

A HISTORY OF DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES IN GHANA: 1938-2010

BY

JOSEPH KWASI ADDAI

(10328424)



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DECLARATION

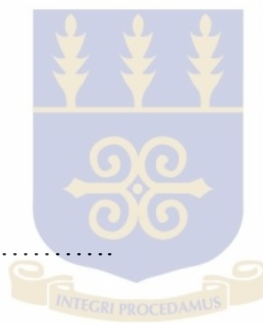
This thesis, with the exception of materials quoted from other scholarly works which have been acknowledged fully, is the original production of research work by the researcher under the supervision of Rev. Prof. Cephas N. Omenyo and Rev. Fr. Dr. George Ossom-Batsa at the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana. Any error in this thesis is fully acknowledged as the fault of the researcher.

Signature:

Date:

Joseph Kwasi Addai

(Student)



Signature:

Date:

Rev. Prof. Rev. Prof. Cephas N. Omenyo

(Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

Rev. Fr. Dr. George Ossom-Batsa

(Supervisor)

ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was that, although the SVD missionaries have been a major partner in the evangelizing mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana since their arrival in 1938, their specific contribution to the growth and development of the Catholic Church in Ghana has not been fully assessed. The objective of this thesis therefore is to appraise the missionary activities of the SVD within Ghanaian Catholic Church, and also assess their relevance in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity as a whole. Using the historical method and approach, chapter two traces the history of the SVD from the time of the arrival of the first two missionaries up to the time the mission was handed over to a diocesan bishop in 1971. In chapters three and four, qualitative, analytical and critical tools were employed using Andrew Walls' three test criteria to evaluate the work of the SVD. Our findings are that the SVDs have largely fulfilled the Church test as proposed by Andrew Walls. As far as the Kingdom and Gospel tests are concerned, these are still on-going. So to remain relevant in the contemporary Ghanaian Christian mission, the SVDs need to do more work in this direction.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Divine Word Missionaries (SVDs)

Divine Word Missionaries, also known as the Society of the Divine Word¹ (SVD), is an international religious congregation made up of men. It was founded on 8 September, 1875 by Fr. Arnold Janssen in Steyl, Holland who was canonised a saint on 5 October, 2003 by Pope John Paul II in Rome. The purpose for establishing this missionary enterprise was to train personnel for missionary service in the Roman Catholic Church. Members of the society consider it their duty to proclaim the word of God to all, to bring new communities into being among the people of God, to foster their growth and to promote communion among them and within the whole Roman Catholic Church.

God's loving grace has gathered us from various peoples and continents into a religious missionary community dedicated to the Divine Word and named after him Society of the Divine Word.²... 'Since God wills that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1Tim. 2:4-5)³, he sent his son as redeemer to form the one people of God from all nations through the power of the spirit. Our missionary service helps gather the scattered children of the Lord (Jn. 11:52) and hasten the hour when all will worship the father in spirit and truth.⁴

These opening statements of the prologue and constitutions 101 of the SVD give the origin, identity and purpose of this Religious Missionary Society⁵ in the Roman Catholic Church. The vision of the SVD in Ghana can be captured in this phrase, 'called by the Triune God from diverse nations and cultures, we are a community of men committed by

¹ The name 'Society of the Divine Word' is the English version of the Latin name 'Societas Verbe Divine' (SVD).

² *The Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word* (Rome: SVD Publications Generalate-Rome, 1983/2000), p. 11. This was taken from the prologue of the 1983 revised edition by the 15th General Chapter-2000.

³ All the Bible quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition)* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1966).

⁴ *The Constitutions*, p.13.

⁵ This is a society in which members take simple public vows of consecrated chastity, evangelical poverty and apostolic obedience. These vows are lived in a religious community made up of members only.

religious vows to the Divine Word, to the incarnate Jesus Christ in the multi-cultural Ghanaian situation.⁶ This vision highlights in a broad way what the society is up to in the Ghana Mission⁷. On 10 October, 1938 two SVD missionaries arrived in the Gold Coast for the first time to start the mission. These missionaries were given the responsibility of taking care of the South-Eastern part of the country with Accra as the focal point. Currently there are 122 finally professed members working in six Catholic dioceses and the Donkorkrom Apostolic Vicariate.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The SVDs have been a major partner in the evangelising mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana since their arrival in 1938. They have been involved in different apostolates such as primary evangelization, education, biblical apostolate, health, book publishing, mobile cinema and other humanitarian services however no systematic study of their involvement in these pastoral activities has been under taken. Available information on them is in the form of diaries, chapter documents, brochures, newspaper articles, newsletters and the like. As a result, it is difficult to evaluate their contribution to the growth and development of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana. This work will examine their contribution to the development and growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana specifically, and Ghana at large.

⁶ Vision statement, adopted at the Provincial Chapter of 2009 held between 28- 31 October, 2009 at Adoagyiri -Nsawam, Ghana.

⁷ Mission in this context refers to a particular geographical area that has been entrusted to a missionary society to establish the Roman Catholic Church there. Ghana mission has been used in this paper in reference to the Eastern and Greater Accra administrative regions of Ghana.

1.3 Objective of the research

The aim of this research is to do a historical study of the missionary activities of the SVD in Ghana. It will examine the real situation of the SVD mission in Ghana in terms of their contribution to the growth and development of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana. An evaluation will be made on how far the SVD missionaries have fulfilled the mission mandate given to them in Ghana: that is establishing the Catholic Church in the mission area entrusted to them. To achieve this objective a critical study will be made on the strategies the SVDs adopted to achieve their mission mandate. The following issues will also be examined:

1. How the SVD missionaries have handled the issue of personnel planning, training and retention especially the indigenous people, and their lay associates.
2. Sources of funding and their sustainability for the Ghana mission.
3. How the SVDs have used the media and modern technology in the process of evangelization.
4. How the SVDs have used lobby, advocacy and dialogue for effective evangelization.

1.4 Scope of the research

Despite the national character of the research, its scope will be limited to some selected parishes and institutions being manned by the SVDs in the Accra and Koforidua dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana. The study has been limited to these two dioceses because that is where the pioneer missionaries started their missionary work in Ghana. At that time the Roman Catholic Church was virtually non-existent in this

geographical area. The SVDs started from scratch and built the church into a diocese. By the time the SVDs moved to the other parts of Ghana, the dioceses were well established.

The selected parishes for study are St. Charles Lwanga, Accra and St. Augustine, Accra. St. Peter's, Nkwatia-Kwahu, and St. Martin's, Adoagyiri are the Senior High Schools studied. Also included in the study are St. Paul's Technical Institute, Kukuruantumi, Orthopaedic Training Centre, Adoagyiri, and the Weija Leprosarium in Accra. These parishes and institutions were selected because they were established by the SVD missionaries and SVD staff are still manning them.

1.5 Theoretical framework

Andrew Walls, in his analysis of Latourettes' *three tests of Christian expansion* comes out with the three test theory,⁸ the Church test, the Kingdom test and Gospel test. The Church test can be seen as the establishment of a stable Christian community that worship together as a result of the proclamation of the gospel. There is the tendency for the church to become an institution and eventually lose its initial focus and mission. That brings in the second test, Kingdom test.

Kingdom test involves the rise of renewal movements and groups in the church which are signs of the Kingdom. These renewal movements reform the church and keep it from deviating from the original mission. Most of these renewal movements come out of the initiatives of the Lay people in the church. The rapid growth of Pentecostalism, Charismatic Movements and other New Religious Movements, have had a dramatic

⁸ Andrew Walls, *The History of Expansion of Christianity Reconsidered: The Legacy of George E. Day*. The Occasional Publication of the Yale Divinity School Library, 1995.

impact on Christianity and the Ghanaian community in general. It is therefore important to examine the role the SVDs have played in the rise of these renewal movement in their mission work hence the need to use the Kingdom test in this work for the evaluation

The Gospel test is what Walls refers to as the effect of Christ's presence directly or indirectly on the wider community as a result of the proclamation. Gospel test is seen mostly in the area of humanitarian and social services offered to the wider community without exception. These include schools, health facilities, care of the cured lepers, solidarity with street children, help for the physically challenged, advocacy and many others. These tests will form the basis for evaluating the SVD mission in Ghana.

In the evaluation, the study will examine empirical evidence on the ground in terms of the physical presence of the structures of a Church. Issues like the number of churches built, resident stations, number of priests and their lay associates and number of baptised Catholics in the mission territory will be critically examined. Kingdom test will look for the presence of lay societies and renewal movements within the church and their influence in the church and the wider Ghanaian society. Using the gospel test, the research will look at the number educational institutions and their enrolment levels in terms of number of Catholics and non-Catholic, the quality of staff, performance in the areas of academic and moral discipline. Under the gospel test we will also look and the number of health institutions and the extent of spread in the mission territory. Finally an evaluation will be made of the mechanisms that have been put in place to take care of the poor, needy and deprived members in the wider society. These tests are significant because they give some standard criteria for evaluating the success or otherwise of the activities of the missionary society. In using the tests we look for concrete, empirical evidence and physical presence of the church in the mission territory.

1.6 Research question

Based on the mission mandate given to the SVD missionaries, have they contributed to the development and growth of the Catholic Church in Ghana and the country Ghana as a whole? Have their activities met the three tests as proposed by Andrew Walls, that is the church test, the kingdom test and the gospel test?

1.7 Methodology

This study comes under Missions History hence the historical method has been used. We come across this especially in chapter two which studies of the history of the SVDs in Ghana. The work of some key SVD missionaries like Adolf Noser, Alphonse Elsbernd, Joseph Oliver Bowers, John Koster, Tarcisius de Ruyter, Andrew Campbell, Pious Agyeman has been studied.

In chapter three, the work examines the contribution of the SVDs to human development and human solidarity. A critical and qualitative study approach has been used. Some educational and health institutions established by the SVDs have been analysed with special emphasis on contemporary issues related to the work. The main focus has been on what might have been done in the past, look at what is being done now and project it into the future. The contributions of the Women Religious, lay men and women who have participated in the work of the SVD missionaries have also been examined. In the evaluation in chapter four, the three test theory of Andrew Walls as explained above has been used.

1.8 Method of data collection (sources for the work)

In this work primary and secondary sources have been used. Primary sources of data used include archival material, dairies of Alphonse Elsbernd, the correspondence of Adolf Noser and the diary of Lucian Oriens, who were among the pioneer SVD missionaries to Ghana. Parish documents, Chapter documents⁹, letters, theses, newspapers, lecture notes have also been used. Some key SVDs like Andrew Campbell, Marek Kowalik, Tarcisius de Ruyter and Pious Agyemang have been interviewed. These interviews were based on the work they were involved in. Issues such as motivation for going into these activities; challenges and successes; sources of funding and the impact of their activities on the Catholic Church in Ghana, as well as the future of these activities and ministries were raised. Some academics in the area of mission like Peter Sarpong have also been consulted. The secondary data involved the reading and analysis of published documents. These include books, journals, and published papers delivered at various forums.

1.9 Literature review

The discussion in this section is structured under major issues and themes discovered in the literature review. It is classified into sections according to the aspects of mission and evangelization they treat.

1.9.1 Mission

This research comes under Mission History. Gustav Warneck,¹⁰ sees mission as an activity of Christianity, aimed at implanting and organising Christian churches among non-Christians. It is a participation in the life of Christ and the church. SVD

⁹ The Chapter is the highest decision making body of the Society. The results of the deliberations at these Chapters are normally compiled into a document for future reference and circulated among members of the Society.

¹⁰ Gustav Warneck, a pioneer missiologist, born 6 March 1834 Naumberg and died on 26 December 1919 in Halle.

understanding of mission as expressed in the document *Prophetic dialogue* portrays mission as dialogue and this is at the heart of the relationship between God and humanity. Mission and evangelization are in essence a process of dialogue where we go out to meet the others from an attitude of respect and exchange.¹¹ SVD missionaries' preferred dialogue partners are faith seekers and people without faith community, the poor and marginalised, people of other cultures and people of other religions and secular ideologies. J. Verkuyl, presents mission as the activities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit throughout the world geared towards bringing the kingdom of God into existence.¹² In sum it can be said that mission is the process of establishing the kingdom of God among the whole of creation.

1.9.2 Historical understanding of mission

In his book *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*, J. Verkuyl explains mission as a theological discipline that must be rooted in the bible which is the basic theological text. The World Mission Conference of 1952 in Germany understood mission as *Missio Dei*.¹³ According to the document of the XVI SVD General Chapter of 2006, mission is first of all *Missio Dei*. 'We are participants in God's saving dialogue with humanity and this confirms with our founder that to proclaim the good news is the greatest act of love for neighbour.'¹⁴

At the Mexico City conference in 1963, the scope of *Missio Dei* was widened to include *Missio Ecclesiae*¹⁵. Austin Flannery describes mission as 'the special undertaken in which

¹¹ 'Prophetic Dialogue', in *In Dialogue with the Word*. 2 (2001). P.11-20.

¹² J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* translated and edited by Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p.5.

¹³ *Missio Dei* (God's mission).

¹⁴ 'Document of the XVI SVD General Chapter 2006', in *In Dialogue with the Word*, 6 (2006), p.56.

¹⁵ *Missio Ecclesiae* (Church's mission).

preachers of the gospel are sent by the church, and going into the whole world, carry out the work of preaching the gospel, implanting churches among people who do not yet believe in Christ.¹⁶ These activities are carried out in defined territories recognised by the Holy See. The principal instrument for implanting churches is the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

These concepts of mission imply that the missionary is a participant in the life of Christ and the Church. From the views of the scholars at these conferences, it can be inferred that mission has to do with sending, proclamation and the planting of churches. This view of mission is quite limited in scope since it is silent on re-evangelization, mission to non-human elements of creation, issues of dialogue with people of other cultures, dialogue with other religions and ideologies as well as the new religious movements. Mission from this perspective is also limited to the confines of the institutionalised church.

In his article, '*Mission for the Twenty-First Century*' Larry Nemer suggests the direction of Christian missions in the coming decades of the Twenty-first Century. In his suggestions, he revisits three major documents on mission in the Roman Catholic Church. These are *Ad Gentes*¹⁷, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*¹⁸ and *Redemptoris missio*¹⁹. The central ideas that come out of these documents are as follows: *Ad gentes*, has inculturation and the local church as its main focus. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, focuses more on human

¹⁶ Austin Flannery (ed.), 'Decree on the Church's Missionary Activities (Ad Gentes Divinus)' *Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981), p.819.

¹⁷ Austin Flannery (ed.), (*Ad Gentes*) 'Decree on the Church's Missionary Activities' *Vatican Council II The Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981)

¹⁸ Paul VI, (*Evangelii. Nuntiandi*) 'Evangelization in the Modern World', in Austin Flannery (ed.) *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982).

¹⁹ John Paul II, '*Redemptoris Missio* on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate' in *Encyclical letters* (Trivandrium, India: Carmel International Publishing House, 2005).

development, social justice and the evangelization of cultures. *Redemptoris missio*, extends the frontiers of mission to the new world. *Ad Gentes* was *ecclesio centric*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* focused on integral and global evangelization, *Redemptoris missio* was more *Christocentric*.

Citing Robert Schreiter, Larry Nemer²⁰ identifies four key ideas that will be important for mission in the third millennium. Mission will continue to be the mission of God. Mission is Trinitarian. The focus of mission will be on dialogue, and finally, mission will be carried out in a situation of multiplicity. Firstly Nemer affirms the fact that despite the great advances in human society, a greater majority of people are worse off. Man cannot save himself. There is the need for communion with God. The primacy of God's action in mission should be the guiding principle of the missionary.

Secondly, the Trinitarian basis for mission implies dealing with pluralism. There should be no room for relativism. Dialogue starts first with *Ad gentes* and it is also taken up in *Redemptoris missio*. These documents focus on the acceptance of differences without violence. Dialogue has the potential of eradicating religious differences and violence. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* stresses on the importance of rooting the gospel in the diverse cultures. John Paul II extends the ideas of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* to include re-evangelization. All these documents emphasize unity in diversity which is a characteristic of the Trinity. The basic issue that comes out is the meaning of evangelization of cultures in the age of globalization where cultures seem to be a hybrid. What does the missionary do in the face of resistance to such changes, especially among migrants? He also raises

²⁰ Larry Nemer, 'Mission for the Twenty-First century', An SVD symposium and workshop, held on 8-11 December, 2000 at Techny Illinois. *Verbum SVD* 1 (2001), p.95.

the issue of how the missionary handles the challenges of secularization, fundamentalism and Pentecostalism? All these are challenges to mission in our world today.

Affirming the views of Wilbert Shenk, a protestant missiologist, Nemer²¹ asserts that the world is the context of mission for today. This world is characterised by modernity and marginalization of religion. Some characteristics of the modern world that are affecting religion are the separation of time and space in our thinking, the reflexive ordering and reordering of society, leaving the future to replace tradition as adjustments continue to be made. He concludes by saying that the world has lost its story because it lost its storyteller, God. The bible has lost its role in cultural development. In the context of these new developments, the preferred text for mission these days is the text in John's gospel (John. 20:20-23) instead of the traditional ending in Matthew (Matt. 28:19-20). This understanding of mission challenges the imperial approach to mission. Mission is now by way of incarnation in contemporary situation and is also trans-relational. Mission from the perspective of John's gospel makes more meaning to me.

1.9.3 Motives for fulfilling the missionary task

Pure motives for mission: The missionary motives of the past, present and future are constantly being scrutinized. Verkuyl citing²² Bernard Shaw and Johannes Schutte, describes the English missionaries as covert imperialist interested more in the British Empire than in the Kingdom of God. The pioneer missionaries to the African missions, have come under criticism, some well intentioned, some fashionable and some of it slanderous. The missionary institutes are accused of everything including cultural aggression, ecclesiastical colonialism, spiritual imperialism and escapism from the situation back at home. It therefore comes out that the motive

²¹ Nemer, 'Mission for the Twenty-First century', p. 96.

²² J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, p.164.

for mission has not always been pure. There have always been pure and impure motives for doing mission.

Verkuyl in his analysis comes out with the following pure motives for doing mission, the motive of obedience which comes from a duty towards the will of God (1 Cor.1:17, 9:16; Gal. 2:7.) There motive of love and mercy which is very strong in the biblical work on mission. The motive of doxology has to do with the praise of God's name. In this direction the missionary responds in praise of God's name. Eschatological motive has as its central issue the kingdom; 'Thy kingdom come.' (Mt. 6:10) Paul sees it in the fullness of the body of Christ. This was a dominant motive in the work of the pioneer missionaries²³. Closely connected with the eschatological motive is the haste motive. This is closely tied to the expectation of the coming of the kingdom. We see in the life of Jesus and also Paul, the need to get the message quickly hence the maxim, do good to everyone while there is time. The parable of talents (Mt.25:14-30) amply testifies to this fact. Personal motive, as far as this motive is concerned, Paul has this to say, I do it for the sake of the gospel so that I may share in its blessing. This is an established fact of human experience and life. He who rouses others to belief, strengthens his own faith as well. Just as stagnant water turn into a morass but if one keeps on communicating; one's own stream will also remain fresh and flowing, (John 4: 14). In sum, Verkuyl concludes that authentic mission should be based on pure motives of proclaiming the word of God to the whole of creation.

Impure motives: Throughout the history of Christian missions, there have always been impure motives. It is quite difficult to deny that shady motives have been operative in the Christian missions. We can see evidence of these impure motives in the following areas, Imperialist Motives, Cultural Motives, Commercial Motives and the Motive of Ecclesiastical Colonialism. By imperialist, it implies the situation where there is an attempt by one state to use another people

²³ Refer to the missionary activities of Philip in Samaria Acts 8:4-40 and Stephen in Acts 6:6- 7:60.

or state as a means to achieve its own goal. A classic example can be found in the case of Popes Nicholas V and Alexander VI²⁴. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they instructed Spain and Portugal to extend their political influence to Asia, Africa and the recently discovered Americas. They were to be zealous for extending the domain of the Roman Catholic Church. These popes directly tied mission tightly to political and ecclesiastical authority. It must be strongly stressed that a warning against imperialism may never be considered old-fashioned or out of date, for the danger is always present. Every people by their nature are imperialist. That comes as a result of the 'tension between the centre and the periphery'²⁵.

Cultural motives sub-planted biblical motives for mission in the 19th century. The missionaries invariably transferred their cultures to the missions. Mission was seen as the transmission of Western cultural values. Verkuyl²⁶ cites Schleiermacher as being very strong and insistent on this. The goal of the missionary is to carry his father land with its laws and customs along with him and to look upon the higher and better things of life wherever he goes. For him, mission work was primarily a cultural enterprise and accompanied a general transfer of culture. Commercial motives were most often an accessory motive. At various times, the missionaries made an appeal to the commercial interest of its readers. It is very important to inspect the ties between the mission and commerce as recent developments in the religious landscape seem to point to the fact that religion has become a very profitable business.

Ecclesiastical colonialism has to do with the imposition of the Mother Church on the Native Churches. They do not normally allow the people to shape their own Church in response to the gospel. When that takes place, the gospel does not find deep roots in the new culture and the native church. From the foregoing discussion, we can affirm the fact that there has always being

²⁴ J Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, P168.

²⁵ Cephas N. Omenyo, Lecture in Gospel and Culture, given to M. Phil students of 2009-2010 in March 2010.

²⁶ J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, p. 171.

pure and impure motives for doing mission work. This work will examine carefully the real motives for the coming of the SVDs to the Ghana mission.

