

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE PLANTING OF A CHURCH IN AFRICA:
THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE AFRICAN IN THE MISSIONARY
ENTERPRISE OF THE AFRICA INLAND MISSION AT MULANGO
DCC 1900 - 1985

BY

MIKE MULWA MUTUA

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in church history

July - 2001

HE
V
55
188
001

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**THE PLANTING OF A CHURCH IN AFRICA:
THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE AFRICAN IN THE MISSIONARY
ENTERPRISE OF THE AFRICA INLAND MISSION AT MULANGO DCC
1900 - 1985**

**BY
MIKE MULWA MUTUA**

**A thesis presented to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Church History**

**LIBRARY
NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
P. O. Box 24686, NAIROBI**

Approved:

Supervisor:

DR. MARK SHAW

Second Reader:

DR. HENRY MUTUA

External Examiner:

DR. ESTHER MOMBO

July, 2001.

0030360

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

**PLANTING OF A CHURCH IN AFRICA: THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE
AFRICAN IN THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE OF THE AFRICA INLAND
MISSION AT MULANGO DCC 1900 - 1985.**

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the examiners.

Signed:

Mike Mulwa Mutua

July, 2001

ABSTRACT

The writing of the history of Christianity in Africa has for a long time been presented as the account of white missionaries and their activities in this savage ridden Dark continent. This approach tends to account for the success of the church planting endeavors to the commitment, sacrifice and dedication of the white persons. Other factors contributing to this growth have been treated as secondary, actually supplementary to the efforts of the missionaries. The past half a century has however seen the birth and quick development of a second approach to African historiography. This second school is called the nationalistic approach that seeks to write the history of the church in Africa, telling the story with an African bias. The proponents of this approach appear to delight in exposing the weaknesses of the missionaries while presenting the African contribution as the sole key to the success story of the evangelization of Africa. Had the African not participated, the church would not have been planted in Africa.

This paper subscribes to an approach that begins with the conviction that the work of winning the world for God has a divine initiative. It is God's agenda that is executed by Him through human tools. This approach therefore seeks to make an inquiry into the means through which the witness to the kingdom was carried out. Attention is given to all factors at play, human and otherwise, giving credit where it deserves.

This paper attempts to tell the story of the church of Mulango utilizing the rich resource of oral history, relying heavily on the memories of the first generation Christians, their immediate relatives and acquaintances. Since those with this information are rapidly passing on, this thesis puts into written form that story thereby preserving it.

Towards that end the introduction states the purpose and the significance of this task while the first chapter reviews some of the relevant literature. The next four chapters tell the story of the church at Mulango. The second chapter looks at the traditional and cultural life of the Akamba of Mulango before the missionary invasion followed by a trace of the path of the gospel to Mulango in the third chapter. The fourth chapter takes a look at the perceived and expressed contributions of the Africans in the particular areas of discipleship, education, administration and evangelism. The nature of the transition process from the missionaries to African leadership is discussed in chapter five, after which lessons, recommendations and conclusions are offered in the last chapter.

DEDICATION

To my late Dad and loving Mama for planting the seed of life in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to the following persons who contributed in one way or another to make this project what it has turned out to be.

Thank you;

1. Dr. Mark Shaw for inspiring me to love church history and for having faith in my ability to make it even when I was on the verge of giving up.
2. My mother, brothers and sisters for being there for me and letting me know you care. Thank you for understanding my situation. Kimum you are the best.
3. Priscilla Mutio and Carolyne Muoki for the hours you put into typing this manuscript, Matthew Musyoki for typesetting and formatting this piece of work. Only the Father can reward you for the sleepless nights.
4. Pastor Katoo Musya for hosting me when I needed some time away to work on this project.
5. Pastor Nduto Syengo my 'guide and assistant' at Mulango during my field research. You know what 'Sony' is all about.
6. Ex-mayor of Kitui Mr. Elijah Muindi and your family for housing and feeding me while doing my field research. May the Lord bless you in a special way.
7. The Pastors, local church council and congregation at A.I.C Jericho for giving me the one-year study leave and bearing with the pain of missing me - or was it a necessary break? Pastor J.B.O Onyango for leaving the US to come and relieve me as Pastor in charge at A.I.C Jericho. God needed you at Jericho at this time. Bless you!
8. All the informers at Ikutha and Mulango. Without you this thesis would have remained only a wish. This is the story you told me.
9. Curtis Reed for bearing with my "Silly Self" and challenging me to learn "how" to think not just "what" to think. Sizzles and sixems will really miss us, and so will KAD 601R.
10. Kalumaita Shaddy for dealing with the kitchen the way I like it during my stay at NEGST so I could time for the books, papers and pens. Without those meals I would have punched three more holes on my waist belt.
11. All of you readers of this document. It is my trust that what has gone into these pages will go some little length into offering valuable information and inspiration further study in this field.
12. All praise to my God who gave me the grace to carry on and offered all these human-gifts to me at my time of need. Were it not for Him my body would have collapsed under the pressure and fatigue. Thank you Lord.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
Introduction	1
Purpose of study	
Significance of Study	
Chapter	
I. Methodology and Literature Review	3
Methodology	
Literature Review	
End Notes	
II. The Akamba of Mulango Before the Missionary Advent	7
The Concept of the Divine	
Art and Acts of Worship	
Community	
Rites of Passage	
Reconciliation Procedures	
Song and Dance	
Social and General Life	
End Notes	
III. The coming of the Gospel to Mulango (1900-1920)	21
The Earlier Attempt	
Johann Hofmann at Ikutha and Mulango	
AIM Takes over	
End Notes	
IV. In the vineyard together (1920-1980)	28
Under the Leipzig Mission	
Under AIM	
The Local Evangelists	
On Relationship	
End Notes	
V. The Transition process (1980-1985)	40
Leadership Training	
Risk of Collapsing the Ministry	
End Notes	
VI. So What? Lessons, Recommendations and Conclusions	46
Training Leaders	
Visionary Leadership	
Supporting Ministry	
Conclusion	
End Notes	
Bibliography	59
Interviews	

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The Christian faith in Ukambani has a long history. One of the main denominations in Ukambani is the Africa Inland Church (AIC) which was founded by the efforts of Christians, local and foreign, working under the umbrella of African Inland Mission (AIM). The existing written information on how the Church was planted fails to examine an element that played a major role in the founding of this faith among the Akamba. That factor is the role of the African in the Missionary enterprise. This paper seeks to demonstrate how significant the role of the African was in the planting of the church in Africa, as illustrated by the case of AIC Mulango in Kitui Central Region, Kenya.

The Significance of the study

This thesis puts into written form the activities of the nationals at Mulango in the process of establishing the church in that locality. This way that history is preserved. It is important to write down that history urgently because the generation that has it in memory is rapidly passing away.

Much of the written history of the church in Africa today, tells the story from the missionaries' perspective. They tell their story. This study offers an African perspective on the endeavors of the missionary enterprise in one African context.

Since the missionaries worked within the African context and with the Africans, there existed a relationship between the two. This historical account offers an insight into the working relationship(s) and the perceived attitude(s) between the

two. Was it one of antagonism, suspicion, or genuine and unreserved acceptance?

It is also hoped that the lives and ministry of the first generation of African christians will serve as a point of reference for contemporary Christian workers in Africa. Their strengths should inspire this later generation of African Christians. The weaknesses of those African church fathers of Mulango should serve a cautionary purpose.

Lastly, suggestions for improving the ministry of the Africa Inland Church at Mulango, and Kenya at large, are drawn from the findings of this project and should offer relevant implications.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Methodology

The author relied heavily on the rich resource of oral history. To this end interviews were carried out. First generation African Christians who are still living, their immediate family members and close relatives were interviewed. The author used unstructured questions. They were used to provoke the informers to tell their stories naturally. The interviews were recorded on tape. In addition the author took notes whenever it was possible. These recorded interviews were later transcribed after which the information was synthesized to formulate the story of the church at Mulango.

Relevant and background information was provided from a review of the literature available that included books, journal articles and primary documents including letters and church records.

Literature Review

Several authors have been helpful for their written works in a variety of the subjects covered by this thesis. Paul Jenkins' article in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, together with chapter four of *Research in Education* by Best and Kahn, are valuable in their treatment of doing oral History. Clark's guidelines on doing research on historical subjects offer a step by step discussion on the general approach to the field of historical inquiry.¹ Ajayi and Ayandele's "Writing African church history" article challenges the African historiographer to avoid mediocrity by

writing a history that relates to the realities of African Christianity.² The two are champions of the nationalistic approach to the writing of African church history. Andrian Hastings has done a milestone survey of the study of church history, pointing out variation of schools involved in this discipline.³ In the study of African church history several works were found to be valuable. Some of these are Sundkler and Steed's *History of the Church in Africa, A History of Christianity in Africa*, by Elizabeth Isiche and also Baur's *2000 years of Christianity in Africa*.

The Kenya Churches Handbook has two chapters that provide a chronology of historical events in the planting of churches in Kenya by the various missionary organizations. It is an ideal comparative study of the various missionary enterprises in Kenya. Karanja and Njoroge give specialized inquiry into the planting of the Anglican faith in Kikuyuland⁴ and the Catholic model in Kenya,⁵ respectively.

In the area of the AIM endeavors and history in Africa, two books are valuable. They are biographical in nature and trace the path and developments of the mission's work in Africa since its inception. These are, *We felt like grasshoppers* by Dick Anderson and *Garden of Miracles*, by Don Richardson.

John S. Mbiti has written extensively on the pre-Christian religion(s) of Africa. He was born and brought up at Mulango. His books are useful in providing an understanding of the lifestyles of the Akamba of Mulango before the Gospel Era.

Upon reflecting on the impact of Christianity on the African, this writer values the insights of various contributors. These include those in *Issues in African Christian Theology*, *Critiques of Christianity in African Literature*, and *Facing the New challenges: The message of PACLA*, which is a published report of the proceeding of a Pan African Christian Leadership conference held in Kenya back in 1976. The conference attempted to wrestle with the nature of the real challenges to the advancement of African Christianity.

A small booklet, put out by the Africa Inland Church press around the time of the turning over of AIM to AIC, exceeds its physical size when it comes to supplying information on the state of the church at that time and the expectations, maybe anxiety, of both the missionary and national leaders.⁶

Missionary approaches to church planting have not given the African participant the credit he deserves on one hand while on the other, nationalistic historiographers have tended to heap all manner of blame on the western missionaries. This thesis adopts a third approach. This third way of doing African historiography is the kingdom approach. The kingdom approach to doing Church history attempts to trace the means of the expansion of God's kingdom on earth through out all generations. This is best achieved by carefully reconstructing the story of the kingdom of God in a particular context whether ethnic, national, cultural or even civilization. This is called ethnographic historiography.

