SONS OF TIV

SONS OF TIV

A Study of the Rise of the Church
Among the Tiv of Central Nigeria

EUGENE RUBINGH

BAKER BOOK HOUSE GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Printed in the United States of America

TO DARLENE

PREFACE

At the completion of the study presented in the following pages, the author looks back with astonishment at the grace of a loving God who so shaped the years that this book could be written. The kindness of many people has surrounded me in the endeavor, and I can but begin to express my gratitude here.

Among all my mentors, the name of Dr. J. H. Bavinck must hold a special place. It was his warmth and majestic vision that fired the dream of serving God in Nigeria, and gave to that dream its content. Though he was called home to his Lord before this book was written, his mark is on its pages.

Upon his successors at the Free University of Amsterdam, Professor J. Van den Berg and Professor J. Verkuyl, fell the task of supervising this study. Dr. Van den Berg stood by with great patience when an urgent call to return to Nigeria interrupted my writing for several years. The main burden of guidance and correction was then assumed by Dr. Verkuyl, and his encouragement and stimulation have been unflagging. His own missionary experience and great geniality made our rapport immediate, and time and again led on to new perspectives.

I must acnowledge my debt to many Tiv friends who tramped with me down bush trails and taught me around the evening fires and in other classrooms. I am especially indebted to Pastor J. E. I. Sai and the Sai family for permission to publish some excerpts from the late Akiga Sai's *History of the Tiv*.

The Christian Reformed Board of Missions and my supporting churches provided me with a leave of absence and a generous scholarship to make this study possible, and then mercifully left me alone. I can thank them now for such forbearance. My wife with untiring diligence deflected children and telephone calls away from my sanctum, and I owe to her love and patience more than I can say. It is to her that I now gladly give these pages.

My parents encouraged me through the many years when it seemed that this book would never be written. They shaped me with a love

both firm and tender, and somehow planted in my restless bones the seed whose fruit is this book. In the Netherlands my dear friends, Pieter and Ada Tymes, stood *in loco parentis,* and Prof. Henk and Ineke Hommes tolerated with their boundless hospitality an impatient American.

In acknowledging these kindnesses, I leave unmentioned many others from colleagues and friends who stood on all sides to help. Through them God dispensed to me his blessing and kept alive the dream of showing how he had come to the sons of Tiv.

— Eugene Rubingh

CONTENTS

I TOUCHSTONES

On April 17, 1911, Mr. Carl Zimmerman of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission of South Africa dismounted from his horse at the compound of Saai, a village of the Tiv of central Nigeria. That day the organized mission endeavor of the Christian Church first launched out to meet the sons of Tiv. Today 180,000 Tiv of this tribe of more than a million people gather each Sunday to worship under the auspices of the *Nongo u Kristu ken Sudan hen Tiv*,[1] the Tiv Church of Christ, which is the fruit now growing from that miniscule planting at Saai. The Roman Catholic Mission, which entered Tivland much later, lists its adherents in the area as 98,275,[2] though these figures include several thousand non-Tiv attenders who reside within the confines of the Diocese of Makurdi. This volume is an investigation of the problematics of church growth and mission purpose in this West African society.

The influence of the Christian faith upon the Tiv forms part of a far-reaching religious and cultural upheaval now taking place in Tivland. It is the purpose of this book to analyze this impact of the Church and Mission on the sons of Tiv, to indicate the forces which have brought them to this hour of the disintegration of the traditional tribal fabric, and to investigate the problems which now arise for the Church in this context of rapid social change. This task is complicated by the fact that traditional conceptions of the nature of the

---

[1]Literally, the Followers of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv. The somewhat incongruous presence of the term Sudan in the name is explained by the fact that the Tiv Church is one of a group of eight, all of whom are known as The Church of Christ in the Sudan, who are joined in a Fellowship (in Hausa: *Tarrayyar*) of churches in what was formerly the Northern Region of Nigeria. This area is part of that broad sub-Saharan belt running across Africa, geographically denominated the Sudan. The ideal embodied in the name is thus that all the evangelical churches of this huge area might be known by one name. It should also be remembered, more immediately, that most of these churches arose through the auspices of the Sudan United Mission, a mission made up of branches from several denominations, and in whose name the same ideal is incorporated.

[2]Courtesy, Very Rev. Donal Murray, CSSp. Vicar Capitular of the Diocese of Makurdi. According to Father Murray, out of this number of attenders, 21,111 are practising members, excluding children.

Church are themselves being called into question in our day. At the outset, therefore, it is necessary to indicate the criteria which may be used to understand and evaluate the institutions and forces now molding Tivland and the Church of Christ rising there.

The necessity of such touchstones for an analysis of the Tiv Church is inescapable. Nigeria is presently reeling from an agonizing civil war which threatens the stability of every social institution. Can the Church help to heal this fractured land, or does she emphasize its bitter divisions? Must Church and Mission now more than ever be involved in social services, or is this the time to focus explicitly on Church growth and individual salvation? What must be the Church's attitude to the world around her? Is she the refuge from all that disillusions and corrupts, or is she to spend herself *for* the world?

But not only in the lands of younger churches are the questions so stark and existential. In the older churches an urgent critique is being launched against hallowed conceptions of ecclesiology. Pomposity and irrelevance often thwart the Church in the race to reach men for Christ, and the question then arises whether petrified structures should be perpetuated on mission fields where secularization and urbanization are relentlessly reduplicating the history of the West. It is first of all necessary, therefore, to indicate the basic plane at which the present missiological problematic exists. The issue is obviously related to the criticism of the Church as irrelevant and ossified. We look first of all, therefore, at some of the features of the contemporary criticism of the Church in order to establish the touchstones for analysis of the newborn Church on the mission field.

No voice in modern times has been more outspoken in objecting to the "ecclesiastization" of Christianity than that of J. C. Hoekendijk, who finds in the doctrine of the Church neither the starting point nor the aim of Christian endeavor. The relentless grip of "churchianity" on Christian life disturbs Hoekendijk as he finds in this domination of the churchly the basis for the insufficiency of the Christian dynamic today. It is precisely this question of direction which faces Tivland as the Church matures and looks ahead. Church and Mission together must assess Hoekendijk's view of ecclesiology:

> When one wishes to speak about God's dealings with the world, the church can be mentioned only in passing and without strong emphasis. Ecclesiology cannot be more than a single paragraph from Christology and a few sentences from eschatology.[3]

It is rather, in Hoekendijk's thought, in the *apostolate* that God continues to struggle with the world, and only insofar as the Church

[3]J. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, Philadelphia, 1966, p. 40.

carries out this mission of carrying God's promises and ordinances into the world is she actually Church in a Scripturally valid way. The substance of this apostolate consists in the setting up everywhere of signs of what Hoekendijk calls kingdom-salvation, the *shalom*. The aim of the apostolate is personal salvation, but also the establishment of peace and harmony in the whole of creation as tokens of Christ's kingdom. In all of this activity the Church can be sufficiently defined by its function, which is its participation in the apostolic ministry of Christ to the whole world. This ministry is not meant to be carried on mainly through the modes and structures of the Church, since the kingdom and the world, not the Church, are the decisive poles of reference for the apostolate.[4] The Church stands between these two as a purely functional means to an end, and not as the end itself.

Hoekendijk's criticism stems also from the fact of secularization. The traditional forms of operation of the Church are questionable as an adequate means of addressing mankind today. With its esoteric jargon the Church dispenses certain moralisms and intelligence rather than the tokens of the Kingdom of God. The Church is constantly addressing the "third" man, the product of classical and "Christian" civilization, while actually the "fourth" man is already here, the man of Camus' *The Rebel,* the bored outsider, the post-Christian rejecter of all that appears phony and pompous.[5] Churchdom will never reach this man, and therefore Christians must be freed from this cloying churchianity, now the stereotype of the Christian faith. In Hoekendijk's mind, very little of the churchly is any longer salvageable.

This radical critique of the Church contains the most immediate implications for the mission enterprise. If the Churches already established have now become highly inappropriate, and incapable of effectively meeting society with Kingdom word or act, it is then the highest folly to plant more on the mission fields of the world, surely not in Africa where the faceless masses of the secular city increase by leaps and bounds. Furthermore, since the *shalom* envisions the redemption of the many planes of the creation, the diaconal services of Mission have their own rationale, geared to a Kingdom-view, rather than a rationale as primarily Church-supportive. On the most basic plane, then, the issue here posed has to do not only with the Church, but with the scope of salvation itself.

A somewhat similar critique of the traditional format of ecclesiology may be found in the works of the late E. Brunner, though Brunner

---

[4]J. Hoekendijk, *The Church in Missionary Thinking,* in: Int. Review of Missions, July, 1952, p. 335.
[5]J. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out,* Philadelphia, 1966, pp. 48-50.

differs from Hoekendijk in his view of the apostolate.[6] The early *ekklesia,* says Brunner, never understood itself to be an institution ringed with canonic law, but rather a brotherhood of the redeemed. The essential genius of the *ekklesia* was that it was a dynamic fellowship of God's people. It was never meant to be what it has tragically become, viz. a Church, where dogma and pontification have usurped the place of communion and personal encounter. The power of the Holy Spirit made the congregation into a true and living organism, the supralogical body of Christ, but through a fascination with dogma, liturgy, and institutionalization, the organism became organization, a stultified synthetic of the original. Brunner details the petrification of the *ekklesia* in these words:

> This attempt at security and replacement assumes three different forms: The living Word of God is secured and at the same time replaced — by theology and dogma; the fellowship is secured — and replaced by the institution; faith, which proves its reality in love, is secured and replaced — by a creed and a moral code.[7]

Where the Word and fellowship and the openness to new individual and corporate acts of love are truly alive, there, maintains Brunner, we find something more than the Church as it exists today. He writes,

> The community which waits in hope for the return of the Lord and which lives by faith and love in the possession of His Spirit, cannot be an institution, a church.[8]

It is apparent that these strictures apply forcefully also to the Christian Mission which often reduplicates the traditional forms of the Church on the mission field. Tivland certainly exemplifies, together with many younger churches, the trends toward increasing organizational apparatus and institutionalism. The Church is growing, in these formative years, into a mold handed down from the pioneer missionaries and she will not now easily be deflected from the forms once delivered. The Tiv Church well knows that her strength in the eyes of the people around her is her stability, her rock-like character, when all else is in flux. She thrives because she is a trusted, authoritarian home in a violent storm. Must she now imperil her growth for the sake of the future?