1.9.4 Forming local churches

As a result of conversion and baptism, people enter the already existing churches or establish new communities. They now gather in unity to form a worshipping community that eventually develop and grow into full maturity. From this perspective, mission should necessarily lead to the building of new particular Churches which function normally in their local settings. John Paul II, in his encyclical letter 'Redemptoris Missio', asserts that 'Missionary activity has as its principal aim, the manifestation of God's plan and its fulfilment in world history. By means of mission salvation history is accomplished.'²⁷ These particular Church should remain in communion with the universal church. Such Christian communities have the power to overcome their internal divisions and tensions. From this perspective, mission is a failure if it does not lead to the formation of a local church. It is important to investigate the assertion that the success of mission should be measured by the formation of a local church.

1.9.5 Mission and social transformation

In his article '*To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society*', Valdir Raul Steuernagel²⁸, projects the view that proclamation and mission must lead to social transformation. Using the text of Matthew (Matt.6:33,) he comes out with the fact that once the kingdom of God is established in a particular mission territory, all other things

²⁷ John Paul II, 'Redemptoris Missio on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate' in *Encyclical letters* (Trivandrium, India: Carmel International Publishing House, 2005), p. 619.

²⁸ Valdir Raul Steuernagel. 'To Seek to Transform Unjust Structures of Society', in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.) *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

will naturally follow but this has not always been the case. There is the need for a concerted effort to bring about the desired social transformation. John Paul II stresses the same idea when he writes, the church offers a force for liberation through the conversion of heart, and ways of thinking, fosters recognition of each person's dignity, encourages solidarity, commitment to service of one's neighbour.²⁹ Proclamation and mission must be holistic, focusing on the whole of creation at peace. Justice as a mark of mission becomes the fundamental expression of God's search for transformation. This must be an integral part of mission.

Thomas Malipurthy,³⁰ in his article '*You shall be my witness*' brings in new perspectives of mission that is aimed at social transformation. In his view mission has been perceived from the point of view of the great commission in the text of Matthew. This is interpreted in a narrow sense to mean a call to administer baptism to everyone. The new trend is that the welfare of the whole of creation is the object of Christian mission. The church is like the leaven that is meant to facilitate the transformation of the world. Mission, the world, other religions and the rest of humanity must be looked at with new perspectives.

Melba Maggay³¹ in his article, '*To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service*', calls for a revisit of the major biblical theme of love of God and neighbour. He poses the question: what does it really mean to serve the poor and needy? To love God is to love the neighbour. The greatest command of Jesus is the mandate to love God and neighbour (Matt. 22:34-40). In his view, evangelization has narrowly been understood as

²⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, p.636.

³⁰ Thomas Malipurthy, 'You shall be my witness' biblical perspective on a core concept of mission' *Verbum SVD I* (2008).

³¹ Melba Maggay, 'To Respond to Human Need by Loving Service', in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the 21st Century, Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008).

proclaiming salvation for the hereafter and getting people to come to the side of the missionary and believe what the missionary believes. This understanding of mission in most cases neglects the issues concerning life in this world. In the understanding of Jesus, to follow God is to love him with passion, to love our neighbour with the same care and total attention that we show ourselves.

The missionary battles against the rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. This view is also supported by Ishvani Kendra in an article '*A Vision of mission for the New Millennium.*' In trying to combat these forces of evil, there is the need to institute certain social safety nets and laws. For instance, in ancient Israel there were Sabbath laws and the jubilee year (Lev.25). These laws were to take care of the poor in society, despite the fact that many of them were not implemented (Is.5:8).

In a similar mood, Haami Chapman holds the opinion that it is important to journey with the community through a variety of self evaluation process and capacity building initiatives. Deep in the cultural history of a people, the missionary can discover values and beliefs long forgotten, where the presence of God can be discovered. Community transformation is very effective if it is driven from within. The community can be made responsible for their own circumstances and future. It is not very useful to uproot people from their background in order to transform them. In sum it can be said that mission and proclamation must lead to the transformation of people's lives and situations. This assertion could be one of a basis for evaluating the SVD mission in Ghana.

1.9.6 School ministry, essential in spreading the gospel

According to Hans van Kempen,³² at the beginning of the SVD mission in Ghana, schools were very essential for spreading the faith. The villages with flourishing ATR were not at all interested in Christianity as such. Without schools, many people would never have accepted the gospel message. They saw the benefits of education but then they were not attracted to Christianity. Citing the experience of Fr. Noser, Hans Kempen writes that in March 1941, Fr. Noser went on trek to the Krobo area at the invitation of one Mr. Opata, the first Manya Krobo convert living at Akotoe near Asesewa. Mr. Opata was able to convince Fr. Noser to take over a small school he had started in that village. The Konor, paramount chief of Manya Krobo, a Presbyterian, well educated and far-sighted became interested in Fr. Noser's zeal for education. He promised to give the mission a large site at Agomanya and this led to the opening of many new stations within a few years. The research will investigate if the education ministry is still a useful means of spreading the gospel.

1.9.7 Challenges to Mission in the third millennium

According to Ishvani Kendra,³³ in an article 'A Vision of mission for the New Millennium' Our world today is characterised by so much good, but at the same time, we see so much evil. He identifies three forms of evil that confront our world which the missionary has to respond to. These are spiritual evil, socio-economic and political evil and personal evil. These three dimensions of evil interpenetrate one another to create a world of darkness of sin. In the view of Kendra it is the good news of Christ that can confront all these dimensions of evil.

³² Hans van Kempen, 'Ghana SVD fifty years of service of the Divine Word Missionaries in Ghana', A brochure prepared for the celebration of fifty years of SVDs in Ghana.

³³ Ishvani Kendra, 'A Vision of mission for the New Millennium', *Verbum SVD (1) 2001*. This is the conclusions of a Research Seminar.

Ishvani Kendra further asserts that changes in our world today bring together peoples of diverse ethnicities, cultures, religions and ideologies. In a positive way, these have the potential for mutual enrichment and respect. On the other hand, we cannot have any absolute truth on issues. The missionary is to witness and encounter all people in the name of Jesus in all these situations. Traditional values of harmony, spiritual values and democracy are gradually giving way to division, fundamentalism and individualism. There is a growing marginalization of sections of society. The unchecked march of globalization is widening the gap between the rich and the poor. There is the mindless exploitation of the limited natural resources of our world. There is evidence of religious pluralism, with the potential for elitism and exclusivism. The gap between the laity and clergy, the banishment of women to the periphery of the church, the ability or inability for the church to insert itself into the culture of the people renders mission quite ineffective.³⁴ In his book *Peoples Differ* Peter Sarpong affirms the fact that no effective evangelization can take place without the triple pole of the situation, the agent and the message.³⁵ Any serious attempt at mission must take into consideration people's situation, the agent of the message and the content of the message.

Examining the Situation of human beings in the world today, Ishvani Kendra observes that developments in science have made human beings more intelligent and creative. This has brought about social and cultural transformation, impacting negatively on religion. He further observes that the growth of power is not always accompanied by the control of that power. Human beings enjoy an abundance of wealth, resource, and economic well-being, yet large sections of society are plagued with hunger and extreme need. There is the threat of war and destruction, search for a better material world without spiritual

³⁴ Kendra, 'A Vision of mission for the New Millennium', p. 84.

³⁵ Peter K. Sarpong, *Peoples Differ: An Approach to Inculturation and Evangelisation* (Accra: Sub Saharan Publishers, 2002), p.16.

advancement. Human beings are now torn between hope and anxiety. It is in the unchanging Christ that we can tackle the problems of our world today. He concludes by saying that the missionary needs to project values that can relate people to the divine source. By being agents of an ongoing universal reconciliation, the missionaries can find allies in all religions and persons of good will through continuous dialogue with religions and civil society groups.

1.9.8 The personal identity of the missionary

Peter Sarpong holds the view that the person who tells the message after studying the situation is probably the most important point of departure in evangelisation. He is the agent, the evangeliser, the person who proclaims the Good News.³⁶ The missionary should be an exemplary spirit-bearer guided by the spirit of God. The spirit's presence in the missionary will fill him with grace and power to carry out his mission. Mission that is spirit-led will not degenerate into a personal project but remain a spirit-led effort which leads to the realization of the Kingdom of God. Without faith all the external factors will be present making the work physically impressive but will lack the decisive power to influence human hearts.

Pope Paul VI strongly asserts that modern man listens more willingly to witness than to teachers. If he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.³⁷ Austin Flannery also affirms the fact that the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way are the joy and hope, the grief and

³⁶ Sarpong, *Peoples Differ*, p.19.

³⁷ Paul VI 'Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)', in Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II More Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p.728.

anguish of the followers of Christ as well.³⁸ According to *Ad gentes* lay people in the country should teach in the schools, administer temporary affairs, collaborate in parochial and diocesan activities, establish and promote various forms of apostolate. This will help them play their own part in the life of the church.³⁹ *Ad gentes* further asserts that, lay people should be encouraged to promote knowledge of peoples and religions by their historical or scientific religious investigations in universities and scientific institutions. This helps preachers of the gospel and prepare for dialogue with non-Christians.⁴⁰ These assertions point to the fact that the missionary needs to take the situation and contribution of the lay people seriously in mission.

1.9.9 Biblical foundation of mission

The need for mission to find its roots in the bible was the subject of the Mexico City Mission Conference (8-19 December 1963). At this conference, W.A Visser 't Hooft⁴¹ in his presentation '*Mission as the Test of Faith*,' asserted that almost all human ideologies and foundations were crushing out and only those based on the living God, the risen Lord and the bible can endure. It was therefore necessary that mission should have a basis in the bible. J. Blauw⁴² made an exegetical and hermeneutical study on work done between 1930 and 1960 which relates to the biblical foundation for mission. The aim of this project was to root mission in the bible.

³⁸ Austin Flannery (ed.), 'Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) *Vatican Council II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981), p.903.

³⁹ Austin Flannery (ed.), 'Decree on the Church's Missionary Activities (Ad Gentes Divinitus) *Vatican Council II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981), p.855.

⁴⁰ Flannery, 'Decree on the Church's Missionary Activities', p.855.

⁴¹ W. A Visser 't Hooft 'Mission as the Test of Faith' in R.K Orchard (ed.) *Witness in Six Continents: Records of the meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches Held in Mexico City 8-19 December 1963* (London: Edinburg House Press, 1964), p.26.

⁴² J. Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).

Ad Gentes (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activities) of Vatican II makes frequent reference to the bible. All these were attempts at getting mission find its roots in the bible and to give a biblical foundation for mission work. Verkuyl in a survey of key Old Testament texts like Gen. 1-11; Is. 49:6; Ezra 1:1-11; Is.45:16-17; Amos.9:2; Gen. 12:1-3; Ps. 72:7-8 and Is. 2:2, arrives at the conclusion that the OT presents a universal nature of God's love for all and that serves as a proclamation of mission. In the same work, Verkuyl⁴³ arrives at the basic understanding that God's work and activity is directed to the whole of humanity. Verkuyl also made the assertion that 'from the beginning to the end, the New Testament is a book of mission.'⁴⁴ The missionary work of the early Christian churches brought this book into existence. Mission therefore becomes the proclamation of Christ among the nations as found in the faith expressed by these Christians. The content of the faith is that Christ is the Lord of history. Reason for mission is no other than God. In conclusion it can be said that biblical evidence supports the urgent need for mission, proclamation and evangelization. That makes the research relevant. From the literature I came across, it can be said that there is no single understanding of mission among scholars and the evangelists. While Matthew for instance stresses on making disciples for Christ, Mark stress on mission to all creation.

Luke on the other hand places more emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. David Bosch refers to 'Luke as the theologian of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who initiates mission and he also guides the missionaries about where they should go and how they should proceed. At every point, the church's mission is both inspired and confirmed by

⁴³ J. Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction*: Translated and edited by Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978).

⁴⁴ Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology*, p.101.

manifestations of the Spirit'⁴⁵. In the gospel of John, the emphasis of mission is on the incarnation of the gospel into people's lives and cultures. There is a gap here that needs to be investigated.

1.9.10 Looking into the future

Ishvani Kendra⁴⁶, holds the view that advocacy in mission is a new area that can be explored outside the confines of the institutional church. Mission should focus on God's mission and God's work. God's work is in this world and is committed to integral salvation of the world. A new understanding of culture, as constructing an identity in a pluralistic world can be very helpful in the whole process of getting the gospel rooted in people's culture. There is the need to promote an image of mission built on the pattern of such symbols as light, salt and leaven. These symbols make the effect of mission to be felt in the wider society. The imperialistic form of mission based on Matt. 28:18-20 can be offensive to the feelings of people who do not share the missionary's beliefs. Proclamation must be more incarnational as found in John.20:20-23, showing respect for other religions. In this way the missionary will be committed to enhancing the quality of life of humanity, while at the same time following the example of Christ.

1.10 New area to be explored

From the reviewed works, it can be observed that mission has centred mainly on the human elements of creation. It has also been confined to the institutionalised Catholic Church. The research intends to explore the possibility of having a biblically integrated

⁴⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shift in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. 140.

⁴⁶ Ishvani Kendra, Conclusions of the Research Seminar 'A Vision of mission for the New Millennium', *Verbum SVD (1) 2001*.

understanding of mission. This form of mission will include both the human and non-human elements of creation, present Jesus as the saviour of the world in whom all things hold together. Mission from this perspective will present God as creator and sustainer of the world, hold Jesus as central to mission and also make him known. Finally mission should provide a message of hope and life in all fullness. God's mission to his world includes the whole created world. In the view of Bookless Dave, mission is a participation in God's mission as ambassadors of Christ hence it needs to encompass the vision and purpose of God, the care of creation. The good news should be for people, communities and for a groaning creation.⁴⁷

1.11 Organization of the work

The research has been organised in the following way. Chapter one examines the introductory issues like, the statement of problem, research question, objective of the research, the scope of the study and methodology, method of data collection and literature review. The chapter concludes with the relevance of the study. The focus of chapter two is on the history of SVD in Ghana from the time of arrival of the first missionaries until it was handed over to a diocesan bishop. In the third chapter, the research deals with the contribution of the SVDs towards human development, human solidarity and the Ghanaian society at large. Issues like education, cured lepers and the care for the physically challenged and inculturation have been discussed. In chapter four, the study evaluates the missionary activities of the SVDs in Ghana over the past seven decades. The concluding chapter has the future of the SVD mission in Ghana as its focus.

⁴⁷ Bookless Dave, 'To Strive to Safeguard the Integrity of Creation and Sustain and Renew the life of the Earth (II)' in Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.) *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), p. 104.

1.12 Relevance of the research

This research has the potential of contributing to the ongoing discussion on mission in the twenty-first century. The gradual infiltration of new cultural trends and ideologies have the potential of undermining Christian families, values and mission especially on issues of same sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia, trial marriages and premarital sex which have the inbuilt capacity to destroy the traditional Christian and African family. There has been a changed socio-cultural and religious situation in Ghana and that calls for new strategies for effective evangelization. These are issues this work intends to investigate. Rapid urbanization in Ghana has brought its own challenges to mission in the urban areas. This is of interest to the work.

The study has the potential of making it possible to fill in the gaps in the history of missions especially the rural-urban divide and their effect on mission. It will also provide an important window into the contributions of an important religious organization in the history of Christianity in Ghana. Corporate needs have proved to be useful in the rural areas while the emphasis is more on individual needs in the urban centres due to the breakdown of the traditional values and social structure. The research will afford an opportunity to find out how these challenges are being addressed by the Divine Word Missionaries especially going beyond diakonia to poverty eradication.

CHAPTER TWO

DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES (SVDs) IN GHANA IN RETROSPECT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the history of the SVDs in Ghana from their first appearance in 1938 until the mission was handed over officially to a Ghanaian diocesan bishop in 1971. The chapter looks at the content and focus of the SVD missionary activities, areas of success and challenges that confronted the missionaries.

2.2. Background information

2.2.1 The Portuguese era and the spread of the Catholic Faith in West Africa (1482-1642) It is generally accepted by scholars that, 20 January, 1482 was the date on which Christianity was first introduced to West Africa in modern times. J. Kofi Agbeti, affirms the fact that Don Diego d' Azambuja led an expedition of 600 men to Elmina, near Cape Coast in Ghana on this particular day.⁴⁸ After negotiation with the chief, they were given a site where they built a chapel and dedicated it to St. George. As early as 1415, the Portuguese had captured Cueta through the adventures of Prince Henry the Navigator. Earlier the Muslims had conquered Spain and Portugal in the 8th century CE. After this conquest, Spain and Portugal re-conquered the Muslims and followed them to North Africa.

Alphonse Elsbernd writes that 'the catholic faith spread in North Africa until the followers of the Prophet Mohammed invaded the whole of North Africa up to Spain

⁴⁸ J. Kofi Agbeti, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Church Foundations:1482-1919* (Leiden, Netherlands :E.J Brill, 1986), p.3.

around the 8th century CE. This made it difficult for missionaries to penetrate the south of the Sahara to the West of Africa.⁴⁹ Around the 15th century CE, with the improvement in the shipping transport system and the improvement in the technique of using the compass, new confidence was found to move across the vast oceans to West Africa. King Henry, the navigator with the support of the Pope at that time embarked upon the expansion of Portuguese power up to the Far East. This was seen as a way of extending the Christian faith and a weakening of the Saracen trade and power.

2.2.2 Work of the Chaplains

In every fort they built, the Portuguese kings who were believed to be sincere Christians made sure that they stationed a Chaplain to serve the spiritual needs of the garrison and the European merchants. Despite this primary responsibility of the Chaplains they rendered some services to some local Africans. In 1471, the first Portuguese ship stopped at Shama, in the present day Ghana. Eleven years later, the Portuguese came with a fleet of ships, and building materials to build their first castle at Elmina. On 20 January, 1482 Holy Mass was offered for the first time on the sandy beach of Elmina, prior to the beginning of the construction of the St. George castle.

The Chaplains could not make any headway in their work due to the scandalous lifestyles of the rough soldiers and greedy merchants. According to Agbeti, despite the individual and Christian group efforts, no effective permanent mission stations and churches were established during this period. Their failure to make any lasting impact on the people can be traced to the fact that the Africans trained for the purpose were not suited for evangelistic work. In addition to the above reason, the traditional African political

⁴⁹ Alphonse Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra* (Accra: Catholic Book Centre, 2000), p.1.

environment was not stable enough for the chaplains to reach out. A flourishing ATR in many of the villages, coupled with the scandalous life style of the European merchants made Christianity unattractive, a situation that was not helpful to the work of the Chaplains. There were many fatal diseases that killed many of them within a short time. As missionaries from Europe, the language barrier was a big problem.

In spite of these challenges there were a few successes. In 1503, the chief of Efutu was baptized together with thirteen hundred of his followers.⁵⁰ Since these converts were ill instructed, they soon reverted back to their traditional ways of living and worship hence not much was achieved. This brings in the issue of continuous education and instructions of converts in the Christian faith. Despite this initial failure, the King of Portugal and the Pope still gave strict orders that the Africans be taught the Christian faith by the Chaplains. The most important achievement of the Chaplains was the teaching of the few Africans like Jacobus Elisha Johannes Capitein and Christian Protten.

2.2.3 The arrival of the first Missionaries

By 1554, the king of Portugal had realised that Chaplains could not establish the Catholic Church in the Gold Coast. This was because they lived among soldiers and merchants who led lives characterised by violence and greed. This type of life style was contrary to the message the Chaplains had come to preach.⁵¹ Thus the loose lives of the soldiers and merchants in the forts hindered effective evangelization. It became evident that real missionaries were needed, men who belonged to a religious order who lived in groups.

⁵⁰ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.2.

⁵¹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.1.

In an attempt at getting religious missionaries into the Gold Coast, Propaganda Fide assigned the Gold Coast to the Society of African Mission (SMA) as their new mission territory in the later part of 1879. On 18 May 1880, two SMA missionaries, August Moreau and Eugene Murat came to Elmina. One Mr. Bonnat was at the shore to receive them and introduce them to the chiefs and prominent citizens of Elmina. The British governor came a few days later to discuss plans for establishing the new mission with the SMA missionaries. Mr. James Gorden, an ex-slave adopted by Mr. Marshall, a British Governor of the Gold Coast became converted and was the first Ghanaian to be baptised in modern times probably around 1873. He was a guide, instructor, lay catechist, as well as a teacher in their first school. Fr. Pellat, one of the successors of Fr. Moreau sent two fathers to Accra to open a new station in 1893 and that marked the beginning of the Catholic Church in Accra diocese.

Bishop (later Cardinal) Hinsley was sent from Rome to promote higher education in West Africa. In 1929 he came to Cape Coast and held meetings with the laity. Cardinal Hinsley in his report in 1929 noted that the eastern province of the Gold Coast had been neglected. There was not yet a Catholic School, not even in Accra, the capital hence he set in motion the search for a new congregation to take care of the eastern province. This search for another society led to the coming of the SVDs.

2.3 The coming of the SVDs

By 1938, an agreement had been reached between Propaganda Fide⁵² and the Divine Word Missionaries in Rome to hand over the eastern province (the Accra mission) of the

⁵² Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

country to the SVDs as their new mission territory.⁵³ In September, 1938 the missionaries set out from England on their voyage to the Gold Coast, the new mission. According to the SVD missionaries, on their arrival, Accra looked very attractive because it was the capital of the country. It was gradually growing into a very important trading centre hence many people were attracted to the town. There was the influx of strangers from inside and outside Ghana. During the earlier visit of Fr. Moreau the SMAs had a very optimistic view of establishing a church in Accra. He was warmly received by the Ga Chiefs and the Governor. 'there is record of a Mr. Miller offering to sell his house for 500 pound sterling, (about 2000 United States dollars) as well as other offers made by others but there were too few missionaries at the time to start the mission.'⁵⁴

After some initial difficulties Accra became a central station. The church started to grow due the untiring efforts of Frs. Strebler and Stauffer, SMA. During this time a large Cocoa warehouse built after the First World War, at the time of the fabulous cocoa boom was bought and remodelled into a Church. The shed became the Sacred Heart Church at Derby Avenue Accra, the Mother Church of the Catholic Diocese of Accra.

