 17, no. 3 (1974): 527-540. Akena, Francis Adyanga. "Critical analysis of the production of Western knowledge and its implications for Indigenous knowledge and decolonization." *Journal of Black Studies* 43, no. 6 (2012): 599-619

104. Philip Sulumeti (84 years, Emeritus Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega), Key Informant Interview, at St. Phillips Emeritii House-Kakamega, on 12th August 2021.

105. Cf. Rooney, John. *A history of the Catholic Church in East Malaysia and Brunei (1880-1976)*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (United Kingdom), 1981.

106. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.237-238.

of God," which means he is on the way to being beatified to become "Blessed" and *Deo volente* to be canonized and become a "Saint." In terms of infrastructure, apart from putting up a church in Kibabii, Chief Namachanja Sudi later gave the Church his own land on which St. Augustine Mabanga seminary was built. All this can be traced to Fr. Nicholas Stam, who created a good rapport with the local leadership to evangelize effectively. Chief Sudi's name is forever linked to the Church among the Bukusu: he gave them the mission of Kibabii. He is, indeed, linked to the Christians of Kenya, for he gave his son Maurice Otunga, who became their first Bishop, Archbishop, and Cardinal.¹⁰⁷

The support given by Chief Sudi Namachanja facilitated evangelization in Bukusu land, especially the construction of the Church at Kibabii and influencing the Bukusu to convert to Catholicism. During World War I, there was recruitment and forced conscription of the people into the King's army as porters. Even the catechumens were recruited to serve as porters with the army in the campaign to fight the Germans in Tanganyika.¹⁰⁸ At first, the catechumenates were exempted, but they had to be recruited with time. Fr. Nicholas Stam had to quickly talk to the chief in Bunyala, who, in the process of protecting the Catechumen from being recruited, demanded that the catechumens could do some work for the chief but be protected from the efforts of recruiting them. Therefore, the FGD CDKK Catholic Men Association reported that during World War I, there were many catechumens at the Missions because of the fear of conscription into the army of His Majesty the King.¹⁰⁹ Thus within the challenge of war, there arose an opportunity for evangelization. The Missionaries responded by expanding the facilities at the mission to allow many local men who were afraid to join the war to undertake catechesis classes.

Furthermore, the period also witnessed some opportunities, which enhanced evangelization. For instance, during World War I (1914-1918), evangelization intensified because the few baptized Africans began to take on teaching catechism seriously. The areas where the Germans were missionaries became empty, and newly baptized Africans had to step in by making them catechumenates for evangelization.¹¹⁰ The German priests who belonged to MHM had to leave because the British and the Germans were at war. M. S Sikolia reports, "The 'readers' continued going to school, and by 1916, the interest in the Christian faith

107. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.110.

108. Cunningham, Tom. "Missionaries, the State, and Labour in Colonial Kenya c. 1909–c. 1919: the 'Gospel of Work' and the 'Able-Bodied Male Native'." In *History Workshop Journal*. 2022. Yorke, Edmund. "The Spectre of a Second Chilembwe: Government, Missions, and Social Control in Wartime Northern Rhodesia, 1914–18." *The Journal of African History* 31, no. 3 (1990): 373-391.

109. FGD CDKK Catholic Men Association, at St Joseph Cathedral Parish-Kakamega, on 23rd October 2021.

110. Box XI: Mumias Diary II November 1920 till 1936 by Nicholas Stam (Archives).

was increasing, and the number of Christians was rising.¹¹¹ During World War I (1914-1918), the British recruited Africans to help them fight the Germans. Therefore, those who were afraid to be conscripted decided to flock to the missions for protection, and in the process, they were evangelized. Thus, notwithstanding the atrocities of the war, something good emerged. The wartime created an enabling environment, an opportunity, for the enhancement of evangelization. African participation in evangelization and the expansion of the Catholic missions increased.