The criticism of the traditional structure of the Church has in-

---

[6]Brunner's thesis is that the apostolate continues only in the written deliverances of the apostles themselves. "After the death of the apostles, the apostolic office (*Apostolate*) retains its value in one way only: as providing the norm of the fundamental tradition now committed to writing, of the fundamental testimony, that of the New Testament." *The Misunderstanding of the Church,* London, 1952, p. 33.

[7]*Ibid.,* p. 53.

[8]*Ibid.,* p. 59.

tensified since the international missionary conference at Tambaram, 1938. At Tambaram the formation and collection of the body of believers within the Church was emphatically set forth as God's Mission in our world. This vision lives on in the large segment of evangelicals who find that this is supremely the age of the Church, the time when she may be etched in history as radically distinct from secular society, for she *is* strange to this world and was meant to be so by her Lord. The Church may not minimize her separateness simply in the interests of becoming more attractive to men who show themselves as increasingly rebellious against the claims of God. The diminution of the Church is at once dilution of the *skandalon*. In a world swiftly darkening with animosity, the Church, to these thinkers, must be seen clearly as a separate people, a chosen race, a drastically distinct institution. Hence *plantatio ecclesia* is now more than ever the aim of the Christian Mission.

In this connection we may cite the aim of Mission as championed by Dr. D. McGavran. A cardinal point of this author is that the establishment and growth of the Church is the basic concern of missiology, and that social permeation will then be accomplished by these younger churches themselves, rather than by missions of the older churches. This church-growth priority must never be submerged by social concern, no matter what attractive name that concern may assume.[9] The New Testament, for example, indicates that the apostles did not attack the institution of slavery, but rather spent their energies in the establishment of many churches. The time simply was not yet ripe for such kingdom work; first, the Church must be founded. Only when the yeast cells have multiplied tremendously can the dough be transformed. The greatest accession to the Church will ultimately cause the greatest Kingdom advance.[10] In a direct response to the view of Hoekendijk, McGavran writes,

> The Lord God has not chosen to plant a disembodied shalom anywhere, nor to transmit the Christian faith without the Church . . . Hence my insistence that the aim of evangelism is the planting of churches. Christ is the Evangelist, and through His obedient servants, and by other means, too, He plants multitudes of churches. The extent of *His* shalom is marked by *a multitude of churches*.[11]

Therefore McGavran vigorously opposes what he terms the "parallel" philosophy of missions whereby social amelioration, enlightenment, and philanthropic service go hand in hand with evangelism.

---

[9]D. McGavran, *Does "Concern for Social Justice" Convert?* in: Church Growth Bulletin, Palo Alto, Calif., Nov. 1964, p. 12.

[10]D. McGavran, *How Churches Grow*, London, 1959, pp. 28-29.

[11]D. McGavran, *Hoekendijk and McGavran on Evangelism*, in: Church Growth Bulletin, Palo Alto, Calif., Nov. 1964, p. 12.

Over against such a view stands what McGavran describes as the Pauline philosophy of Mission in these words:

> This holds that the central continuing purpose of the world mission is winning men and women, tribes and nations, to Jesus Christ and multiplying churches. There are no other chief ends of mission, though men may be healed and kindly deeds done as in the case of the cripple at Lystra. These, however, never form the purpose of the mission. Missionaries are not sent out to do these deeds. It is not the business of the church in Antioch to do charity in Corinth, but rather to establish churches there.[12]

The somber events of history, which have led many evangelicals to see in them an avenue for demonstration of the antithetical nature of the Church in the world, have provided other thinkers with a far different view of the Church and her stance in the world. At Willingen it was maintained (partly through Hoekendijk's influence) that the work of God must not be identified solely with the progress of the Church, as though the rest of history and this present world had been handed over to the demons. God is the Lord of all history, and his people must not separate themselves as an enclave cut off from the events of a falsely-termed "secular" history. This point of view found reaffirmation at New Delhi in Sittler's presentation of the "cosmic Christ" who speaks not only in the Church but also in the world's totality.

This quest for involvement and relevance may itself sometimes appear irrelevant in the daily life of the young church. In Tivland the immediate concerns of pastor training and inadequate finances overshadow considerations of the role of history and the ultimate rationale of institutions. Yet these are not issues solely for academic analysis. The Church may, in fact, work from a position she has not herself articulated or fully analyzed. In the Tiv Church, the following features are characteristic: (1) The Church is eager to witness in every aspect of life. The comprehensiveness of the ancient Tiv world-view, and observation of the Mission's wide ranging activities confirm her own understanding of the Scriptures in this direction. (2) At the same time, the Church is conservative and resistant to innovation. She is a bastion of changelessness and security for the insecure. The expansion must involve no threat to traditional structures or to the conception of the lordship of the Church and her antithetical stance over against the world.

These two characteristics are on collision course. The new challenges emerging today (of the cities, for example, and the universities) will demand basic innovations and threaten the Establishment. The alternative is to preserve her traditional stance and limit expan-

[12] D. McGavran, *How Churches Grow*, London, 1959, p. 71.

sion to the old forms. This she is equally unwilling to do. Thus, a direction must be sought and a decision made. Just here the rationale of institutions and the role of history become existential concerns.

This conviction regarding the role of history as fully relevant to the Church's Mission is stated by L. Newbigin in these terms:

> The Gospel of God, with which both Testaments are concerned, does not refer merely to one of the strands of man's cultural history. It refers to the beginning and end of all things and therefore to the real meaning of all that happens. It follows that there cannot be absolute separation between the history of our redemption and the sacred story of the Old and New Testaments, the story of the Church, and the whole story of mankind. The Bible does not make such a separation.[13]

In answer to the charge that this is a "theology of defeat," a capitulation to the resistance of the world, with tendencies toward syncretism, Newbigin counters that the assertion of the discontinuity of the Church and the world is not the *only* affirmation to be made regarding every situation. Rather, "what is required is an understanding of the relation between what God has done — uniquely and finally — and what he is doing in the life of mankind as a whole."[14] A far more living danger confronting the Church in this age is the specter of ghettoism, the separate enclaves of Christians who talk only to themselves in esoteric jargon, a "practical withdrawal into the position of a tolerated and static minority."[15]

The uniqueness of the Gospel is not in any sense sacrificed in this view, according to Newbigin. Rather it is time to recapture the sense of the *trinitarian nature of the Biblical message.* Christians must again acknowledge the full meaning of the Father as the Creator and Controller of the universe. Mission is *to* the world and *for* the Kingdom; it must not be reduced to the snatching of coals from the fire to be placed in the bosom of the Church.

Likewise the fact of Pentecost and the acknowledgement of the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead the Christian into the matrix of the world. Dr. H. Boer has pointed out that the central importance of Pentecost has long been subordinated in missionary thinking to another Biblical datum — Christ's giving of the Great Commission. In actuality, maintains Boer, it was Pentecost, and not the giving of the Great Commission, which conferred upon the early Christians the inspiration for missionary advance whereby Mission was seen to be the very essence of the Church and not simply one of its activities in response to one of several mandates. The Great Commission was

---

[13]L. Newbigin, *Trinitarian Faith and Today's Mission,* Richmond, 1964, p. 24.
[14]*Ibid.*, p. 28.
[15]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

simply an unrepeated command naturally and necessarily executed, even as the cultural mandate in the Old Testament never had to be repeated, but formed a law of man's life flowing from his human nature.[16] In fact, writes Boer, the Great Commission "derives its meaning and power wholly and exclusively from the Pentecost event."[17] The power of the Spirit drives men to witness, and so naturally the Great Commission is carried out.

The acceptance of the trinitarian basis implies that the aim of Mission is the establishment of the Kingdom of God. The diaconal services manifest the restoration of the wholeness of God's creation. This witness should never be confused with merely humanitarian philanthropy nor with the "perfecting" of an already existing Church Rather it is the obedience of the children of the triune God who seek to demonstrate the eschatological Kingdom in this present world. The salvation which God wills may therefore never be confined only to the forgiveness of sins of the individual sinner, but includes the whole of the cosmos. It must reach out to include what Prof. J. Verkuyl has termed the "macrostructures" of society, that is, the fundamental social, economic, and political ways of life of the community and even of the state.[18] It is here that the Lordship of Christ finds its fullest manifestation, and this witness takes the complete Lordship of Christ with the fullest seriousness. In Hoekendijk's words,

> It is not permissible to spiritualize the statement that Jesus Christ is Lord; and that he came that they "might have life and have it more abundantly" may not be reduced to the forgiveness of sins.[19]

We are now in a position to summarize the major facets of this polarity of thought concerning the nature of Christian Mission. First of all, the types of activity in which Mission engages are at issue here. Yet the answer to this problem, we have seen, rests on a prior understanding of the nature of the Church and its stance over against the world. Even this posing of the problem does not reach the most fundamental plane on which the issue must be faced. The most basic plane of evaluation has to do with *the nature and scope of salvation*. This is the issue that stands at the heart of the modern missiological problematic.

The definition given to salvation is determinative for all the work a mission sets out to perform. If salvation is taken to refer to the spiritual rescue of the sinner, then the diaconal aspects of Mission

---

[16] H. Boer, *Pentecost and the Missionary Witness of the Church*, Franeker, 1955, p. 116.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[18] J. Verkuyl, *Daar en Nu*. Kampen, 1966, pp. 22-23.
[19] J. Hoekendijk, quoted in K. Bockmühl, *Die Neuere Missionstheologie*, Stuttgart, 1964, p. 14 (my translation).

find the genius of their service as Church-supportive; their aim is to attract men to this individual and spiritual salvation. This may naturally be accomplished in a variety of ways, for example, through providing an opening wedge into a hostile environment in order to secure a hearing for a later presentation of the message of salvation. They may serve to curry the approval of a government through the means of hospitals and schools, so that the presentation of this message may continue unabated. Their work is frankly to support those who carry the Gospel, and they may themselves provide an arena for this preaching. Yet in this view it is always the deliverance of the individual soul from condemnation that constitutes salvation.

It is necessary therefore, to concern ourselves at this point with the scope of God's salvation, and the mandate for Mission that follows from that understanding. We shall deal with this problem under three headings:

A. God's Salvation
B. God's World
C. God's Priorities

A. GOD'S SALVATION

Nigeria today is experiencing the horror of civil war. Even without war the adjustments to the new age were agonizing as ancient cultures collapsed and the young discarded venerable folkways and restraints. Yet now the specter of death, destruction, and grinding poverty confronts a land where the Church is a relatively new institution and where she purposes to bring new hope. Her attitude and action are in the balance as never before as she leaps into the new age. The nature of her proclamation has reached an hour of new testing. It is therefore not superfluous to indicate the scope of the salvation that is hers to preach and exemplify. We contend that this salvation cannot be restricted to the incorporation of individuals into the body of Christ or to the forgiveness of sins. It extends as the aim of the *missio dei* to the redemption of the universe. It is this majestic breadth of salvation which is shared by even the humblest local church. The immediate and compelling fact of "lost souls" must not dim for any church that vision of the Scriptures.