2.3.1 The Transition Period (1939-1940)

This is the period the SVDs were getting inserted into the Accra mission. When the Accra mission was assigned to the SVD, it was done with the stipulation that missionaries from English speaking nations would be sent there. It was a British colony and the international situation was becoming worse due to the world war.⁵⁵ The Superior General at that time Fr. Grendel, gave a wider interpretation to this. For him any English

⁵³ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.40.

⁵⁴ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.33.

⁵⁵ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.40.

speaking missionary sent there would satisfy the agreement. Fr. August Gehring, a former missionary to Togo and a German national was selected as the head of the mission since he could speak English. Seven young priests⁵⁶ from the continent were also sent to England to learn the English language.

Fr. Alphonse Elsbernd svd, was selected without consultation to accompany Fr. Gehring svd to the Gold Coast. Fr. Elsbernd was a philosophy teacher at Hadzor, England and later at St Augustine's seminary in Germany. The two SVD missionaries spent some days in London getting visas and also paid their respect to Cardinal Hinsley who had set the ball in motion to get them to the new mission. The journey started at Southampton. They landed at Takoradi on 13 October, 1938. Fr. Gehring was delighted to meet a taxi driver who could speak the Ewe language. He took them to the mission house in Sekondi. Fr. Rothoff, sma drove them to Cape Coast where Bishop William Porter, received them graciously. The next day they were sent to Accra and to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Derby Avenue in Accra.

According to Hans Kempen, svd⁵⁷ Fr. Gehring svd, being an experienced missionary was supposed to be the first superior of the SVD mission in Accra. Upon arrival he wanted to visit and inspect all the stations in the area entrusted to the SVDs. He was accompanied by Fr. Lemmens, sma on the trip. Due to old age he became very ill at the end of the trip. He was ordered by a doctor at Ridge Hospital Accra to go to Europe for treatment. On the 14 December, two months after his arrival he left the country and never returned. Fr.

⁵⁶ The names of the priests have not been given. From the dairy of Fr. Elsbernd, the gathering war cloud at the time made it impossible for the seven priests learning English to come to the mission. This may explain why their names are not given.

⁵⁷ Hans van Kempen, 'The Beginning of a Mission', in *Ghana SVD fifty years of service of the divine word missionaries in Ghana, 1988*. A brochure prepared for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the SVDs in Ghana.

Alphonse Elsbernd being the only SVD left in the country was put in charge of Sacred Heart Church in Accra.

At the beginning of the year 1939, Bishop Porter officially gave charge of the Sacred Heart Parish, Accra to Fr. Alphonse Elsbernd. He also handed over the financial responsibilities of the parish to Fr Elsbernd. No detailed written record of the financial situation of the parish was handed over to the SVDs since the assets of the parish were far in excess of the financial liabilities. After Fr. J van der Bronk, sma was transferred to Koforidua, Fr. Elsbernd also took up the teaching and chaplaincy work of Fr. Bronk, sma at Achimota school Accra for half a year, until Fr. Harold Rigney svd arrived in early July 1939 and took up the teaching and Chaplaincy work at Achimota School as a full time member of staff.

In May 1939 at the invitation of a former catechist of the SVDs in Lome, Fr. Elsbernd went to Agomanya on a visit. He stayed over night and the following morning the first mass was said at Agomanya (Manya Krobo), in a small palm branch hut which had been erected for that purpose. Thirty three years later the first Krobo in the person of Fr. Samuel Batsa was ordained a priest. The testimony from the archives indicates that the black missionaries never look on the black Africans as inferior, an attitude that enhanced the missionary activities of the pioneer missionaries. At this time in the history of the mission, the missionaries used catechists as interpreters since they had not yet learnt the local languages. In January 1940 Fr. Erlsbernd became the General Manager of the Catholic Schools. He was in charge of all the Catholic Schools in the mission entrusted to the SVD (the mission was made up of the present day Eastern and Greater Accra

regions). Having introduced the SVDs to the mission work, Fr. Derickx SMA, left for Cape Coast for good.

2.4 From SVD mission to Prefecture (1941-1943)

On 1 January, 1941, Bishop Porter handed over the care of the Eastern Province (present day Eastern and Greater Accra Regions) of the Cape Vicariate to the SVDs. Fr. Adolf Noser, rector of St. Mary Seminary in Techny USA who arrived in the Gold Coast in early December, 1939 was named the superior of the mission. 1 January 1941, therefore marks the beginning of an autonomous SVD missionary activity in the Gold Coast. According to Elsbernd ‘The Governor at the time was Sir Alan Burns, a staunch Catholic who never missed Sunday mass. Anytime his car arrived for Sunday mass, the Priest had to be punctual on the spot to greet him and his wife, an Anglican, sprinkle Holy Water on them and escort them to their reserved place in the church.’⁵⁸ The fathers saw his example as having a positive influence on the African community. There was one instance when Fr. George Wilson, svd started the mass before the Governor arrived. Fr. Wilson might have misread the time on his watch. The next day the Governor wrote to Fr. Noser, complaining about the incident and expressed the hope that it never occurred again. That gives an indication of the warm relationship between the SVD missionaries and the political authorities at that time. It can also be seen as a way of making sure that the missionaries remained loyal to the British government.

⁵⁸ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.54.

2.4.1 *Mass conversion at Akrofufu, Akim*⁵⁹

In this village, there was a mass conversion of a group of elderly Presbyterians to the Catholic Church due to some grievances they had against their Reverend Minister. In June 1942, a delegation came from Akrofufu in the Akim area to Fr. Elsbernd in Koforidua. They came with the request that they wanted the Catholic Church to take over a new school they were building. These were elderly Presbyterians who were dissatisfied with their church leadership. It was their claim that nothing had been done for their village over the years. They had been contributing their church dues and special collections and all the money had gone to the Rev. Minister in Kwaben also in the Akim area, but nothing had come back to improve the school. The school had remained a one-teacher school, held in the little church building.

Initially, Fr. Elsbernd refused to become part of the dispute with the Rev. Minister. Later the Odikro who was not a member of any church came to see him and explained that the school actually belonged to the village. Fr. Elsbernd agreed to take over the school. Soon the school was ready and a teacher catechist was sent there. After proper instructions, whole families of Presbyterians were received into the Catholic Church. From this time the school and the church continued to grow to the joy and delight of all the Rev. Fathers who visited the place.

2.4.2 *A British spy visits the SVD Fathers*

A British spy visited the fathers in the mission in 1943. He came parading around as a sub-deacon, wearing the habit of the Benedictine order. He claimed to be stranded due to

⁵⁹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.58.

the disruption of the shipping transport system as a result of the world war. Fr. Noser accepted him and even took him on trek on several occasions. Eventually it came out that he was a fraud. He had stayed in a monastery for only one month and was not a catholic but an Anglican. He had been sent by the British Military who did not trust the loyalty of the SVD missionaries to investigate their activities. 'Throughout the war years the non-British missionaries were suspected of being disloyal to the British. For years, all non-British missionaries had to report to the police whenever they set out on trek, giving details of when and where they would be each day. Fr. Anthony Bauer took a trip without informing the police and they took a very serious view of it.'⁶⁰ This attitude of the British military was to make sure that the activities of the missionaries did not conflict with British colonial interest.

2.5 Fr. Adolf Noser appointed Prefect Apostolic

On 19 December, 1943 the Accra mission which was handed over to the SVDs on 1 January, 1941 was raised to the status of a prefecture and Fr. Adolf Noser was appointed the first Prefect Apostolic. The decree making the mission a prefecture arrived on 11 February, 1944. This was interpreted as a splendid tribute to the work of the SVDs. At the time the SVDs started the mission they had a staff of six priests, Harold Rigney, Adolf Noser, Alphonse Elsbernd, John Daughine, Anthony Bauer and Joseph Oliver Bowers living in two resident stations (Accra and Koforidua) with only one complete grade school and not more than 1600 names in the baptismal register. It was also above all a tribute to the self-sacrificing work of Fr. Noser, whose zeal and energy was an example to all the other missionaries. Bishop William Porter, sma installed Fr. Noser as the first prefect in the Sacred Heart Church Derby Avenue, Accra. At this time in the history of

⁶⁰ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.70.

the mission, the only means of transport for the prefecture were two small cars in Accra and a motor bike at Kwahu Tafo.

2.6 The pastoral policy of Fr. Adolf Noser

It was the custom and pastoral strategy of Fr. Noser in these early years to go out on trek every three months visiting established stations and opening new ones until that particular area was organised enough to be handed over to the care of another missionary⁶¹ By 1943, the Upper Krobo area was already in the good hands of Fr. Joseph Oliver Bowers. In the same year, Fr. Noser took Fr. George Wilson on his trek through Shai, Lower Krobo and Volta, an area he intended to hand over to Fr. Wilson. At the same time Kwahu Tafo had also been given to Fr. Anthony Bauer. After this success story, the SVD mission was extended to the Afram Plains. This particular mission was quite challenging.

The Afram Plains was least developed and sparsely settled area in the North East of the prefecture. The mission to Afram Plains spearheaded by Msgr. Noser was through Kpando across the Volta to Adeemmra with the aid of Papa James, a local guide. According to Fr. Elsbernd, 'At Tease, there was not a single Catholic but the Protestants, Muslims and Traditional believers all joined in greeting them and offered them hospitality'.⁶² It is good to note that in all the places the missionaries travelled they received hospitality from Protestants, Muslims and Traditional Religious Practitioners who were already well established in these areas. From this perspective, we can say that the people belonged to one religion or the other before the SVD missionaries arrived. Despite the competition that existed among the various religious groups they received the

⁶¹ Kempen, 'The Beginning of a Mission'. (NO PAGE NUMBER)

⁶² Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.76.

SVD missionaries with warm Ghanaian hospitality. The women warmly welcomed and fed them with local Ghanaian dishes. It can be inferred that this warm reception from the local people might have encouraged Msgr. Noser and his team of missionaries to continue their missionary journey to Kwahu Tafo.

On 25, July 1944, Msgr. Noser managed to reach Kwahu Tafo through the Afram plains. Fr. Anthony Bauer was there to receive them. Due to the absence of roads in the Afram Plains at this time in the history of the SVD mission in Ghana, the missionaries were walking long hours to the mission stations. There was an outbreak of small pox at Adeemmra in the Afram Plains in 1945. The people had a traditional way of solving such problems by pacifying the spirits. It was also detected that any woman who had difficulties during labour and child birth was always accused of adultery.

The deprivation of those years caused Msgr. Noser to exert himself to the limit in the mission. He was given just about six months of life in the tropics by the medical experts in the USA when he was coming, but he did more than the other missionaries could do. Msgr. Noser always carried his type writer along when he went on trek. He typed all letters that had to be replied to. On this particular trek in 1945, to the stations along the lower Volta he typed 120 letters in answer to correspondence received from benefactors. According to Fr. Elsbernd, on the trek Msgr Noser managed to type about 120 letters in answer to letters and donations received from friends and benefactors. He did this in his spare time.⁶³

⁶³ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.82.

2.7 The coming of the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS)⁶⁴

Earlier in 1946, ten SSpS sisters came to the prefecture to begin their work in the mission. The first two sisters, Srs. Jane and Bernadette arrived on 22 February that year. In the course of the year, Srs Bertille, Rosette, Raphael, Doris, Louis, Hellen, Juanita and Virginia also arrived. The Sisters took charge of the school in Korle Gonno in Accra. This school later became St. Mary's Secondary School and was blessed in April 1946. In June the sisters moved to their convent at Korle Gonno and got involved in social work in addition to the school work. Sr. Jane, the Superior took special interest in the lepers, who were housed in miserable huts on the sea side of the Labadi road. A permanent convent was also built for the sisters in 1948 at Koforidua.

As part of their pastoral duties, the Sisters also visited the sick in the hospitals and baptised many infants in danger of death. They were very instrumental in the development of the Christian Mothers Association. They trained the mothers in the Catholic faith, care of their children and Christian living. Yearly conventions were organised for the women with retreats, religious instructions and practical demonstrations followed by festivities. The sisters normally accompanied the Fathers to the outstations and after Sunday mass gather the mothers for instructions in matters regarding healthy diet, and training in cooking and house keeping.

2.8 More SVD missionaries arrive

In mid year 1946, three SVD fathers, Frs. Van Eijindhoven, van Reil, van der Hulst came from Holland. These happened to be the first Dutch SVD priests to arrive in the prefecture. In September of the same year, Fr. Edward Datig an American also arrived.

⁶⁴ Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) is a religious congregation of Women founded by Fr. Arnlod Janssen to support and collaborate with the missionary work of the SVDs.

He eventually became the first principal of the Mount Mary Training College at Somanya which was opened in February 1947 to run a two-year training programme for teachers. Initially the school was at Agomanya but was later transferred to Somanya. By this time the missionaries had become more convinced that it was only through the schools that they could get access to the different people in the villages and new areas in the city since the other religious bodies had a greater advantage over the SVDs.

2.9 From Vicariate to Diocese (1947-1950)

In November 1946, a cablegram from the SVD headquarters in Rome came with the news that the SVD prefecture had been raised to the status of a Vicariate and Adolf Noser chosen as the first bishop. It was indeed an appreciation of the work of the SVD in the mission, coming only seven years after beginning the work in the mission. The Apostolic Delegate of English speaking East and West Africa Archbishop Mathews came to Accra in February 1947. Before he left Accra in March 1947, he recommended the building of a worthy Cathedral, as the Sacred Heart Church was not fitting enough for the Catholic Church in the mission. The other Churches had better ones. This was also in view of the raising of the prefecture to the status of a vicariate, where there will be the need for a cathedral for the Bishop.

In aid of the Cathedral, Fr. Erb obtained permission from the government to raffle a new car. Frs. Erb and Hoddap took turns to drive the car to market towns and show it to the public. The tickets were eagerly bought and the Nigerians in Ghana were very

enthusiastic about the whole project hence they really patronised this raffle. The event took place on Easter Monday in 1949.⁶⁵

2.10 Accra Diocese under Bishop Noser (1950-1953)

The SVD Vicariate was officially made a diocese on 18 April 1950. During the year Fr Charles Erb, an SVD priest started to organise a new parish at Christ the King. The Church started in June 1951. There were many Europeans and educated Ghanaian Catholics who were reluctant to join the existing parishes for Sunday masses. No reason has been given for this attitude but then it can be inferred that this was an elite group in the Ghanaian society that found it difficult to join the common people for worship. In December 2010 when Fr. Andrew Campbell brought the cured lepers to Christ the King Parish, the parishners did not take kindly to this action.

The National Eucharistic congress, the first of its kind in West Africa was held in Kumasi from 19-26 February 1951. This celebration was the brain child of Fr. Charles Erb svd, with the cooperation of the Bishops and the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) from the North. On 18 February 1953 Bishop Noser left Accra for good ending a brilliant, dedicated and fulfilled mission in the Gold Coast.

2.11 Accra Diocese under Bishop Bowers (1953-1971)

Fr. Joseph Oliver Bowers arrived on 31 January, 1939 as an SVD missionary to the Gold Coast was immediately stationed at the Sacred Heart Church in Accra. As part of his duties as a priest, he also taught catechism to the adults, visited the sick at the Korle Bu and Mental hospitals. He also visited the inmates of the James and Ussher fort prisons as

⁶⁵ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.114.

well as the leprosarium. Fr. Noser asked him to accompany him on trek to the upper Krobo area in 1941. At the beginning of 1943, he was put in charge of the Upper Krobo district as the pastor. The Shai, Dangbe, and Lower Krobo were added to his work in 1944, which he effectively managed.

In March 1950, he left for studies in Rome. He returned in 1952 with a licentiate in Canon Law. On 10 December, 1952 he was named the Catholic Bishop of Accra. He was consecrated bishop in Bay St. Louis, USA on 22 April, 1953. His vision as a bishop was to consolidate the work of Adolf Noser and make the local church viable in terms of personnel, finance and evangelization.

During his episcopate, the diocese continued to expand especially in the area of health, education, social services and general growth of the church. He established second cycle schools to train personnel for both the church and public life. 1957 was one of astonishing progress especially in new ventures in higher education and the medical field. Pope John Secondary Seminary School was established in January 1957 at Effiduase near Koforidua. In February 1957, St. Peter's Secondary School was also established at Nkwatia-Kwahu. It is to the credit of Fr. Clement Hotze, svd and the cooperation of the town people that St. Peter's made such rapid progress.

St. Paul's Technical School was opened in February 1957 at Kukurantumi under Fr. Harpel, svd with 18 students. The growth of this school was much slower but eventually it grew to the credit of Fr. Harpel. St. Martin's secondary school Adoagyri-Nsawam was established in September 1966 as the first co-educational catholic second cycle school in Ghana. Bishop Bowers also improved facilities in the existing schools like St. Mary's and

Aquinas in Accra. St. Anne's Vocational school was established in 1963 at Noaso near Agomanya to train young women to be less dependent on their husbands. As part of his policy of women empowerment, he founded a religious congregation (Handmaids of the Divine Redeemer) for women to train local sisters for the mission.

The first Dominican Sisters⁶⁶ from Speyer, Germany were invited by Bishop Bowers in 1957 to work in the Accra diocese. They were Srs. Victricia, Inclinata, Edeltrudis and Caritas. They opened a clinic in August at Battor. He also accepted to take over the local clinic at Akwatia and transformed it into a hospital. The Dominican sisters were made to run the hospital. The challenge to the sisters was that most of the people here were traditionalists who did not trust these European women. The St. John of God Brothers started a hospital in Koforidua in April 1960 with the active collaboration of Bishop Bowers. In 1962 the Holy Family Hospital at Nkawkaw was established and run by the SSsS sisters. They also established a clinic at Kwahu Tafo and Agomanya. At this time the Sisters of the Little Servants of the Sacred Heart opened a hospital and orphanage at Akim Swedru.

2.12 The National Catholic Secretariat

Fr. Francis Mertens svd, who had been Education Secretary since 1959 was asked by the bishops to organise a National Catholic Secretariat in view of the pressing problems facing the Church in various fields of activity. In June 1961, he was officially appointed head of the organization. It started with only one department, Catholic Education at that time. As at 2011 it has about thirteen departments. In 1965, the National Social Action, an effort to promote closer cooperation between the seven dioceses of Ghana as well as

⁶⁶ Dominican Sisters: it is a religious congregation of Women invited by Bishop Bowers to help in the area of Education and Health in the SVD mission territory.

the Catholic Church and the other Christian Churches was formed in the face of mounting efforts by the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) to eliminate Christian influence in the land. It was a special mission by Fr Frans Verstraelen, svd from Holland.

2.13 The growth of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)

As a way of empowering the youth to share in the SVD mission the CYO was formed in the mission. CYO is an international organization which exists in all parts of the world under different names. In Ghana the organization was founded by Bishop Adolf Noser, svd Catholic bishop of Accra and Fr. Peter Norek, svd in 1949.⁶⁷ This period in the history of the mission, saw a growing influence of communist propaganda in the country and majority of the youth were being negatively indoctrinated. In 1951, Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke, the then governor of the Gold Coast laid the corner stone for the building of the CYO national headquarters, training centre and sports stadium at Adoagyiri-Nsawam. Branches of the movement spread throughout the country independent of each other. In 1959, a national federation of all catholic youth movements in all the various dioceses was formed at the expressed wish of the catholic bishops.

The CYO is devoted to facilitating and conducting training courses in the field of youth service. It also seeks for and administers the funds for youth service. It cooperates with the church's hierarchy in the church's missionary activities especially in the area of youth ministry. It cooperates with the government and other agencies concerned with the growth and development of the youth. The CYO coordinates the activities of societies in the Catholic Church dealing with the youth.

⁶⁷ National Handbook of the Catholic Youth Organization. Imprimatur: Peter P. Dery, Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Tamale, 1993.

The organization provides young people in the parish community a Christian life that prepares them for active cooperation in building a living church and a better world. It inspires, directs and guides the natural creative qualities and desires of young people by promoting recreational, educational, cultural and religious programmes that will adequately meet their physical and mental and spiritual needs. Membership cuts across all social classes and professions. 1964 was seen as a year of spiritual growth in terms of number of membership of the CYO.

In 1947 Bishop Noser appointed Fr. Norek to do youth work. He became the CYO organizer at Adoagyiri. He formed a football team out of the CYO which was among the best in the country for many years. A first-class youth centre and a stadium was built at Adoagyiri for CYO work. Branches were formed in all the larger stations, like Nkawkaw and Akim Swedru. The CYO remained loyal to the church during all the years of CPP pioneer movement. They celebrated the silver jubilee of Bishop Noser's priesthood with a grand rally at Adoagyiri park with games, marches, drills and singing competition. All the bishops were keenly interested in the catholic youth movements as a means of saving the youth from the anti-Christian atheistic socialism broadcast by the ruling CPP party.

To counter the anti-Christian atheistic socialism that was growing in the Universities at that time, the Catholic bishops proposed the formation of Pax Romana in the universities. The first seminar of Pax Romana was organised by Fr. John Koster in 1957 at University of Ghana, Legon. It was attended by about 100 students from various universities who took part in the seminar. Fr. John Koster also formed the Ghana branch of the world-wide Pax Romana at Legon in December, 1959. Its meetings were well attended and

became an annual affair. This was to mobilise the university students to resist the anti-Christian stance of the CPP government.

Other lay societies like the Legion of Mary and Christian Mothers' Association also saw increase in membership. Church attendance was on the increase despite the godless propaganda and repression by the CPP government. This observation by the pioneer SVD missionaries seems to affirm the fact that any time the Church is persecuted, the Laity stand firm to defend her course.