END NOTES

¹Kitson G. Clark, *Guide For Research Students working on Historical Subjects*. [London: Cambridge University Press. 1972], 9-63.

²J. F. Ajayi and E. Ayandale, "Writing Church History," *Church Crossing Frontiers* [Beyerhaus: Lutheran Mission 1969], 90 - 108.

³Andrian Hastings, "African Christian Studies, 1979 - 1999: Reflections of an Editor," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 30:1 [Leiden 2000], 30 - 44.

⁴John Karanja, *Founding an African Faith: Kikuyu Anglican Christianity, 1900 - 1945*. Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1999.

⁵Lawrence Njoroge, *A Century of Catholic Endeavor: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

⁶Ndeti Somba, Ed., *Sura Mpya ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya*. Kijabe: A.I.C Kijabe Press n.d.

CHAPTER II

THE AKAMBA OF MULANGO BEFORE THE MISSIONARY ADVENT

The gospel did not land from the west into a religious vacuum at Mulango. The Akamba were and still are a very religious people. Their life was deeply spiritual. Their daily routines, practices, duties and seasons were entwined in the experience of worship.

This Chapter intends to lay the background to the story of the church at Mulango. The concepts, practices and issues highlighted here will be referred to or presupposed in the chapters that follow.

The Concept of the Divine

God is referred to as *Mumbi*, the Kamba term meaning the creator. He is believed to be the Supreme Being, above all that has been made. His origin remains a mystery. He is said to have been living very near, just above the heads the people, overshadowing the community as a protective canopy. During those days he was directly involved in the daily affairs of the people. However, whenever women would be pounding cereals with pounding sticks, they would keep poking him and he consequently moved further up. Ultimately, he went so far up to the sky, so that to reach him the community needed to use some means. The ancestors were venerated but never treated as deities. They were part of the community and would be involved in the affairs of the community. The spirits of those that had died in the recent past were believed to be as close to the people as to be able to make requests and demands. They would appear to close relatives and even spoke through children

and babies.¹

God was also known as *Mwatuangi*. The implication of this name is that he is the designer. God was seen as a God of order. The Akamba accepted that he could allow incidents to take place, and even when they were not for the felt good of the people, he was known to be in control and nothing would be beyond his sovereignty. He was expected to turn things around and vindicate the victims of misfortune. The overwhelming display of the created order and its design led the people of Mulango to worship God for, and at, the landmarks of his creation such as rivers, mountains and rocks.

Since God was interested in the welfare of man in particular, but was removed from him man, approached him through worship.

Art and Acts of Worship

One prevalent act of worship was prayer. There were both long ceremonial prayers and short momentary ones. Shorter prayers were often part of daily life and interaction within the community and the environment. Some were said as expressions of wishes and invoking blessing upon loved ones. When people were parting company for some time especially for a journey, they would wish each other *kithanze kivoo*, meaning paths that do not lead to danger.² Prolonged prayers were occasional and said in specific contexts. After a long drought the people were gathered together by their religious leaders to offer prayers placing specific requests for the rain to fall. This was done at the *Ninja* rock and at the pool called *Kwa Katingi* in a river near the place where the mission station was to be established later.³

There were no written creeds and liturgy to recite. Prayer was from within them, from their blood and heart.⁴ Sacrifices and offerings were two important acts

of worship for the Akamba. Sacrifices involved the shedding of the blood of an animal. Animals that were kept as livestock were the only ones acceptable as sacrifices. Offerings included the casting of foodstuffs into shrines or on the by-ways along with the pouring of libation. Offerings for the major part were tokens of appreciation to God while sacrifices were for atonement and the appeasing of God and the spirits. Sacrifices were also offered as signs of consummation of union between families or clans, and also between man and God or spirits. Offerings and sacrifices could be interpreted as a psychological device to restore the felt ontological imbalance.⁵ The shrines where these gifts were offered were respected as sacred, but not idols. They were neither worshiped nor prayed to.⁶ They were centers of worship, the houses of God.

Therefore, it is to be noted that the concepts of worship, prayer, offerings and sacrifices were intrinsic aspects of the Akamba of Mulango before the missionaries arrived. The missionary did not need to teach the people how to worship as much as he needed to understand the elaborate and deep worship experience of the Akamba and seek to transform that worship, borrow from it and even promote its elements for a more fulfilling form of African Christian Worship of Yahweh.

Community

The religious consciousness of the Akamba has a background of a very personal religious experience. This personal relationship with the spiritual is however communal. The sacred is not experienced in separation or isolation to, rather it is in the unity of the diversity in the community. The whole is therefore holy. This whole is found in the community where the individual finds his fulfillment as he participates in a family.⁷

The concept of the community and integration in one bigger whole is

founded on strong relationships in the extended family. In answer to the question of one's identity, it was possible to simply recite one's genealogy (ancestors). This kind of identification placed a great significance on one's clan. The community therefore transcends time and offers a fulfillment in the realm of personal identity. Taboos, rites and rituals were put in place to enforce this sense of community and to govern relationships, chain of command as well as obligations to other members of the society.⁸ The community was therefore a complexity of well-articulated mutual relationships and graded obligations. Mutual respect was expected and lack of it was punishable. The perceived family extensions and relationships also regulated the marriage institution. This means that the idea of a church as a community of believers, one body of Christ is not foreign but a concept that already formed the backbone of relationships within the people of Mulango.

Rites of Passage

As an individual comes into existence, he finds himself born in a community. From birth to burial his life is patterned according to the framework of the society. At birth, the community at Mulango shared in the reception of a new member to the society through a celebration ceremony called *ndua*. *Ndua* is porridge. It is the kind of porridge that was taken by a mother who had just delivered. It was made from millet, finger millet or sorghum. Finger millet was the preferred cereal for this purpose. The community shared in *ndua* parties, symbolizing association and participation in bringing into their midst a new life. This ceremony was also the occasion for naming the child. The name was picked from a range of the aspects of life. Most commonly, the name of the grandparents or other elderly and respected members of the community were given to the child. The events surrounding the birth often would dictate the choice of a name. For example, if the child were born

while the father was on a journey a boy would be called Mwendo, Kyalo or Kuthi.⁹

Naming children after clan totems was also a common practice around Mulango. *Mbiti* means hyena, *Nzou*, an elephant, and a couple of other names were given to children, especially the first born. Seasons of the year provided another source of names. Wambua (male) and Kambua (female) were given to those who were born while it was raining, Munyao for dry seasons, while Mumo was for one born at a time of boom in harvest.¹⁰ Names meant more than just an identification of a person.

Among others, it meant occasion, family belonging and even a spiritual reality.

The child's next major bridge was initiation. This was done for boys and girls as well. Those to be initiated were kept in secret camps where they were trained in family -life issues, community virtues and responsibilities to the society. This training was an essential school and so was the physical act of circumcision. The Akamba circumcised both boys and girls. The significance of circumcision was the bonding that took place through the shedding of blood. This bond extends to the wider family, the ancestors and to all the Akamba people transcending the limitations of time and space.¹¹ At the same time the scar remained as a constant reminder to that bonding and the call of duty to the communal responsibility to the welfare of the community. The Akamba believed that if one was able to withstand the pain of circumcision, then he or she would be able to withstand the hardships and pain of this life. Initiation was therefore treated as the bridge to adulthood, a passport for marriage and involvement in family life. Finally, as the newly initiated returned home from seclusion accompanied by song and dance, there was the symbolism of new birth into a new realm of life with new responsibilities and privileges. The initiated belonged to one age group called *nthuke*. Tokens, gifts and portions of family property were offered to these new adults. Anytime after this, the boys got wives for themselves and the women would be married off.¹² The

Christian practice of baptism as ushering the believes into another level of Ecclesiastical privileges including the right to the Holy Communion and Church Weddings was well received.

Marriage was a very sacred institution. The path towards marriage, the wedding day and the days after was seen as one whole package of worship acts, including prayers for preservation, fertility and blessing. Some stages in the marriage path were observed as foundational. They did not necessarily follow the order presented below but they had to take place to legitimize the marriage. After the girl had been identified by the corporate efforts of the boy's extended family, the parents or some representatives went to the girl's home to declare their interest. This was a time to introduce themselves, exposing their family in its extended form. Most clans did not allow marriage between members of the same clan. Some clans were preferred to others as providers of good husbands and vice versa. After this introduction, the visitors were request to give their hosts some time to *gossip* about them and then return later for a response as to whether or not their request had been granted. If the response was positive then a date for another bigger ceremony of *Kutuma nduu*, to initiate a special friendship, was set. This was basically an elaborate feast. During this party the elders of the two clans or family representatives would engage in a business meeting to negotiate the dowry. The dowry was not seen as a price for the bride. Though it was later abused and seen as a payment, dowry initially was a sign of union symbolized by an exchange of ownership. The ownership of property was transferred from the boy's family to that of the girl's, while the ownership of the girl was transferred to the boy's family. Once the agreement was reached, the wedding could take place even after the giving of the smallest portion of that dowry. Dowry continued to be given and received over a long period of time but mental record of how much was exchanged was never

lost. There was a sense of pride and satisfaction on the part of the groom in giving the dowry for a wife one had married.¹³ There are still questions as to whether Christians should give and take dowry.

Mbui sya ntheo was the term given for some goats that were brought to the bride's family for a ceremony called *Kuthea*, which literally means cleansing. This ceremony involved three goats. Two she-goats and one he-goat were brought the day before that of the ritual. On the said day, the he-goat was slaughtered to shed blood for the other two. The other two were now cleansed and all the other livestock and gifts to be brought into that home from the groom's home. That same blood cleansed the girl and set her apart for the groom. The blood also did the role of binding the families together, the man and the wife, the community and the ancestors and the new couple with the community. If this ritual was not done, the woman was not buried in that new home upon her death - she did not belong there yet. Other foodstuffs offered included a bundle of sugarcanes, two bunches of bananas, a basketful of sweet potatoes and another of maize flour. After a meal, some pieces of roasted goatskin were given to those 'who gave birth to us' and beer was poured out too for the ancestors to join in the celebration.¹⁴ Anytime after this, the girl was allowed to leave and could be whisked away anytime without any other notification. The couple could also choose to wait for a ceremonial send - off. It should be noted that even before Christianity shedding of blood for cleansing purposes in the Spiritual sense was practiced. The cleansing power of Jesus' blood found prepared ground in this cultural practice. It should have been easier to communicate this concept for the missionaries in Ukambani.