Certainly in the early pages of the Old Testament, deliverance from defeat in battle or other calamity formed the most prominent aspect of salvation.[20] There are many instances of this salvation, but the most dramatic deliverance which would burn forever in Israel's memory was the salvation from the bondage of the Egyptians (Exod.

[20]The Hebrew *yasha'* to save, engrained in the history and language of Israel in the name Joshua, prototype of Jesus, the Savior.

14:30, *"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians,"* etc.). This deliverance was not only individual, but communal and national, for Jehovah was the God of the armies of Israel (Deut. 20:4, *"For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies to save you,"* AV; the RSV has *"to give you the victory"*).[21]

Salvation for Israel is not, however, only victory in battle, but is extended also to the troubles of life in this world (I Sam. 10:19, *"But you have this day rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses"*).[22] In the positive sense, temporal success and prosperity are also definite characteristics of God's salvation (Ps. 118:25, *"Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, we beseech thee, give us success!"*).

With the deposition of the prophetic writings a deepening line of judgment comes into conjunction with the line of blessing and victory for Israel. This increasing emphasis upon the ethical significance of life is bound up with the Messianic hope, for the Messiah will come as the Savior of the faithful remnant. The salvation as victory in battle and as temporal prosperity are still in evidence, though the reward is less and less in the immediate future, and comes only after the judgment of faithless Israel. The deliverance is not merely from calamity, but from the sin which is seen to lie at the root of all calamity (Ezek. 36:29, *"I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses"*). Sin is tied to the brokenness of Israel's life. This deepening of the understanding of salvation does not imply that the compass of salvation is being restricted, but rather seen as broadened to include the Spirit. With this coming of the Messianic hope the compass of the salvation is broadened in another way as well, for even the wilderness and the dry land shall then be glad, and the desert rejoice and bloom (Isa. 35:1). The present order of things is transformed by this salvation, which culminates in the new heaven and the new earth (Isa. 66:22). It is therefore inaccurate to suggest that with the coming of the Messianic expectation, the transformation of the world order is left behind, and the material is transcended in favor of a completely spiritual salvation. Such a view is not the vision of the prophets.[23] We therefore accept the conclusion of R. Girdlestone

[21]Salvation in this sense of temporal deliverance from the enemy is vividly stated in I Sam. 4:3; 9:16; II Kings 14:27; I Chron. 16:35.

[22]Cf. Calvin's dedicatory statement in the Institues, addressed to King Francis: "Yet shall we in patience possess our souls, and wait for the mighty hand of the Lord, which undoubtedly will in time appear, and show itself armed for the deliverance of the poor from their affliction." J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Allen Translation), Vol. I, p. 40. Cf. also Ps. 34:6; 107:13.

[23]J. H. Bavinck, *Introduction to the Science of Missions*, Grand Rapids, 1960, p. 35, "Old Testament prophecy regards Messianic salvation as including both the spiritual renewing and glorification of Israel and also the spontaneous coming of the heathen and the radical transformation of the world order."

regarding the use of *yasha'* in the Old Testament, viz. that it "includes divinely bestowed deliverance from every class of spiritual and temporal evil to which mortal man is subjected."[24]

This deepening and widening of the understanding of salvation continues in the New Testament. There salvation for mankind is *"to be conformed to the image of his Son"* (Rom. 8:29).[25] On the side of internal depth, the individual and moral aspects of salvation are enriched. Salvation is through faith, a fact Jesus stressed over against the work-righteousness of the Pharisees. It is hence possible so to spiritualize this salvation that it is completely taken up in the forgiveness of sins and the freedom from condemnation at the last day. In the teaching of Christ, however, to be saved is preeminently to enter the Kingdom of God, on the one hand a supramundane kingdom, yet in an equally significant way present already (Matt. 12:28, *"The kingdom of God has come upon you"*).

It was precisely this aspect of the teaching of Jesus that so disturbed the Jews who had transmuted the thought of the Kingdom of God into the future, since the earthly triumph seemed so inaccessible. They did, of course, desire the Kingdom to be a present reality, but not in the sense that Jesus suggested, a sense devoid of pomp and earthly glory. This situation can easily be confused, as though the Jews looked for a concrete, earthly kingdom, while Jesus taught a spiritual and future kingdom. Actually, it was the Jews who thought of Jehovah in terms of transcendent attributes and approachable only through the mediation of the ceremonial law, and it was Jesus who transformed this purely transcendent and distant concept with his emphasis on a loving Father who exercised detailed and loving care over his world (Matt. 10:29-31, *". . . you are of more value than many sparrows"*). Likewise, in place of a purely future salvation, discernible only at the day of judgment, salvation is present even now (Luke 19:9, *"Today salvation has come to this house"*). Jesus is not the preacher of a solely *jenseitig* salvation; he constantly brought the Jews back to earth to understand that salvation was also here and now.

Nor should we miss this comprehensiveness in the Pauline emphasis on justification by faith. The need for spiritual conversion over against the merit of the works of the flesh must not be allowed to obscure the fact that growth in sanctification is vital in Paul's soteriology. Through it the "old man" is put off, and the believer bears the fruit of the spirit here and now (Gal. 5:22-26). This moral force in the believer's life is the real test of salvation (Rom. 8:13, *"If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you*

[24]R. Girdlestone, *Synonymns of the Old Testament*, reprinted Grand Rapids, 1951, p. 125.

[25]W. Foerster, art: *sozo*, *ThWNT*, VII, p. 993.

will live"). Furthermore, the whole of the discourses on the resurrection in the Pauline writings (and Paul deals with this theme even more than he deals with Christ's passion) join salvation and newness of life (Rom. 6:12-14). To view salvation as solely justification by faith and pardon for sin demeans the importance of the new life as holiness. Paul had no such view.

We can now consider salvation in the New Testament also from the side of its external breadth. Here the fact of the Kingdom of God is of paramount importance. In the healing of the sick and the casting out of demons, we see the breaking down of Satan's kingdom and the giving of the tokens of order and wholeness which belong to the Kingdom of God (Luke 11:20). At the time when Jesus announced his mission in the synagogue of Nazareth, his words were from Isaiah 61, as found in Luke 4:18, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has appointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."* It simply will not do to cast this statement into terms of "symbolic" language. Jesus himself did not do so. When the emissaries of John the Baptist came to inquire concerning his Messiahship, Jesus' answer was, *"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them"* (Luke 7:22). Christ's kingdom is, furthermore, both supramundane and in this present world. Matthew writes of the Kingdom of Heaven with its heavenly rewards (Matt. 5:12, *"Your reward is great in heaven . . ."*), heavenly treasures (Matt. 6:20), and Christ says forthrightly to Pilate, *"My kingship is not of this world"* (John 18:36). It is equally true, however, that Jesus taught that the Kingdom was also already present.[26] Wherever men demonstrate the quality of the supramundane Kingdom, there the Kingdom is a living fact. (Cf. Luke 10:11, where Jesus commands the seventy themselves to proclaim the words, *"Know this, that the kingdom of God has come near."*)

This emphasis is equally prominent in the demonstration of Christ's power over the demons. The exorcisms are parables of Christ's saving mission in conflict with the emissaries of Satan, who has invaded the excellent creation of God and placed his own diabolic manifesto there. The exorcisms are thus the obvious and dramatic signs that Satan's hegemony is in principle already demolished.[27] In

[26]See Luke 17:21 where AV has, *"the Kingdom of God in within you."* That Jesus would state this to the Pharisees is incomprehensible, and RSV gives the idea more lucidly as *"the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you,"* for Christ himself was there present.

[27]Mark 3:26-27; Luke 10:17-18.

Christ's exorcisms we see his comprehensive power, liberating the creation from the bondage of evil.

The breadth of salvation may be mined also from the thought of Paul. Here salvation clearly reaches out beyond this earth to include the totality of the universe. The whole creation is now subject to malfunction and pain, but this is not its permanent condition; here, too, there is deliverance in the offing. In Paul's mind, Christ is the mediator of a salvation truly cosmic, and this is to be the grand sweep of God's purpose. This purpose is to reconcile all things to God in every part of the cosmos, a consummate plan to place all things once again in their essential unity (Col. 1:20, *"Through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven"; cf.* also Eph. 1:10). This is true of mankind, but also of the created order (Rom. 8:21, *"The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay"*). Finally, all death and decay, the destroyers of the beauty of the universe, will be abolished and the universe itself will be redeemed (I Cor. 15:25-28).

O. Cullman speaks of this redemption as "completion." That is to say, redemption is the completion of the eschatological drama in which all things are made new. It is this towards which history tends, now that the decisive event of redemption has already occurred. Into this eschatological outworking everything is drawn. He writes: "Primitive Christianity, in spite of all of its concentration upon the redemptive line in the narrower sense, or rather on the basis of this concentration, has in view the *entire world process.*"[28] Already at the creation the world was joined to Christ (Col. 1:16, *". . . for in him all things were created. . ."*). So also in the eschatological completion shall all things be subjected to him who is all in all (Col. 3:11).[29] This is the consummation of the Biblical vision of salvation; the final scenes of the Bible picture the heavenly kingdom in the imagery of the earthly, and there the last scene is the universal completion of the plan of salvation. In this consummation the work of Christ finds its unity, enclosing all time and reality in the purpose of God's glory.

This understanding of salvation has the most fundamental implications for the practise of Mission. Mission is nothing else than God's work carried on through the sending of men. G. Vicedom writes: "The Missio Dei is the work of God through which everything that He has in mind for man's salvation — the complete fullness of His kingdom of redemption — is offered through those whom He has sent."[30] The meaning of this understanding of salvation for the Mis-

[28]O. Cullman, *Christ and Time,* Philadelphia, 1950, p. 178.
[29]*Ibid.,* p. 81.
[30]G. Vicedom, *The Mission of God,* St. Louis, 1965, p. 45.

[illegible] Samuel M. Warren, former secretary [illegible] According to Warren,

> [illegible] the world as we know it is that the world shall be [illegible] which shall lead to true unity in the unity [illegible] Saviour and Redeemer. [illegible] of God as a finite embodiment in [illegible] the part of the Christian individual, the Christian [illegible] Church."