As part of the spiritual growth in the mission a catechetical school newly constructed at Asamankese in 1965 received its first class of men. They were of various ages and about thirty in number. They started a two year course under Fr Dominic Andoh. The contents of the course included catechetics, liturgy and biblical studies. Despite this positive growth in spirituality the situation in the elementary schools was quite different. The teaching of Christian doctrine had come to its lowest ebb. The sponsored pioneer movement aimed at getting children out of the church on Sundays, scheduled rallies on Sundays, thus gathering the children from village schools to their rallies and preventing them from going to church.

The new government that came after the overthrow of Nkrumah was favourably disposed to the Church. They allowed religious programmes to be broadcast live on the newly introduced television. Fr Albert Kretschmer had the distinction of being the first catholic priest to give a week-long prayer service, a ten minute programme on Ghana Television. He insisted on appearing in full clerical garb. In all these it can be affirmed that the laity played a very significant role in the process of evangelization in the early days of the

mission. Fr Frans Larkin of USA and Albert Kretschmer were very instrumental in the enthronement of the sacred heart in the homes of the laity to serve as devotional practice and adoration. All these were positive signs of spiritual growth of the mission.

2.14 Missionary institute at Adoagyiri-Nsawam

The year 1966 also saw the formation of a missionary training institute at Adoagyiri-Nsawam. It was a project undertaken in collaboration with religious superiors of the other dioceses. It was to introduce newly arrived missionaries into the culture, teach them the fundamentals of traditions, customs, ancient religions and language of the people among whom they were to work. This was to help the new missionaries to get properly inserted into the Ghanaian traditions, customs and culture for effective mission. This institute formed the beginning of the programmes at Tamale Institute of Cross Cultural Studies (TICCS) in Tamale.

2.15 Social Services

In the course to the year 1967, Fr Rudolf Krajcik svd and the Catholic Church received praise in an Accra daily for the good work being done in the Afram plains. Afram Plains was semi-arid grassland in the northern-eastern part of the diocese. Fr. Krajcik had been organising the village people in self-help projects to improve upon their living conditions. With aid of volunteers from Canada and financial aid from Germany, he was digging wells to provide good drinking water, and thus eliminate water borne diseases which had become a major health and developmental issue. This also shows the keen interest the SVD missionaries had for the infrastructural and social development of the country. The Fr. Krajcik also built tanks to harvest rain water.

2.16 Christ in Ghana Showcase

Fr Charles Erb svd, head of the Department of Social Communication organised ‘a Christ in Ghana’ display stand during the second international trade fair held at Accra during the first two weeks of February 1971. This was to project and showcase the work of the Christian Churches in Ghana. Though he did not get the support of all the other churches, he used the two week-long activities to showcase the work of the SVD in Accra diocese. Hundreds of visitors including top officials of the government commented favourably on the display and its ecumenical aspect.

Bishop Bowers left Accra in the course of the year 1966, to attend the Second Vatican Council as a representative of the seven Bishops of Ghana. On 6 February 1971, official news reached Accra that Bishop Joseph Oliver Bowers had been transferred to the newly created diocese in the West Indies (Leeward Islands Diocese). The main reason for the transfer was to make way for the appointment of a native Ghanaian bishop of Accra Catholic Diocese. After working for thirteen years as a pioneer missionary and for eighteen years as a bishop, he left Ghana for the West Indies on 4 June, 1971.

2.17 Challenges to the SVD Mission in Ghana

2.17.1 Prejudice against the mission

In the year 1949, there arose a strong prejudice against the mission from the Jehovah Witnesses and from the political class. The reason for this prejudice is not clearly stated but it might have been the result of an unhealthy religious rivalry and the political turmoil that was gripping the country. In the course of the year 1948, there was political turmoil under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. A riot broke out in Accra in February due to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s agitation for self-government now. Stores were broken into and

looted. From Accra the agitation spread to other towns. The colonial government had to bring in troops from Nigeria to bring sanity and peace into the country. Neither Church nor mission suffered and the credit goes to the Africans. They had greater respect for what is holy and persons consecrated to God.

The looting was part of the political agitation. ‘The Whites and Europeans were branded as colonialists and imperialists who were here to enrich themselves.’⁶⁸ One Mr. DesBordes who had been trained by the SVD missionaries in the United States in catholic action and CYO work fearlessly defended the missionaries. There was animosity from the Jehovah Witnesses. They were aggressive, going out into the towns and villages upsetting the minds of all Christians as yet ill-informed for the tenets of the Christian religion, by the facile scripture quotations so often out of context. They normally left the villages with the minds of the Christians set in confusion.

There was also the intellectual bias against the Catholic Church in particular. The daily papers were at the forefront. The CPP communist-inspired socialism revived the antagonism. The propaganda centred more on the youth. The Young Pioneer Movement was launched in June 1960 by Nkrumah. In 1961, the ideological struggle for the youth intensified between the CPP now in power and the Catholic Church. This was manifested in the appointment of teachers to the church schools and admission of candidates into teacher training colleges. These were controlled by GES officials with utter disregard for religious affiliation. There was a conscious effort at indoctrination of students in secondary schools through the introduction of text books extolling the virtues of atheistic socialism. According to Elsbernd, ‘Teams of lecturers were sent round into the schools to

⁶⁸ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.113.

rally students to their cause. Most of these lecturers were of limited education.⁶⁹ The popularity of Nkrumah was reaching new heights. He was gradually being extolled as the saviour of Africa who could do no wrong. A specialised training college for teachers at Winneba was taken over by the party. This institution was transformed into the Ideological Institute, which was also referred to as a university. The Ideological Institute was training top-level leaders with Atheistic and Socialistic ideals. The CPP government became hostile to the church in general and the Catholic Church in particular. In most cases the target of attack was the Catholic Church.

The Young Pioneer Movement was financed from government sources so that it could spread quickly over the country. By the end of 1961 the movement could boast of a membership of 60000. The relationship between the CPP and the Catholic Church was strained almost to the breaking point by 1963. Fr Francis Damoah of Cape Coast Archdiocese, an outspoken opponent of the pioneer youth movement was arrested. Archbishop Amissah mobilised the faithful in a round the clock sit down protest in front of the jail day and night. This strong show of solidarity forced the police to release Fr. Damoah after five days of incarceration.

According to Elsbernd, 'All over the country, schools were ordered to establish the pioneer movement. The movement meddled in school and church activities. Teachers loyal to the CPP party became untouchable and irremovable. Zealous pupils and students were rewarded with unmerited scholarships. If any loyal pioneer youth failed at the end of the year, it must be the fault of the teacher.'⁷⁰ On 24 February, 1966 Nkrumah was overthrown and that ended the pioneer movement. This however did not end the struggle

⁶⁹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.207.

⁷⁰ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.220.

between the church and state especially in the area of education since all the officials at the ministries were bent on taking over the church schools.

The civil service personnel remained practically unchanged and that included the top officials of the education ministry. In 1968, based on the Mills-Odoi commission report, a white paper was issued to the effect that the government was going to take over all schools. This was to include all church owned property like land, buildings and all church property. The main argument here was that the lands were given for building schools and the monies were collected from the contributions of the local people. The buildings were also constructed through communal labour.

Three Catholic Bishops Amissah, Bowers and Essuah presented a memorandum to General Ankrah, the then head of State. General Ankrah was sympathetic to the cause of the bishops but as usual the opposition came from the ministry hence no definite decision was taken on the matter. In 1969, there was another attempt at taking over the church schools. Archbishop Amissah intervened. He was blunt with the ministry. 'You can take the pupils but the classrooms built with church funds are ours'.⁷¹ The government did not have the funds to build new classrooms hence the government had to back down.

2.17.2 The floods of 1963

In 1963, the Volta was in floods and that destroyed almost everything in Battor district of the mission. The district suffered a calamity. Practically all the schools and chapels built by Fr Noser, Fr. Krajcik and Fr. Seiler disappeared. It was only in Battor where schools and chapels built with cement blocks and concrete foundations survived. This also shows

⁷¹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p. 273.

that at the initial stages most of the structures were built with mud and local materials hence their inability to withstand the floods. With the construction of the Akosombo dam, a large lake was formed upstream. Many stations were lost. The Adeemmra district for instance lost eleven outstations to the Volta Lake.

2.18 Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to establish the historical foundation of SVD mission in Ghana. From the records available in the SVD province archives, it comes out clearly that by the early 1970s the basic foundations for the mission was firmly established in Ghana. All the major stations had resident priests. Schools, churches, clinics and hospitals were firmly established. The lay societies had also taken shape and were supporting the missionary efforts of the priests. From this time onward, the focus of the mission will be on leaving the well-established churches to the newly created dioceses in order to establish new ones and also deepen the mission in some specialised areas like education, social development, inculturation, human solidarity, justice and peace as the situations dictated. The next chapter will highlight some of these specialised ministries that the SVDs have been involved in in Ghana at the initial foundation of the mission.

CHAPTER THREE

SVDs CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SOLIDARITY IN GHANA

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on the contribution of the SVDs to human development and human solidarity which has been a permanent feature of the SVD mission in Ghana. It has two main sections. The first part examines issues that directly lead to human development where people are equipped with skills to develop their talents for life. Issues on education and inculturation are discussed. The second part examines human solidarity. This section deals with the support for the disadvantaged in society. Issues concerning the care of people whom society will normally ignore (care for the physically challenged and the cured lepers) are discussed. These two sections together ensure the integral development of people in the SVD mission territory.

3.2 The SVDs and education in Ghana

According to Anthonio M. Pernia, the founder of the society, Fr. Arnold Janssen, made sure that equal weight was given to ordinary parish work and formal education. Along with parish work, he always encouraged the establishment of schools, publication ministry and Catholic Lay Associations in order to win political and social influence. It was the view of the founder of the society that as missionaries they could no longer save the world with sermons and liturgy alone. Perhaps they cannot avoid becoming politically involved because the struggle between faith and atheism was being fought in the public arena⁷². The importance of human development is also affirmed by Joy Phumaphi and

⁷² Foreword to 'SVD Education Ministry as Mission of Dialogue: Our Educators' Perspective', in *In Dialogue with the Word*, 10 (2010), P.7.

Lord Carey Clifton in a foreword to a book by Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds) *Development and Faith*⁷³ as they assert that the lost opportunities in human development, represented by children underserved and under-schooled has led men, women, and children to suffer from diseases that are easily prevented. Jobless and underemployed individuals around the globe, poverty and inequity are matters of conscience that needs urgent attention. This can best be done if people are given holistic education.

According to Fritz Bornemann, the pioneer SVD missionaries to Ghana observed that most of the Ghanaians, especially the upper class, were brought up in government schools in which no religion was taught. English was the language most used in education and most of the daily papers appeared in English. Thus the local languages, and with them the old cultures and religions, were being pushed into the background and seem likely to fade away within a few generations. Their likely successor was atheistic materialism, unless the Church succeeds in building Christian elite.⁷⁴ This observation by the pioneer missionaries to the Ghana mission might have inspired them to take issues of education in the Ghana mission seriously. The links between religion and teaching, educational quality and values, and efforts to build peaceful, equitable societies has been the focus of Jesuit-run school system that now operates in 17 Latin American countries. These schools stress the critical importance of education, in overcoming social conflict and building social cohesion.⁷⁵

⁷³ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds), *Development and Faith :Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together* (Washington, D.C, 2007), p. XI.

⁷⁴ Fritz Bornemann, *A History of our Society* (Romae: Apud Collegium Verbi Divini, 1981), p. 402.

⁷⁵ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds), *Development and Faith*, P.77.

The SVD missionaries also observed that education was the only means of having a useful dialogue with all the other ethnic groups, and also access to the villages and other parts of the city. This might have accounted for the fact that in all the stations, the missionaries started with schools and churches. According to the SVD missionaries the success of their work in Ghana was largely due to the Catholic schools.

3.3 SVD Understanding of Education

SVD education ministry can be seen in the wider context of evangelization of cultures. It is an important means to bridge the widening gap between gospel and culture. Catholic schools are instruments for the evangelization of cultures as well as a means for the cultivation of partnership and collaboration with the laity who find themselves in all spheres of public life. Education has the task of enkindling love and humanity in young hearts. Education is therefore seen in terms of transforming young people into persons who have more love, more humanity and above all more God in them. Education must enable people not only to get jobs and earn money but also to open their minds to understand the world. In this context human development must promote positive change while opposing obstacles to it, such as corruption and exploitation. Material development is seen as an essential counterpart to spiritual development because, as the Buddha is believed to have said if stomachs are empty, there is no ear for preaching.⁷⁶

From this perspective, it can be said that education is any action or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical capabilities of an individual. It can also be understood as an attempt to sharpen one's instincts on three levels, past, present and future. Through education, the society promotes the development of people who are

⁷⁶ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds), *Development and Faith*, P.255.

striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance. It also prepares those looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement in their human qualities. Education in this sense is considered a decisive mission method and one of the most important activities in the SVD missions. It is the view of the SVD that, those who receive a higher education can exercise a good influence on their contemporaries.

Mission through education can also be referred to as a prophetic dialogue. It leads to a positive evaluation of other people's religion and culture. There is the emphasis on the dignity of the human person, the promotion of human rights and respectful interaction with the followers of other religions in the process of education. It helps to express an attitude of solidarity, respect and love. This is in the form of the three-fold prophetic dialogue: dialogue with the poor, dialogue with cultures and dialogue with other religions.

3.4 Developments in the Education Field in Ghana

According to Fritz Bornemann 'In the Ghana mission, the SVD missionaries began with schools for children of six to eight year-olds. This was followed by other schools for eight to eleven year-old children. Between 1940 and 1945, the number of schools and teachers increased fivefold and that of the pupils fourfold.'⁷⁷ There was however a big problem of how to get trained teachers for the Catholic Schools. The Catholics were running two teacher training colleges and all were in Cape Coast; this was in 1942. One was for the boys at Amissano which later became the minor seminary and the other for the girls, that is Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) Training College.

⁷⁷ Bornemann, *A History of our Society*, P.403.

The pioneer SVD missionaries saw the important link between the schools and the mission. It was through the schools that SVD missionaries could have a mixture of different ethnic groups coming together. They established separate schools for both boys and girls in most of the stations. The basic question is why the missionaries were interested in one sex school and not mixed ones. No specific reasons have been given for this policy on education but then it can be inferred that their background as celibates who were used to single sex schools might have influenced this policy.

The year 1943 saw a big boost for girls' education in the Ghana mission. Based on an interview with Miss Appleyard, then in charge of women's education, Frs. Adolf Noser and Alphonse Elsbernd were encouraged to draw up a plan which included five girls' senior schools (middle schools) with the promise to assist them from the very beginning and with financial help to build the schools. The five schools were planned for Accra, Koforidua, Adoagyiri, Nkawkaw and Agomanya in that order. These schools formed the basis of girls' education in the SVD mission in Ghana.

With the establishment of these girls' schools came the felt need for religious women to help train these girls. Ten Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) arrived in 1946 to participate in the education ministry and also help run these schools. The first sisters arrived on 22 February that year and went into school work right away. They opened the first Catholic High School for girls five years later. The major problem the Sisters faced was how to get trained teachers for the schools. It was also around this time that a fully qualified priest Fr. Edward Datig, svd arrived to start a teacher training college.

With the arrival in September 1946 of Fr. Edward Datig svd, a fresh attempt was made at opening a teacher training college after some initial difficulty of getting approval from the education ministry. He became the first principal of Mount Mary Teacher Training College at Somanya. Mount Mary College which officially was opened in February, 1947 started running a two-year teacher training programme. Around the same time a site was also acquired for the construction of a girl's school and a convent for the sisters at Korle Gonno.

The school in Korle Gonno which later became St. Mary's Secondary School was blessed in April 1946. In June 1946, the sisters moved into their convent and got involved in social work (hospital and prison visitation, visits to the Weija Leprosarium) in addition to the school ministry. Adoagyiri was the third girl's school built by the sisters during the year 1947. The school began in January with 15 girls. According to Alphonse Elsbernd 'by the end of 1947, the number of basic schools in the SVD mission had increased from 16 in 1940 to 105. The number of pupils had also increased from 1095 to 5,233.'⁷⁸ During the year, 1957 an effort was made by the Catholic Education Unit and the Christian Council of Ghana to prepare an agreed religious education syllabus for elementary schools. It was also a dominant view to make the subject examinable at the final examination. There was disagreement on the question of doctrine hence nothing came out of it.

3.5 Progress in the Area of Second Cycle Education

During this period between 1947 and 1950 there were plans to open a secondary school in the Akim area but that failed due to the rivalry between Swedru and Oda, among the

⁷⁸ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church*, P.96.

chiefs and the Catholic community. Swedru people wanted the school in their town because the church came there first. Oda however was the seat of the paramount chief. This rivalry prevented the SVD missionaries from opening the school. In October 1951 a private secondary school was opened at Osu in Accra. The school opened officially in February, 1952 for academic work. It came to be known as St. Aquinas School. 1951 also marked the end of the era of purely Catholic Schools. From this time onwards all schools were going to be Local Authority (L A) schools. This meant that the local political authorities were going to run all the schools in the country.

1957 saw a lot of progress in the areas of second cycle education. A diocesan seminary was established at Effiduase near Koforidua. The construction work was done by Fr. Josef Jud and Bro. Baldericus Tenscher who were SVD missionaries. In February 1957, St. Peter's Secondary School was established at Nkwatia Kwahu. The initiative came from the Nkwatiahene and his people who approached Bishop Bowers to start a secondary school in their town. The bishop together with Fr. Cletus Hoddap and Fr. Alphonse Elsbernd travelled to Nkwatia to meet the chief, his elders and representative businessmen from Accra, Kumasi and other cities. The bishop was shown a large track of land with a spring that never dried up at the outskirts of the town. The Chief and his people promised to help finance the new buildings required and also help with communal labour in the actual construction work.

Being so faithful to his promise, the Nkwatia Chief made sure that once a week, all the citizens were summoned to work at the construction site. They even offered one of the largest buildings in the town free of rent for use and also free lodging for boarders in another house. It is important to note the active support of the local people in establishing

this school. The sharp rise to prominence of this school shows the importance of the involvement of the local people in the mission. When the local people are involved, they tend to own the project and actively support it.

In February, 1957 St. Paul's Technical School was opened at Kukurantumi. This was followed by the establishment of St Martin's Secondary School, Adoagyiri in 1965. St Martin's Secondary School was made an assisted school 1966 but only day students were admitted into the school. It had remained private since 1965. It was however decided by the government that only the form one class was to be assisted. In 1965, St Rose's Secondary School started as a teacher training college at Akwatia. By the time Accra Diocese was handed over in 1971 to a diocesan bishop, the SVD missionaries had established 324 elementary schools with an enrolment figure of 55,230. The number of second cycle schools in the diocese was six, with a total population of about 2610. There was one teacher training college with a population of about 240. The diocese also had 55 minor seminarians and 13 major seminarians⁷⁹

3.6 SVDs and Tertiary Education in Ghana

Fr. John Koster, svd arrived in September 1950 with a master's degree in Physics. According to Alphonse Elsbernd, the government at that time did not consider him suitable enough to teach at Mount Mary College because the emphasis in the training colleges at that time was not on science education hence he joined the staff of the newly opened University College of Ghana Legon. With further studies he obtained a doctorate degree in Physics and remained at the Physics Department at Legon. By 1958, Fr. John Koster was already well known at the University of Ghana, Legon for his experiments on

⁷⁹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church*, P.297.

radio activities of the stars. He conducted some experiments in cooperation with the University of Manchester, England. After the end of the Second World War, he was able to track the Russian sputnik, predict its course and appearance in the sky where people were able to see it. For days he was given wide publicity in the Ghanaian dailies. He was the only one in West Africa to have achieved this feat at that time.

Fr Koster was the guiding spirit behind the International Movement of Catholic Students (Pax Romana) at Legon right from the beginning. Due to the ideological struggle based on the Socialist and Communist doctrine that characterised politics in the country at this time, the Catholic bishops saw the need to have a youth movement in the universities that will form the students in Catholic doctrine. Fr. Koster was the only SVD priest on the university staff at that time hence he was given the additional task of forming and animating the movement at Legon. In December 1954 he organised the first meeting of the Pax Romana seminar which was attended by 100 students from various universities. His role in the spiritual formation of the students at Legon proves that his strong science background was still very compatible with his vocation as a Catholic priest.

In April 1964, the government of Ghana established the Ghana Academy of Science. Fr. Koster became one of its members, an honour to him personally as well as the SVD and the Church in Ghana. In 1970 Fr. Koster was given a sabbatical year by the University of Ghana. He travelled extensively and gave courses in Taiwan University, Formosa. His life and work has been of immense credit to the Church and a living proof that science and full Catholic belief can go hand in hand.

3.7 School problem

The school problem has always been the main topic for discussion in all the Bishops Conferences. These problems include the many towns with sizable catholic population without catholic schools. Catholic children were in non-catholic schools where the quality of teaching and learning was very low. The quality of teaching staff in most of the schools was far below expectation. More teacher training colleges were needed but there was the lack of qualified staff, funds and the government approval. The bishops wanted a free hand to open and conduct private schools, since they were concerned with the transmission of the purity of doctrine to the children of catholic parents. It was also becoming difficult to cope with the denominational rivalry as well as the standard fees to be paid. Pupils were forced to attend the school's denomination Sunday service, failure of which attracted flogging or similar punishment.

Ever since the CPP gained control of the reign of the nation, several attempts were made to take over all church-founded schools. 'The first demand by the CPP government was a call on all churches to unite small, redundant schools in villages and towns to form larger, more efficient ones to eliminate wasteful competition. The policy to unite smaller schools died in 1949 due to doctrinal differences among the religious denominations.'⁸⁰ The Catholic laity and their bishops played a decisive role in the fight against the take over of schools belonging to the church.