In case a marriage had to be broken and the woman returned home, an act called *Kuthi Wendo*, the representatives and clan leaders were involved in trying to resolve the matter with the intention of restoring the marriage. However, should this

fail to be achieved, then the dowry would be refunded and if she had a child she had to go with the child. If she was later married into another family, the child would go with her and enjoy all the rights and privileges of membership in that family.¹⁵ John Mbiti, a renowned scholar of African traditional religions and one who hails from Mulango, enlists more than ten observations on the meaning and significance of marriage in Africa. Out of these ten the Akamba of Mulango seem to acknowledge only four. They saw marriage as an essential institution for the bearing and raising up of children. Marriage was also a unifying link in the rhythm of life where communities, ancestors and the future generations were linked together. Marriage gave the man and wife a sense of completeness, an establishing of a status in the society at the social, religious and cultural realms. A married person had the added responsibility and obligation to provide for his family and the unspoken requirement to exhibit good qualities and manners such as the loving and respecting of others as well as caring for communal property.¹⁶ Both the husband and wife had turned into guardians of the community virtues.

Death was the last bridge to cross. Many reasons surrounded the causes of death. There were natural causes, which included accidents, war, famine and illness among others. There were also the spiritual causes. These spiritual causes were given more attention than the physical. The Akamba of Mulango had a saying in regard to death and misfortune, *ti mana* that means that nothing happens without a hidden cause. Misfortunes do not just happen. Acknowledging that God *Mumbi* was the ultimate owner of life - he gives and takes. They referred to death as *Kwitwa*, meaning to be called. He who died was said to have answered that call. This could also imply being called by the ancestors into the other life. For the Akamba, death is just a transposition into the spiritual realm, which is as real and not separate from this physical one. Death was however not seen as a friend to the

community. The sinister causes of death were sought by consulting witchdoctors. Depending on the revealed cause, certain rituals would be carried out to appease the spirits of the departed. Whatever the ancestors and spirits demanded was done or given. The spirits of the dead often visited the living, most of the times for benevolence but at other times to cause trouble for being neglected or offended by the living. Contact with the body of the dead was risky because that would transfer the spirit of death to the living. The home of the bereaved was avoided, at least until the burial took place.¹⁷ The corpses used to be cast away until much later when burial was initiated. The body was buried away from the homestead and by the elderly only. No woman was allowed near the corpse lest she contracted death and never got to give birth to a living child. The elders slaughtered a goat and took beer which they also poured to appease the *aimu* (spirits).¹⁸

Reconciliation Procedures

As it is expected, differences, even fighting occur when people live together and the early dwellers of Mulango were no exception. They, at times, stole cattle from each other. Sometimes girls were unceremoniously taken away as wives, which strained inter-family relationships. There were cases of fornication and adultery, although only a few cases were reported. Men at times could fight with or beat up, unreasonably, their wives and such were the cases taken before the elders led by a local judge called *Musili*. The elders, referred to as *atumia* or *asee*, listened carefully to both sides and deliberated thoroughly before making recommendations that were normally imperative in nature. They decided what compensation was to be given to whom and whether any punishments were required. As a symbol of reconciliation and to seal the renewed covenant, a goat was slaughtered and beer poured and shared. The reconciled groups were required to eat from the same

calabash some *ugali* made from finger millet with fermented milk and gee.¹⁹

Against this background the gospel of reconciliation back to God and man to man was to be received and appreciated by the Mulango people when the missionaries came.

Song and Dance

The songs and dances of the Akamba were for entertainment and worship. The entertainment songs and dances were also educational and recreational. Through songs traditions and philosophies have been handed down. Entertainment singing was called *Wathi* meaning simply a song. These were done even in the day as opposed to worship singing, which was done only at night. Villages would hold joint song festival to show their best in song and dance. When the missionaries came they did not recognize that the dressing, ornaments and artifacts for this kind of song and dance were for aesthetic and beauty purposes only. They associated *Wathi* with the more worship oriented *Kilumi*. Kitema Nzinga was renowned for putting up some of the best dances with his children.²⁰ African Christians desired to continue doing *Wathi* after conversion but their white masters would not let them. That is why Paul Ngave was wrestled to the ground and his dancing gear taken off by force by a missionary called Holland.²¹

The *Kilumi* was a kind of worship dance that involved beating drums until someone was possessed. The possessed person would speak, at times, in unknown languages or babbling after which another would interpret. This would be taken to mean that the spirits and ancestors were communicating a message with the living. They would demand a song or gifts to be given to the individual through whom the spirits had spoken or to be cast a shrine. At times people would take advantage of it and pretend to be possessed, making requests for selfish ends. Mr. Kyemba Nthenge

beat up his wives after he discovered that they were faking possession and asking for clothes too often.²² Traditional healers and medicine men received curative suggestions from the spirits often during *Kilumi* dances.²³

Social and General Life

The Akamba of Mulango were polygamous and this was very acceptable, in fact a sign of wealth and better social standing. They kept many cattle and for this the Maasai whom they called *Akavi* occasionally attacked them.²⁴ The Akamba did not wear clothing until puberty and adolescent age. Then they could cover themselves with small hides, later on they used sheets called *Suka* bought from the Asians and Arabs. Some old men preferred to walk around and work in their farms naked, the last of who were Mutua and Kitongo, respected men at Mulango.²⁵

Wooden hoes were used to dig up the ground for planting seeds. Crops like millet, sorghum and sweet potatoes were grown in Ukambani for many years. Maize was brought from India and hence the Kiswahili name *Mahindi*, meaning 'from India'. Beans were introduced much later as famine relief food.²⁶ Full dress and new types of crops were introduced by the missionaries or during their era.

Wealth was seen in the possession of large livestock including cattle, sheep and goats. Chicken was owned by the women and was a special diet for visitors. Children were another sign of wealth.²⁷ Land was owned communally and families would migrate almost at will to new areas but never lost trace of their original ancestral land.²⁸ When the missionaries arrived at Mulango, social, cultural and spiritual conditions were the setting they found themselves in. Armed with the gospel of Jesus which was clothed in the cultural dress of their respective origins, a few Kiswahili words (not Kikamba) and a group of local guides and interpreters, the white man begun the task of witnessing to the Kingdom of God at Mulango.

END NOTES

¹John Isika, Elder at AIC Mulango. Interview by author, 25 September 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

²Joel Mutisya, Pastor at Ikutha DCC, interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

³Isika.

⁴John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* [London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1983], 67.

⁵Ibid, 59

⁶Nowell S. Booth " An Approach to African Religion" In *African Religions: A symposium* , ed. Nowell Booth [New York: Nok Publishers Ltd, 1977], 7.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Isika.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Kathini Viata Ngave, retired teacher, 122 years old. Interview by author, 24 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

¹¹John S. Mbiti , ed. *Akamba Stories* [London: Oxford University Press, 1983], 98.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Isika.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* [London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1983], 67.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷Isika.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Peris Mbandi Mutuvi, old resident of Mulango. Mother to a renowned scholar in African Religion and Traditions, Professor John S. Mbiti. Interview by author, 24 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

²¹Isika.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Mutuvi.

²⁷Masumba Mulinge, fought for the colonialist government in India during World War II. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

²⁸Isika.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF THE GOSPEL TO MULANGO (1900 - 1920)

The Earlier Attempt

In January 1844 Johann Ludwig Krapf, a German Lutheran employed by the Church Missionary Society of London, landed at Mombasa with a desire to go deeper into the interior of Africa from the East Coast. He had a theory that a tribe called the Galas, who lived in the northern side of East Africa, were an important tribe in the area and therefore if they were reached with the gospel it would be very easy to reach the other tribes of East Africa. He saw the possibility of reaching these people by the way of the Akamba, who were the Southern neighbors to the Galas. By God's providence, a chief from the Akamba, Kivoi, was at Krapf's disposal and together they traversed the large area of Ukambani hoping to reach the Tana River.

Chief Kivoi was killed in an attack by a group of robbers but Krapf and some other men in their company escaped.¹ Kivoi's death was a great setback to Krapf's intention to settle in Ukambani for mission work. This account is significant because it is expected that the story of a white man touring around with a Kamba chief must have spread widely among these long distant traders and hunters. Those accompanying them could have included someone from Mulango area. Even if there was none, Kivoi had served as a guide to the missionary and explorer who brought the gospel to the Akamba. He should go down into the books of the history of Christianity in Ukambani as an early acquaintance with the Christianity of the white missionaries.

The death of Kivoi seems to have also shut the door for the work of

evangelizing the interior and especially Ukambani. Krapf returned to Europe and his companions targeted Usambara instead.²

Johann Hofmann at Ikutha and Mulango

It was not until 1886 that the door opened again in Ukambani. This time the witness was through the work of the Bavaria Evangelical Lutheran Mission. In that year, Dr. Johann Hofmann began a mission station at Ikutha, near the Southern end of the current Kitui District.³ He was joined two years later by another Lutheran missionary, G. Sauberlich. With the blessing of the hospitality of the Akamba of Ikutha, Dr. Hofmann was able to establish a big station there. He gathered around himself a number of local friends who were not necessarily converts but servants. Hofmann complained in a report that the Akamba of Ikutha were not converted nor attracted to the faith itself, but were open to receive the food relief, material tokens and medical services with great eagerness.⁴ He had expected much too soon, by the Akamba who were deeply rooted in their cultural worship could not possibly abandon it overnight. By December 1898, only three boys had been baptized.⁵ Even then, the team of Missionaries ventured further to the North. G. Sauberlich was the one to pioneer the work at Mulango the following year (1899). He settled down and in four years his labors were rewarded with the baptism of four converts. Mulango remained a sub-station with Ikutha as the headquarters of the mission work in Ukambani by the Bavaria Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

The converts from Mulango were taken to Ikutha for catechism and baptism, alongside technical training in carpentry and masonry. By 1913 numerical statistics showed that Ikutha was leading with sixty one native converts followed by Mulango with twenty five and a station at Miambani which had been started in 1903, which

had only nine.⁶ At this time, it was the Leipzig Mission that had taken over since 1893 that was doing the work.⁷

The breaking out of the First World War in 1914 thwarted any hopes for any further expansion of the Ministry under the Leipzig Mission. The Germans were required, in fact forced to leave the British territories in East Africa. One calm night in December that same year, Dr. Hofmann called together the believers at Ikutha for an unusual fellowship. He told them that he would be arrested any time then. He then gave them his last sermon, led them in the Lord's supper and some emotional prayers. At 2.00 a.m. as they continued to worship in song, government soldiers (Britons) walked into the church hall and arrested Dr. J. Hofmann, who did not put up any resistance. He bid his friends farewell and was taken away with a few of his belongings.⁸ The next morning, the believers learnt that the missionaries at Mulango had been arrested too. The mission station at Miambani about fifty (50) miles west of Mulango was closed down and the missionaries there expelled.