The study revealed that the involvement of lay people, particularly in constructing and repairing their dwellings, played a significant role in enhancing evangelization in the region. Their active participation fostered a sense of ownership and acceptance of the evangelization process. It also facilitated the conversion of their families and influenced others to join the Catholic faith. The MHM had recognized the importance of involving the laity in the apostolate early on, and Nicholas Stam, in particular, embraced the strategy of collaborative ministry. He engaged the laity in teaching catechism, resolving disputes, and various tasks within the mission. By doing so, he was in tune with the Theory of Challenge and Response and Social Cognitive Learning Theory in terms of imparting faith and handing on knowledge via modelling, imitation, and attitudinal change among the faithful.¹¹²

The beatification of the Uganda martyrs had a profound impact on the evangelization of Uganda and East Africa. Fr. Nicholas Stam and the people of Mumias celebrated for three days when the martyrs were beatified in Rome on June 6, 1920. The story of the martyrs became a central theme in Stam's teaching and preaching. Learning that their fellow Africans were becoming Saints fascinated the people in Western Kenya, and many took on the names of the Uganda martyrs at their baptism. The event of beatification greatly inspired evangelization and instilled hope, as the lives and martyrdom of the Ugandans served as a powerful testament to the Gospel, motivating many in western Kenya to embrace the Catholic faith.

Another important reason for the Missionary success was that the chiefs and headmen in many locations of Luyia land were men from Wanga, brothers of Mumia, mostly Muslims, who the colonial administration installed. These leaders had made themselves leaders of the local people who wanted people of their own as chiefs. By supporting the mission, the local population undermined the existing power structure of the Wanga domination. Fr. Stam, therefore, was not slow to take advantage of these sentiments. Consciously or unconsciously, he acted like an alternative leader for Christians; because he, too, was not a friend of the Muslims.

111. M. S. Sikolia, *Op. Cit.*, p.59.

112. Windahl, Sven, Benno Signitzer, and Jean T. Olson. *Using communication theory: An introduction to planned communication*. Sage, 2008.

The research revealed that, evangelization and conversions in this period were done through charitable services. The missionaries put up Mumias and Mukumu hospitals, in 1935 and 1938 respectively, in which they offered medical care to the sick and cared for the needy. The sisters played an important role in providing medical services. According to Lubulela, some of those who turned up to be treated decided to become Catholics.¹¹³ Some who were ransomed from slavery or other inhuman practices were kept in the missions, taught Christianity, and given a chance to live a successful agricultural life.¹¹⁴ Kizito Muchanga, in his master's thesis, explained that during famines, the Catholic Church played a significant role in finding food for the flock (Laity). During the famine of 1941-1943 (*Inzala ya Kuta*), Brother Michael, popularly known as "Mikayili," who was in charge of the Mukumu Mission Farm, made plans to acquire cassava from Uganda.¹¹⁵ This strategy was also implied in the reports of the D.C. of North Nyanza or Kavirondo who commended Brother Michael for his charitable works.¹¹⁶ One Key informant, Peter Itebete, remarked that the move made by "Mikayili" was necessary at the time because it later turned into an evangelization strategy. He retorted that, many people who had left the Church because of famine returned. When food was distributed to all people, including non-Catholics, further conversions to Catholicism were realized. During this period of famine, many mission stations for both Catholics and Quackers had closed. However, with the charitable evangelization strategy of the Church, many people returned to the mission stations.¹¹⁷

Therefore, it is indisputable that the charitable works of the Catholic Church played an integral role in evangelization, leading to conversions.

Of significant to note is the Plokosian¹¹⁸ evangelization strategy is associated with Fr. Arnold Witlox (*Pere Lokosi*). He arrived at Mukumu Mission in 1908 and studied the situation of the people in that area. He observed that the Isukha and the Idakho folk loved their cultural festivals, especially the *Isukuti* dance, *Shilembe* (Traditional Ceremony to honor a fallen hero among the Isukha Idakho), bullfighting sport, and the drinking of the local brew called *Busaa* (traditional

113. Petro Lubulela(88 Years, a Renown Retired Trade Unionist and a lay Church leader- Mukumu Parish), Oral Interview, at his home-Burimbuli, on 4th March, 2021.

114. P. Sulumeti, (1970). *Op. Cit.*, p.129.

115. K. L. Muchanga, (1998). Impact of Economic Activities on the Ecology of the Isukha and Idakho Areas of Western Kenya, c. 1850 to 1945, Masters Thesis in History, Kenyatta University, p. 207.

116. KNA, DC/NN. /26/1943.

117. Peter Itebete (90 Years, Retired Senior Civil Service Officer in the Government of Kenya), Key Informant Interview, at his home-Muraka, on 6th May 2021.