The policy of Local Authority (LA) schools was introduced in 1951. The Government of the day decreed that all the schools opened after 1951 should belong to the local authorities in order to qualify for grants. Private schools were not forbidden but it was

⁸⁰ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.122.

really difficult to get funds to support them since payment of school fees was banned in primary schools. The local councils were made responsible for equipment, furniture and repair of all schools as well as buildings additional classrooms. This policy failed miserably because the local authorities did not have the required logistics to carry out the programme. The local authorities were intent on building their own schools to rival the church ones.

Next, education officers started dealing directly with head teachers. This further diminished the authority of the local managers. They began to appoint untrained teachers to the catholic schools. Another means was to control the intake into the training colleges. In 1952, the government reserved 25% of vacancies in admission to training colleges to ensure getting teachers for the L/A schools. By 1958, the heads of training colleges had lost all authority and control over the intake of students. They were made to admit candidates based on the order of merit as presented by the examination council irrespective of religious affiliation. The posting of teachers was controlled by the government hence even Muslims could be posted to catholic schools to the displeasure of the Catholic Bishops. The authorities supported the teachers against the church in matters of discipline. In the same way the teaching of religious doctrine suffered. There was the deliberate policy to restrict religion to the inside of church walls.

Alphonse Elsbernd recounts one instance where ‘the church-managed schools teachers in Southern Volta (Trans-Volta) were accused of being behind the opposition of that part of the country to join independent Ghana. The government subsequently took control of all the church schools in that area.’⁸¹ Archbishop Porter and bishop Bowers called on the

⁸¹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.184.

Prime Minister Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to complain. He assured them that the take-over was temporary emergency measure due to political necessity. A circular from the ministry of education a few days later however indicated that the take over was permanent hence the bishops made personal contact to influence the officials concerned. This did not work and the bishops continued their protest about the illegality of the government's action on the matter concerning schools in Trans-Volta.

In July 1958, Bishop Amissah, the only Ghanaian among the bishops and the Christian council presented a memorandum to the government. All the church committees of all the parishes in the diocese of Trans-Volta composed and signed a letter of protest that bore more than 600 signatures. The government bowed to pressure and in September 1958, the schools were handed over to the church. 'This crisis of the government forcefully taking over all church schools was averted by grassroots opposition of brave men and women daring to defy the CPP government. It took a lot of courage to do this.'⁸² In 1959 there was an attempt to introduce a text book called the ABC of socialism into all institutions of higher learning. This was a cause for concern for the Catholic bishops. It was to indoctrinate their minds with Nkrumah's special brand of materialistic socialism. The catholic bishops strongly resisted this move. It can be affirmed that the attempt by government to interfere and meddle with the affairs of church schools has had a long history, and it is still far from over.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the SVDs were very influential in establishing schools in the mission area entrusted to them. Despite the remarkable success in the

⁸² Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.185.

education field, the challenges they faced at that time, like the question of ownership, admission policies, the recruitment and posting of teachers, the place of religion in education still persist until this day. It can be inferred that the SVDs in the schools see education as a mission in which educators mould young minds and hearts. Apart from providing quality education and formation for the youth, education becomes a form of evangelization. In this form of evangelization, the missionary helps to shape the young hearts and minds of the youth which is a very noble pursuit. This falls within the SVD specific vision on education. This vision is centred on the fact that the schools offer the opportunity for a witness that is inclusive of God's love and its openness to diversity. The missionaries in formal education and schools form young people into fitting building blocks of God's kingdom. Since school ministry has evangelization through formal education as the major thrust, the Lay Organizations were founded to focus more on non-formal education in the wider society. These Lay Organizations will be discussed in the next section.

3.8 Lay Organizations in the Mission

The founder of the SVD formed Catholic Lay Organizations in order to win social and political influence in society. This idea can also be seen in the Latin America's poorest communities where there is a partnership between *AVINA Foundation*, Society of Jesus⁸³ (Jesuit) educational programmes, international business groups and a grassroots Catholic-inspired federation of non-governmental organizations for integral popular education and social promotion. Basing their lessons on the realities of surrounding communities,

⁸³ The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is a religious society within the Catholic Church that specializes in education at all levels.

highlight the need for mechanisms to bridge the cultural divide between institutions operating in very different worlds.⁸⁴

Based on this vision, many Catholic Lay Organizations were formed in the mission by the pioneer missionaries. The Legion of Mary was introduced by Bishop Noser in 1941. It became a very rich source of spiritual blessing for the members and the Catholic Church as a whole. The Christian Mothers Association which was formed along side the Legion of Mary also made remarkable progress just as the Legion of Mary in the training of women to be good Christian mothers. The Knights of St. John, a Catholic fraternity organization modelled on the Knights of St. Peter Claver in USA was inaugurated in Accra. This was on Pentecost day in 1944. The Knights of Marshall was also formed to animate the lay people. These later groups operated more as charitable organizations and also defended the interests of the Catholic Church in civil matters.

The Knights of Marshall and St, John were formed to prevent Catholics from joining the lodges such as the Free Masons introduced into the country by the British. These Lay Catholic societies played very significant roles in negotiating for property. Bishop Noser, however refused the Knights of Marshall permission to organise a branch in Accra for many years. The following were his reasons: ‘they violated their own rule, and they admitted and even elected members to higher offices who were non-communicants. Some were living in common law marriage or keeping a second wife. They were also using highly questionable books to instruct new members.’⁸⁵ Despite this misgiving about some of these lay societies, they have remained very important partners and collaborators

⁸⁴ Katherine Marshall and Richard Marsh (eds), *Millennium Challenges for Development and Faith Institutions* (Washington, D.C., 2003), p.76.

⁸⁵ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church*, p.101.

in the SVD mission in Ghana. The societies that were formed on spiritual lines have positively influenced the lives of many Catholics and Ghanaians in the wider society. Those formed on fraternal lines have made generous contributions towards the welfare of the marginalised in the Church and Ghanaian society. These charitable works are normally in the form of human solidarity as will be discussed in the next section of the paper.

3.9 Human Solidarity

In almost all human societies, we come across the rich, powerful and influential as well as the poor, weak and marginalised. The latter group of people need the support of others to live decent lives in society. The mechanisms put in place to take care of the weaker members of society gives an indication of the level of development in that society. This forms the basis of human solidarity. ‘Solidarity is an evangelical witness. It is an important and essential gesture which shows the missionary’s attitude to dialogue.’⁸⁶ Christian solidarity springs from the preferential love of God who listens to the cry of the poor and oppressed, (Ps. 12:5) hence Jesus came to show solidarity with humanity. Solidarity helps to overcome boundaries which separate and divide human beings. Solidarity helps to bring people closer, and allow independence of ideological, religious, economic, cultural and political differences. Solidarity lies in the sharing in the lives of others especially the poor and marginalised. In solidarity, the missionary struggles together with the poor and oppressed to improve their living conditions.

The key to solidarity is participation. This is different from simple humanitarian help that comes from outside. Solidarity treats of a humble and loving participation in the lives of

⁸⁶ ‘Prophetic Dialogue’, in *In Dialogue with the Word*, 2 (2001) , p.48.

others, sharing one's own lives with them. In solidarity, the missionary shares his very life which includes his possessions with other people. Through solidarity, the missionary works with the poor for the common good of both. Solidarity becomes dialogue when the missionary helps the poor and they in turn help him. Through solidarity the missionary enables the poor to control their own destiny. They begin to discover new ways of and sources of creativity. Solidarity in the end becomes liberating and it is seen as the most authentic form of living dialogue.

Examples of solidarity in the Ghana mission include helping the cured lepers, the physically challenged, and living in solidarity with street children. Elsewhere we find the Response of Faith-based Organizations to Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and communities in Africa.⁸⁷ By solidarity, the missionary tries to restore dignity to the human person. In this way the poor and marginalised are made to know that they are taken into account and that they form part of a greater whole. It comes out that in the plan of God's kingdom, no one is excluded, no place or person is insignificant.

Early in their ministry in the Ghana mission, the pioneer SVD missionaries saw the need to attend to the health and other social needs of the people especially the poor and the marginalised hence the close collaboration with the Religious Sisters in establishing hospitals, clinics, and other health institutions in the mission. This was a way of showing solidarity with the sick, the poor, the physically challenged and the needy. Out of this initiative came the mission to the cured lepers at the Weija Leprosarium near Accra. The Orthopaedic Training Centre (OTC) at Adoagyiri was also established to take care of the

⁸⁷ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds), *Development and Faith* pp.177-179.

physically challenged in the Ghanaian society. The missionaries played leading roles in providing medical care for the people in all the stations especially the deprived areas of the mission.

The missionaries sometimes faced a number of challenges in providing health care to the local people due to the traditional belief systems and their traditional world view. For instance, when there was an outbreak of small pox at Adeemmra in 1945, the people had a traditional way of solving such problems by pacifying the spirits with sacrifices and a ban on noise-making at night. The epidemic claimed a number of victims since the traditional solution proved ineffective. It was also detected that any woman who had difficulties during pregnancy and labour was always accused of adultery. There was a clash between the traditional world view and modern medicine which was a challenge to the missionaries in many villages.

At this time, infant mortality and maternal death was on the increase. There was still a very strong belief in traditional explanation to sickness. Such issues were very frequent in the hospitals and clinics established by the missionaries, most of which were located in the remote areas of the country. It can therefore be affirmed that the missionaries had a very close dialogue relationship with the local people hence they could easily detect some of these epidemics and find remedies to them before they got out of hand.

3.9.1 *Orthopaedic Training Centre (OTC)*

In a good-will message to the staff of OTC⁸⁸ on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the centre in May 2011, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana indicated that healthcare delivery is one important area that the Catholic Church is always ready to be associated with. He identified the mission of the OTC as special since it had a concern for the care children and women. A similar initiative can be found in Senegal. In an attempt to take children out of the streets in cities in Senegal, the Street Children's Campaign Partnership was launched in late 2006. This initiative has won active support from the Senegalese government, UNICEF, the African Development Bank, the French Cooperation, the International Labour Organization, national and international celebrities, religious leaders and other members of civil society, NGOs, the media, and the private sector.⁸⁹ This is an example of a show of solidarity for children who society will normally ignore, something that has been a core value at OTC where the workers take care of all people without discrimination.

The area of orthopaedics is rare but crucial. Brother Tarcisius de Ruyter, svd who runs the centre arrived in Ghana from Holland on 14 May 1961, as a qualified orthopaedic shoemaker to work as a shoemaker and to train candidates for the Brotherhood in the Society of the Divine Word. He was also mandated by the SVD to make shoes and orthopaedic appliances for the physically challenged. That actually marked the beginning of the work at OTC⁹⁰.

⁸⁸ Source: Brochure prepared for the Golden Jubilee celebration of OTC at Adoagyiri-Nsawam on 14 May 2011

⁸⁹ Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen (eds), *Development and Faith*, p.258.

⁹⁰ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church*, p.202.

Within six years of his arrival in Ghana, Bro. Tarcisius had been recognised as a leading authority in Ghana on orthopaedic technique hence he was invited to Holland to participate in a TV programme in aid of handicapped children who were mostly victims of polio. Brother Tarcisius has attended many courses, seminars, conferences and congresses on orthopaedic technology in Europe and North America, organised by UNESCO and other international organizations all in recognition of his personal contribution to the growth of the centre and the improvement in the quality of service offered at the centre.

By the year 1971, the centre had developed into a rehabilitation centre for children who were mostly victims of polio and the training of Ghanaians in the work of offering life, hope and future for the physically challenged. Under the expert supervision of Brother Tarcisius, its founder and the SVD, the centre was growing very fast. The work here was in three main sections. The first was a hostel for the handicapped children. In this section there was treatment of inmates, fixing of artificial limbs, exercise and surgery by which the patients were helped to gain the use of their limbs and begin a more normal life. This was a way of empowering them to be on their own when they leave the centre. The second aspect involved the training of Ghanaian technicians. This involved a five year course in which recruits were made to learn the making of special shoes, braces etc for the children. The third part of the work at the centre involved service to physically challenged patients in hospitals in the other parts of the country. Brother Tarcisius and his team visited the hospitals in Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi and other parts of the country on a regular schedule to supervise and offer help in the rehabilitation of the physically challenged.

At the initial stages of the institution, the hostel at Adoagyiri could admit an average of 30 children. The children lived under supervision as a family, helping each other, doing the household chores, each according to their ability. It was the only such home in Ghana at the time. With time the activities of the centre were expanded to include the training of all kinds of amputees so that they can regain the use of their limbs. The training of the amputees to regain the use of their limbs was also to discourage them from sitting by the way side to beg for alms as was common among the physically challenged at the time. The centre also has a basic school for children of school-going age. On 6 March, 1999, Brother Tarcisius was honoured for his contribution towards the physically challenged in Ghana when President Jerry John Rawlings presented him with the Head of State award for service to Ghana and humanity. He was also given the title Knight of Orange by the Dutch government for his meritorious service at OTC.

Throughout the years, the centre has brought smiles onto the faces of many who otherwise would have been wallowing with physical challenges. For a long time, the OTC was practically the only authority in orthopaedic technique in Ghana. The training and standard set by the OTC serves as a yard stick by which others have been measured and judged. The OTC staff constantly show love and concern for those whom society often overlook or ignore.

As at 2011 when the centre celebrated the golden jubilee of its establishment, it had three main departments, the orthopaedic workshop, the mobile unit and the children's home. The workshop was started in 1961 to manufacture orthopaedic shoes, shoe prostheses, leg braces and artificial limbs. The workshop serves patients from all over Ghana and beyond. At the centre the following services and treatments are given: Foot and limb

deformities, amputations, spinal problems and any other condition that make walking difficult. According to Sr. Elizabeth Newman, Co-director at the centre, each Monday is outpatients' day. People come for consultation, repairs, new measurements and collection of appliances that had been ordered, the rest of the week is used for the needs of the inpatients as well as those whose measurements were taken during the regular treks.⁹¹

The mobile unit started in 1965. This is an outreach programme which is a very important feature of the centre. The mobile unit travels to every region in Ghana on a regular basis. In her address on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the centre Sr. Elizabeth Newman, Co-director at the centre, remarked that in 2010, the mobile team attended to about 3115 patients' country-wide. They also travelled some 20,908 km to bring services to the physically challenged in Ghana. The aim of this unit is to have stations throughout the country so that patients who have difficulty in travelling or financial difficulty may not have to travel too far to be attended to.

The children's home started in 1967. The purpose of this unit was to provide facilities for those who need intensive therapy and for the children most of whom were so severely handicapped that parents could not cope with their training and rehabilitation. In addition to the regular training and rehabilitation, the children are also offered education at the centre. Qualified teachers are always appointed by the GES to the centre. In the children's home great care is taken to create a family atmosphere at the centre.

⁹¹ Address given by Sr. Elizabeth Newman, Co-director at the centre, on the occasion of the golden jubilee celebration of the centre.

In terms of funding, the centre used to rely heavily on foreign donors. This contribution to the centre has been dwindling over the past few years. This may be attributed to the adverse world economic situation. Local donations are quite small however efforts are being made to generate more funds from local sources for the smooth running of the centre. In the past, patients made some contributions for orthopaedic appliances. This source of funds is decreasing due to the harsh economic conditions in the country. The equipment and devices are heavily subsidised but even then, the amounts charged is quite burdensome for many to bear. Despite this, the management at the centre try to keep prices within reach making it possible for people to come for the help they need. Looking carefully at the services offered at OTC, it can be said that by establishing and running this institution over the years, the SVDs have succeeded in bringing hope to many people who would have been ignored by society.

3.9.2 Support for the cured lepers

The earliest attempt at giving some form of support and care for the lepers was in 1946 when according to Alphonse Elsbernd, Sr. Jane, the Superior of the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) took special interest in these lepers, who were housed in miserable huts on the sea side of the Labadi road. On 4 August 1950, a group of these lepers were transferred from Labadi to their present site at Weija. As at August 2010, five of the original group were still alive at Weija. They include Gladys Adobea, Nancy Ayaw, Comfort Aben Afi, Afio Mensah and Armah Tiokor the eldest of the lepers aged 99 years. It is also recorded by Alphonse Elsbernd that the last mass of Bishop Noser in Ghana before leaving was offered for the lepers who were now housed in Weija near Accra.

For the past 40 years, Fr. Andrew Campbell,⁹²svd has been the backbone of the Weija Leprosarium. Born in Dublin, Ireland on 26 March, 1946, Fr. Campbell studied philosophy and theology. He came out with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from St. Patrick's College in the United Kingdom in October 1970. In December that same year he was ordained into the Catholic Priesthood. In October, 1971, he arrived as a missionary of the SVD to Ghana. He has worked in various parishes like Osu, Holy Spirit Cathedral, Sacred Heart, Derby Avenue, Good Shepherd, Tema and currently Christ the King Parish all in Accra.

Fr. Campbell works mostly with the disadvantaged in the country particularly, the cured lepers. Apart from the relief items he receives from his numerous friends in and outside Ghana for the cured lepers, he has been a strong advocate for the support and integration of these lepers into the wider Ghanaian society. Over the years he has made significant contributions to the Weija cured lepers rehabilitation centre. He also organises annual musical concerts to raise funds for the upkeep of the cured lepers. Every year at Christmas and Easter, Fr. Campbell organises parties for the cured lepers to let them feel part of society. There is a leper's aid committee that handles all the musical concerts and fund-raising activities. Fr. Campbell also uses his immense influence in the public forum to advocate the increase in the daily stipend from the government to the cured lepers.

⁹² Fr. Andrew Campbell, interviewed, 28 January 2011, Adoagyiri-Nsawam. This was during the occasion of the annual SVD family feast.

3.10 SVDs and inculturation

The missionary encounters different cultures and become involved in the process of inculturation. According to John Paul II, ‘This process involves the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity into the various human cultures.’⁹³ This process involves the Christian message and the Church’s reflection and practices. It is normally done without compromising the integrity of the Christian faith.

Through inculturation, the Church becomes a more visible and intelligible sign of what she is called to be and a more effective means of mission. Mission, in this form enriches the Church with forms of expression and values in the area of evangelization, worship, theology and charitable works. The church is motivated for continual renewal. According to Peter Sarpong, ‘Culture was given by God, but then culture needs to be purified and polished so that the human elements of culture could be transformed. The human elements become the means of transformation.’⁹⁴ A missionary society committed to the proclamation of the divine word on all the continents, needs to have inculturation at the centre of its mission.

Inculturation has to do with a conscious effort at rooting and spreading the gospel in a particular culture. This involves the ability to adapt the gospel to the local context and fit the gospel with native primal world view. It is the application of gospel truths to real-life issues within the native cultural context. The pioneer SVD missionaries saw the danger

⁹³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, p.630.

⁹⁴ Lectures given by Peter K Sarpong to M.Phil. Students, Department for the Study of Religions, Legon at his residence in Kumasi on 12-14 June 2010.

of bringing the gospel in a foreign language and culture hence the untiring efforts of the pioneer SVD missionaries at inculturation right from the beginning.

3.10.1 Early attempt at Inculturation 1963

Fr. Francis Beemsterboer of Adoagiri parish was a leader in the transition from the use of Latin to vernacular. Alphonse Elsbend records that, Fr. Beemsterboer was very active in adapting the liturgy to a more Akan culture by insisting on Twi songs and prayers in the Mass. As early as 1963, following directly from the Vatican II declaration on the liturgy that, ‘Even in the liturgy, the Church does not wish to impose rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or good of the whole community. Rather she respects and foster qualities and talents of the various races and nations’,⁹⁵ he set in motion the process of inculturation. At this time there was also a growing dispute over the use of different languages in the Liturgy in some stations. Fr. Elsbend writes that on his visit to the Koforidua Parish in 1967, bishop Bowers had to mediate in a dispute between the Ewe section and the pastor concerning Sunday mass in their own language at Koforidua.

In 1960, with a new and modern printing press, the work of translation expanded. During the year more than 100,000 items rolled off the press. Prayer books, the epistles, catechism, hymn books and gospels for Mass. Most were printed in the various local languages of the Accra diocese: Ga, Krobo, Twi and Ewe. This was a positive development in inculturation in the mission.

⁹⁵ Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council ii: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1981), p. 13.

By way of inculturation, certain negative cultural practices and customs such as widowhood rites, female circumcision, destruction of twins are gradually abrogated. The missionaries applied adaptation especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the Sacramentals, procession, liturgical language, sacred music and the arts. A notable SVD on this project is Rev. Bro. Pius Agyeman, who has been at the forefront in adapting the liturgy to the Akan culture and language through music, dance, drama and the use of traditional local musical instruments since 1969.

3.10.2 Reverend Brother Pius Agyeman, SVD and the Adehyemma sacred choral group

The Adehyemma sacred choral group was founded by Rev. Bro. Pius Agyeman, svd.⁹⁶ He is also the director. Its main aim is to promote Ghanaian sacred music in catholic worship. Bro. Pius, a specialist in liturgy and sacred music has composed 18 masses in the Akan language and five masses in the English language. He has also composed over 1000 songs to his credit. Most of his songs are liturgical and religious music. Others are patriotic, philosophical and traditional folk songs.

Pius Agyeman started studying music at the SVD novitiate at Adoagyiri under Bro. Tarcisius de Ruyter and Bro. Marcus Hipolito all svd brothers. He undertook further studies under Prof. Kwabina Nketia and Dr. Ephraim Amu. He also studied conducting in Music and the theory of music at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He went for further studies at the Winneba Music Academy where he formed singing group to promote his own catholic compositions for the liturgy.

⁹⁶ Interview granted by Bro. Pious Agyeman at Adoagyiri- Nsawam. Date: 12 December, 2011.

After professing first vows in 1964 (8 September) he studied at St. Martins Secondary School between 1964 and 1967, where he obtained the O level certificate. He was appointed to St. Joseph's Parish, Adoagyiri to promote Akan songs for the liturgy and worship. It was here that he introduced Ghanaian drums and other musical instruments to accompany the songs in the mass. In his maiden attempt he met a stiff opposition by the catholic faithful for introducing Ghanaian songs and drums into the Catholic Church. He was however strongly supported by Fr. Francis Beemsteboer.