The departure of these Leipzig Missionaries left the church at Mulango in the hands of unprepared local leadership. The British authorities took from Ikutha the Africans who were working closely with the missionaries to serve the colonial government at Kitui town, about six kilometers from Mulango. These were to be interpreters for the District officers, the law courts, and at official public meetings. These interpreters included Samuel Kiteng'e, Joseph Ngonde, Samuel Mbithuka, his brother Andrew, and Elijah Mulu. A few become bookkeepers and clerks to the District Commissioner (D.C) including Paul Ndivo. Another young man from Ikutha served as the cook to the D.C. His name was Benjamin Mbathi Musyimi. Others in this transplanted group included Timothy Kitwa, Petro Lutu, Nicodemus Ngwili and his brother Abraham Kisaa. Joseph Ngonde, who had come from the coast with

Hofmann to Ikutha and later brought to Mulango rose through the ranks to become the chief of Mulango area. Petro Lutu and his brother Abraham became renowned masons, building most of the government offices in Kitui town and the missionary houses at Mulango mission station⁹.

The first converts under Dr. J. Hofmann were also transferred to Mulango and these two men, Jordan Ikumbi and Ee-Mbwenyi committed themselves to the ministry of evangelism and pastoral work around Mulango preserving and spreading the faith.¹⁰ The witness of these immigrants from Ikutha who found good positions in the government and settled around Mulango, had profound effects. They are referred to as ‘the light of Kitui’.¹¹ By implication, they send the message that Christianity was a means to better social status, by being able to work in the government offices of the white men. They had better living standards and were respected. They acquired land and property. Most of them had better living standards and were respected in the society as “the learned fellows”, the *Asomi*.

Meanwhile, missionary activities under other missionary societies were also going on. One such activity was by the initiative of one Peter Scott.

AIM Takes Over

Peter Cameron Scott had served in Congo with his brother since 1890 but because of his bad health, he returned to America. He still hungered for a missionary endeavor in the inland of East Africa. In 1895 August, commissioned by the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) he left for Mombasa with three other men, his sister and two other women. They arrived at Mombasa on October 17 of the same year and begun the inland trek at once. They established their first station at Nzaui the 4th December that year.¹² By the time of his death one-year later (December 4, 1896), they had

already established mission stations at Sakai, Kilungu and Kangundo (October 3, 1896). Kangundo remained the headquarters until 1903 when it was transferred to Kijabe for the necessity of getting nearer to the new railway. A year before Kijabe, another station at Machakos had been started. In 1908 Mbooni was opened and the following year Mukaa was established.¹³

The need to move into Mulango to take up the work left by the departed Leipzig missionaries was responded to the following year after the Lutherans had left. The imperial government may have called upon the AIM to take over the work since there was no agreement or official a handing over from the Leipzig Mission Society. When the AIM missionaries moved into Mulango they found the work in the feeble but dedicated and zealous hands of the African Christians. So in 1915, Mulango become a AIM Mission Station and the work proceeded with the participation of both the white missionaries and the African Church workers, commonly referred to as local evangelist. The station at Ikutha was ignored and left desolate for approximately ten (10) years until evangelistic efforts were initiated from Mulango southwards around the year 1924.

What has been established so far is the path followed by the gospel to Mulango. It can be concluded that there is a possibility that these long distance traders and hunters from Ukambani may have come across Christianity at the coast, noting the friendship between chief Kivoi and Krapf as significant in promoting the receptability of the white man by the Akamba, as friends. We have also traced the path of the Lutheran Missionaries through Ikutha to Mulango noting that Mulango was an outpost of the Ikutha Mission Station. The first world war resulted in the deportation of the Germans and the transplanting of Christianity from Ikutha to Mulango through the vehicle of the African converts. These first converts from

Ikutha served in the colonial government administration as well as leading the church at Mulango during the transition period which ensued. The AIM stepped in after the deportation to continue with the ministry at Mulango. They were to stay at Mulango until another transition from AIM to AIC would take place.

It is a good juncture now to seek for answers to the question of the relationship between the foreign missionaries, the local workers and general population at Mulango.

END NOTES

¹Jonathan Hilderbrandt, *History of the Church in Africa: A Survey*[Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1981], 124 - 126.

²Ibid

³Johanne Hofman, "Katika Ukambani" Leipzig, 1931. A letter to the church leaders in Ikutha with an outline of the chronology of missinary events upto the World War I, translated into Kiswahili by A.M. Ngonyi.

⁴Ibid, 5.

⁵Ibid, 1.

⁶Ibid, 2.

⁷David B. Barret, and others, Eds. *Kenya Churches Handbooks; The Development of Kenya Christianity: 1498 - 1973* [Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973], 22.

⁸Masumba Mulinge. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Hilderbrand, 184 - 186.

¹²Ibid, 186.

¹³Keneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles: History of Africa Inland Mission* [London: Victory Press, 1968], IX - X.

CHAPTER IV
IN THE VINEYARD TOGETHER (1920 - 1980)

Under the Leipzig Mission

In Kitui district, the people of Ikutha were the first to interact with missionaries. Mulango was the second after G. Saubelich started a mission station there in 1899. These Lutheran Missionaries were very friendly to the local people, especially when compared to some of the AIM Missionaries who came to Kitui later. Maybe the Lutherans, as pioneers, were careful to establish a relationship that would ensure their security, given that they were Germans working in a non-German territory. Hofmann carried around an African stool and would share in taking the local beer. He sniffed traditional tobacco and at times brewed it and invited the old men of the village for beer parties. He would use this opportunity to share about God.¹

Sauberlich at Mulango made a name for himself as a friend to many. He kept a large herd of cattle and gave free milk to his neighbors and those who worked on the compound.² The possession of a lot of cattle was a sign of wealth and a qualification as a leader. He was very understanding and accessible. One day his son was playing with the African boys when a boy called Mutia beat up the young lad. Mutia's mother, Wanza, who was working on the compound rushed to restrain his son. She saw Sauberich coming out of his house hurriedly with a cane in the hand to find out why his son was crying. Wanza begun to tremble with fear but Sauberlich and his wife, noticing it was child play went back to the house laughing.³ He was

human however and could take offense whenever someone provoked him. On one occasion he had a stand off with Muli Kithusya, one of his neighbors whose bulls would gore his. Muli was actually evicted to resettle at Katulani now called *Kwa-Muli*, the place of Muli.⁴

After the deportation of the Leipzig Missionaries and the African Christian from Ikutha were brought to Mulango station, the Africans undertook the task of sustaining the ministry for several months. There was discipleship to be done, home visitations as well as services to be led on Sundays. These they did with a marked success until the AIM missionaries came in late 1915.⁵

Under AIM

The first AIM Missionary was viewed as a man with two purposes. He was known as *Bwana* Holland. *Bwana* is the Kiswahili word for 'Sir' or 'Lord'. The Akamba applied it for both the missionaries and the colonial masters. This could imply that the Akamba people did not differentiate between the white colonialist and the white missionary, or that they liked them quite closely. *Bwana* Holland was seen as a colonial administrator and a churchman. He was in charge of government projects especially road construction. He dealt quite harshly with the Africans, even those at the mission station. Benjamin Mbathi and a few others who had been brought from Ikutha were sent back to Ikutha because they were declared unconverted or uncommitted. This same missionary called simply as *Bwana* Holland wrestled with Paul Ngave, who was living near the mission station. Holland did this as he removed dancing ornaments from Mr. Ngave who was preparing to go for a recreational festivity. *Bwana* Holland managed to overpower Ngave and keeping him from attending the *wathi*.⁶ As if this was not anti - missionary enough *Bwana*

Holland, who was also involved in hunting game, beat a man to death because the man failed to skin a leopard to Bwana Holland's satisfaction. This same church planter beat and arrested a Mr. Katumi because it was alleged that Katumi was restraining his wife from joining the church. When the relatives of Katumi went to report the case to the District Commissioner, they were told that Mr. Holland was a *Musungu* (a white man) too.⁷

In the years that followed the arrival of Mr. Holland and the AIM leadership, a lot of activities took place which saw the growth of the church at Mulango and the planting of other local congregations around Mulango station. The African Christians were very zealous to serve the newly found Lord and to demonstrate their own competence before these incoming foreign missionaries with the hope that the missionaries would at least desire to lean from them the direction the mission was going. Unfortunately the new *Asungu* (plural of whiteman) chose not to notice the value of the ministry of the Africans, which did not go down well with the local church workers. Some put up some resistance to this exception from the leadership of a church they had been so faithfully served before. This attitude is what resulted in the expulsion of some of them who were sent back to Ikutha. Back at Ikutha they did not continue with the work of the Church because they had developed bitterness against the establishment of the mission. The Church at Ikutha was to be re-born after almost a ten - year dark age, during which virtually no significant Christian activity took place.

At Mulango the missionary depended on the willingness of their Akamba friends to serve as guides, in the pattern of Krapf and Chief Kivoi, only that this time it was within a localized context. These guides would serve as interpreters also until such a time that many of the missionaries could communicate adequately in

Kikamba. These guides underwent on-job training as they observed those whom they led share the gospel. The earlier missionaries had a simple gospel. Hermon Nixon repeatedly summed up the gospel message thus, ‘From up there came down someone. He died and rose again and went back to heaven. Those who allow Him in their hearts will go to heaven at the end of time.’⁸ The missionaries visited homes and trading centers to share this message. However, they avoided cultural festivals and ceremonies because they were seen as the worship of Satan that needed to be renounced and fought against at any cost. This attitude brought serious conflict between Christianity and the cultural life of the people at Mulango. As observed earlier the Akamba were religious, in fact spiritual, in every way. Those getting converted and embracing Christianity were seen as people who were betraying their religious and communal heritage. They were therefore persecuted, and that is how many of them ended up at the mission stations or built their homes nearby. One such family was that of Mr. Philip Mwikya, who left his home in Zombe, East of Mulango, to settle at Mulango in 1933. He became a committed Christian who later was trained and became an evangelist and pastor⁹

The local Evangelists

The story of the success of the gospel endeavors in Ukambani, Mulango in particular, is not complete without the much-deserved credit attributed to the local evangelists. Some of these evangelists went on evangelistic tours single handedly with only a blanket rolled up and hung on a walking stick that was carried across the shoulders. Such evangelists would cover long distances, spending weeks, even months away from their homes in the name of spreading the good news. They depended on the hospitality of the people for food and lodging, and on God's

providence for protection and acceptability. Those who willed to 'accept God' were invited to the nearest church, which at times was close to a hundred miles away.