Warren's view is that the Christian Mission "is in fact proclaiming that God is [illegible] to show that any aspect of man's life is outside the range of the Christian Mission."[3] There is no other conclusion which can follow from the essential fact of salvation:

> The great end in which creation is moved by the will of God is not the restoration of mankind to such status quo of the natural order but the redeeming of all the spiritual possibilities of creatures into a new heaven and a new earth, the City of God.[4]

Because Mission is God's work in this world through the sending of men for its fulfilment, the source of true motivation is determinative for the course of Mission. As the motivation is rooted in the Christian Mission has a Kingdom orientation. The work involves calling men from external union to eternal life and the result is unity and peace in the universal realm now subjected to the dominion of the Sanctified. This involves an emphasis on the immediate emergence of ignorance and illness through healing and medicine, through literacy and organization. So with these instruments Mission has not announced the reign of the Kingdom. Here is the real challenge for overbearing Missions to maintain the Kingdom of God as the result of man's work. [illegible] of government, and its ultimate establishment. None of this [illegible] the Kingdom [illegible] Mission to that end. [illegible] Christ [illegible] in the world.

[illegible] Western churches and [illegible] capital and [illegible] missionary movement. The [illegible] the same. For [illegible] will exhibit [illegible] the Christian [illegible] into the [illegible]

That this program staggers the imagination may be true. The sense of despair and lack of accomplishment that follow from it is humbling. One need but consider that the Christian Church is made up of people holding the most challenging Gospel in history and having the most tremendous spiritual and material resources at their disposal. Then the reduction of the vision becomes truly frightening. Yet to act now according to the Biblical principle is the one imperative, with faith that God will yet bless wherever His work is being done. One is reminded of the words of Alexander Duff, "We are only playing at missions." The radical call to total Mission challenges the Church to change that judgment.

B. GOD'S WORLD

The positive attitude toward the salvation of the world is also reflected in the Scriptural idea of the cosmos. In making an assessment of the world, the question arises, does the world stand under Satan's authority as the foe of the Church or is the world the Church's friend-in-need? One strand of thought views the Church as the veritable antithesis of the world. *"In the world you have tribulation,"* said Christ, *"but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). The Kingdoms of the Prince of Darkness and the Prince of Peace grow side by side until the final day, when each shall receive its reward. The obligation of the Christian Mission is to say to men, "Come ye out from among them." Christian duty revolves around the effort to tear men from the spiritual ruin of the world.

This view of the Christians as the *tertium quid* was brought forward already by Tertullian in his *De Idololatria.* Almost every profession brings obstacles to Christians in the world here below. Thus neither the astrologist nor the sculptor can carry on their professions after conversion. Teachers and professors must also teach concerning false gods and faiths in order to be successful, and so these professions, too, are virtually closed to Christians in the public context. Is successful commerce possible? Hardly; the commercial entrepreneur soon becomes subject to the temptation of earthly gain. Nevertheless God will take care of his people, even though they leave such worldly pursuits. *Fides famen non timent.*[34]

In the *Apologia* of Justin Martyr, we find a greatly differing view of the world. In the past, he maintains, the people deified the demonic powers until polytheism was rampant among the barbarians. But thinkers such as Socrates lashed out against these fantasies, and in this protest Socrates was led by the Logos. That which the Greek philosophers saw vaguely, the Christians have now brought into the

[34]Tertullian, *De Idololatria,* IX, X, XI.

sion enterprise is also stressed by Canon M. Warren, former secretary of the Church Missionary Society. According to Warren,

> God's will for the world, as we know, is that the world shall be saved, and shall be made whole, shall find its true unity in the unity of its response to the God who is Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. The Christian Mission is this will of God as it finds embodiment in active obedience on the part of the Christian individual, the Christian group, and the Christian Church.[31]

Warren's view is that the Christian Mission "is in fact proclaiming that God is One, refusing to allow that any aspect of man's life is outside the range of the Christian Mission."[32] There is no other conclusion which can follow from the essential fact of salvation:

> The great end to which creation is moved by the will of God is not the rescue of numbers of individuals out of the natural order but the redeeming of all the myriad relationships of existence into a new heaven and a new earth, the City of God.[33]

Because Mission is God's work in this world through the sending of men for salvation, the scope of that salvation is determinative for the scope of Mission. As the salvation is cosmic, so the Christian Mission has a Kingdom mandate. Its work involves calling men from eternal death to eternal life, but also the attack on misery and chaos in the created order, now subjected to the incursions of the Satanic. This involves an invasion into the immediate problems of ignorance and disease through schools and hospitals, through literacy and orphanages, but with these institutions Mission has not exhausted the reach of her imperative. Here lie the vast challenges yet confronting Mission to manifest the Kingdom of God in the areas of man's work, his manner of government, and his esthetic development. None of this militates against the urgent necessity for individual conversion, yet the Biblical view of salvation allows no restriction of Mission to that one line alone. The cosmos is the Lord's; he wills its salvation. Christian Mission is that *Missio Dei* in the world.

That Mission is not simply the task of Western churches and their missions overseas. The fact that younger churches lack capital and trained staff *removes* nothing from their missionary character. The scope of the salvation they proclaim and manifest is the same. For the Tiv Church this means that in this hour of testing she will exhibit to the eyes of thousands watching, that salvation reaches into the concrete spiritual and social needs of a tortured land.

[31] M. Warren, *The Christian Mission*, London, 1951, p. 61.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

That this program staggers the imagination may be true. The sense of despair and lack of accomplishment that follow from it is humbling. One need but consider that the Christian Church is made up of people holding the most challenging Gospel in history and having the most tremendous spiritual and material resources at their disposal. Then the reduction of the vision becomes truly frightening. Yet to act now according to the Biblical principle is the one imperative, with faith that God will yet bless wherever His work is being done. One is reminded of the words of Alexander Duff, "We are only playing at missions." The radical call to total Mission challenges the Church to change that judgment.

B. GOD'S WORLD

The positive attitude toward the salvation of the world is also reflected in the Scriptural idea of the cosmos. In making an assessment of the world, the question arises, does the world stand under Satan's authority as the foe of the Church or is the world the Church's friend-in-need? One strand of thought views the Church as the veritable antithesis of the world. *"In the world you have tribulation,"* said Christ, *"but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). The Kingdoms of the Prince of Darkness and the Prince of Peace grow side by side until the final day, when each shall receive its reward. The obligation of the Christian Mission is to say to men, "Come ye out from among them." Christian duty revolves around the effort to tear men from the spiritual ruin of the world.

This view of the Christians as the *tertium quid* was brought forward already by Tertullian in his *De Idololatria.* Almost every profession brings obstacles to Christians in the world here below. Thus neither the astrologist nor the sculptor can carry on their professions after conversion. Teachers and professors must also teach concerning false gods and faiths in order to be successful, and so these professions, too, are virtually closed to Christians in the public context. Is successful commerce possible? Hardly; the commercial entrepreneur soon becomes subject to the temptation of earthly gain. Nevertheless God will take care of his people, even though they leave such worldly pursuits. *Fides famen non timent.*[34]

In the *Apologia* of Justin Martyr, we find a greatly differing view of the world. In the past, he maintains, the people deified the demonic powers until polytheism was rampant among the barbarians. But thinkers such as Socrates lashed out against these fantasies, and in this protest Socrates was led by the Logos. That which the Greek philosophers saw vaguely, the Christians have now brought into the

[34]Tertullian, *De Idololatria,* IX, X, XI.

clear light of day. The activity of God in the world and in the currents of history is vigorously affirmed.[35]

This ancient divergence of Christian thought has continued in various forms into the present era. The aims of Mission have thus been described by the assessment of the nature of the world. The well-known triad of Voetius, *conversio gentilium, plantatio ecclesia,* and *gloria et manifestatio gratiae divinae,* was an attempt to unite both strands, but the third member of the triad was often subsumed under the first two. Beyerhaus has shown, for example, how this was true in the thought of Henry Venn and his pioneering of the "church-centric" view which must replace the "mission-centric" view with its tendency towards civilizing men rather than planting the Church.[36] Rufus Anderson, while emphasizing the local church over against Venn's more diocesan view, nevertheless viewed the civilizing activities of the Mission as a hindrance, a tying down parallel to the tying of the early Church to the Jewish law.[37]

In our own century the missionary attitude toward the world has undergone a wide evolution. The renascence of the slumbering religions and the rise of nationalism, coupled with the forces of rootlessness and the crumbling of standards, have influenced Mission thought and strategy regarding the world. One of the mountaintops of that development is Edinburgh, 1910. In the words of Bishop Neill, "Edinburgh 1910, was indeed the beginning of an epoch — the epoch of reflection and ecumenical cooperation; at the same time it was the end of an epoch — the epoch of the glad and confident expansion of the Christian missionary enterprise."[38] In the papers of the conference one can read of the secularization of education, the rise of a godless technology, the coming of a nationalism inimical to foreign missionary effort, and a world-wide trend toward indifference. The problem of the attitude of the Christian Mission toward the world was at issue there.

All these destructive forces were considered at Edinburgh more pragmatically than theologically. No real consensus regarding the Christian view of the world emerges; however, the path that reflection would take is intimated in the report on education and mission schools (Report 4). Here the question posed is, Shall education by the mission be carried on for purposes of conversion alone, or to bring peoples out of poverty and barbarism as well? Must the Church (that is, the Church school) permeate society with Christian ideals? Roland Allen's reflections on these questions a decade and a half

---

[35]Justin Martyr, *Apologia,* II, 8, 10.
[36]P. Beyerhaus, *Die Selbständigkeit der jungen Kirchen als missionarisches Problem,* Wuppertal-Barmen, 1959, p. 43.
[37]*Ibid.,* p. 53.
[38]S. Neill, *The Unfinished Task,* London, 1957, p. 149.

later exhibit one form of the answer. If the community adopts Christian morals and ideals without really accepting Christ, says Allen, the people may well become altogether immune to the radical challenge of the cross. Regarding mission educators Allen wrote:

> They have professed a desire to use (the schools) not directly for the immediate conversion of their pupils, but rather so to influence their minds that society might become permeated with moral and religious ideas which could indeed be accepted by non-Christians, but which would in the long run tend to open the way for the acceptance of their religion.[39]

Allen rejects this attitude toward dealing with the world, for while he does not combat the principle of the permeation of society as such, in practise such a method will prove harmful to the Church:

> Mission institutions, which admit large numbers of non-Christians without converting them, naturally educate some opponents of the religion which they represent.[40]

Allen's concern over the direction which missionary thinking was taking was not put to rest by Jerusalem, 1928. The call to present Christ in all of His meaning for all of the nations of the world could be taken up in various ways, and many saw in such a program the advance of a liberal tide. In the famous words of Bishop Neill, "Jerusalem, 1928, was the lowest valley out of which the missionary movement has ever since been trying to make its way."[41] The implications of the call for communal dialogue with other religions, and the questioning of overt evangelism were disturbing features to many who saw in this new attitude a diminished respect for the finality of the Christian faith. This fundamental divergence of views regarding the nature of the world is the theological hallmark of Jerusalem, 1928.