Bishop Bowers appointed him to Tema Community Two to start a new choir there. He formed a small group and named it '*Tete Domankoma Singers*' to promote the Ghanaian church music. It was this group that sung the mass for the Pan-African laity seminar at the state house in Accra in 1970. In 1977, while at the Sacred Heart Parish in Accra, he formed the *Adehyemma* Sacred Choral group. He also formed the catholic youth singers and dramatists to promote music and drama through the youth for effective participation in the liturgy. During the Pope's visit to Ghana in 1980, Bro. Pius' three *Adehyemma* groups from Accra, Koforidua and Kumasi led all the Ashanti choirs of 1200 singers to celebrate the Pope's mass at the Kumasi sports stadium. On that occasion, Ghanaian liturgical music was performed on a large scale and that gave a clear picture of developments in inculturation of the liturgy in the Ghanaian Catholic Church.

In 1991, after his studies in Maynooth, Ireland, he formed the SVD Pastoral Liturgical and Sacred Music Ministry at St. Arnold Jansen house, Tesano, Accra. This department promotes the Vatican II liturgy to enable the lay faithful to understand the teaching, meaning, history and application of catholic authentic liturgy. The music department also run workshops, seminars for parishes, seminaries, religious and priests.

The group participated in an international religious music festival in Poland (Sept. 1997) and also won the best choral award at the Pan-African Festival of Arts and Music (PAFAM) held in Accra in 1990. Brother Pius personally won the first prize in an all Africa Church Composers contest in Lome in 1987. He also received a medal from the Pope for his contribution to the inculturation of the liturgy. Adehyemma is there to promote African music in the service of Liturgy. New compositions are normally inspired by scripture, capable of being sung by all and suitable to the mentality of our people both old and young.

3.10.3 Tamale Institute of Cross Cultural Studies (TICCS)

TICCS is an ecumenical⁹⁷ teaching and research institute of the Catholic Church established by the SVD and Tamale Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church. It fosters deeper understanding of African cultures and languages for the inculturation of the gospel and for holistic human development in Africa. It offers cultural training, language courses, workshops, study groups and field education courses.

According to Marek Kowalik, there is the problem of communication and ministry across cultures. Each group of people speak, think, and perceive the world differently. An in-depth language and culture learning is a must. This will afford the outsider the opportunity to perceive the world through the insider's eyes before acting. There is the need for a supervised language, culture and ministry learning within a cross-cultural context.⁹⁸ It is the core mission of TICCS to offer such an important resource.

⁹⁷ TICCS is ecumenical because both the participants and facilitators cut across the various religious divide.

⁹⁸ Fr. Marek Kowalik, interviewed, 3 August 2011, TICCS, Tamale. He is the SVD Director of TICCS.

At TICCS an attempt is made to guide the new missionary in methods for learning an African language and culture. 'This is unique in that it responds in an organised unitary and professional way to all three supervisory needs of new missionaries. Those of language learning, culture learning and ministry learning all in a village context'⁹⁹ On-going formation in the area of mission anthropology through seminars, conferences and workshops on topics related to culture, mission and human development applied to the local context are offered at TICCS. Target groups include missionaries, teachers, service, and development personnel on regular basis.

The founder of the SVD recognised the importance of an anthropological institute that evaluates scientific data in order to point out the legitimacy of religious faith and monotheism. According to Jon Kirby, in 1951, Dr. Hugo Huber, svd began doing research among the Krobo People. He was the first SVD trained ethnographer with the opportunity to apply ethnology to mission work in Ghana. In the preface to the 300 page document on the language, culture and traditions of the Krobo people, he states that his main objective was to help preserve and transmit the ancient language, wisdom and respect for the supernatural to the future Krobo generations.

Traditionally, the SVDs have had a bias towards the 'bush missionary'¹⁰⁰. The anthropologist is seen as a threat, someone who interferes rather than helps. The assumption is that they go to the bush and presume to tell the real missionary who has been living there what to do and how to do it. The changing ethos of mission dictates that missionaries find themselves working with local churches rather than founding them. The

⁹⁹ Jon P. Kirby, *Ghana Handbook: A Guide for Missionaries to Ghana.* (Tamale: TICCS Publication,1991), p.35.

¹⁰⁰ 'bush missionary' These are missionaries who live and work in rural communities.

new missionaries are predominantly from designated mission countries. The missionary there needs to cooperate with the local church in ways that are sensitive to cultural values. It is the culture that forms the individual, his approach to life, his view of life and his social position. The missionary must become bicultural to minister effectively. The missionary simply extends the invitation of love in a way that is understandable to other cultures. It is in the light of this that TICCS was established in 1984, to apply what is written about culture to appropriate ministry.

3.10.4 Research and Publications at TICCS

TICCS publishes its own research findings. Some of their publications include: *African Herbal Treatment*, *African Parables: thoughts for Sunday readings*, *ATRs and Christian Ministry*, *ATRs and Development*, *Culture and the Kingdom*, *Culture-Drama and Peace building*, *Dagbani for Beginners*, *Dagbani Proverbs and the Bible*, *Ghanaian English*, *Konkomba for Beginners*, *Nawuri Proverbs*, *Taboos and Development*, *Twi for Beginners*, *Women and Christian Ministry*, *Women and Development*, *Eethnic Conflicts and Peace Building*. The research areas that TICCS focuses on are: African art, politics, traditional economy, kinship and gender, women in development, traditional religion, African symbols, liberation theology, proverbs and oral literature, pre-colonial and colonial history, mission history, Islam, psychology of culture, cross-cultural psychology, religious psychology, scripture, spirituality, religious formation, peace and justice and ecology.

3.10.5 SVDs interaction and response to Ghanaian culture

In the course of their missionary activities, SVDs have come across a number of challenges due to cultural differences between the missionaries and the local people. We find this mostly in the area of marriage, traditional religious beliefs and practices

3.10.6 The Problem of Marriage

In most of the mission stations, there was the problem of marriage. A number of unlawful marriages that is marriages which did not conform to the church norms, were noticed by the missionaries. Polygamy was very common among the converts. The catholic men who were lawfully married took on a second wife when business prospered and they could afford it. Under such circumstances the converts with more than one wife could not receive communion. There was the issue of divorce which was permitted in native customs but not in the Catholic Church. Many young men baptised in school refused to marry in church because that will not give them the opportunity to divorce. They will marry by local custom try the wife for years before coming with their children to bless the marriage. In the early years, the missionaries compelled young men especially teachers to marry at once. A large number of them divorced later and could not receive communion for the rest of their lives hence blaming the church for their problems.

3.10.7 The Kunde Kult

While in Keta, Fr Noser became acquainted with the Kunde Kult a wide-spread religious cult. It was concocted by an ex-Catholic teacher. It was a clever mixture of ATR and Christianity. Kunde is believed to be God's messenger protecting only his devotees from harm, accidents and cures their illnesses. Followers were to obey his command, not to commit murder, theft, adultery, to do good and attend kunde meetings on Sunday.

Kunde is reputed to detect and punish offenders. This gave the leaders a handy tool to enrich themselves by imposing heavy fines on offenders. They could also get ride of opposition, claiming kunde as the one who punished hidden offences. Followers in need of help kneel before the shrine and pray, offer gifts and pray vocally. If he dies, he is declared an unfaithful follower for his guilt. The same verdict is given to a woman who dies at child birth. The family in each case must pay a heavy fine before burial is permitted. Important disputes are brought before the leader, who takes the chicken brought along, breaks the neck and watches it struggle to die. From its position when dead the verdict is given. In 1939, the government outlawed the cult and destroyed its shrine. Too many mysterious deaths were taking place in the village.

In trying to explain this phenomenon, Alphonse Elsbernd,¹⁰¹ came to the conclusion that the cult was due to the evidence of the stress caused by European culture on the old settled traditionalist way of life. Christianity and schools were destroying the old order. Commerce and industry with their shifting population destroyed family and tribal ties. The foreign government with its laws were upsetting the old established role of Chiefs. Christianity was not strong enough to impose a new order. Christianity with its forgiving God and punishment after death was not deterrent enough.

The old chiefs thought the moral chaos threatened order in the communities. That was why they welcomed such a cult with strict and swift punishment for wrong-doing. This was seen as an effective way of dealing with the swift increase of theft and crimes of all sorts. The cult swept through the land doing much harm to the village churches. The fraud

¹⁰¹ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, pp. 46-47

of the leaders was eventually exposed but they did much harm, while enriching themselves.

3.10.8 Witchcraft

The SVD missionaries came face to face with the issue of witch-craft which was a big challenge for them. This phenomenon was a universal belief among the communities the missionaries visited, and the victims were normally old women. 'Due to old age, many of these women had weak minds and bodies hence they begin to act strangely. Other old women got embittered due to neglect by their families. In case there was ill health, strange deaths or accidents these women were accused of witch-craft. The belief was that these women had evil spirits.'¹⁰² Many such women suffered gravely for something they had never done.

Fr. Elsbernd witnessed a witch trial in Koforidua in 1943. A self-proclaimed prophet claimed spiritual powers to smell out or in other way discover witches. The Koforidua chief had called in such a one to clear his domain of evil-working witches. On the opening day a huge curious and entertainment-hungry crowd gathered. One after the other, these old women were brought in and accused of causing death in families, sterility in women, failure in business, sickness or some natural calamity. They were berated, shouted at, questioned, accused, threatened, and cajoled until bewildered and confused they 'confessed' that indeed they were witches.

With the crowd joining against them, subjected to intense brainwashing they usually 'confessed' to have committed preposterous crimes. On this particular occasion one old

¹⁰² Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, pp. 64-65.

woman even ‘confessed’ having killed as many as twenty six people besides a long list of other crimes. A stiff fine is normally imposed on these women, followed by a public oath to desist from any further witchcraft. Some years later the Christian Council of Ghana began to investigate and expose the tricks of the Prophets who were behind this practice of witch hunting. With time the issue of witchcraft and witch hunt began to die out.

3.10.9 The Tigari Cult

In 1946 Msgr. Noser was able to locate the source of the Tigari cult which had come down from the North and was slowly invading the prefecture. It was a new form of religious cult. It caused untold damage to the church which came to a standstill in many villages. A careful observation by Msgr. Noser and the other missionaries revealed that the old order was rapidly changing due to the impact of the war and post-war economic boom, together with the spread of education.

Msgr. Noser observed that, ‘the growth of towns and cities had disrupted the social order. The religious order that served in the past was gradually going down. Educated young men did not respect the elders any more. They had lost the fear and respect their elders had for traditional worship. The ex-soldiers from East Africa and Burma came with new ideas.’¹⁰³ The growing city attracted strangers from all the tribes to the city and they owed no allegiance to any traditional authority. As the social order deteriorated and crime increased, the older people became confused and insecure. The chiefs and people were ready to welcome any new deity that could help in restoring the old standards of morality and the old ways of life which they were used to. Tigari promised that type of assurance.

¹⁰³ Elsbernd, *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.95.

The deity could punish any and every wrong doing. It could inflict punishment here and now by sending sickness, a misfortune or even death. When joining the cult, one had to confess all wrong doing publicly, there-by being purged of it. From this time onwards, the devotee pledged to keep away from all wrong-doing lest a quick and dreadful punishment over-take them. The priest of the cult managed to keep alive this fear by explaining accidents and misfortunes happening to members as punishment for hidden sins.

One small village near Kibi in the Akim area with a very strong Catholic community lost all the members to Tigari. The son of an old trusted Catechist had become the Priest of Tigari cult in this village and that might have hastened the mass conversion of Catholics to Tigari. As a sign of their conversion, members marked their foreheads with a red dot to show that they had eaten cola with Tigari. The Christian God of compassion and mercy was not deterrent enough for crime prevention. By 1950, the Tigari cult which had done so much damage to the church was now declining.

3.11 *Dei Verbum* Course at Adoagyiri-Nsawam, Ghana

The Ghana edition of the *Dei verbum* course is offered by the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) in Ghana Province's Biblical Pastoral Ministry (BPM) office headed by the coordinator Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurath, svd together with Fr. Alex Awuah, svd and Fr. Matthias Helms, svd. This course is run in collaboration with the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF), Biblical Pastoral Coordinators of Africa and Madagascar (BICAM) and the National Catholic Secretariat's office of Pastoral care.

SVDs by virtue of their vocation are committed to making the word of God available to all people. In carrying out this mission mandate, they recognise the important contribution

of the lay people and other pastoral agents in the mission. The course is designed to equip these lay people, biblical pastoral ministers and those engaged in various biblical apostolates with some basic skills in scripture so that they can effectively participate in the biblical pastoral ministry of the SVD. The basis of the course is the directives of Vatican II concerning sacred scripture in the life of the church as found in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*). The focus is on chapter six of the document which deals with the place of sacred scripture in the life of the church.

3.11.1 Target Group for the Course

Anyone who is involved in the biblical apostolate or biblical pastoral ministry can attend. These include men and women, religious and lay people. The expectation of the course is that participants will be engaged in the biblical pastoral ministry after the course. This is the specific aim of the course, to form ministers of the word. Participants come from the various dioceses of the Catholic Church in Ghana. Resource persons for the course are drawn from various geographical, cultural and pastoral backgrounds. They share their expertise in sacred scripture and various biblical ministries with the participants. There is an active interaction between the resource persons and participants as well as among participants themselves. The experts draw from their own personal experience and particular skills. They also help participants to tap into their own resources and experiences for the benefit of the group.

3.11.2 Major Topics in the Course

These include ministers of the word, the church's approach to sacred scripture, God's word in stories and the interpretation of the bible. Others include Jesus and the Gospels, the Psalms, the Book of Revelation, the Gospel of Mark, the Jewish roots of Christianity,

God's word forming communities, the kingdom of God, *lectio divina* and bibliodrama. Participants are challenged to learn the steps of community building with fellow participants from the various countries and cultures. There are opportunities for prayer and reflections on sacred scripture.

There is an emphasis on learning and practicing *lectio divina* and various methods of bible sharing. This aims at interiorization of the word of God. Finally participants are expected to produce a particular biblical pastoral project which they can use in their future biblical pastoral ministry.

3.11.3 Major Areas of Concentration of the Course

The course has as its focus three main areas.

1. The interiorization of the word of God which is a basic requirement for the minister of the word of God. 'for it must not happen that anyone becomes an empty preacher of the word of God to others and not being a hearer of the word in his own heart'¹⁰⁴
2. The communication of the word of God, which is the ultimate goal of the course 'that as many as possible of those who are ministers of the divine word may be able to distribute fruitfully the nourishment of the scripture of the people of God.'¹⁰⁵
3. To study scripture for better understanding. This will help to move ahead daily toward a deeper understanding of the sacred scripture.

¹⁰⁴ Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, p.764.

¹⁰⁵ Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, p.763.

3.11.4 Why the Course is offered

There is the great need for a solid formation of ministers of the word of God who are immersed in the scriptures. Vatican II insists that ‘all the preaching of the church as indeed the entire Christian religion should be nourished and ruled by sacred scripture.’¹⁰⁶ Following from this assertion, access to sacred scripture ought to be opened wide to the Christian faithful. Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* called for adequate formation of all ministers of the word. It is his vision that pastors, religious and lay people be fired with their mission to evangelize seeking ever more suitable ways of proclaiming the gospel effectively. According Paul VI ‘it is with the greatest joy that we see a multitude of pastors, religious and lay men who in their zeal for the task of preaching Christ are seeking constantly to improve the proclamation of the gospel.’¹⁰⁷ John Paul II also underlines the need for diligent preparation for all ministers of the word.

3.11.5 The Impact of the Course on the Catholic Church in Ghana

The situation of biblical pastoral ministry in Ghana looks quite promising. There is the reading of the bible by lectors as the proclamation of the word of God. Catechists are being formed to spread the Good News to the faithful. Sunday schools are springing up in many parishes to present the word of God to children in ways that touch their lives. Correspondence courses for the youth in publications such as the Catholic Messenger, Catholic Standard and God’s Word for the Day are now available due to the *Dei Verbum* course organised by the SVDs.

¹⁰⁶ Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, p.762.

¹⁰⁷ Paul VI ‘Evangelization in the Modern World (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*), in Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p.748.

3.11.6 Recommendations for future growth

At the closing session of the *Dei Verbum* course at Adoagyiri-Nsawam in 2003, the participants came out with the following recommendations for future growth of biblical pastoral ministry in Ghana.¹⁰⁸

1. The institution of a national bible week to be celebrated in all the parishes.
2. The enthronement of the bible in all liturgical celebrations.
3. The participants need to put the training they have received at the disposal of others.
4. There is the need to emphasise the importance of the bible within the church.
5. Bibles must be made accessible and at affordable prices to all.
6. There the need to promote unity in diversity by the celebration of the annual national Christian home week.
7. The word of God should be at the centre of the lives of the faithful.
8. Formation of a national biblical commission.

A closer look at the *Dei Verbum* course reveals a positive and bold attempt at involving the lay people in the biblical pastoral ministry by offering them some basic biblical skills and training. For me, this is a novelty in the missionary efforts of the SVDs and the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana. It is a project in the right direction and all efforts must be made to support it.

3.12 Conclusion

It has been the aim of this chapter to examine the contribution of the SVDs to human development and human solidarity. Despite the different modes of human development, the SVDs see education as key to authentic human development. This explains why along

¹⁰⁸ Bulletin *Dei Verbum*, 68/69 (2003), pp 21-3.

side normal pastoral work, they established educational institutions from the basic to the secondary levels in the mission territory assigned to them. This comes from the vision of the SVD on education. Education is an important method of evangelization where young people are formed to be fitting building-blocks of the kingdom of God. This is considered a noble pursuit by the members of the society.

Recognising the important roles played by the lay people in the mission, they made a conscious effort at forming lay organizations like Legion of Mary, Pax Romana, Christian Mothers Association, CYO, Knights of Marshal and St. John to participate in the SVD mission in Ghana. This shows the close collaboration between the clergy and the lay people in the mission. The SVDs saw the need for good health and well being of the people they minister to hence the establishment of health institutions, care for the cured lepers and the physically challenged in the Ghanaian society. To make the word of God available to all, the Dei Verbum course is mounted annually to train more people for the biblical pastoral ministry. This course has made the reading and reflection on the word of God more attractive to many Catholics. We also see the impact of the course in the zeal with which catechists are helping the spread the Good News of Christ.

As far as human solidarity is concerned, the SVDs are motivated by the example of Jesus who came to proclaim relief to the widow, the orphan, the oppressed and the out casts on the fringes of society. It is the vision and commitment of the members of the society to opt for the poor, weak and marginalised in society. This explains the many human solidarity interventions from the members of the society. This leads to the next chapter where the research will evaluate the SVD mission in Ghana based on the four-fold

prophetic dialogue using the family traits or characteristic dimensions. The three tests of mission by Andrew Walls will also be used in the evaluation.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION OF THE SVD MISSION IN GHANA

4.1 Introduction

It is the aim of this chapter to evaluate the various missionary activities of the SVD's in Ghana over the past seven decades as discussed in the previous chapters. The evaluation is based on the three tests of mission by Andrew Walls.¹⁰⁹ These are the church test, kingdom test and gospel test

4.2 The Church Test

This has to do with the physical and empirical evidence of the establishment of the structures of the Church in the area entrusted to the SVD missionaries. Andrew Walls affirms the fact that one of the ways to evaluate mission is by the use of the church test. This means that out of the proclamation of the Gospel, a stable worshipping Christian community is formed. This community is stable in terms of liturgy, personnel, theology and finance. The Accra (Ghana) mission was officially handed over to the SVD's on 1 January, 1941. There were two main stations (parishes) with resident priests at that time. Sacred Heart Parish in Accra and St. George's Parish in Koforidua. The two stations had four resident priests. Frs. Adolf Noser and Joseph Bowers were stationed in Accra while Frs. Elsbernd and Bauer were resident in Koforidua. Nkawkaw eventually became an outstation of Koforidua as the mission expanded. Fr. Cletus Hodapp svd, arrived in January 1941 and was sent to Adoagyiri- Nsawam to establish it as a main station. In the course of that year, a school and chapel were started at Adabraka in Accra.

¹⁰⁹ Andrew Walls, *The History of Expansion of Christianity Reconsidered*.

From Koforidua the missionaries reached out to the Krobo area in March 1941. According to Alphonse Elsbernd 'this area had not yet been touched by the catholic missionary effort.'¹¹⁰ hence there was the urgent and felt need to intensify their missionary activities in the area. As part of their efforts to evangelise the Krobo area, stations were established in the Upper Krobo area. Places like Akotoe, Asesewa, Odumasi and Agomanya were visited with the view of making Agomanya the main station (parish). Akuse, Ada and Mepe were added to the Krobo mission area. It was however difficult to establish a station at Mepe due to the dominant influence of the Presbyterian missionaries in the area. According to Fr. Elsbernd, by the end of 1941, the Accra (Ghana) mission had three main stations, Sacred Heart in Accra, St. George's Koforidua and St. Joseph's in Adoagyiri-Nsawam with 69 outstations. 14 schools had been established with 1,173 pupils.

In March 1942, Osonson was started the first mission station in Manya Krobo area. The Catholic Church was firmly established in the Krobo area largely due to the singular effort of one Mr. Dawutey, a faithful school teacher and Catechist of the SVDs in the former German Togoland. He migrated to the Krobo area when the SVDs were expelled from Togoland after the First World War. Due to the absence of the Catholic Church in this area he became an Anglican. With the arrival of the SVDs in the Krobo area he came back to the Catholic Church and was very influential in establishing the Catholic Church in many villages in Kroboland.