Philip Mwikya was one such evangelist.¹⁰

Another approach to evangelism by the local evangelists was via evangelistic bands. Teams of evangelists with numbers ranging from two to fifty, at times more, would set out for evangelistic campaigns. Such bands would include men, women as well as children and would cover vast areas planting churches from village to village. Due to the large size of the team, they carried their own food and water, but they accepted any supplements from villages they visited. They moved around singing gospel songs. Whenever they approached a village, they would send heralds ahead to announce the dates and venues for open-air evangelistic meetings. The heralds would visit homes and gatherings of people with the characteristic greeting of peace *Nu voo* meaning 'we have news' and they would also declare their intention. When the time for the meeting came, the band of evangelists would gather under the tree, or wherever the meeting was to take place and begin to sing. The reading of the scriptures and an explanation of the gospel followed the singing. The message dwelt largely on the call to renounce the evil practices of darkness and to respond by faith to Jesus, which would be demonstrated by a commitment to attend church services and school too.¹¹ It is remarkable that this kind of gospel proclamation won more people to the church than did the missionaries' incentives of salt, clothing and food relief. As Hofmann observed in 1931, the Akamba were not seduced to the faith, neither the generosity of the missionaries nor by the medical assistance they received from mission stations.¹²

On Relationship

From the labors of these nomadic evangelists, there were more churches in a short time than there was qualified leadership. The blame could be attributed to the missionaries' attitudes towards the natives. This is so because even though the natives had proved to be competent evangelists, and more effective as church planters, the missionaries were either slow in training them to become church leaders or had a low opinion towards the ability of the evangelists to pastor a church. Possibly there was also the fear that the natives would assume independence from the missionaries there upon rendering the need for missionary and their enterprise at Mulango over, necessitating the departure of the missionaries to some other unreached people elsewhere. May be the missionaries' ethnocentricity, conscious or subconscious superiority and paternalistic tendencies produced a complex in them that could be termed religious imperialism, which refused to acknowledge the superior work of God's grace in the lives of the native evangelists. This could explain the unwarranted delay in ordaining an African Pastor in Mulango Church and the tussle over the reinstatement of Benson Munywoki as the principal at Mulango Bible School to take over from the missionary, even as late as 1984.¹³

In the area of administration and decision making the Africans were rarely involved. The missionaries made decisions which would ultimately affect the lives and ministry of the nationals, neither informing nor involving the nationals in the decision making process. In times of controversies that had to do with cultural values and practices, the African evangelist was expected to support the missionary even when the issue in question would have been handled better by the African Christians. Therefore, the African chose to remain passive on occasion. The marriage pact between Damaris and Mwikya was strongly influenced by

missionaries to the point that none of the two families would propose the normal cultural procedures, not even dowry. However behind the scenes, these two Christian families continued to exchange 'gifts' and 'tokens'.

During the time of a missionary known as Bwana White, who came after *Bwana* Holland, failure to involve the native pastors in the running of the church at Mulango brought a major division that resulted in a split. One group lead by Paul Ngave began to worship under a tree two kilometers away from the mission station. This church continued to meet under the tree until Bwana White left. The other missionaries, especially Bwana Nixon, worked for an understanding with Ngave's group and they were re-joined the Mulango Church again. Today the place where this splinter group used to worship is the place of worship for an Africa Brotherhood Church, an independent church that split from Africa Inland Church (AIC).¹⁴

After this episode, African pastors were allowed to preach after this episode. Until this time they had only been involved in catechism teaching since the early days of the AIM missionaries, at least by 1920. Those involved in training catechism students were led by an evangelist called Mr. Muthuvi.¹⁵

The missionaries hoped to propagate the gospel and produce grounded converts through schools. They put this ministry near the top of their priorities. The AIM in particular wasted no time in this area. After it begun its work in 1995, the following year it was reported that the school work had been running on faithfully. Even though schools were met with opposition from the parents, elders and headsmen, accusing them of aiming at making children untribalized, this attitude changed and by 1924, the missionaries could boast that a full ninety-five percent of their church membership had gone through their school.¹⁶ Unfortunately, two major problems threatened the future of these schools. One of them was the elementary

nature of their educational program. The intention of the AIM was to open schools to enable the adherents to read the scriptures and hymns. The natives however began to desire to read more than just the Bible and songbooks. They wanted to get higher education like those in other mission schools and government institutions. Mulango School was no exception. Within the district, other missions had schools that were giving more basic reading classes. These included Muthale (Catholics), Kitui School and St. Angela's School. It was either the mission school upgrades its training or a mass drop out would inevitably take place. Upgrading the school demanded more funds and better trained teachers. Funds were offered by the government in 1918 to subsidize educational costs in mission school but Aim's America office ruled against receiving such a grant.¹⁷ Among the reasons for the rejection of the aid was that it would open a door for interference from the government with the affairs of AIM and that applying for such assistance would contravene the faith base of the mission statement of AIM. AIM held to the position that the responsibility of higher education was the government's, not of the church.¹⁸ The African students, some of who had gone to gain higher education outside of AIM, felt that AIM missionaries did not have much interest in the nationals' welfare.¹⁹

The other problem was closely tied to the one above. The AIM schools were found to be in pathetic conditions by the government inspector of schools and placed many of them on the closure-line. The students were not making it in government examinations. The reason for this poor performance was lack of qualified native teachers. Anderson observed that only ten percent of the two hundred and eighty native teachers in AIM schools were qualified teachers.²⁰ These teachers were poorly supported and were not treated with respect by their missionary counterparts. At Mulango, the missionary in charge of the school, *Bwana Davis* was very high

handed with the natives. He was hard and rough in his language with those who were working at the mission and treated them with contempt. He once quarreled and beat up a native teacher, Mr. Malombe Mailu, in school. Filled with rage and bitterness, Mr. Mailu unleashed his wrath on the students, spanking them with pieces of wood.²¹ There was uproar from the parents against the beating of their children but the episode had served to reveal the attitude with which the missionaries were treating native teachers.

This same low opinion upon the native workers was also reflected in the medical department at Mulango. There were no Africans involved in the running of the medical center in Mulango until as late as the eighties. The clinic began as medical assistance offered by a missionary's wife done from their house at the time of Sauberlich and only developed into a clinic with the AIM missionaries. Obviously, if there could be hardly any African qualified primary school teacher at Mulango, how can we postulate to find a qualified African physician?

At the political arena, AIM did not encourage nationalists to speak out or even influence people to engage in political endeavors whatsoever. The names are elusive but it is told of an African Evangelist who was drug out of the pulpit by the missionaries while addressing the church for uttering anti-colonial sentiments at Mulango AIC.²²

The church that was born out of these conditions had planted twenty-one other local churches by the end of the century. The church in Kitui District has been run from the Mulango station until the present day. That which was the original district of Mulango has since been subdivided for closer administration due to its increase in congregations. Currently, the district has twenty-four churches, though AIC Mulango has not planted all of them.²³ At one time catechism students

walked over a hundred kilometers to Mulango for baptism.²⁴

The contribution of the African was expected by the missionaries, even sought after for services that were non-religious such as building, cooking and keeping the grounds. They were also needed as guides and interpreters. When it came to leadership, policy making and administration, the African was left out. This would later reflect badly during the transition period. That exclusion from policy making and leadership circles communicated a message to the Africans about the missionaries' attitude towards the local co-workers.

END NOTES

¹Justus Nzau, former AIC Missionary Board's national co-ordinator. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

²Peris Mbandi Mutuvi, resident of Mulango. Interview by author, 24 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

³Ibid.

⁴John Isika, Church Elder AIC Mulango. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ndungu Muoka, old church elder A.I.C Ikutha. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Damaris Nzivu Mwikya, lady leader A.I.C Mulango, over 70 years old. Interview by author, 23 February 2001, Mulango. Taping recording.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Johane Hofmann, "Katika Ukamba" [Letter to AIC Ikutha Leaders, 1931], 5.

¹³Philip Muteteti, Principal Mulango Bible Institute. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.

¹⁴Viata Ngave Kathini, retired teacher, 122 years old. Interview by author, 23 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

¹⁵Ibid

¹⁶Dick Anderson, *We felt like Grasshoppers: The story of Africa Inland Mission* [Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994], 81 - 82.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid, 82.

¹⁹Ibid, 83.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Viata.

²²Isika.

²³Philip Muthoka, AIC Mulango Secretary. Interview by Author, 25th February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

²⁴Viata.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSITION PROCESS [1980-1985]

In 1971, 16th October, a monumental event in the history of the African Inland Mission took place. The national church, which was called Africa Inland Church (AIC), was given the autonomy to serve as an independent church, under the leadership of nationals. The process had been underway for over thirty years. In 1940, first steps toward an independent indigenous church were initiated by the beginning of writing a constitution separate from that of AIM. The writing of this constitution was done but it took another twenty-seven years before the national church could be given the authority to conduct ministry endeavors without the glaring eye of the foreign masters. Dick Anderson observed that despite the mission's long-standing commitment to indigenization of the church the mission was surprised when the Africans finally began to ask for more autonomy.¹ The 'we can do it ourselves' attitude among the nationals provoked may have feelings of uncertainty and alarm but at times complacency and indignation on the side of the missionaries. On 14th December 1960 Philip Henman, chairman of the International Conference which had been set up five years earlier to enhance co-operation between all missions councils, gave counsel to the missions.² He insisted that missions needed to initiate policies of leadership on the principle of accepting to take the second place in the organizational government of the church. He urged them to prepare to serve as handmaids of the national church, obedient and subjecting themselves to the authority of those indigenized churches. The missionaries needed to become members of those churches for effective mission

work. As results seem to indicate, Henman's words fell on ears unwilling to take kindly this counsel. The mission leaders in Africa at that time disliked the appearance of home councils dictating policies for a field situation they (home councils) did not have an understanding of.³ The AIM led in rejecting this counsel and responded that they were having a very close integration and that they were working together with the locals in very close harmony. They claimed to be handing over full administration of the work to the national church.⁴ The genuineness of this claim was to be questioned under the observation that it took another ten years before that handing over of the full administration of the work could come to be.