The next decade produced serious reflection on the nature of the Christian message. The *Laymen's Report* openly expressed much that was in the air at the Jerusalem conference in terms of the sharing of religious goods with men of other faiths, and Kraemer's *The Christian Message* was a rousing call for a return to witness to the act of God in Christ as the antithesis to the evolutionism of Hocking. At Tambaram, 1938, the power of sin and the chaotic was taken with far more seriousness than had been the case at Jerusalem. A world-wide program of all religions to combat secularism was no longer entertained as a viable option. W. Andersen writes:

---

[39]R. Allen, *Education in the Native Church*, London, 1925, p. 15.
[40]*Loc. cit.*
[41]S. Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

> Secularism, about which, in contrast to Jerusalem, 1928, comparatively little was said, appeared now more definitely as an anti-Christian force; and the non-Christian religions were regarded not so much as a sign of man's yearning after God as the expression of his fallen condition and of his rebellion against God.[42]

Over against this development of thought regarding the Church and the world in the earlier mission conferences stands the reaction to Tambaram that we have alluded to in the thought of Hoekendijk. This centrality of the Church in the missionary movement disturbed Hoekendijk, who found in the grasp of this teaching a deflection of the Messianic thought of the Kingdom-for-the-world, so that in the usual formulation, the world was considered in the most negative terms as the Christian's enemy. Rather, says Hoekendijk,

> World (*kosmos/oikumene*) and Kingdom are correlated to each other; the world is conceived of as a unity, the scene of God's great acts; it is the *world* which has been reconciled (II Cor. 5:19), the *world* which God loves (John 3:16) and which he has overcome in his love (John 16:33), the *world* is the field in which the seeds of the Kingdom are sown (Matt. 13:38) — the world is consequently the scene for the proclamation of the Kingdom.[43]

The problem that emerges from this citation is obviously that the world is often presented in the Scriptures as unworthy of the Christian's affection. Devotion to the world produces a temper of mind which falsely estimates values (I Cor. 4:13, *"we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world"*). The mind of this world inflames man's pride and confuses his estimate of men (I Cor. 1: 27-28). One can go even farther; the world is in fact incapable of receiving the Spirit of truth at all (John 14:17, *"Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive . . ."*), for this world has another spirit (I Cor. 2:12, *". . . we have received not the spirit of the world . . ."*), while the disciples are *"not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"* (John 15:19). It is in St. John especially that "world" is used in this somber light. The world indicates the mass of men who are hostile to the truth (John 7:7, *". . . it hates me . . ."*). In the most radical sense the world is thus the domain of Satan (I John 5:19, *". . . the whole world is in the power of the evil one"*). It is therefore the unavoidable duty of Christians to fight the world and to overcome it (I John 5:4, *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world"*).

It is evident that we confront more than one denotation for the term *kosmos* in the Biblical evidence. The underlying meaning is that of *the universe,* the sum of all created beings and things, universal

---

[42]W. Andersen, *Toward a Theology of Mission,* London, 1955, p. 32.
[43]J. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out,* Philadelphia, 1960, p. 41.

space and everything in it. In this sense it is also a synonym for *oikumene*. But more than this, the cosmos is also the world which is now estranged from its Creator and Lord. It is thus the theater not only of history, but of salvation history. It is for this reason that the New Testament avoids the use of the term *kosmos* when speaking of the world to come. Because of the universally shattering impact of sin, "there arises the distinctive nuance which has ever after clung to the word *kosmos* in the New Testament and the Church. The world is the epitome of unredeemed creation. It has become the enemy of God."[44]

The passages noted above have thus become determinative for a distinct view of Mission over against the world. God's people must be delivered from this hostile world and taken to the shelter of the Church ("Hide me, O my Savior, hide,/ Til the storms of life are past," goes the well-known hymn).[45] The Church is God's enclave in the midst of a belligerent environment, and hence a mission's effort must be directed toward the birth and development of the separate people in every place.[46]

It is, however, the same St. John who records the words of Christ that God loved the world, and that he came that it might be saved. Such passages suggest that the world cannot be thought of only as the domain of Satan, and that the deepest meaning of *kosmos* lies elsewhere. That is true because in spite of the incursions of the Evil One, the world is yet incorporated into God's cosmos, as the place where his own plan is worked out. His *kosmos* is the wise arrangement of all that exists outside of himself in his creation. God created this cosmos with beauty and harmony and has ever showered upon it many tokens of his love. His children can but reflect that love, and as God loves the world, so do they. Satan, however, has injected into this world another plan, an arrangement of disorder and chaos. He thus sets out to usurp the Lordship of Christ and to erect, in the place of the domain of God, his own kingdom. He is the deceiver, the surrogate, for the cosmos is not his: his is only a pseudo-claim presented to man with all the enticements at his command. The world is therefore filled with temptation for man whose fascination with per-

---

[44]H. Sasse, art. *Kosmos, ThWNT*, Eng. Tranl., Vol. 3, Grand Rapids, 1965, p. 893.

[45]Writes Melvin Hodges concerning the Pentecostal view of social involvement, "His coming will solve the problems of the social order." The point is apparent: With Christ's coming imminent, the Church need not get deeply involved in the problems of the social order. cf. *A Pentecostal's View of Mission Strategy*, Int. Rev. of Missions, July, 1968, p. 310.

[46]As, for example, A. McLeish, *Objective and Method in Christian Expansion*, London, 1952, p. 10, "The only objective of the Christian cause is to call into existence the fellowship of the Church as an agent of the Holy Spirit," and p. 12, "I see in the maintenance and expansion of the church the one end and object of the total impact of its witness on the world."

sonal pride and aggrandizement is encouraged by the Evil One. Man succumbs to the false estimate of values that Satan insinuates into the world. Yet the earth is the Lord's and they that dwell therein.

When the sinner accepts the Gospel, however, his previous estimate of the world is transformed. He sees Christ as rightful Lord of the cosmos, and rejects the usurper Satan. He denies the claims of the Prince of Darkness and dethrones him. The Christian is thus alienated from the world, from the entire system of values which was his in his enslavement to the Satanic. In this sense the Christian is estranged from Satan's arrangement which enslaves and corrupts. At the same time the Christian realizes that the world is the Lord's and is to be consecrated for the building of his Kingdom. The world under Satan's hegemony must be utterly rejected, for he who loves it cannot love the Father (I John 2:15-17). In the mind of the child of God, however *that* cosmos is crucified (Gal. 6:14), and in its place the Christian sees God's Kingdom rising (Rom. 14:17).

It is precisely in this view of the cosmos that the significance of Christ's death is beyond measure. He has gained the victory over the entire cosmos of Satan, for that cosmos is spurious. Satan's arrangement works itself out in the rebellious heart of man and in the world to its deadly and inevitable fruits. This sinful arrangement, under God's curse, meant death, the death which Christ assumed (Gal. 3:13). In Christ, the curse is overcome and the arrangement of God breaks through in victory. The death of Christ is truly cosmic in its significance (John 8:12, *"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness"*; cf. also John 3:33, 51, and II Cor. 5:19). Through Christ God's cosmic plan is proclaimed and realized, and Satan's hoax exploded.

It is on this basis that the injunction not to love the world does not contradict the truth that God loves the world. Likewise, Christians love God's world and detest Satan's spurious world. They practise both world denial and world affirmation. Believers do not identify themselves with the passing institutions of this world, but rather establish in them the features of another Kingdom which is their home. This they do now, because Christ is Lord now. O. Cullman has pointed out emphatically that the center of the redemption line lies not in the future, but in the fact that the resurrected Christ rules as Lord. Hence the Christian need never deny the world which is the Lord's. Where this happened, as at Thessalonica, eschatological extremism replaced the emphasis on the Lordship of Christ over the present hour. The view of the New Testament is rather that the world is "already" the dominion of Christ, even while its present transient form is passing away.[47]

[47]O. Cullman, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

The conclusion to be drawn from this understanding of the world can now be stated. The *Missio Dei* is to manifest the Kingdom, to expose Satan's kingdom for what it is, for the world is salvable. The elect are not to be called out of the world, but rather God's Kingdom is to be built wherever they are. In terms of the Christian Mission, this means that the diaconal aspects of Mission are not merely church-supportive, nor are they merely the opening wedge for a later presentation of salvation. Schools and hospitals are *themselves* engaged in the work of bringing into the world the Kingdom of God.

Even more than this is involved. Mission includes witness in the most basic structures of society. Every community exhibits areas for witness in the basic ways men construct their world-views, in politics, economics, esthetics, and all of what has sometimes contemptuously been termed "social work." It must be pointed out that the Bible presents a social Gospel as well as a personal Gospel. The social Gospel has been the subject of intense criticism, but that criticism must not take the form of a minimizing of the Gospel's ministry to society. The present return to a Biblical emphasis on the trinitarian basis of Mission supports an outreach thought of in terms of society and the cosmos. The world in its widest outlines stands open for salvation. The healing of the brokenness, the amelioration of the chaotic, is a chapter in the struggle against the Prince of Darkness. The trinitarian basis of Mission demands this conclusion. It is also the conclusion which follows from our study of God's world as described in Scripture.

C. GOD'S PRIORITIES

The scope of God's salvatory plan is cosmic and his love is extended to that cosmos, even though a usurper now stands upon the earth to set up a pseudo-kingdom. Christian Mission seeks to carry out the will of God the Sender and this is reflected in the cosmic mandate that devolves upon her for the establishment of God's Kingdom.

Such a basis provides considerable latitude for criticism of the Church and her effort in the past. It is evident that the Church has not sought to carry out her mandate with sufficient appreciation of the scope of the challenge before her. This is something else than a plea for the comprehensive approach. The term comprehensive approach in itself says very little as to the rationale for Christian evangelism. The end may be thought of solely in terms of the establishment of the Church as the repository of God's love. Acceptance of the comprehensive approach does not in itself mean an appreciation of God's love for His world or an understanding of the extent of salvation.