Kwahu Tafo was started as the fourth mission station in 1942. A day after Pentecost that same year a school and chapel were built at Asakra, also in the Kwahu area. Fr.

¹¹⁰ Alphonse Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra* (Accra: Catholic Book Centre, 2000), p. 51.

Anthony Bauer, svd was sent to Kwahu Tafo to live there and to take care of the Kwahu district. A mass conversion of the people of Akrofufu also testifies to the work of the pioneer SVD missionaries. Lower Krobo area, with towns like Senchi, Nuaso, Agomanya and Somanya, became part of the Accra (Ghana) mission. Development in the Shai area was quite slow because of the dominant presence of the Presbyterian missionaries. Despite these challenges the SVDs managed to open a school at Asuchware.

On the Akwapim ridge, however, the SVDs failed to make any impact. The old Basel missionaries had settled here about a hundred years before the arrival of the SVD missionaries. With the introduction of cocoa farming around 1870, the Akwapim farmers grew wealthy. This led to the growth of Presbyterian Church in the area. On his first visit to the area in October 1942, Fr. Noser made this observation ‘All the towns along the highway have splendid church buildings and large schools full of children.’¹¹¹ This largely explained why the Catholic Church never got established on the Akwapim ridge.

By 1942, there were resident stations at Accra, Koforidua, Adoagyiri-Nsawam, Kwahu Tafo, and Achimota School (St. Thomas More) in Accra. The Krobo district became autonomous in 1943, while the Kwahu district was divided into two, Tafo and Nkawkaw, with Fr. Alois Turbek, svd at Nkawkaw. On the 19 of December, 1943, the mission was raised to the status of a Prefecture with the following stations firmly established with resident priests and functional church structures. Accra, Koforidua, Adoagyiri-Nsawam, Kwahu Tafo, Nkawkaw, and Agomanya. The statistics below show the rate of progress over the first five years of SVD missionary activities in Ghana.

¹¹¹ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.61.

Table 1: Progress of work in the SVD Mission (1940-1945)¹¹²

Year	1940	1945
Number of residential stations (parishes)	2	6
Outstations	68	128
Baptised members	7520	10240
Adult converts	281	353
Infant baptisms	404	591
Number of catechumens	746	3281
Number of schools	23	87
Catholic pupils in the schools	534	1096
Non-catholic pupils in the schools	612	3589
Teacher/ Catechists	37	162

From the table above, it comes out that the SVD mission made a tremendous progress within the first five years of their existence in Ghana. From a humble beginning of two resident stations (parishes) in 1940, the number had risen to six resident stations with priests by 1945. The out stations had also increased from 68 to 128. Within the same period, the number of baptised Catholics also rose from 7520 to 10240. In the field of education, the number of schools increased from 23 to 87. Enrolment levels increased from 1146 to 5685 in 1945. The SVD mission also offered employment to many teachers.

¹¹² Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.89.

The number of teachers in the SVD established schools increased from 37 to 162 within the same period.¹¹³ In 1948, the Akim Oda-Swedru-Ntronang district with one resident station and 23 outstations, which was part of the Cape Coast Vicariate was added to the SVD mission territory.

From the statistics below we can see the steady growth in the number of resident stations (parishes) and outstations in the mission over the period between 1940 and 1971

Table 2: Growth of the mission in terms of the number of resident stations (parishes) 1940-1971¹¹⁴

Year	Number of residents	Number of outstations
1940	2	56
1941	3	69
1943	5	94
1945	6	128
1946	7	147
1948	8	170
1953	14	227
1965	27	270
1971	32	300

From these figures, it can be inferred that in terms of physical presence, the Catholic Church was firmly established in all the major towns in the Accra mission territory. The only areas that the SVDs could not penetrate were the towns on the Akwapim ridge. The

¹¹³ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.89.

¹¹⁴ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, various pages.

main reason for this failure is that the Presbyterian missionaries had settled in this area for over hundred years before the SVDs arrived hence they had a strong hold on these areas.

Closely connected to the number of resident stations is the number of baptised Catholics living in the mission territory. The number of baptised Catholics includes infants and adults. At the beginning of the mission in 1940, the number of baptised Catholics was 7520. This number steadily rose to 127500 in 1971 when the mission was handed over to a diocesan bishop, this shows a dramatic increase in the number of Catholics in the mission as the table below shows. Also included in this table is the number of baptised adults for the different years. This is of particular significance to the research in that it shows the number of adults converts who were baptised within the years indicated.

Table 3: Number of baptised Catholics¹¹⁵

Year	Number of baptised adults ¹¹⁶	Number of baptised Catholics ¹¹⁷
1940	232	7520
1945	329	10240
1946	798	11150
1953	1420	34040
1954	705	36500
1955	2775	40220
1958	1860	61000
1960	2261	64000
1961	-	68000
1962	3308	75000
1964	4400	90000
1968	3000	112000
1971	-	127500

The table above shows the dramatic increase in the number of baptised Catholics from 1940 to 1971. Within this period the total number of baptised Catholics steadily rose from 7520 in 1940 to 127500 in 1971. This number includes infants and adult converts. Of particular significance is the number of adult converts from other religions to Catholicism. This figure rose from 232 in 1940 to 3000 in 1971. This shows that not only

¹¹⁵ Source: Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, various pages.

¹¹⁶ The figures in this column include adult converts from other religion and denominations.

¹¹⁷ The figures in this column include infants and adults who were baptized during the period.

infants and children in the catholic schools and church were baptised but a good number of adult were baptised into the Catholic Church.

4.2.1 SVD Districts as at 1971¹¹⁸

For effective administration and regular interaction among the missionaries and their collaborators the mission territory was divided into districts. As at 1971 when the mission was handed over to a diocesan bishop, the SVDs had five main administrative districts as indicate below with the different parishes that constituted the districts.

Accra District: Holy Spirit Cathedral; St. Paul's Church Kpehe; St. Kizito's Church Nima; Sacred Heart Church, Derby Avenue; Martyrs of Uganda Church, Mamprobi; Christ the King Church; St. Peters Church. Osu; Holy Family Church, Mataheko; St. Theresa's Church, Kaneshie; St. Aquinas Church Osu; Our Lady of Mercy Church, Tema; Good shepherd Church, Tema; and St. Thomas More Church, Achimota School.

West Akim District: St. Joseph's Church, Adoagyiri; St. Andrews Church, Akim Swedru; Our Lady of Fatima Church, Akim Oda; St. Michael's church, Ntronang; St. Anthony's Church, Akwatia; St. Mary's Church, Asamankese; St. John's Church, Akim Ofoase; St. Catherine's Church, Kade and St. Theresa's Church, Suhum.

Koforidua District: St. George's Church, Koforidua; Pope Johns Secondary School, Effiduase.

Kwahu District: St. Michael's Church Nkawkaw; Mother of Good Counsel Church, Kwahu-Tafo; Mary, Mother of God Church, Adeemmra.

¹¹⁸ *CATALOGUS Sodalium societatis verbi divini* (Roma: Apud Curium Generalitiam SVD, 1971)

Krobo-Battor District: Holy Trinity Church, Agomanya; St. Augustine's Church, Asesewa; St. Peter's Church, Somanya; St. Barbara Church Akosombo; St. Mary Goretti Church Battor.

A careful observation of the work of the SVDs in the Accra (Ghana) mission based on the statistics above, will affirm the fact the SVD missionaries have largely fulfilled the church test as proposed by Andrew Walls. This involves the mandate to dialogue with people without faith communities and faith seekers by establishing and consolidating the institutionalised Roman Catholic Church within the mission area entrusted to them. By 1971 when mission was officially transferred from the SVD missionaries to the Local diocesan bishop, the mission had the following impressive statistics to show.

In terms of personnel the mission had one ordained Bishop, 77 ordained priests, 37 religious brothers, 87 religious sisters, 13 major seminarians and 55 minor seminarians preparing for the ministerial priesthood. It is important to note that some of the religious brothers, sisters and priests were non-Ghanaians who were attracted to the mission by virtue of the SVD presence in Ghana. At this time the population of the Accra diocese was 2,170,000.¹¹⁹ Of this, it was estimated that there were 200,000 Catholics including immigrants. 127,500 of this number were baptised. There were 300 stations scattered all over the diocese. There were about 32 stations without a resident pastor.

In the area of education, the mission had 324 elementary schools with an enrolment figure of 55,230 pupils. There were six second cycle schools with student population of 2,610. The mission also had two vocational schools with student population of 190. In the health

¹¹⁹ Source: Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.297.

sector the mission had four hospitals with about 400 beds fully occupied. Each of the hospitals had an outreach programme for the surrounding communities. In addition to the hospitals, there were three clinics with two of them having maternity wards. It is estimated that the total outpatient treatment given annually by the hospitals and clinics was 320,000. The mission also had an orphanage at Akim Swedru with 80 orphans. Finally, the mission had one printing press which used approximately 100 tons of paper in 1971, with a work force of about 40 people.

4.3 The Kingdom Test

As part of the process of forming stable Christian communities, the ecclesial basic communities come in as a force for evangelization. Andrew Walls sees the growth of these groups as part of the kingdom test. John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio*¹²⁰ affirms the fact that with the establishment of the Kingdom of God, there must be a transformation in human relationships. The kingdom concerns individuals, societies and the world. These basic Christian communities keep the institutional church from deviating from her original mission. This is a rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches. These groups have proved to be centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach programmes. At the level of family, or in a similar restricted setting, these are groups of Christians who come together for prayer, scripture reading, catechesis and discussion on human and ecclesial problems with the view to a common commitment.

The basic Christian communities decentralise and organise the parish community to which they always remain. They normally take roots in the less privileged and rural areas

¹²⁰ John Paul II, 'Redemptoris Missio on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate' in *Encyclical letters* (Trivandrium, India: Carmel International Publishing House, 2005), pp. 618-637.

and become a leaven of Christian life of care for the poor and neglected. They also have a commitment to transforming society, giving individuals the sense of playing an active role in the community. In such communities they show how division, tribalism and racism can be overcome (Acts 2:42-47). They become a true expression of communion and a great hope for the life of the church. According to Vatican II document *Apostolicam Actuositatem* the lay faithful have a vital role to play in the church's mission especially in the area of evangelization, renewal of the temporary order, charitable works and social aid. They are also called upon to be actively involved in church communities, the family, young people national and international affairs. These groups constitute the lay organizations¹²¹ that were formed in the mission to serve as leaven in the church and also by their activities satisfy the kingdom test as proposed by Andrew Walls.

4.3.1 Lay Organizations in the Mission

The founder of the SVD formed Catholic Lay Organizations in order to win religious, social and political influence in society. It was his view that the missionaries cannot avoid becoming politically involved in the life of society because there is a constant struggle between faith and atheism which can only be confronted in the public arena where the lay people are in the majority. Based on this vision, many Catholic Lay Organizations were formed in the mission by the pioneer SVD missionaries. The Legion of Mary was introduced by Bishop Noser in 1941. It became a very rich source of spiritual blessing. Members in Accra were very active. Churches in Nima and Kpehe, all parishes in Accra for example owe their origin to groups of Legionaries who went round to organise lax Catholics into prayer groups. Out of these groups the churches had their

¹²¹ Flannery Austin (ed.), 'Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*)' *Vatican Council II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981), pp. 766-798.

beginning. The group spread all over the diocese in every parish serving as a leaven in the church.

The Christian Mothers Association which was formed along side the Legion of Mary also made remarkable progress just as the legion of Mary. The Knights of St. John, a Catholic fraternity organization modelled on the Knights of St. Peter Claver in USA was inaugurated in Accra on Pentecost day in 1944. The Knights of Marshall and St, John were formed to prevent the Catholics from joining the lodges introduced by the Europeans. It was the view of the missionaries that Ghanaians have a penchant for joining secret societies. These Lay Catholics played very significant roles in negotiating for property for the church.

As at 2011, the following lay societies are very active and working in all the SVD parishes and other parishes in the diocese. Association of Holy Child, Association of Catholic Doctors, Catholic Akan Union, Catholic Ewe Union, Catholic Journalists Association, Catholic Lawyers Guild, Catholic Nurses Guild, St. Theresa's Society, Catholic Women Association, Catholic Youth Organization, Christian Mothers Association, Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, League of Tarcicians, Legion of Mary, St Anthony's Guild, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Knights of St. John and the Ladies Auxiliary, and the Knights of Marshal and their Ladies Auxiliary¹²². The focus of these societies vary, some are more spiritual while others are more fraternal and charitable organizations. All these societies actively support the work of the pastors in the various parishes.

¹²² **Source:** Ghana Catholic Diary (Accra: Catholic Book Centre, 2011).

4.4 The Gospel Test

The focus of the gospel test is that mission and proclamation must lead to social transformation in the wider society. Andrew Walls refers to this concept as the gospel test. John Paul II describes this form of mission as ‘promoting development by forming consciences.’¹²³ Valdir Raul Steuernagel in a similar mood refers to the same concept as ‘to seek to transform unjust structures of society.’¹²⁴ The work of the missionary must be holistic, focusing on the whole of creation at peace. This must embrace all human life and all human beings. Social transformation must be at the centre of mission. Issues concerning feelings, intuitions, thoughts, actions, crying, laughing, hoping, food, hunger, water, thirst, fatigue and sleep, form part of God’s shalom, which is a community’s gift and all these are integrated into God. The focus of the gospel test is how mission puts in place the mechanism that takes care of the weaker and marginalised members of society as far as the issues raised above are concerned.

Looking closely at the public ministry of Jesus, we can infer that it was carried out mostly within the Jewish community which was characterised by his outreach to the poor and marginalised. These were people whose lot had often been caused by religion and society. In his mode of operation, Jesus related to the people in the spirit of solidarity, respect and love. It can be said that the pioneer SVD missionaries opted for the poorer areas of the mission in Ghana, in order to help transform the lot of the people in these deprived areas. This explains why most of the educational and health institutions were established in the economically deprived areas of the country. This form of mission has to do with actions on behalf of integral development and liberation from all forms of oppression. This generates among the people, a drive towards progress.

¹²³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 635.

¹²⁴ Valdir Raul Steuernagel, ‘To Seek Transform Unjust Structures of Society (I)’ In Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds.), *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008) P.62.

The missionaries bring salvation to the poor by proclaiming the truth about Christ and about man, applying this truth to a concrete situation. Associating itself with the Latin American Bishops Conference, the SVD's share the view that 'The best service we can offer to our brother is evangelization, which helps him to live and act as a son of God, set himself free from injustices and assists his overall development.'¹²⁵ The SVD missionaries through the various social services and institutions have offered the opportunity for people to be more than what they are now by awakening their consciences through the gospel.

The SVD missionaries hold the view that authentic human development must be rooted in an ever deeper evangelization. The people's development consists in the formation of consciences and the gradual maturing of ways of thinking and patterns of behaviour. Man therefore becomes the principal agent of development. SVD missionaries have always seen themselves as having the obligation to work for the development of the whole person and of all mankind. They seek to promote development of heart and ways of thinking by fostering the recognition of each person's dignity, encourage solidarity, commitment and service of one's neighbour. This gives everyone a place in God's plan which involves the building of a kingdom of peace and justice. This brings a close connection between the proclamation of the gospel and human promotion. This is what Andrew Walls refers to as the Gospel test.

¹²⁵ Document of the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops, Puebla (1979), 3760 (1145)

It is important to note that a soul-less development cannot suffice for human beings, and excess affluence is as harmful as excessive poverty.¹²⁶ The SVD missionaries insist that the development model being exported from the north to the south is dangerous to religion and human values as it emphasises more on consumerism. A new model of development that takes into consideration ethical and religious values needs to be adopted. The poor need to be introduced to the light and impulse towards development. At the same time, the awareness needs to be created in the wealthy to realise that the time has come for them to demonstrate that they are true brothers and sisters to the poor. This is the focus of human solidarity, helping the poor and disadvantaged to assert themselves in society.

As at the time of handing over of the mission to a diocesan bishop, the following health facilities were firmly established and operational to offer support for the poor and disadvantage in the rural areas. Catholic hospital, Battor; Holy Family Hospital, Nkawkaw; St. Dominic's Hospital, Akwatia; St. Joseph's Hospital Koforidua; St. Martin's Clinic, Agomanya; St. Joseph's Clinic, Kwahu-Tafo; Maternity Clinic and Orphanage at Akim Swedru: Orthopaedic Training Centre, Adoagyiri; lepers rehabilitation centre at Weija near Accra. 'The four hospitals had about 400 beds which were fully occupied most of the times. Two of the three clinics had maternity wards. On the average the total outpatient treatment given by the hospitals and clinics was approximately 320,000 a year. The orphanage had 80 orphans.'¹²⁷ All these health facilities were sighted in the deprived areas of the country to offer relief to the people in these areas without exception. Despite all these interventions on behalf of the poor, we

¹²⁶ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, p. 636.

¹²⁷ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p. 298.

can say that the SVD's have a long way to go as far as solidarity and dialogue with the poor is concerned.

In his testimony, Fr. Elsbernd affirms the fact that without the schools, the gospel message would not have taken roots in the mission area entrusted to them. For effective evangelization therefore schools were built in all the stations, and out of the schools, the churches were built. The statistics below show the prominent role the SVD missionaries played in establishing basic schools which eventually became the vehicle of evangelization in SVD mission territory. In the final analysis, the schools became the vehicle for developing the human capital base of the country.

Table 4: The Growth and Development in basic Education¹²⁸

Year	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of pupils
1940	16	36	1100
1941	16	36	1173
1943	42	119	2680
1945	87	162	4685
1946	105	205	5233
1951	160	205	12400
1953	177	775	21085
1955	177	775	25150
1956	193	775	26100
1964	193	775	50000
1971	324	1660	55000

Table 4 shows contribution of the SVDs to the growth and development in basic education in the Ghana mission between 1940 and 1971. From a humble beginning of 16 basic schools, 36 teachers and 1100 pupils in 1940, by 1971 the SVDs had established 324 basic schools with 1660 teachers and 55000 pupils. These schools were being effectively managed by SVD personnel. From the table it can be inferred that the SVDs attached keen interest to basic education as the foundation for the human capital development of the nation.

¹²⁸ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, various pages

There was Progress in the area of second cycle education. As at 1966¹²⁹ the following educational institutions were offering good, holistic and quality education to all without exception in some of the most deprived areas of the country. The principal focus of these schools was to train high level personnel to run the affairs of the country.

Table 5: SVD second cycle schools as at 1966 with their enrolment levels

School	Enrolment
Mount Mary's Training College, Somanya	240 boys
St. Rose's Training College, Akwatia	77 girls
Aquinas Secondary School, Accra	255 boys
St. Mary's Secondary School, Accra	270 girls
St. Peter's Secondary School, Nkwatia	380 boys
Pope John's Seminary/Secodary School, Effiduase	275 boys
St. Martin's Secondary School, Adoagyiri	115 boys
St. Paul's Technical School. Kukurantumi	230
Total	1,602

These schools established by the SVDs rank among the best in the country in terms of discipline and academic performance. Just about nine years after Ghana's political independence, the SVDs had established first class second cycle school in some of the most economically deprived areas of the country to offer good quality and holistic education. The SVD missionaries in collaboration with the religious missionary sisters place a high premium of girl child education. The enrolment levels in St. Mary's and St.

¹²⁹ Elsbernd *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*, p.245.

Rose's attest to this fact. It is not so surprising that the SVDs established the first mixed catholic secondary school at Adoagyiri.

4.4.1. Support for the needy

In support of the poor and needy in the society, an office of the Catholic Relief Services was established in Accra in 1959 to distribute relief items to victims of natural disaster. Tons of food, clothing and medical supplies were distributed through this office for many years to come. The distribution of these relief items had their own problems. Sometimes those with the least need of the items such as government officials, teachers, and businessmen were the first to claim a share. Refusal meant the end of friendship. Sometimes those entrusted with the final distribution of these relief items kept the best articles. Some of the items even found their way into the market.

It is the view of the SVD missionaries that apart from giving the poor relief items in times of disaster, there is the need to introduce the poor to the fact that they break out of the cycle of poverty. The missionaries must consistently create the awareness in the wealthy to realise that the time has come for them to demonstrate that they are true brothers and sisters to the poor. We see this in the numerous fund-raising activities organised by SVD missionaries in support of the cured lepers and the physically challenged in the wider Ghanaian society. Despite the good work being done by the SVD missionaries in support of the poor, we still have a good number of poor and needy people in our society. It can be concluded that the SVD's have a long way to go as far as solidarity and dialogue with the poor is concerned.

4.4.2 Dialogue with People of Different Religious Traditions and Secular Ideologies

Divine Word Missionaries use the various institutions they have established as avenues for dialogue with people of different religious traditions and secular ideologies. These institutions are open to all and they are normally sighted in the rural and deprived areas. Examples include OTC, at Adoagyiri, the second cycle schools, the carpentry shop at Kukurantumi and parishes like Sts. Augustine and Charles Lwanga in Accra

Vatican II document *Nostra aetate*¹³⁰ affirms the fact that in this age of ours people are drawing closer together hence there is the need to strengthen the bond of friendship among the various peoples of the world. The church has the obligation to examine with greater care her relationship with non-Christian religions like Islam, African Traditional Religion and people of other secular ideologies.

The biblical image that comes to mind in this form of mission is the encounter between Christianity, Greek Philosophy and Religion as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. According to John McKenzie¹³¹, the Acts of the Apostles deals with the history of the growth of the church from a Jewish sect into a world religion under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. The main focus of the text is the expansion of the church to the Gentile world. The Acts of Apostles apologetically vindicates Christianity before Judaism and the Roman government.

The book presents the Christian religion as a harmless cult that it deserves legal position as a lawful religion. By undertaking this project, the author sees the expansion of

¹³⁰ Flannery Austin (ed.), 'Declaration on the relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra aetate*)' in *Vatican Council II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents* (Northport, New York: Castello Publishing Company, 1981), pp.725-738.