Leadership Training

From the very beginning AIM schools were places where the only textbook was the Bible and the goal of learning was to produce students who could read the Bible and hymns.⁵ This means that schools were evangelistic centers where natives were brought into contact with the word of God. The other form of education was catechism classes. These were for those who had accepted the new faith. The objective was to ground the converts in the teachings of the new faith. The missionaries did not think about preparing future leaders. Compared with the education level of the missionaries then, the African was not capable of taking up the leadership of the seemingly complex mission network. Therefore, even though the constitution that separated AIC from AIM was finalized in the early forties, AIC was given the ministries of evangelization and pastoral care and even then only on trial basis to see if the African could perform his duties effectively under minimal or no patronage. The mission kept to itself the ministries of the Bible schools, literature departments, radio broadcasting and medical department.⁶ The missionaries

involved the Africans in these ministries but not at the leadership levels. The nationals were not given the opportunity to learn by serving at the leadership levels side by side with their western counterparts. Leadership and administrative aspects of the missionary enterprise was kept a secret for the missionaries themselves.⁷ Therefore, when the transition was finally inevitable, African leaders who were poorly trained and who all along had been led to believe that they were incapable of leading, were then expected to offer wonderful leadership. The confidence needed for leadership must have taken time to come by.

Risk of collapsing the Ministry

The fear that the church would collapse once left in the hands of the Africans may have kept the AIM from translating itself into an arm of the church. Their fear may be justified judging from the observation that many of the institutions left in the hands of the nationals tended to deteriorate at alarming rates.

As mentioned earlier, lack of proper training for the nationals to lead contributed to the running down of church projects and property left in the hands of the nationals. The case of Mulango Bible School serves as an example to illustrate this fact. The Bible School was begun as a one year Bible class in 1956 by a missionary called *Bwana* Ness who had come from Ukamba Bible School with the intention of doing evangelism in Kitui, based at Mulango Mission Station. After a year or so, he was recalled to Ukamba Bible School and he went with all the students in his class. He returned to Mulango in the early sixties to begin a three-year program, which continued until 1971 when it became a four-year course College offering a one-year post-diploma pastor's course.⁸

Benson Munyoki joined the college as a teacher during this time under the leadership of Ben Bridge and he was made the principle in 1972, a year after AIC

had become independent from AIM. Benson left for further studies abroad and Bainbridge took over the leadership of the Bible school again, even though there were African teachers who would head the school. The local was not stable enough financially to support Benson Munyoki to go for further studies and the missionaries had not groomed him or any other national to lead the school. By God's grace however he managed to go to the USA. When Benson returned to Mulango in 1982, it took him a while before the missionary, who was the principal then, could hand over the leadership of the school to Munyoki.⁹ Some tussling at the district and regional leadership levels surrounded the reinstatement process. There were those who were for the missionary to continue on the one hand and those who favored Munyoki's leadership on the other. By this time, local pastors headed the church at Mulango. At the district level, Rev. Maithya was the chairman while at the regional office Rev. Konzi was his counterpart.¹⁰ These two leaders were spiritual men of God but behind them was the missionary wielding some strong power influencing decision-making processes and the running of the church at Mulango. Benson was reinstated as principal in 1984 against Bainbridge's will, who had another teacher as a preferred principle. Only the missionaries themselves can clear the air about whether or not financial assistance from the west was frozen in reaction to the direction taken by the nationals. What is confessed is that financial assistance was hard to come by for the Bible School. This prompted the nationals to plead for material support from the churches. Rev. Kimama called on the church at Mulango to come up and give money, foodstuff and any other assistance to the Bible school. He reminded the church that then the school had become their own.¹¹ This appeal did not bear lasting solutions partly because the church had not been forewarned of the responsibilities to accompany the indegenization of church government and partly because the resources of the national church were meager. Benson Munyoki

has been described as hardworking strong willed and competent African leader, who managed to keep the school going with little else apart from the students' school fees and prayer.¹²

The missionaries at Mulango had a deliberate delay in handing over the work of the church to a national pastor. The transition was delayed for lack of an ordained minister to take over.

The delay to ordain ministers at Mulango cannot be blamed on lack of faithful disciples. As early as 1914, Elijah Muthuvi and Jacob Kisiki, who had migrated from Ikutha mission station after the Leipzig mission was closed, were already teaching catechism classes.¹³ Yet it was not until 1945 that Rev. B.N. Watuma was ordained to become the first African Reverent. This ordination was done at Kangundo and Mulango had to wait until 22 August 1966 when Nashon M. Mbuva was ordained, and again until 15 December 1970 when three others, James K. Maithya, David Kyalo Mutisya and Daniel Milu Kasaa, were ordained.¹⁴ They were to serve as the first nationals to lead the church apart from the missionaries. There was one characteristic feature of their leadership that was acquired from the missionaries; strong authoritarian will. Even though they chaired their respective councils, their vote at times had more weight than that of the rest of the council combined. These men were however men of integrity and honesty with a passion for holiness and church growth.¹⁵ When AIC became a national church in 1971, Mulango fell under the Kitui Regional Church Council headed by Rev. J.M. Maithya. Mulango District Church Council had 84 churches and an estimated six thousand worshippers. The church in the region had fifty-three schools to run. An educational board was formed to take care of all the matters related with general education within the district.¹⁶

END NOTES

¹Dick Anderson, *We felt like Grasshoppers: The Story of Africa Inland Mission* [Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994], 187.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, 82.

⁶ Ibid, 192.

⁷ Philip Mutetei, Principal Mulango Bible Institute. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Damaris Mwikya Nzivu, Lady Elder A.I.C. Mulango, over 70 years old. Interview by author, 23 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

¹² Mutetei.

¹³ Nzivu.

¹⁴Ndeti Somba, ed., *Sura mpya ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya* (Nairobi: Africa Inland Church Press.n.d.), 38.

¹⁵ Mutetei.

¹⁶Somba . 35.

CHAPTER VI

SO WHAT? LESSONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the role of the African in the planting of the church at Mulango was very significant. The African was the guide into Ukambani through chief Kivoi and to Mulango under the Leipzig missions from Ikutha. The African, it has been observed, served as the interpreter, local evangelist and catechist. Later they became dependable teachers and pastors. They worked at the station of the missionaries as grounds-men, cooks and houseboys (called by the Akamba *avisi* and *mavoi*). The life, survival and success of the missionary depended heavily on the faithfulness of these friendly Africans. Chief Ngonde of Mulango, who had come from Ikutha after the Leipzig mission was closed down, serves as an example of how African leaders, including clan and family heads, were instrumental in the establishment of the church in Ukambani. Now that the church has been planted, that Christianity has spread broadly in Kitui district from the center at Mulango, transition has taken place and now the African leads the church at long last. The challenge that faces the church leaders today is that of taking Christianity in Ukambani to the level where it can be in reality African and authentically Christian. In trending that path the leaders must wrestled with several thorny issues.

One of the inadequacies of Christianity in Africa as brought by the missionaries is the depth of that spirituality. Worship has been relegated to a few hours of congregational praise, prayer and reading of scripture, one day a week. It has come to be associated with a social practice for the modernized and civilized, an

opportunity to display the latest in fashion and eloquence of speech by the pastor trained in the science of public speaking. A few coins are dropped into the offering basket and as the benediction is said, worship is supposed to have taken place! As observed in an earlier chapter, worship for the African was life. His religion accompanied him and governed every aspect of life. Some acts of African traditional worship might be treated as questionable, but the African's quest for the spiritual, the mysterious and respect for the sacred cannot be satisfied by a two-hour worship service where for the most of this period it is only the pastor and maybe the choir who are active participants of the worship experience. Worship that will satisfy the deep spiritual quest of the African will be the type that Julius Muthengi calls worship as a way of life.¹ Such worship must be integrated into all the areas of life and realities of the African.

What even the evangelicals have failed to come to terms with is the definition of an authentic African Christian spirituality. The African worldview is one where the spiritual and physical are closely linked. The physical is representative of a deeper spiritual reality. Artifacts, sounds, movements, positions and means of worship are of symbolic value and have a bearing on the reality of a spiritual and mystical meaning. Christianity must seek to penetrate into African worldview to offer solutions and interpretations at that level. The church in Africa at large should advance a form of worship that goes beyond forms, to values, to the worldview level. If only forms are changed and replaced Christianity in Africa will remain only skin deep. This explains why the Akamba Christians are notorious of reverting to traditional means to respond to their unanswered questions and unsatisfied spiritual needs. For example, among many Akamba Christians today there is still some infiltrated cultural practices that have deep religious significance, and have refused to be shed off in light of the gospel. *Kuthea* for the brides is still

held onto very strongly even though the bride confesses to have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus and the families united in baptism to Jesus and each other. Some Pastors even demand that all 'other' issues be completed 'at home' before a church wedding can take place.²

The sufficiency of Christ must be preached, taught and exemplified by the leaders. In following the steps of the first generation African Christian, there must be no middle ground, compromise or syncretism in the church. They chose to be rejected, mocked and to be ill-treated for the sake of the gospel. When they could not stand the presence of evil, they moved to form a community of believers around the mission station until such a time that their faith was strong enough to withstand the *ulei* (unbelief) of their people.³

Training Leaders

The problems of the transition have been attributed to the lack of preparation of nationals to take up the work the missionaries began. As bad as this was, therein was a blessing in disguise. If these nationals had prolonged and adequate exposure to leadership styles of the missionaries, there would have been the tendency to implant leadership modules that would be irrelevant and inefficient in tackling the needs of the church in the African context.

Whereas the missionaries' negligence or their deliberate decision not to train Africans in the general elements of effective church leadership cannot go uncondemned, the greater blame should be placed on the African leaders and scholars who managed to slide through to some considerable levels of higher education and biblical studies in the west. Their tendency has been to blindly transfer their seminary teachers' notes into their note books and passing those same uncontextualized lesson contents to church members and Bible students in Africa.

As a result theological and Bible colleges in Ukambani have become extension centers of colleges in the west, with the African trainers serving as field staff to those colleges.