At the same time, though we are aware of the smallness of vision which has sometimes marked the history of the mission enterprise of

the Church, nevertheless we must analyze somewhat further the intense criticism of the Church which has been noted above. We have noted that Brunner lashed the Church of the present day for supposing that she is the continuation of the New Testament *ekklesia*. It is in that *ekklesia* that Brunner finds the aim of God's dealings with man. The *ekklesia* was never to be thought of simply as a means; it is impossible, says Brunner, "to describe the Church as a means to a higher end. The fellowship of Christians is just as much an end in itself as is their fellowship with Christ."[48] The *ekklesia* "has its goal in itself and is not there to serve a further end."[49]

The denigration of the contemporary Church thus goes hand in hand, in Brunner's thought, with the elevation of the *ekklesia*, which is the all-embracing goal of the Christian's activity. This is because it is in the *ekklesia* that God's self-communication is realized, as he communes with himself in Christ's body. The coming Kingdom of God is being realized now in the *ekklesia*.[50] In so far as one may speak of the Kingdom of God in the present tense, the *ekklesia* is its expression, the all-encompassing fellowship of believers with no stipulations regarding discipline, membership, officers, sacraments, or organization. While we can accept Brunner's castigation of the Church for its fascination with intellectual and legal criteria rather than with the living One who is its Head, yet we must ask if his picture of the *ekklesia* corresponds to the view of the New Testament.

Though Paul's epistles present a Church unencumbered with dogmatic and legal barriers, yet a definite structure certainly emerges from them, and in the framework of this structure discipline was exercised over those who were members, e.g. I Cor. 5:2. Brunner's attempt to deny that such a structure was part of the early Church leads him into a critical situation with regard to Scripture. He maintains, for example, that the meaning of the laying on of hands had nothing to do with the ordination to a particular office of service in the Church, the pastoral epistles notwithstanding.[51] Brunner undertakes to remove this obstacle by taking the position that the pastoral letters are not the work of Paul, but of someone who assumed his name.[52] In the pastoral epistles, according to Brunner, we see the ominous beginnings of the offices and the organization of the Church, and hence these letters cannot be Pauline. Brunner finds the same danger of institutionalization in the sacraments, for they demand dispensers and authority, and hence he rejects both baptism

---

[48]E. Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[49]E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*, London, 1962, p. 32.
[50]*Ibid.*, p. 363.
[51]E. Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church*. London, 1952, p. 80.
[52]*Ibid.*, pp. 81, 87.

and the Supper as sacraments.[53] The idealization of the *ekklesia* leads Brunner finally into exaltation of the *ekklesia* to the divine: *"Die neutestamentliche Ekklesia ist Inkarnation Jesu Christi"*[54] in her fellowship as His body. All these statements find their conclusion in the view that the *ekklesia* is not now and never was an institution among men.

One can, of course, argue about the semantics, but one sees the *ekklesia* rising from the pages of the New Testament with a common structure and discipline, with mutually held practises and goals which distinguish it from everything else. An institution, says Nils Ehrenstrom, is "a definite and established structure, built around and sustaining one or more social functions, and characterized by such traits as durability, persistence, and stability."[55] This definition surely applies to the Biblical *ekklesia*. Brunner's idealization does not allow him to see that in the Church, in spite of devolution and failure, the *ekklesia* still lives. The Holy Spirit still animates the Church and inspires within her the desire for communication with the world. Her structure may stand in need of modification, but not of annihilation. The way must be charted between rigidity and mass confusion; between the two lies the path of the Church.

In sharp contrast to the idea of the *ekklesia* as *Selbstzweck*, stands the thought of Hoekendijk that "the church lives for the world." This position should also be considered more closely. A corrective to the radical criticism of the Church on this point may be found in the work of G. Vicedom. A telling observation is Vicedom's point that not all the early Christians were apostles. The apostles were chosen from the ranks of the disciples, and therefore discipleship is the prerequisite to the apostolate. This means that a congregation of disciples, a brotherhood at worship, is the area in which the apostolate is formed. The radical criticism of the congregation cannot therefore go unchallenged. In Hoekendijk's thought, "the church is dissolved into an event, into an insensible entity, vanishing continually in the apostolate."[56] A purely functional view of the church is inadequate, for the Church does have a life of its own, and a home where it hears, where men *come*, where there is a partaking of the sacraments. Furthermore, the body of Christ is in this world a visible entity, a people of God who stand over against the heathen not only

---

[53]E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church*, pp. 42, 64.

[54]E. Brunner, *Das Mitverstandnis der Kirche*, Stuttgart, 1951, p. 84. It is striking that in the English edition, this sentence is omitted.

[55]N. Ehrenstrom, in *Institutionalism and Church Unity*, New York, 1963, p. 26. In the same volume, however, R. Hanson writes: "Jesus did not found a church as an institution," p. 94; but this assertion is quickly nullified since the writer goes on to say that Jesus apparently did not found the Church as anything else, either, in fact, "Jesus did not found the Church; he is the Church," p. 95.

[56]G. Vicedom, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

individually as disparate units, but also communally. Nor is the Church solely ecological, solely formed by its environment and existing for it, but the Church listens to a *kerugma* which stands above as well as in that environment. Hoekendijk has been critical of the German identification of *ta ethnè* (*goyyim*) with the nations, and hence critical of national churches, but his own road ends in individualism. One must throw off the shackles of "churchianity" without losing the essentials of the Church. Indeed, it is safe to say that without the congregation, the apostolate itself will eventually be lost. The Church as the people of God must therefore take shape. She must take shape to confront the world. Organization and "churchdom" are indeed dangers, but if the visible congregation is abandoned, the apostolate itself ultimately vanishes.[57]

Finally, the Church must take shape because *she also* is a token of the Kingdom of God. In her the *shalom* is manifested. There is a movement about her which is both centripetal and centrifugal, and this can never be made only one way if she is to exist at all. There is a going from her but also a coming to her. As W. Andersen writes: "The Church is not only that which is sent forth (*Sending*) to the world, but also, without ceasing to be that which is sent forth, that which is gathered together (*Sammlung*) in the world."[58]

The place of the Church in God's Mission in the world is not, therefore, only as *"Selbstzweck"* on the one hand, nor merely "functional" on the other. The Church is the human agency for the divine sending of the Gospel of salvation. She is also established by that sending. That planting and nurture is an ineluctable goal of the sending, and may never be permitted to become something less. However, the sending also reaches out with salvation into all the structures of human relationship to establish there the witness to the Kingdom of God. Such is the massive program which ever confronts the Church of Christ.

Is there any way in which this vision can be meaningfully executed by younger churches in largely non-Christian areas? The answer must be qualified in two respects. In the first place, the growing recognition of the oneness of the Church demands that her resources be channeled with better understanding and less waste. There is no reason why the horizons of younger churches cannot be enlarged, if sending and receiving churches can talk together and see their needs as mutual. Indeed, the very terms sending and receiving are prejudicial, for the Church is one. As the Church sees herself as Mission, she may yet understand that all parts of the world today are "uttermost" and that the task is global.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[58] W. Andersen, *Further Toward a Theology of Mission*, in: The Theology of the Christian Mission, New York, 1961, p. 312.

The second qualification is a more existential one, and demands the recognition of some hard realities. First of all, the Church is still "on the way," and has not fully recognized her servanthood and mandate to mission. This is fully as true of younger churches as of older. We have already alluded to the resistance to innovation in the Tiv Church. The fact is that she also is a church "on the way" with a gradually growing understanding of challenges to be met. The Mission which assists her likewise comes out of a church "on the way." Yet the problems and needs are *now*. With staffing and financial limitations, a methodological problem must be met, and the question of priorities inexorably presents itself. Simply to launch a wide-ranging program with pitifully inadequate depth is not the answer to the mandate to mission. To enter a wide spectrum of activities in a superficial manner which fails to manifest the quality of God's Kingdom is an insult to the Lord. One need but think, for example, of a well-meant Kingdom witness through a radio production of mediocre quality and esthetic barrenness, which may actually become a negative witness. One must face the fact that practical considerations limit what a church or mission can undertake at a given moment. In the theoretical setting the challenge of the comprehensiveness of salvation is clear; on a pitifully staffed mission field, the viable possibilities force selection.

In this connection it should also be remembered that for a mission to undertake the modification of unjust political or social structures in developing lands such as Nigeria is fraught with the greatest peril, especially for a group from the West. Local Christians, nourished and inspired by their own churches, are the agents for changing the social and political structures and marking them with the Cross. The assistance of the older churches may be requested by them if the delicacy of the situation allows such assistance.

These considerations urge the conclusion that Christian Mission place among its primary aims the establishment of churches which will themselves drive believers toward modification of the macrostructures. It is here that the plea of Dr. McGavran must be taken with great seriousness. This must be done with a realization of the faults of "churchianity" which we have noted above. The desperate effort to free the Church from stultification does not imply, however, the devolution of the Church. Our analysis of the thought of Brunner and Hoekendijk has affirmed the Church and indicated its necessity. These churches will spur believers to work within the framework of the social and political structures of their own lands.

A further argument for placing the Church in the front rank of Mission goals stems from the importance which the Bible attaches to the salvation of man in the specifically spiritual sense. In the preceding pages we have noted the current appreciation for the trinitarian

basis of Mission and for God's love for the whole of the cosmos. We should, however, be in error to be led by this effort into minimizing the urgency which the Scriptures attach to repentance and conversion. The significance of this specific call is supremely set forth by the provision of eternal life for the believer. The Lord of creation saves the cosmos, yet the amelioration of the chaotic and the demonstration of his Kingdom breaking through the twisted structures of this world must not obscure the fact that only repentance and personal faith issue into eternal life. The Mission of the Church is cosmic, to be sure, but where not all can be attempted, there the choice of priority is provided. Man's responsibility for his neighbor allows no relaxation of this priority, for it is precisely the Christian who stands aware of the awesome facts of eternal life and eternal death which confront his brother. The witness to the Kingdom in societal structures is important for every Christian, nevertheless an eternal destiny is involved in the confrontation of the Gospel with individual rebellion and the need for spiritual conversion. Mission not driven by *this* urgency and which does not give passionate expression to *this* call has transmuted its vision into something less.

We may now summarize the conclusions of our study. First of all, the universal scope of salvation supports the conviction that Mission is not comprehended solely in terms of the establishment of the Church. The realization that Mission finds its ultimate basis in the trinitarian God, who wills the establishment of his universal Kingdom, provides fundamental implications for the structure of Mission. The proponents of the Church-growth view of Mission at times show insufficient appreciation for the Kingdom in its relation to the Mission of the Church.[59] The understanding of this basis for Mission, when applied to the diaconal outreach, means that such institutions exist not simply as the tools for leading men to conversion, but they are themselves witnesses to the Kingdom, carriers of salvation into the world, means for the overthrow of the satanic, harbingers of the reconciliation of the cosmos. Their role is not simply to assist a proclamation which is in essence exterior to their own nature.