¹³¹ John L. Mckenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1996), pp. 9-12.

Christianity to the Gentiles as a legitimate fulfilment of the mission of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. McKenzie projects Paul as a man who initiated forcefully this project of inter-religious dialogue. He was a man of two world, Judaism and Hellenistic civilization who always appealed to his strong and brilliant rabbinical background. He was very well trained and well grounded in Judaism.¹³² It is in Paul that for the first time the church and Jesus living in the church encountered world civilization. The world has never learned a better language in which to address the world than in the language of Paul.

With Paul coming to Athens (Acts.17:16-34) Christianity came into contact with a new world of Greek Philosophy and Religion. Andrew Walls refers to this form of mission as the gospel test. John Paul II refers to this form of mission as ‘dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other religions’¹³³. In sum it can be said that this form of mission constitutes inter-religious dialogue, which forms part of the SVD evangelizing mission. It is a method of mutual knowledge and enrichment. This is part of mission *ad gentes* and it is directed at those who do not know or believe in Christ, his gospel, and belong to other religions.

Athens was a city of Gentiles, a cultural, philosophical and urban centre with its own way of living. It must be stressed that at this time Christianity had been a typically rural-based religion. In this urban setting, democracy and tolerance had an upper hand in public life. People of various origins met and all kinds of religions thrived. In Athens, idols abound everywhere and many ideologies sustained them. Paul began his mission among the Jews of Athens in the synagogue. He also met the Stoics and Epicurian Philosophers who were very strong here. (Acts 17:18)

¹³² Mckenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*. P. 10.

¹³³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, P. 632.

In presenting his message, Paul established as broad as possible a common ground with his hearers. The response to his presentation was mixed, some mocked him, others agreed to listen to him another time and others believed. The text can be read in the context of urban life and reality as the missionary minister in the urban environment. The various facets of urban reality, with the presence of different cultures present a special challenge to mission.

Human relationship in the urban setting is based on local interests and concerns. People form relationships easily with those outside their families and neighbourhood circles. Dialogue may be with New Religious Movements, and urban organizations which strive to improve the quality of life, housing, transport, health and other felt needs. The missionaries have made an impact by speaking from their own experiences and from that of their listeners. This situation has led them to value the indigenous culture and the faith of the people, their symbols and feasts as well as the personal, emotional and creative aspects of people's lives. We see in these, various attempts at incarnating the gospel in the culture of the local people.

Urbanization is one of the major world changing trends today¹³⁴. According to Paul B. Steffen¹³⁵, the city attracts migrants from all over the country and beyond. These live side by side, and that presents a real challenge to all and a great opportunity for intercultural life and activities, now and in the future. There is the need to project an identity that will give meaning for being a missionary in the urban context. The rapidly growing world population is concentrated in large cities.

134 Urbanization has to do with the growth of large cities in most of the third world countries. It is closely connected with the movement of a large number of people from rural communities and this presents a great challenge to mission in both the sending and receiving communities.

135 Paul B. Steffen, 'Migrant Ministry-The Kairos for a Pastoral-Missionary Work,' *Verbum SVD*, 51(2010), pp.313-340.

In the urban setting the attitude of the SVD missionary has to be that of dialogue. In the urban life, there is the need to develop a sensitivity which will enable the missionary to grasp the various aspects of urban living. It is important to dialogue with their philosophy of life. In Athens, Paul adopted the attitude of solidarity, respect and love. Christian teaching could be presented in their way of thinking in order to render it more familiar. Prophetic dialogue with people of other religions and ideologies calls on the missionary to live a community life that overcomes any exclusion based on ethnic, regional or national background.

Some areas of life need to be kept in mind and the missionaries need to value participation in any gathering which takes place in order to plan the life and functioning of the city. Neighbourhood assembly, municipal organizations, trade union meetings, etc. In this way the missionary promotes and strengthens his commitment in those areas created from the felt needs and common interest of the people. Dialogue implies taking seriously other peoples view points, making use of means available and addressing the needs of people. The mission houses and churches should become places that promote all that gives identity and bring understanding to people. In the end, the missionary in the urban setting cultivates sensitivity to cultural diversity and integrates himself into a multicultural community.

The SVD missionaries have to be prepared to understand other people's beliefs with an open mind. This has been characterised by trust, humility and frankness. This has enriched each side of the dialogue. This form of dialogue has the potential of eliminating all forms of prejudice, intolerance and misunderstanding which directly leads to inner purification and conversion. If pursued with docility to the Holy Spirit, it can be very

fruitful. Dialogue in this form has the capacity to favour the relations which ought to be established with the followers of various religions and through the example in the situations in which they live and in their activities. Dialogue becomes a path towards the kingdom and will certainly bear fruits in due season that is known only to the Father. It is important to note that dialogue with people of other beliefs and secular ideologies has never been easy for an SVD missionary. It is still on-going and it can be said that the SVD's have a long way to go as far this form of mission is concerned in Ghana.

4.5 Conclusion

It has been the aim of this chapter to evaluate the activities of the SVDs in the Ghana mission. From the discussion, it comes out that the SVDs have largely fulfilled the church test as proposed by Andrew Walls. To a very large extent, the SVDs started with a mission station and a few missionaries in Accra, Sacred Heart Church in 1938. By 1971, this mission had been transformed into a local church (a diocese) with all the structures of a local church and an effective administration. As far as the Kingdom and Gospel tests are concerned, it is still on-going and a lot more need to be done in that direction if the SVDs can have any future in the Ghana mission. Despite the fact that the SVDs over the years have established and manned various educational and health institutions, they are not sufficiently known to many people in Ghana as the people behind these institutions, this has limited their influence in the public sphere.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the summary of the main findings of the work and also gives some recommendations as to the direction the SVDs should go in future as far as the Ghana mission is concerned

5.2 Education

Education is a form of evangelization that continues to be a very effective tool for mission. It is a major means of coming into contact with people from all sectors of the society. Most of the people who come to SVD schools are from different cultures, poor and marginalized, faith seekers, people without faith communities, people from different religions and secular ideologies. Over the years, the SVDs have used the medium of education to evangelise. This way of doing mission needs to be varied since many of the students and workers in these SVD schools are not Catholics. The most appropriate model to use in the schools ministry is the biblical image of the visit of the Magi who were Gentiles (Matt. 2:1-12).

These Magi were genuine faith seekers. They were full of joy when they saw Jesus. After paying homage to the new born king, the Magi were not converted to Judaism nor did they become followers of Christ. They went away enlightened. Encounter with Jesus does not necessarily lead to the adoption of a different religion. SVDs in education are engaged in primary evangelization and re-evangelization. For the SVDs, to proclaim the good news is the foremost and utmost act of love for neighbour. Some of the students in

the SVD schools are faith seekers. Their journey is dynamic and full of enthusiasm just like the Magi. The Magi recognized the star as a sign and they interpreted the sign as pointing to the messiah. It is expected that these students will be enlightened, maintain their identity and uniqueness irrespective of religious beliefs after they have left the SVD schools.

In the school ministry there is the need for dialogue for common concerns. This may involve striving for peace, justice, dialogue of religious experience without any pretence of winning adherents. The missionary becomes a star to the students in the school. At the same time he looks for Jesus among the poor, marginalized, and faith seekers as well as in all the events of personal and world history. Searching together in dialogue, the missionary learns a lot from non-Christians in the school.

As missionaries in the education sector there are a number of issues that need urgent attention. Issues like who should be employed in the SVD mission school, who heads the SVD mission school, what method should be used to teach Religious and Moral Education (RME) and what constitute character training. Recent developments in our country point to the fact that there is an invisible force in the secular world that has an agenda to destroy the human resource of our country which is the major gain in the SVD mission in Ghana. We can hardly effectively preach the gospel of moral uprightness outside the context of a strong religious foundation which can be effectively incorporated in the school system. In the synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in 1995, the Synod expressed disaffection at the way cultural enrichment programmes by the GES appeared to be interfering with the academic and Christian religious life of children. How this was being done was never elaborated. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana felt

threatened by the teaching of cultural enrichment programmes in the schools.¹³⁶ A conscious effort by the Government of Ghana and Ghana Education Service (GES) to eliminate the teaching of religious and moral education in schools is a source of worry to many parents. The SVDs have noted with gratitude to God that religious studies have been reintroduced into basic education. However, it is important that such religious formation be extended to cover the second and third cycle institutions of our educational system, with special reference to our Polytechnics and Training Colleges. This is an area the SVD missionaries must explore with keen interest since education is a key area of mission in the SVD.

There is the issue of pluralism in the schools. This can be used as a testing ground for religious pluralism in Ghana. Looking closely at the issue of faith and conformity, a question that comes out is how religious pluralism can operate harmoniously in the SVD schools. There is also the vital question of ownership, content of the curriculum and conformity in the education sector. It is becoming clear that in the near future, the SVDs and religious bodies will establish schools but these schools will be in the private domain to avoid unnecessary government interference. Looking far into the future, it is important to begin to look at the issue of community participation in education, the political atmosphere in the schools, student participation in politics and activism, the interaction of the different faiths in the mission schools. In conclusion it can be said that the missionary can play a vital role as an animator in the school, affirming the importance of unity in diversity.

¹³⁶ Cry Justice :The Prophetic Voice of The Presbyterian Church of Ghana *In 1995 synod.*

5.3. Human solidarity (Support for the needy)

Recognising the fact there are needy members in the Ghanaian society the SVDs established an office of the Catholic Relief Services was in Accra in 1959 to distribute relief items to victims of natural disaster. In support of the poor and needy in the society, Tons of food, clothing and medical supplies have been distributed through this office over the years. In addition to that the SVDs also established schools hospitals, clinics, carpentry shops to either train local people to acquire employable skills or offer direct employment in these institutions. All these interventions were aimed at creating jobs for people for people of different faith so that they can earn decent incomes and livelihood.

It is the view of the SVD missionaries that apart from giving the poor relief items in times of disaster, there is the need to introduce the poor to the fact that they can break out of the cycle of poverty. In this direction, the missionaries must consistently create the awareness in the wealthy to realise that the time has come for them to demonstrate that they are true brothers and sisters to the poor. We see this in the numerous fund-raising activities organised by SVD missionaries in support of the cured lepers and the physically challenged in the wider Ghanaian society. Despite the good work being done by the SVD missionaries in support of the poor, we still have a good number of poor and needy people in our society.

In their interaction with the people of Ghana at different levels, the SVD missionaries have come out with the fact that abject poverty stares at us everywhere, in the cities, towns and villages. That one of the main foreign exchange earners for Ghana appears to be Ghanaians living outside the country should be a very sad commentary on the state of our economy. This is especially so since we know that many come by their money not in

the most commendable way. They have identified the fact that the rate of unemployment keeps soaring, resulting in such illegal practices as unlawful gold prospecting, taking of bribes, absenteeism from work and many others. They have also observed that law enforcement agencies, sent to stop the unlawful search for gold, having driven the so called criminals away, have themselves turned illegal gold miners.

A publication of the World Bank *Faith in Development*¹³⁷ asserts strongly that the role of the Church extends beyond the material welfare of its members, and even beyond temporal concerns altogether. It is in view of this that the SVD missionaries must intensify their efforts at influencing Government policies that affect the lives of majority of the people through advocacy. In Ghana, the SVD missionaries are close to the poor and among their most trusted representatives. They offer health services, education, and shelter to the vulnerable and disadvantaged. Spiritual ties are often the strongest in societies otherwise rent by ethnic discrimination, conflict over resources, and violence.

The SVDs have identified two major causes of poverty among the people of Ghana: external and internal. The former comprises, among others, the harmful effects of globalisation, the negative factors inherent in the free market economy and some programmes imposed by some rich nations and international financial institutions, which have impacted negatively on the Ghanaian economy. Among the internal causes, they have noted, in particular, bad governance, mismanagement of national resources, bribery and corruption, environmental degradation, mounting indiscipline, the introduction of inappropriate development policies and the lack of a diversified economy.

¹³⁷ Deryke Beishaw, Robert Calderisi and Chris Sugden(eds.), *Faith in Development: Partnership between The World Bank and The Churches of Africa* (a Co-publication of the World Bank and Regnum Books International, 2001).

Lack of job opportunities, inflation, an unstable currency, low productivity, unsatisfactory quality of schools attended by children, lack of basic amenities, the refusal of young people to go to the land, resulting in unproductive and widespread despondency about the future among both the rural and urban poor who are becoming increasingly alienated. The poor thus become very vulnerable to external shocks and internal social conflicts.

The results of poverty and its destructive effects are manifested in the rising crime rate, particularly armed robbery, rape, child defilement, high incidence of domestic violence, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the brain drain which results in the loss of our best human resources including nurses and doctors. Of greater concern is the phenomenon of *streetism* (the increasing number of people spending their lives on the street for various reasons), falling standards of our educational system, gradual collapse of some health services, the persistent worrying situation of high infant and maternal mortality, unemployment and under-employment, among others.

Sometimes people are poor because they lack the means to break out this cycle of poverty. The missionaries need to find a way of addressing the issue of poverty among the people they minister to. There is the need for a conscious effort at forming the faithful to have a proper understanding of wealth and poverty in accordance with the gospel vision and social teaching of the church.’ This can be done by formulating a Catholic theology of entrepreneurship to guide the proper creation and use of wealth and also inculcate a proper entrepreneurial spirit and skills among Catholics.

A closer look at the work of the SVD missionaries shows that they considered the people they ministered to as incapable of creating wealth on their own. It was their view that the best way to help the faithful was to provide them with temporary relief. This has led to

the high dependency syndrome. In most of the parishes, schools, hospitals, the people saw the buildings being put up with funds from donor sources like *Missio, Miva, Misereo* and the Catholic Relief Services. This situation created the wrong impression that the missionary was there to solve all their financial and developmental needs. This has rendered most of our people poor, always expecting ‘hand-outs’ from the missionary.

The missionary can play the following roles in creating wealth and prosperity. The spiritual aspects of life should be emphasized at the work place. There should be harmony, increased productivity and wellness in the work environment. God’s word should be at the centre of the economy to infuse spiritual energy in the people. This should be based on the right use of time and sound work ethic. The primary medium of education, work values, ethics towards sound productivity, need to be stressed especially in the schools. This will help to harness ‘the large human resource and skill that performs offshore and not on shore. There is the need for discipline of character at the work places. In terms of output and man hour the work place should be a place of moral decision making’.¹³⁸

In his book *Religion in Public Life*, Roger Trigg affirms the fact that it is important for missionaries to examine carefully the issue of public recognition of religion in the face of constant pressure to make it a characteristic of private life only.¹³⁹ The missionaries should provide the moral compass to members to refrain from the negative practices that tend to dissipate wealth instead of creating wealth. The scriptures should be used to

¹³⁸ Elom Dovlo, ‘Religion in Public Life’ lecture given to M. Phil. Part I Students of Study of Religions on 27 October 2009 at the Department Conference Room, Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana.

¹³⁹ Roger Trigg, *Religion in Public Life: Must faith be Privatized* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p.9.

enlarge wealth. The parable of talents (Matt. 25: 14-30) can be used as a good model for wealth creation.

People should be encouraged to use their productive and creative power given by God. The SVD missionaries should influence thinking positively at the work place to make the worker more productive, efficient and committed. This is the best means of eradicating poverty and showing solidarity to our people. This is something which the SVD missionaries have not employed to the full in their ministry.

5.4 SVDs and inculturation

In their missionary activities in Ghana, the SVDs have encountered different cultures. This has led them into the process of inculturation. This process involves the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity into the various Ghanaian cultures. In this process the Church becomes a more visible and intelligible sign of what she is called to be and a more effective means of mission. In the area of evangelization, worship, theology and charitable works the Church has been enriched with forms of expression and values. This has made it possible to spread and root the gospel in the various cultures in the SVD mission territory. The pioneer SVD missionaries saw the danger of bringing the gospel in a foreign language and culture hence the untiring efforts of the pioneer SVD missionaries at inculturation right from the beginning.

It has been the policy of the society that each missionary learns the language and culture of the area he works. In this direction the SVDs have also been involved in the transformation of the liturgy by the use of local languages songs and musical instrument

in worship. This has gone a long way to make the liturgy lively, more intelligible and attractive. The contribution of Francis Beemsteboer and Pious Agyeman who were at the forefront in adapting the liturgy to the Akan culture and language through music, dance, drama and the use of traditional local musical instruments need to be acknowledged and commended.

As early as 1960, the work of translation had started. Books, the epistles, catechism, hymn books and gospels for Mass were printed in the various local languages of the Accra diocese: Ga, Krobo, Twi and Ewe. This was a positive development in inculturation in the mission. By way of inculturation, certain negative cultural practices and customs that did not promote and preserve human life were gradually abrogated. The missionaries applied adaptation especially in the case of the administration of the sacraments, the Sacramentals, procession, liturgical language, sacred music and the arts. From the study, it comes out that the SVDs and have done so much in the area of inculturation . This notwithstanding, there is the need to dialogue further in the area of marriage, polygamy, childlessness in marriage, the right of the individual in the family where culture seem to disagree with the gospel.

SVDs have a commitment to make the word of God available to all people. In carrying out this mission mandate, they recognise the important contribution of the lay people and other pastoral agents in the mission. The *Dei verbum* course has been designed to equip the lay people, biblical pastoral ministers and those engaged in various biblical apostolates with some basic skills in scripture so that they can effectively participate in the biblical pastoral ministry of the SVD. The course is opened to men and women,

religious and lay people. This course has actually empowered the lay people in the Catholic Church to take the word of God seriously.

In spite of this fact, the course can be made more affordable so that many more people can participate in the course. Looking at the impact of Pentecostalism, Charismatic renewal movements and the other New Religious Movements, there will be the need to widen the scope and contents of the course so that participants will be better educated on the impact of this religious phenomenon on the Ghanaian religious landscape.

5.5 Empowering the Lay Societies in the Church for Effective Evangelisation

By virtue of their numbers, spread and sphere of influence, the lay societies and their members become an effective means for mission. These societies have supported the work of the SVD missionaries through the formation of basic Christian communities where spiritual growth and development are brought to the door steps of the faithful. Societies like the Legion of Mary, Pax Romana, Christian mothers and CYO have contributed immensely in this direction. The charitable societies like the Knights of St. John and Marshall have also played very important roles in the SVD mission.

It is important to stress that over the years this vital resource for mission has not been fully harnessed. The Lay people can be better organised and empowered to take up mission and evangelization in some ministries which include the music ministry, counselling ministry, evangelism ministry, healing and deliverance ministry, choreography and drama ministry, information and publicity ministry, organization and information ministry, Bible study teachers' ministry, and Sunday school teachers. Each

of these ministries has specific contributions to make to the growth of the church community.

According to Elom Dovlo this form of shared ministry facilitates more active and specialised involvement of the laity in worship and church life. 'The laity lay claims to spiritual maturity and gifts, and minister in the church, this builds some bridge between them and the clergy.'¹⁴⁰ Democratization of charisma as this form of shared ministry is normally referred to, helps to reduce social vices among the youth in the church, community and the nation. The various ministries in the church engage the youth, even at weekends. Instead of going to the discos and cinemas, the choreography and drama ministry is there to play the role of these secular entertaining centres.

Despite the attractive nature of shared ministry, care must be taken not to side-line members who do not seem to demonstrate any spiritual gifts. In given the laity the liberty to express their spiritual gifts there should be rule of law, checks and balances. This helps maintain order and peace in the Church so that respect will be given where it is due since all do not have the same spiritual gifts.

There has been the tendency for Priests to take on many responsibilities in the parishes which the lay people are better qualified to do. We find this especially in areas of administration, project management, financial management and many others. By delegating such responsibilities to qualified lay people, they are empowered to do more. They also liberate the priest so that he can concentrate more on his pastoral work. The important role of women needs to be recognised, encouraged and affirmed. Recent trends

¹⁴⁰ Elom Dovlo, 'The Church in Africa and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of the New Religious Movements and Charismatic Churches', *Exchange*; 27 (1) 1998, p.63.

in the Church show that women constitute an important constituent in the church in terms of numbers, participation and contribution. From the above discussion, it can be said that the issue of the democratization of charisma or shared ministry cannot be overlooked. In sum it can be said that empowering the lay people to share in mission will be a positive development in the whole process of mission and proclamation. This is an area the SVD missionaries need to delve into.

5.6 Missionaries and the Media

The pioneer SVD missionaries saw the dominant influence of the media. This explains why they established a printing press in Accra and also offered mobile cinema in the rural areas. This was a way of having a positive influence on the consciences of the people using gospel values. At their annual plenary assembly, the catholic Bishops of Ghana observed with regret the influx of violent and immoral films and video programmes in the country. These have adverse effects on the life-style, cultural and moral values of our youth. The visual media in their capacity to communicate values are to form consciences, provide role-models and motivate human behaviour and not create a culture of violence and immorality. All media houses and video centres were urged to be circumspect and selective in their desire to provide entertainment. There was further call on parents and teachers to take responsibility for programmes that children view.¹⁴¹ Despite this culture of media violence, the missionary can use it as an effective too for evangelization and mission.

¹⁴¹Ghana Bishops Speak, p.65. Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Tamale, Ghana 5-9 July, 1999.

The visual expression of Ghanaian religion especially Christianity in pictures, naming of businesses and many others in public space are becoming means of mission and evangelization. They include giant bill boards and overhead banners on streets. Originally these were in cloth and now we have digitized printing. Glossy wall posters, handbills, are on display for the public at the bus shelters and other vantage points to depict a theological mindset of success and well being. Looking at the dominant influence of the media and modern technology it can be said that this is an area the SVDs are yet to explore in aid of mission despite the fact that the pioneer missionaries were using these mediums for mission.

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