What is needed today is a near total overhauling of the curriculums and course contents taught at most, if not all, such colleges. If these institutions are resistant to change then it may be time to put up new centers to train church leaders. At Mulango, however, the current principle, Mr. Philip Mutetei has put underway a curriculum review process that will seek to formulate new courses and restructure some of the existing ones to be able to respond to the needs of the church in Africa. One of the courses to be added will revisit the book of Acts for principle on spiritual leadership for the African church. This is deemed as needed because there is a prevalence of leadership according to human wisdom. This course seeks to provoke sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's guidance in decision making and conflict solving. The principal also hopes to facilitate for an emphasis on rich and authentic worship in addition to Biblical counseling.⁴ Scott Theological College, AIC's highest institution of theological education has been undergoing similar transformations. It has been working under a new curriculum since 1995 initiated and carried through under the patronage of African teachers. The author suggests that this process of reviewing curricula in African theological institutions should become an unending task. The cause of the sickness of the church in Africa needs a sober diagnosis from her own theologians. In doing this task, they must seek to come to terms with the realities of the African context. Then and only then will they be able to suggest the right prescription which the pastors, who must be involved in the review process as key resource persons, will administer to the Church at the local level. The African Journal of Evangelical Theology (AJET) which was initiated by the lecturers at

Scott College in Machakos is a blessed provision in an attempt to wrestle with issues facing African Christianity.

There is still need, however, for continuing learning among the pastors and church leaders who are already in the field. One of the ways this writers suggests is through annual conferences within particular cultural contexts to deliberate on the current challenges in African Christianity. That way the pastors can come up with issues that they would go ahead to try and implement.

Mutetei is of the opinion that those men and women called of God for full time ministry should be allowed to take specialized training in the areas that their gifts fit the most. The training should be an opportunity to sharpen and develop one's call and gifting. The church on the other hand should take note of these gifts and offer the trained ministers opportunities for service in their respective departments according to those gifts and training.⁵ Dr. Titus Kivunzi's success as Scott Theological College Principal is an ideal illustration to this observation. Mulango is particularly blessed with various departments including a girls school, a children's home, a Bible school, a baby home, a dispensary and a church. The tendency to send Bible school graduates to teach secondary schools has been very troubling to the graduates who do to have a calling into the teaching ministry and it also denies the church the benefits of these people - gifts⁶

Visionary Leadership

At the time of the transition, 1970, E.H. Arensen put forward an exhortation thus, "Truly speaking this is a new chapter, but one thing is clear and must be kept in mind, that such is a great responsibility and heavy. Not an easy task. It demands a leadership that is wise and totally committed to the call to ministry".⁷ Wisdom in

leadership is demonstrated through visionary leadership. It has been observed that the transition process did not exhibit visionary planning. Many of the institutions and departments were just dumped onto the laps of the nationals who replaced the missionaries with little orientation, if any at all. Most African church leaders had to crop about in leadership darkness and some have never gotten out of that dark cave up to this very day.⁸

Visionary leadership demands that a leader formulates a goal and sets out to mobilize the gifts in the church towards a target. At Mulango, there seems to exist no sense of unified and corporate goal. Even at most departments, there has been little goal setting. The river of events has been left to flow wherever it wills. This must be changed. Leaders must wake up to the realization that the world around them is moving and the church has to raise herself to contemporary challenges. Church members need to know where they are headed if they are expected to participate actively on the agenda of the Church. Therefore the vision must be defined clearly and then it should be sold out to the church, her departments and arms.

Visionary leadership accepts criticism and responds positively to the challenges presented by friends and foes. The high handedness that was characteristic of the missionaries and their immediate successors, tending towards dictatorship has no place in visionary leadership.⁹ This does not mean to rule out exercising of pastoral authority as need arises. It is a call to exercise servant leadership. Servant leaders follow the model of King David who delegated responsibility accordingly and appreciated good service without jealousy. He made himself vulnerable by becoming approachable and held himself accountable to God and his brethren.¹⁰ Such a leader grooms successors and is open to change even if

that change demands that he hands over the leadership mantle to another person of God's choice.

Visionary church leadership is not dictated upon by the world nor confirmed to its trends. Instead it seeks to respond wisely to those trends in such a way that the Church remains a witness to the Kingdom values in the changing world. The trend has been that the political climate sets the agenda for the church. The church, consciously or under delusion, follows on to serve the interests of the world. In Kenyan history, the church began to desire, even demand autonomy from the white patrons with the rise of nationalistic secular movements.¹¹ The introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992 was paralleled by a quest for the translation of the AIC organization to adopt a polity that gives the local congregations more autonomy.¹² This author agrees with Mutetei who strongly believes that it should be for the church to act on her own agenda and not to just flow with the agenda of the politics of the land.¹³ He is right because the church has a supra-political agenda which remains ever so clearly stipulated; to be a witness at all times, to all men. This is not to be taken to imply that the author is for a Church and State dichotomy. What the author saying however is that the Church must act on her own conscious volition. She should remain a prophetic voice and representative of God's will for the country.

Visionary leadership should also seek to facilitate the participation of all the members of the body of Christ in the mission of the church. Mulango area is blessed with many committed Christians who have been in the church for quite a while. Onunwa agrees with Rev. Kenneth Strachan's thesis that the growth of any movement is directly proportional to the success of that movement in mobilizing its total membership in the constant propagation of its tenet and practices.¹⁴

Consequently, it can be concluded rightly that the future of the ministry at Mulango depends, to a large degree, on the willingness of the leadership to involve the laity in ministry, especially those with special gifts and a desire to serve God.

Supporting Ministry

E.H. Arensen wrote about the AIC, at the time she was granted autonomy from AIM, declaring that the church was “not a child anymore but mature, able to stand on her two feet, make her own policies and meet all the financial obligations involved in running her business”.¹⁵ Whether this was factual or theoretical, the case for Mulango could not fit in that description. The pastors were not being supported well financially and Pastor Kimana had to pleaded repeatedly with the church to provide food supplements for the Bible school.¹⁶ There has never been a time in the history of the church at Mulango since the missionaries left that the funds were adequate to comfortably meet her needs. The funds that used to be sent from the west to assist the missionaries were mysteriously withdrawn when the Africans took over the mission work at Mulango.

The first African Bishop of AIC, Rev. Wellington Mulwa, placed a plea for the missionaries and their oversees offices to do their best to inform Christians and churches back home of the plans of the church (in Africa) that required both prayers and financial aid, in the spirit of *Harambee*, “let us pull together.”¹⁷ No official response was granted but as Mutetei observes, the west does not respect the Africans for the latter's perpetual begging. He proposes that the time is overdue that African Christians took seriously the ministry of supporting church work including evangelism, training of ministers, and owning their institutions and projects.¹⁸ This is one area that the AIC worshipers were not adequately taught by the missionaries to do. Christianity had been initiated through attractive seduction with material

incentives. The missionaries did not expose their financial sources to the Africans. Most African evangelists worked on their farms and depended on the hospitality of the local people on their evangelistic ministries, while the missionaries put up structures and institutions without requiring a penny from the local worshipers. Though times and conditions have changed, the indifferent reaction of the national worshippers to the call to support the ministry can be accounted for against this background.

This spells a dilemma. The ministry must go on. The ministers must feed and meet the financial needs of their families, yet the salary given by the church is far below the demands. This poor enumeration for pastors can be attributed to a lack of spiritual maturity amongst most converts who, despite having been in the church for many years, have not seen it as their responsibility to support the work of the ministry. According to Kibor, some of them even believe that the government pays pastors!¹⁹ This sad state of affairs has consequently pushed some church leaders to secondary money making endeavors. Kibor observes that these money making ventures easily entangle the pastor, to the point that the ministry suffers greatly.²⁰

The suggestions forwarded by Kibor would go a long way in assisting the church at Mulango. The church should set apart annual festival Sundays like Thanksgiving day, Christmas, New year and Easter as special days for giving to support the ministry.²¹ The church budget should be presented to the church and the members so that they can get a rough idea of what is expected from them. The church should engage in money making projects as a co-operate measure to boost their treasury.²² Such projects at Mulango could include poultry farming, vegetable gardens, a nursery school and bricks baking. The church could run a shop within the compound, a telephone bureau, computer and typing services. The members should also be encouraged to give farm produce as their offering to the

church.²³ The food could be distributed to the ministers and the institutions that normally depend on the money offered for food. The members should also be encouraged to share directly with their pastors their earnings whether from their farms or businesses.²⁴

Since the writer of this thesis believes in the universal nature of the body of Christ, he supports the endeavors of professor Dr. John Mbiti and the pastor in charge of AIC Mulango in seeking for financial support from the founding mission in Germany for the repair of the existing structures and putting up new ones.²⁵ If such support would be granted, the church treasury would be relieved of that responsibility and would therefore be in a position to meet other needs and possibly to invest in at least one of the projects suggested above.

The structure of AIC administration and organization has contributed to the poor performance of the churches in giving to the support their pastors. The responsibility of supporting the pastor of a particular local church is passed on to the District treasury. This has two negative implications. On one hand, the pastor does not have to work hard to be paid and this may result in retarded church growth resulting in, among other consequences, poor giving. On the other hand, the church at the local level does not feel obliged to give financial support to the pastor after all, isn't he paid by the district? The solution that the writer wishes to suggest is that the local church be granted autonomy to handle all her financial matters, including raising support for their pastor. This way, a relationship as suggested by the scriptures, in which the pastor is supported by those he instructs is developed [Galatians 6:6]. This produces a sense of mutual responsibility; the pastor to the church and the church to the pastor.

Finally a word must be said about the stewardship responsibility of the pastors at Mulango and a call to return to sacrificial service exemplified by their

forerunners who were not put on any office's payroll. Mrs. Viata and Mrs. Nzivu Mwikya observe rather strongly that pastors became less committed to the Lord's service when they were put on a salary scheme.²⁶ Possibly there are those pastors who were attracted to the ministry by the prospect of a pay at the end of the month, rather than a calling to the ministry. Genuine ministers should remain faithful to the Lord even when the support is hard to come by.

In conclusion it has been established that Christianity was planted not into a religious vacuum at Mulango. These people were comprehensively spiritual with an organized religious system that governed their worship, daily living as well as their passage through life.

There is a possibility that the gospel had gotten to the people of Mulango through the long distance traders who frequented the Kenyan Coast long before any missionary put his foot onto the land of the Akamba. Historically, the Leipzig Missionaries were the first to set up a mission station at Mulango, which was later taken over by AIM. The Africans were useful as guides, interpreters, evangelists and disciples in the process of planting the church at Mulango. They served as native teachers and took key positions during the colonial administration. They were however treated with a low opinion by some of the missionaries, an attitude that is seen as suspect to the slow, and possibly, unwilling transition process.

The story of the church at Mulango has lessons that the present church workers can benefit from. These lessons have led this author to make some recommendations for impacting the Ministry of Africa Inland Church in general and Mulango DCC in particular.

END NOTES

¹ Julius Muthengi, "The Work and Worship of the Christian Church," In *Issues in African Christian Theology*, Ed. S. Ngewa, Shaw and Tienou (Nairobi; East Africa Educational Publishers-1998), 256.