118. Plokosi was the native corruption of Fr. Witlox.Unable to pronounce it simply referred to Fr. Arnold Witlox as Plokosi.That is why his strategy of evangelization has been coined as Ploksian Strategy.

brew made from fermented maize and millet).¹¹⁹ Therefore, to bring the people closer to the mission for evangelization, Witlox identified himself with the Isukha and Idakho cultural practices.¹²⁰ Once in a while, he joined the people in those cultural dances and even liked their local brew. After every liturgical celebration, Fr. Witlox would invite people to the *Isukuti* dances and *Busaa* drinking, in which he actively participated.¹²¹ After dances, there followed catechetical instructions via question and answer methods. He respected the culture of the people, identified with them, spoke their language fluently, ate their food, took their brew, and within a short time, the Mukumu mission was blossoming and beaming with converts. Thus, people came to like him, and humanely he became a centre of attraction, while spiritually, a miracle took place. The people began flocking to the Mukumu Mission and liked to belong to the Catholic faith.¹²²

In this case, Fr. Witlox understood and isolated the local people's cultural values; which he adopted to suit the situation, therefore attracting the people to the Church, unlike what was taking place elsewhere in the region.¹²³ Witlox understood that, for the effective evangelization of a people, it was important to know and understand their culture and be able to speak their language. That is why Witlox has remained in the annals of Mukumu Mission history as one of the great shepherds. On the "plokosian" methodology of evangelization, Vincent Likunda added his voice by asserting that, Witlox made Sunday dances to be known as *masitsa* or *mumasitsa*.¹²⁴ According to Burgman (1991), it was a resounding success, a marvelous apostolic medium. Since then, Mukumu has remained a strong and vibrant Catholic mission. Although the Church was yet to deliberate on inculturation as a strategy in evangelization by this time, Fr. Witlox already had the idea. He could also settle disputes among the people. This approach attracted many people, even the chiefs and elders.¹²⁵ Apart from the Plokosian strategy, Witlox had a good relationship with the local leaders. He related well with the chiefs and elders. He organized meetings with them to solve issues and appreciated them for providing security.

According to Muchanga Kizito, the Plokosian strategy greatly impacted the region of Abakakamega. From the Mukumu mission, the following parishes were created: Eregi opened in 1913, Shikoti in 1952, Musoli in 1956, Shibuye in 1958,

119. Peter Itebete (90 Years, Retired Senior Civil Service Officer in the Government of Kenya), Key Informant Interview, at his home-Muraka, on 6th May 2021.

120. KNA: DC/NN.3/2/2 Notes on Some Customs and Beliefs, 1931(Archives).

121. Cf. Brief History of Mukumu Written by parishoners in 1956, in an exercise Book (Archives)

122. H. Burgman, (1991), *Op. Cit.* p.69.

123. M. S. Sikolia, 1993, p.70.

124. Vincent Likunda Priest of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega and Dean of Mumias Deanery and a former Dierector of the Catechetical Centre –Mumisa), Key Informant Interview, at St Charles Lwanga Parish-Lutaso, on 6th August 2021.

125. Annual Reports of The Diocese in Mukumu Archives.

Kakamega Cathedral in 1968, Shitoli in 1989, and Irenji in 2016. These are parishes that directly emerged from the mother, Mukumu Parish.¹²⁶ Parishes indirectly connected to the Mukumu mission via Plokosian strategy include Shiseso and Lufumbo Parishes, which sprang from Musoli Parish. Mukomari, Mukulusu, and Muranda Parishes have emerged from Shibuye. From Eregi parish emerged Erusui, Hambale, Buyangu, Chamakanga, Emalindi and Luanda parishes. From Shikoti parish, there emerged Lusumu, Lutaso, Malava, Eshisiru, Lubao and Chimoi. From Kakamega Cathedral, Lutonyi and Amalemba parishes have been created.¹²⁷

It has to be noted that Plokosian strategy of evangelization was not received well by some of his colleagues and the protestant churches in the area. Some Quackers at Kaimosi defected to the Catholic Church at Mukumu because the latter allowed them to drink alcohol and remain Christians.¹²⁸ Some of his critics, among them Fr. Nicholas Stam, believed that the missionaries had come to drive out the devil from Africans, and some of his favourite hiding places were the traditional dances. The Bisukha dancing was seen as immoral. For example the Bisukha wife dancing wriggled their hips, swinging their bottoms, and making their breasts tremble. Indeed, this was immorality in its most blatant form! So Fr. Witlox's method was not taken over in any other mission.¹²⁹ His critics were suspicious of *isukuti* dance songs and cultural activities as they were regarded as adulteration of the true faith, the Christian faith. They associated it with demonic forces and hence devilish dances.¹³⁰ It was unfair for some Mill Hill priests to associate the Isukha-Idakho dances with the devil. The assumption that African culture and practices were primitive, pagan, and devilish stemmed from a lack of understanding of the African culture. This mindset was influenced by the Darwinian Social Theory, which considered only the 'superior race' as having godly religion and culture. However, the study revealed that effective evangelization requires an understanding of the people's worldview. Fr. Witlox's approach, known as the Plokosian strategy, was highly praised as he successfully integrated many people into Catholicism, leading them into the catechumenate. His strategy even prevented the Bisukha people from resorting to suicide. This acknowledgment countered the notion that African practices led to moral

126. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.78.

127. K. L. Muchanga, (2006). "Deeper Evangelization: A Challenge to Basic Catechesis in Mukumu Parish, Diocese of Kakamega", BA Desertation, St. Mbaaga's Major Seminary-Ggaba (Ug), p. 4.

128. M. S. Sikolia, *Op. Cit.*, p. 69. Wasike, Elijah. "Alienation of Abashitaho's land rights, 1920-1963." PhD diss., Kenyatta University, 2018. Simwa, Linus PI. "The establishment and impact of friends church among the Tiriki of western Kenya." PhD diss., University of Nairobi, 2015.

129. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.69.

130. Petro Lubulela (88 Years, a Renown Retired Trade Unionist and a lay Church leader- Mukumu Parish), Oral Interview, at his home-Burimbuli, on 4th March, 2021.

degeneration and highlighted Fr. Witlox's unique apostolic role.¹³¹ This awful custom of hanging themselves had reached its peak in 1912. However, with evangelization, it dramatically reduced. In the diary for the mission, there is evidence that on 23rd March 1913, about one hundred and fourteen (114) Christians received Holy Communion and had opened a mission in Maragoli land (Eregi).¹³²

Among the Mill Hill Missionaries, some did not favour inculturation in Christian worship. T. L Hassan gives the general reasons why the missionaries did not embrace inculturation. He strongly believes that the missionaries possessed the "*conquista mentality*," in which they acted more as patriotic Europeans than men of the Holy Bible.¹³³ In the *conquista mentality*, the missionaries identified themselves with the colonizers. They were indeed a spiritual wing of the colonizers. Ngugi wa Thiong'o voiced his concern that the priests and the colonial District Commissioner (DC) were the same.¹³⁴ In that, they acted like Lords and rode on the powers of the European state. Thus, their sense of patriotism inhibited the messengers from interrogating their national identity and values from the point of view of Gospel values.¹³⁵ The European government's collaboration and close conduct with missionaries (the Church) contributed to the latter's arrogance. The Church manifested itself in Africa through imperialism within the political and ecclesiastical context. Imperialism by nature and character is inimical to dialogue since the latter presupposes some degree of equality and respect from the interlocutor.

Apart from the *conquista mentality*, it relived the crusading mentality of medieval Christianity. According to Hassan (2015), the crusading mentality was endemic within the missionary movement in Africa. To re-assert the position of the Church, the missionaries looked at African religions and cultures as obstacles to evangelization. While the enemies of the Church in Europe were Muslims, the enemy was the divine healer and all his paraphernalia and accoutrements in Africa.¹³⁶ Because of this, Tugume states:

The missionaries saw it as his duty to destroy all forms of Pagan beliefs and instil an unadulterated form of Religion in Africa. Because of the exclusiveness associated with this crusading mentality, the missionaries of this era were not inclined to show respect for the value of the African to choose his or her Religion, what to believe, and

131. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.69.: Mukumu Archives: Nicholas Stam: Short History of Eregi: Mukumu Archives: Nicholas Stam : Short History of Vicariate Kisumu (Archives).

132. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.69.

133. T. Hassan, *Op. Cit.*, p.34.

134. Ngugi WA Thiong'o, (1987). *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (Vol. 240). Nairobi: East African Publishers, p. 12.