In the African context, these conclusions have a special significance. There the view of life is not compartmentalized into realms largely unrelated to one another. Christianity is received as pertinent to this totality. This understanding is encouraged also by the fact that the African has seen in the Christian Mission the facets of education,

[59]See for example, R. C. Guy, in: *Church Growth and Christian Mission,* (D. McGavran, ed.), New York, 1965, pp. 139-142. Here the view is maintained that all activities of Mission are to be judged by the questions: How many churches have been planted; how many converts won? These questions also serve as the criteria by which to assess hospitals and schools.

medicine, Church, aviation, and building, all bound up together in one effort. The Church that is born naturally imitates the mother; indeed, she knows no other, she does not know that churches in the West do not themselves carry on all these endeavors. All of these things are easily part of the total structure of evangelism. To suggest that the work of the Church is properly confined to a more narrowly-conceived proclamation of the Gospel is most confusing to the African. It does not correspond to what he sees the Mission doing. Furthermore, he himself believes that life is of one piece, that religion, culture, and technique are all found in all. He has a ready substructure on which to build a holistic view of the Christian life. Therefore, when a writer such as McGavran asks concerning the social ministries of Mission: "All this is good, of course, but should it be called evangelism?"[60] then the answer is a resounding affirmative. This conclusion follows no less surely from the fact of God's love for the cosmos and His will for its redemption.

These principal touchstones for Mission must not, however, remove us from the hard realities of the situation facing Mission. We need, therefore, also a touchstone of priority. This will guard against a superficiality of effort to which Mission might be driven by the enormity of the challenge before her. It does not imply that Mission must come with sophisticated facilities in primitive areas, or that effectiveness must now be based on material trappings. The search here is not for a way to lessen the *skandalon* by a conformity to the world, but rather for competence and positive affirmation whenever a Kingdom-witness is made. If this competence and positive affirmation cannot be exhibited, there the witness to the Kingdom is itself in jeopardy.

Obviously, a particular church or mission cannot do everything. It must select. Where this selection is faced, there the aim of conversion must stand out. It cannot stand alone as the *sole* aim, but it must stand in the front ranks of the immediate tasks of Mission. Nor can this conversion be thought of in purely individualistic terms. Thus the establishment and growth of the Church are necessarily tied to this appreciation of the *Missio Dei*.

This criterion also is applicable to Mission in Tivland. The Church is small, yet growing at an astonishing rate, doubling more than twice each decade. There are hundreds of thousands sympathetic to the Church's message, as soil ready for planting of seed. Here the Spirit has obviously prepared a people, and now Church and Mission stand in Tivland confronted by a multitude of challenges and a paucity of sophisticated physical resources. What are God's priorities?

---

[60]D. McGavran, in: *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, New York, 1965, p. 231.

Certainly God has answered in the work of his Spirit in Tivland. He has given people, a growing throng of Christians, enthusiastic and confident. At this moment these people have little technical training and less money. But they have the potential to call for faith in Christ and to multiply churches. This is the Church's great resource for this hour. God wills the use of this resource now to build his Church.

Yet beyond this hour lies tomorrow, since Church growth is not simply numerical. The danger of a restriction of the kingdom witness and the temptation to petrify the Church in its present form must be faced. Here are the challenges which will be described in the pages ahead. As the Church becomes a significant factor in the life of the Nigerian nation, she must dream new dreams. In a sense this hour is already upon her, as the Lord of history thrusts her into the midst of a nation newly ravaged by war and animosity. It is already time to ask the question of God's eschatological purpose with this Church in Tivland and beyond. She has the inheritance, in an unmistakably earthern vessel, of salvation for this world. The scope of that salvation demands that she place the tokens of the kingdom in the life of the new Nigeria. She can no longer live there simply as a refuge from its turbulence, for as God loved the world, so must she. These are the touchstones of her odyssey with the new age.

We now turn to the beginnings of that momentous journey out of the old aeon into the new.

2 THE WIDER CONTEXT

This volume is an investigation into the problematics of Church growth and Mission purpose in a West African society. Africa today is undergoing "rapid social change," and this change permeates the Church as well. Coup and counter-coup rip through the continent, tribal animosities arise in societies which have suddenly become self-conscious, age-old standards of conduct fall, and a moral vacuum ensues. On one side of the Church stands the hoary monolith of ancient culture, resistant to all change, and on the other side, the Western Mission, charged with its fascination for progress in the categories which are its heritage. Between these the Church now presents her unique witness to the coming of the kingdom of God in Africa.

This study focuses in particular upon the Tiv tribe of central Nigeria, a tribe comprising more than one million people, situated in the savannahs, parklands, and "bush" of the Middle Belt of Nigeria. In many ways the tribe serves as a microcosm of Africa south of the Sahara, epitomizing the influences that uproot a venerable way of life as well as the forces which impel the Church into the era ahead. The forces which influence the Tiv exist in a context that extends in ever-widening circles to the entire continent. Indeed, it is impossible to portray the transformation of Tivland apart from the wider context which is her home. We shall delineate this setting under the headings:

A. Africa
B. Nigeria
C. The Middle Belt

A. AFRICA

The celebrated winds of change have vastly altered the face of Africa. Before 1950 there were four independent nations on the continent; today there are more than forty. These nations occupy one-third of the seats at the United Nations. Africa's population is currently

reported at 312 million,[1] and the rate of increase of this population may be observed from the estimates for various years:

1900 — 141 million
1940 — 191 million
1950 — 222 million
1960 — 277 million
1964 — 303 million
1967 — 310 million[2]

In 1958 a United Nations publication estimated the future population of Africa as follows: 1975 — 303 million; 2000 — 517 million.[3] By 1964 the population estimated for 1975 had already been attained.

It is impossible to provide an accurate picture of the religious allegiance of this population. Almanacs and encyclopedias generally list under the tabulation of Protestants only those who are full members, rather than the number of those identifying themselves as Protestant Christians.[4] By a comparison of various surveys the following approximation of the African scene emerges: one-half of the people of Africa adhere to traditional religions, one-third are Muslim, and one-sixth are Christian.[5]

The African continent comprises 22% of the land surface of the earth, and into this area the United States, Europe, and India could be placed with ease. Some 800 languages are spoken on the continent; 250 in the nation of Nigeria alone. At the 1967 meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Churches in Northern Nigeria known as TEKAS, an association of but eight evangelical churches, speakers of 91 tribal languages were present.[6] Obviously, the restraints of these linguistic barriers have profoundly influenced the development of Africa.

---

[1] *Book of the Year, 1968,* Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Chicago, p. 669.

[2] *Information Please Almanac,* 1969, New York, p. 322.

[3] United Nations publication, *The Future Growth of World Population,* Population Studies, #28, New York, 1958, p. 3.

[4] Thus the Encyclopaedia Brittanica's *Book of the Year* available in 1968 listed the number of Protestants at 8,410,000, while admitting that this figure represented only church members. *The World Christian Handbook, 1968,* (Coxill and Grubb, eds.), New York, pp. 226, 236, lists the Protestant community as 21,608,509.

[5] Analysis of the figures cited above compared with the *World Almanac, Information Please Almanac, Encyclopaedia Brittanica and Encyclopedia Americana* suggests the following approximation for 1969:

Protestant	23,000,000
Roman Catholic	30,000,000
Coptic	7,000,000
Total Christian	60,000,000
Muslim	100,000,000
Traditional African religion	155,000,000

[6] Information of Pastor J. E. I. Sai, 1967.

The very size of Africa is likewise an important consideration in an understanding of its diversity. Some areas had contact with outside influences far more quickly than others. Thus the changes of this century are reflected in urban and coastal areas, while bush areas exist with little modification of the life lived centuries ago. This great difference accounts for much of the strain in the current problems of culture change in Africa, and illustrates one area of tension within the Church.

A further influence concerns not space, but time. In Europe, the changes that ushered in modernity consumed centuries; the urbanized African, on the other hand, attempts to leap a millenium in a single generation. Max Warren makes the point that the technology of the West breaks up the venerable world-view of the African without first providing a unifying core for his experiences, whereas the Renaissance man of the West *first* had the individualizing background and then acquired his complex technology.[7]

The impetus for the second major thrust of the Gospel into Africa, that of the Portuguese in the Middle Ages, stemmed largely from Prince Henry ("the Navigator," 1394-1460) who encouraged exploration and combined his encouragement with a high missionary zeal. When Pope Alexander divided aegis of the regions of the world in 1493 with a line down the Atlantic, he gave to Portugal permission to assume control of all lands unoccupied by Christians which lay to the east of the line.[8] Thereupon followed the dictum of *cuius regio, eius religio* on which the Capuchin missionaries who tried to introduce Christianity into the West African kingdom of Benin placed so much confidence.[9]

With the decline of Portugal as a major sea power, however, the missionaries also withdrew, and after a time the tribes they had reached returned to their tribal religions. Only a few vestiges of Christianity in the form of crucifixes and images remained into the present era.

The third major effort to bring Christianity to Africa continues to this day. The Church Missionary Society was formed in 1799, and sent out its first two missionaries to West Africa in 1804.[10] We note here also the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society in 1813 inasmuch as an agent of this society, Thomas Birch Freeman, was the first missionary of the modern period to enter Nigeria. The evangelization of Africa proved to be excruciatingly difficult. The

---

[7]M. A. C. Warren, *The Christian Mission*, London, 1955, p. 33-35.
[8]C. Niven, *A Short History of Nigeria*, London, 1955, p. 10.
[9]J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria. 1841-1891*, Evanston, 1965, p. 2.
[10]E. Stock, *History of the Church Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, London, 1899, pp. 83-88, *passim*.

enervating climate, the scourge of malaria[11] and other tropical diseases, the lack of roads, and the apparently endless varieties of language made the task seem forbidding. To this must be added the opposition from the slave trade and the continued somnolence of many churches in the West. In spite of these obstacles, the Church of Christ has come into being in Africa, largely in that small segment of time which is this century. In North Africa, Islam still holds unrelenting authority in spite of varied attempts at Christian witness. In sub-Saharan Africa, Islam and Christianity race to meet receptive populations now discarding animism in the face of modernity. In Nigeria it is this very confrontation which looms so significantly on the threshold of this nation's future.

B. NIGERIA[12]

The religious affiliation of the people of West Africa has recently been listed as follows: traditional religions, just under 60%; Muslim, 36%; Christian, less than 5%.[13] When we look specifically at Nigeria, however, we note how that both Islam and Christianity have made inroads into the former pagan preponderance. Here the figures are as follows: traditional religions, 29%; Muslim, 48%; Christian, 23%.[14] In terms of population we find that 18 million adhere to traditional religions, 29.5 million are Muslim, and 14 million are Christian.