² John Isika, church elder A.I.C. Mulango. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

³ Viata Ngave Kathini, retired Teacher, 120 years old. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.

⁴ Philip Mutetei, Principal Mulango Bible Institute. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ndeti Somba, ed., *Sura Mpya Ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church* (Nairobi: Africa Inland Church Press. n.d.), 76.

⁸ Mutetei.

⁹ Joel Kiema. Pastor A.I.C. Ikutha DCC. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

¹⁰ Tom Houston. *King David: Lessons on leadership From the life of David*. (Essex: MARC Europe. 1987), 128-129.

¹¹ Dick Anderson, *We felt like Grasshoppers: The story of Africa Inland Mission* (Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994), 192-194.

¹² Mutetei.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Udobata Onunwa "The ministry in the Local Church: Roles and Involvement" In *Issues in African Christian Theology*, ed., Samuel Ngewa, Mark Shaw and Tite Tienou (Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers, 1998), 281.

¹⁵ E.H. Arensen, "Neno la Kukumbuka", *Sura Mpya Ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya*, ed., Ndeti Somba (Nairobi: Africa Inland Church Press n.d.), 176.

¹⁶ Damaris Nzivu Mwikya, lady elder A.I.C. Mulango (70 years old). Interview by author, 23 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.

¹⁷ Wellington Mulwa, (First Bishop of AIC.) *Sura Mpya ya Kanisa; Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya* Ed. Ndeti Somba (Nairobi: Africa Inland Church Press.n.n.), 29.

¹⁸ Mutetei.

¹⁹ Jacob Kibor "The Growth and Development of the Africa Inland Church in Marakwet, Kenya" unpublished MA. thesis (NEGST. 1992), 100.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, 101.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Viata.

²⁶ Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ajayi J.F. and E.A. Ayandele. "Writing African Church History" In *Church Crossing Frontiers*, ed. Beyerhaus. Lutheran mission, 1969.
- Anderson, Dick. *We felt Like Grasshoppers: The story of Africa Inland Mission*. Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Anderson, W.B, Fr. S. Clement and others, "A History of the Kenya Churches" In *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity 1498-1973*, ed.D.B.Barret, Mambo, Mclaughlin, Mcveigh. Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1973.
- Arensen, E.H. "Neno La Kukumbuka" In *Sura mpya ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya*, ed. Ndeti Somba. Nairobi: Africa Inland Church press, n.d.
- Bahemuka, Judith. *Our Religious Heritage*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1984.
- Barret, David B. and others, ed. *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenya Christianity: 1498-1973*. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973.
- Best, John W. and James V. Kahn. *Research in Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.
- Booth, Newell S. "An Approach to African Religion," In *African Religions: A symposium*. New York: NOK Publishers Ltd, 1983.
- Bukenya, Austin, Wanjiku M. Kabira and Okoth Okombo,eds. *Understanding Oral Literature*. Nairobi: Nairobi University Press, 1994
- Clark, G. Kitson *Guide For Research Students working on Historical subjects*. London: Cambridge University press, 1972.
- Ela, Jean Marc. *My Faith as an African*. New York: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Falk, Peter. *The Growth of the Church in Africa*. Michigan City: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979.
- Gratian, John Alexander. "The Relationship Of The Africa Inland Mission And Its National Church In Kenya Between 1895 And 1971." Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1974.

- Groves C.P. *The Planting of Christianity in Africa 1878 - 1914*. Vol. III. London: Lutherworth Press, 1964.
- Hastings, Adrian. "African Christian Studies, 1979-1999: Reflections of an Editor." *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. xxx No.1, pp 30-44.
- Hiebert, Paul G. "Culture and Cross-cultural Differences." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne. California: William Carey Library [1981], 250-253.
- Hilderbrandt, Jonathan. *History of the Church in Africa: A Survey*. Achimota, Ghana; Africa Christian Press 1981.
- Hodges, Melvin L. *The Indigenous Church*. Missouri: Gospel Publishing House. 1976.
- Hofman, J. "Kati Ka Ukamba..." Unpublished Document, trans. A.M. Ngonyi. Leipzig: 1931.
- Houston, Tom. *King David: Lessons On leadership from the life of David*. Essex: MARC Europe. 1987.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Michigan City: William B. Eardman Publishing Company, 1995.
- Jarret-Kerr, M. *Patterns of Christian Acceptance*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Jenkins, Paul. "The Roots of African Church History: Some Polemic Thoughts." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 10:2 [April 1986], 67-70.
- Karanja, John. *Founding An African Faith: Kikuyu Anglican Christianity, 1900-1945*. Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1999.
- Kennedy, Jack. "Literacy-Evangelistic Link Between Diversity and Truth." In *Facing the New Challenge: The Message of PACLA*, ed. Michael Cassidy and LucVerlinden. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House [1978], 571-575.
- Kieti, Mwikali and Peter Caughlin, *Barking, You'll be Eaten! The Wisdom of Kamba Oral Literature*. Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1990.
- Kietzman, Dale W. and William A. Smalley, "The Missionary Role in Culture Change." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne. California: William Carey Library [1981], 503-506.
- Kiiti, Joseph Nyamai. "Mulango Church Center." Unpublished Document, Mulango, 2000.

- Koech, Kipng'eno, "African Mythology: A key to understanding African Religion." In *African Religions: A symposium*, ed. Newell S. Booth. New York: NOK Publishers Ltd. [1977], 117-139.
- Kraft, Dr. Charles. "Christianity and Culture in Africa." In *Facing The New Challenges: The Message of PACLA*, Ed. Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinded. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House [1978], 285-291.
- Lingenflter, Sherwood. *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*. Michigan City: Baker Books, 1998.
- Luwum, Rev. Janani. "The Local Church in Mission." In *Facing The New Challenge: The Message of PACLA*, ed. Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinden. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House. [1976], 518-522.
- Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1983.
- _____ *Akamba Stories*. London: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- _____ *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- _____ "Christianity and Culture in Africa." In *Facing the New Challenge: The Message of PACLA*, Ed. Michael Cassiyd and Luc Verlinden. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House. Kisumu [1976], 272-284.
- _____ *Introduction to African Religion*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1985.
- _____ *Prayers of African Religion*. New York: Orbis Books, 1975.
- Mbula, Judith. "The Penetration of Christianity in Ukambani." M.A thesis, University of Nairobi, 1974.
- Muga, Erasto. *African Response to Western Christian Religion*. Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975.
- Muthengi, Julius. "The work and Worship of the Christian Church." In *Issues in African Christian Theology*, ed. S. Ngewa, M. Shaw, T. Tienou. Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers, 1998.
- Nandwa, Jane and Austin Bukenya. *African Oral Literature for Schools*. Nairobi: Longman Kenya Ltd, 1994.
- Njoroge, Lawrence. *A Century of Catholic Endeavor: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.
- Penwill, D. J. *Kamba Customary Law*. Nairobi: East Africa Literature Bureau, 1972.

- Richardson, Don. "Finding the Eye Opener." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne. California: William Carey Library [1981], 421- 427.
- Richardson, Kenneth. *Garden of Miracles: A History of Africa Inland Mission*. London: Vicotry Press, 1968.
- Shaw, Mark. *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A short History of African Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.
- Somba, Ndeti, ed., *Sura Mpya ya Kanisa: Historia ya Africa Inland Church Kenya*, Nairobi. Africa Inland Church Press n.d.
- Scott Theological College, "Heavenly Melodies." Unpublished collection of songs in African tunes by students, 1971.
- Sundkler, Bengt and Christopher Steed. *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Temu, A. J. *Protestant Missions in East Africa*. Nairobi: Longman, 1973.
- Thiongo, Ngugi. *Homecoming*. London: Heinmann, 1972.
- Townsend, W. N. Cameron. "Tribes, Tongues and Translators." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne. California: William Carey Library [1981], 250 - 253.
- Ukaegbu, Rev. James. "Training Laymen for Christian Witness and Ministry." In *Facing the New Challenge: the Message of PACLA*, ed. Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinden. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House [1978], 571 - 575.
- Wanyoike, E. N. *An African Pastor: The Life and Work of The Rev. Wanyoike Kamawe 1888 - 1970*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1974.
- Watt, Mrs. Stuart. *In the Heart of Savagedom*. London: Pickering and English, 1912.
- Winter, Ralph D. "The Long Look: Eras of Mission History." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne. California: William Carey Library [1981], 167 - 177.

Interviews

- Isika, John, Church Elder A.I.C. Mulango. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Kathini, Viata Ngave, Retired Teacher and former Lady Teacher aged 122 years. Interview by author, 23 February 2001 Mulango. Tape recording.

- Kiteng'e, M.S. AIC Kitui Central Religious Education Secretary. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Masumba, John, Former Teacher Mulango Bible Institute. Interview by author, 16 April 2001, Nairobi.
- Mbandi, Peris Mutuvi, old resident of Mulango and Mother to Professor John S. Mbiti. Interview by author, 24 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Mbithe, Meliki, Worshiper at AIC Mulango. Interview by author, 24 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Mulinge, Masumba, Fought in the World War II in India. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.
- Muoka, Ndungi, Old church elder at AIC Ikutha. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.
- Mutetei, Philip, Principal Mulango Bible Institute. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.
- Muthoka, Philip, Secretary AIC Mulango. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Muthwii, Daniel, church elder A.I.C. Mulango and Medical Doctor Kitui. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.
- Mutisya, Joel, Pastor AIC Ikutha DCC. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.
- Mutua, William, Resident of Mulango and brother to Professor John S. Mbiti. Interview by author, 25 February 2001, Mulango.
- Mwikya, Damaris Nzivu, lady elder A.I.C. Mulango, over 70 years old. Interview by author, 23 February 2001, Mulango. Tape recording.
- Nzau, Justus, Former AIC Missionary Board National Co-ordinator. Interview by author, 2 January 2001, Ikutha. Tape recording.

VITA

Mike M. Mutua was born in 1969 to a Christian family. He comes from Ikutha location, Kitui District in the Eastern Province of Kenya. He went through his basic education at Ikutha Primary School (1977-1983) and Maseno School (1984-1987). He attended Mumbuni High School (1988-1989). He joined Moi University (1991) but left after one year to pursue theological training at Scott Theological College (Kenya) graduating with a Bachelors Degree in Theology (BTh, Hons.) in 1996. He joined Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in September 1999 for postgraduate studies in Church History.

Mike Mutua is a pastor at A.I.C Jericho, in Nairobi, Kenya.