135. Tugume, (2015). *Op. Cit*, p.194.

136. *Ibid*, p. 197.

what not to believe. The missionaries finally ravaged African culture and religious systems, and history.¹³⁷

Inculturation was delayed or not allowed because, all along, the missionaries had a negative attitude toward African Religion and culture. Fr. Mose de Acosta (S.J.) classified civilizations and cultures where;

... the western intruders were included to rate the Asian cultures as highest though still below the level of Anglican civilizations as next best and Black Africans jostling for the bottom position with the Carribs, the Tupi, and other unnamed "savages" of the new world.¹³⁸

Western scholars, including Christians, have never been genuinely interested in the African Religion. Their works have all been part and parcel of some controversy or debate in the Western world.¹³⁹ Their works depicted the deep convictions that Africans were "bocais (*ita est* clowns)" best suited for converting immortal souls. For this reason, Christian missionaries in Africa were not of African World view; they were thus unprepared to adapt to local conditions and environment. Rather they were only prepared to give what they believed and knew. Thus, their attitude was inimical to dialogue, explaining the ultimate failure to eradicate the African Religion. With the Vatican Council II and the subsequent Popes, the door for inculturation in the Church was opened.

Finally and fundamentally, no evangelization could ever take place in western part of Kenya without the Holy Spirit and the grace provided by Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity. According to the historian St. Luke,¹⁴⁰ the Holy Spirit works in two main ways; to empower the agents of evangelization as witnesses and to use the gospel to bring about belief. Jesus said: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth"¹⁴¹ The Holy spirit is the principle evangelising agent, it is He who pushes and announces the gospel and the intimacy of the conscience. He welcomes and makes it possible to understand the words of salvation.¹⁴² Therefore, based on the many challenges, MHM encountered in this region of western Kenya, the study concurs with

137. Ibid, p.198.

138. Boxer, (1978). *Op. Cit*, p.78.

139. R. Lister, F. Williams, A. Anttonen, U. Gerhard, & J. Bussemaker, (2007). *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe: New challenges for Citizenship Research in a Cross-National Context*. Policy Press, p.5.

140. St. Luke was both a physician as well as a historian. His main books in the Bible are the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Looking at the introduction of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (Prologues) the historical method of data collection used by Luke is well illustrated. Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1: 1-5.

141. Acts of the Apostles, 1:18.

142. *Evangelli Nundiatti* no. 75.

bishop Sulumeti assertion that the missionaries relied on the power of the Holy Spirit to evangelize western Kenya. The Holy Spirit is thus the comforter, and He calmed the fears and filled the hope of the missionaries. Without the Holy Spirit, evangelization would not have been effective. According to Pope Francis, without Holy Spirit, evangelisation is empty advertising. To him the Holy Spirit is the protagonist of evangelization,¹⁴³ a fact which this study underscored.

The study identified key historical events that played a significant role in shaping evangelization in Western Kenya. These events include the establishment of mission stations, World War One (1914-1918), the inter-war period (1919-1939), World War Two (1939-1945), the influence of individual bishops, the fight for independence (1945-1963), and the Vatican II Council (1962-1965). The Mill Hill missionaries intensified their evangelization efforts in the area from 1904 onwards, resulting in the establishment of numerous mission stations by 1978. The establishment of the Prefecture Apostolic Kavirondo and the presence of the Ursuline sisters further contributed to the growth of evangelization in the region.¹⁴⁴

The contributions of individual bishops and priests were crucial in the progress of evangelization. Bishop Brandsma (1926-1935) established schools and founded the Sisters of Mary Congregation. Bishop Nicholas Stam (1935-1948) actively opened and visited mission stations. Bishop Fredrick Hall succeeded him, and the post-World War II era saw the development of vibrant mission centers.¹⁴⁵ The Hospitals, schools, and convents began flourishing in the Mill Hill region. During Bishop Fredrick Hall's regime (1948-1963), the number of missions increased explosively.¹⁴⁶ The biggest expansion took place in Luyia-Land, where 14 new missions were opened: Kitale, Misikhu, Kisoko, Shikoti, Lutaso, Mundika, Buyangu, Kiminini, Musoli, Chamakanga, Shibuye, Hambale and Erusui.¹⁴⁷ The proliferation of mission centers indicated increased conversions, highlighting the effectiveness of evangelization. Bishop Fredrick Hall played a significant role in collaborating with his priests to evangelize Buluyia and neighboring areas.

Following him, Bishop John de Reeper (1963-1976) revitalized the Church by introducing parish councils, emphasizing the Catholic family movement, and improving Sunday services in outstations without priests.¹⁴⁸ This was the time of the Vatican II Council (1962-1965). The Vatican II Council is a big benchmark in the History of the Church. The Council Fathers proclaimed many changes that enhanced evangelization in the Catholic Church. For example changes in liturgy included the change from Latin to other local languages, a move that enhanced evangelisation in the Catholic Church. Within this spirit, Bishop John de Reeper

143. Pope Francis during his weekly general Audience in St. Peter Square on 22nd Mrch 2023 in Catholic Courier.

144. Pius VI, (1775-1799). Apostolic Letter, *Ut Aucto*, in A. A. S. Vol. XVIII, pp.87-88.

145. H. Burgman, *Op. Cit.*, p.245.

146. *Ibid*, p.246.

147. *Ibid*, p.246.

148. *Ibid*, p.279.

took over the Diocese and focused on what would improve evangelization. Burgman describes Bishop John de Reeper as a brilliant, optimistic and focused shepherd.¹⁴⁹ He equipped his Diocese with the new structures of collegiality with the clergy and religious participation, creating a big force of evangelization agents. Prior, the Sisters were not involved in evangelization, but with Bishop John de Reeper, all the institutions in the Church were to step up as agents of evangelization. By introducing improved Sunday services in outstations without priests, Bishop de Reeper involved the Laity, especially the catechists, in evangelization true to the spirit of the Vatican II council.¹⁵⁰ It was in this context that Mumias Catechist Training Centre (CTC) was established in 1962 to train lay people as catechists, who played a significant role as agents of evangelisation. In 1976, Bishop Philip Sulumeti took over the Diocese of Kisumu from John de Reeper as the first African (Black) bishop. Following the steps of his successors, Bishop Sulumeti demonstrated strong apostolic zeal. In 1978 Diocese of Kakamega was created from the Diocese of Kisumu. The new Diocese encompassed the entire former Western Province of Kenya, including Kakamega, Bungoma, and Busia Districts. According to Sulumeti (Bishop Emeritus), the Holy Father Pope Paul VI decided to move him to the new Diocese because it was expensive, highly populated, and needed an experienced Bishop.¹⁵¹

World War I (1914-1918) had a significant impact as many people joined the army and realized the importance of literacy. Catechetical centers were transformed into schools to accommodate the growing desire for education. This period coincided with Wilson Woodrow's declaration of self-determination and the Great Depression (mid-1920s to mid-1930s). The inter-war period (1919-1939) saw the rise of independent churches and schools, aligned with the spirit of self-determination. The Second World War (1939-1945) facilitated the ordination of indigenous Africans as priests, and by 1957, the first African bishop was consecrated in Kenya. These events significantly influenced and intensified evangelization efforts.

149. Ibid, p.277.

150. Ibid, p.247.

151. Philip Sulumeti (84 years, Emeritus Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega), Key Informant Interview, at St. Philips Emeritii House-Kakamega, on 28th March 2021.

Conclusion

This article provides a historical account of evangelization in Western Kenya from 1902-1978, highlighting key events and individuals involved in spreading the faith in the region. The study examines various determinants and strategies employed during the establishment of the Church, including Kerygma, baptisms, creation of catechumenates, and literacy initiatives. The success in addressing challenges relied heavily on the expertise and leadership of bishops such as Brandsma, Nicholas Stam, Fredrick Hall, John de Reeper, and Philip Sulumeti. The study sheds light on the diverse approaches and contributions that shaped evangelization in Western Kenya during this period.

Finally, the article has authenticated that the determinants of evangelization in Western Kenya was influenced by various historical events that took place in this period. For example, the Catholic and Protestant conflicts in Uganda led to the coming of Mill Hill, and the Islamic factor in Mumias remained a challenge to the evangelisation in Mumias mission and its progress. The Islamic challenge was exacerbated by the Wanga traditionalists who tried to oppose the new Religion. First and Second World Wars affected evangelization too. After the war, the clamour for independence in Kenya was also felt in the Church, and hence a paradigm shift led to the consecration of African priests to Bishopric.

The drastic paradigm shift in evangelization was realized after the Vatican II Council (1962-1965) brought tremendous changes in the Church that has affected evangelization to date. Finally, the theoretical framework of this study has manifested itself in contextualizing and interrogating the data in this article. Functionalism theory has helped evaluate how a Church has functioned and purposed to evangelize through her various structures. The challenge and response theory has given a milieu for evaluating how the various challenges inspired and motivated the various Bishops, priests, and catechists to respond to them in the process of evangelization. The article has clearly established that opportunities became a reality within the various evangelization challenges/obstacles. The challenges motivated the Church leaders to moot various strategies that suited evangelization at that time.

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