Nigeria exists as the fourth largest country in the Commonwealth in terms of population, and as the most populous nation in Africa. Nigeria's population currently stands at 61.5 million, with the foremost tribal groupings as follows: Hausa, 18%; Ibo, 16%; Yoruba, 14%; Fulani, 10%.[15] One out of six Africans is a Nigerian.

In recent years artifacts of a remarkable culture known as the Nok culture, dating from 900 B.C., have been unearthed at Nok in Northern Nigeria. However, the first rulers of the peoples of the basin of Lake Chad of which there still remain historical records were the Sefs, also

---

[11]A recent work on Christianity in Nigeria reflects a point of view current in West Africa, "We in Nigeria thank God for the malarial mosquito. For this insect, combined with yellow fever and other perils, turned West Africa into the 'white man's grave.'" That is, the European found it impossible to become a settler, and so the problems of race and land tenure of Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa were avoided. The quote is from Marioghae and Ferguson, *Nigeria Under the Cross*, London, 1965, p. 11.

[12]For the influence of Christianity in Nigeria from 1841 to 1914, the following works by Nigerian authors are authoritative: J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891*, Evanston, 1965, and E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914*, London, 1966. At times the ebullience of the criticism is quite ruthless, yet the correction of the more glowing European appraisals is irrefutably accomplished.

[13]Marioghae and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[14]Encyclopaedia Brittanica, *Book of the Year, 1968*, Chicago, p. 578.

[15]*Loc. cit.* Cf. *Information Please Almanac, 1969*, p. 722.

known as the Saifawa dynasty. About A.D. 800 they, together with other desert tribes, established to the north and east of Lake Chad the kingdom of Kanem. The Negro tribes of the Chad basin were consolidated and gradually absorbed by this movement, and in the earlier part of the eleventh century the kingdom was Islamized from the east. These events have been of the greatest significance for the composition of the north of Nigeria and her position relative to the rest of the nation. Around 1400 the Sef rulers were driven westward and their power was re-established in the area of Bornu.[16] The kingdom of Bornu appears on the maps of Portuguese explorers of the fifteenth century.

Of equal importance for our study is the rise of the seven Hausa states. The word Hausa is actually a linguistic designation rather than simply tribal, and covers several peoples and lands now assimilated into the Hausa sphere of influence.[17] The Hausas probably first came into Nigeria about a thousand years ago from the east. Islam was brought to them by a Fulani people from the Mali empire around 1300. The introduction of the camel shortly after this marked the beginning of a great Saharan trading enterprise. Especially the states of Kano and Katsina prospered, though they also fought each other constantly.[18] Again the point to be noted here is that practically all contact with the outside world came from the north and the east.

The next development of significance for our study occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century with the rise of the Jukun empire (they were then known as the Kwararafa). The Jukun constantly harassed and finally overwhelmed Kano and southern Katsina and forced the payment of tribute from them. We shall meet the Jukun people again in this book, for they are the neighbors of the Tiv to the east, and today form the largest tribal group in the East Benue Church.

These wars of the Jukun and Hausa peoples began already in the fourteenth century. About 1600 the Jukun made a very destructive raid on Kano and they did so again in 1660 and 1671, inflicting great damage on this proud Hausa city, though they never settled in the subjugated areas. After the raid of 1671 the Jukun empire fell into decline. Today their capital is the town of Wukari, which figured so greatly in the history of the Sudan United Mission as its first permanent station.

No other real threat to either the religion or the power of the Hausas came from the south until the English forces of Lord Lugard appeared in 1900.

A further major influence on the peoples of the Niger and Benue

[16]M. Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, London, 1966, p. 32.
[17]A. Burns, *History of Nigeria*, London, 5th ed., 1958, p. 41.
[18]Niven, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 46.

basins was provided by the coming of the Fulani. These nomadic tribesmen are the cow herders of West Africa, moving with the seasons to find grazing, water, and markets for their cattle. It was the Fulani who ultimately acquired the hegemony over the Hausa and, indeed, over many of the tribes of the north.

The rise of the Fulani empire occurred under the leadership of Usuman dan Fodio (1744-1817), a man whose intellectual and religious insight led to his appointment as teacher to the sons of the area chieftain. Gradually the Hausas of the area came to resent the rising influence of the Fulani mentor, and they may have attempted to kill him. They certainly made every effort to restrict the Fulani tide. Under Usuman's influence Fulani devotion to Islam was also undoubtedly strengthened. Tensions between the new chief and Usuman increased, until in 1804 Usuman was forced to flee (Usuman's *hegira*), and so became a hero to the Fulani who now rallied to his support and proclaimed him *Sarkin Musulmi* (chief of the Muslims). A *jihad* (holy war) against the infidels was declared and so successful was the campaign that in two years the upsurge had become an empire. In 1809 Kano opened its gates to Usuman without a fight. The Fulani empire was henceforth based at Sokoto and exhibited its sovereignty through collection of annual tribute from the Hausa emirs. All the emirs were from then on appointed from Sokoto.

The Fulani empire continued until 1903 when Sir Frederick Lugard defeated the Sultan in the name of England. Even in 1960 at the time of Nigeria's independence, the most powerful single influence in the federation was that of the Sultan of Sokoto, the late Sir Ahmadu Bello. His missionary zeal also accounted for the conversion of thousands to Islam. Even today the memory of his assassination in January of 1966 fires the imagination of Hausa and Fulani alike. His soul and body, it is commonly related in northern Nigeria, were transported immediately into the presence of Allah. Indeed, in those days there was talk of a new *jihad,* but the leader of any *jihad* was himself dead.

While the great social and cultural influences on the Tiv have come from these peoples of northern Nigeria, the penetration of the Christian faith followed another route. The first known Christian influence in Nigeria came at the hands of Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries during the Middle Ages, as the Portuguese sailed ever further down the coast of Africa in their search for a way to India. Portuguese missionaries were working in Benin in 1487, and in 1504 the Oba of Benin requested that more missionary teachers be sent to his land. When they arrived in August of 1515, the Oba was fighting a war, and summoned the hapless missionaries to join him on the battlefield, asking however that lessons on religion be post-

poned for the time being. In 1538 three other missionaries arrived, but by then the Oba was no longer interested and the effort died.[19] When the English entered Nigeria in the nineteenth century, few traces of this missionary labor could be found.

It was at the time of the Portuguese infiltration that slavery became an international business. With the decline of Portugal as a major sea-power, the Dutch and English assumed the major share of the traffic. The Reformation had also lessened somewhat the influence of the Papal bull which reserved sole rights for the slave trade in Africa for the Portuguese and which authorized the opening of a slave market in Lisbon. The English began to engage in the trade in 1562, and the Portuguese eventually surrendered their property on the Gold Coast to the Dutch, who also attempted to drive out the English. British influence in West Africa, however, grew steadily.[20] Eugene Stock in his classic study of the Church Missionary Society, writes,

> It is a humiliating fact that for more than two centuries England was the chief slave-trading nation . . . In 1562 an Act was passed by the English Parliament legalizing the purchase of Negroes . . . In 1771, no less than 192 slave-ships left England for Africa.[21]

Crowder cites conservative estimates of 24,000,000 slaves being exported from West Africa and Angola alone, and adds "of these about 22,000 were shipped annually from ports in Nigeria."[22]

The difficulties experienced in carrying the Gospel to West Africa were massive. Nine Moravian missionaries labored on the Guinea Coast already in the eighteenth century, but all died. Many other societies sent missionaries in the first decades of the next century, but nearly all met disaster.[23] Many Christians took from these events a message from God that Africa should remain closed to the Gospel until the Spirit showed a riper time. The inferior slave status of the African and the supposed curse on Ham combined to strengthen the conclusion.

In this aura of futility it became apparent to those Christians who were concerned with the evangelization of West Africa that the whole region must somehow be opened before mission work could go ahead. With this purpose in mind a large expedition was assembled in

---

[19]Ajayi, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[20]Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[21]Stock, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[22]Crowder, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
[23]Out of twelve missionaries sent to Sierra Leone in the early nineteenth century, ten died before one year's residence. The Basel Mission sent nine missionaries to the Gold Coast in 1824, but eight died before a single convert could be baptized. The Methodists sent out five workers between 1835-1837, but all perished on the field.

England in 1841, called the Niger Expedition. The expedition aimed to acquire information about the major languages of the area, to increase knowledge of tropical diseases, to establish a model farm, to investigate the possibilities of trade, and to make treaties with local chiefs for the abolition of the slave trade and the introduction of the Gospel.

The Niger Expedition left London in three steamships of the Royal Navy. Several Africans joined the party in Sierra Leone, among them Samuel Adjai Crowther, later to become Bishop of the Niger. The distinguished company arrived at the mouth of the Niger in August, 1841. Within two months forty of the 145 Europeans on board were dead.[24] Among the Africans aboard there were no deaths.

It had been the hope of the Niger Expedition to travel up the Niger River and then up the Benue. Had these hopes been fulfilled, the party would have passed through the domain of a large tribe called the Tiv. It was not until 1854, however, that the outside world would hear of the Tiv people.

In 1838 the Methodists had sent Thomas Birch Freeman to West Africa to begin a work which covered the remaining 52 years of his life. Freeman was the son of an English mother and an African father, which may well help to explain his longevity in Nigeria. Freeman became the first missionary of the present era to carry on the work of the Gospel in Nigeria. He entered Badagry on September 24, 1842, and thereupon followed the establishment of the first mission station in Nigeria. It was actually at Abeokuta, however, that the first center of Christian impact in Nigeria was formed among the Egba branch of the Yoruba tribe. Many of the first Christians there came from the ranks of freed slaves who had returned from Freetown.

Slavery is thus deeply involved in the history of Christianity in more ways than one. Slavery was, in fact, one of the great factors in the opening of the doors to Christianity. G. Robinson writes:

> It is rather ironic that Christianity was again introduced to Nigeria as a direct result of the slave trade . . . The unusual success in converting these displaced refugees was due partially to the fact that they were separated from group pressures of their society and were free to make individual decisions without loss of position or even more severe sanctions from their kinsmen and fellow villagers. This plus the contrast in treatment given them by the slave traders and that which they found among missionaries resulted in a more ready

[24]Grimley and Robinson, *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*, Grand Rapids, 1966, p. 36. However, Ajayi, *op. cit.*, p. 12, states, "Forty-five of the 150 European members of the expedition died," and Mariughae and Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 31, affirm ". . . of 162 white men, 54 died of malaria."

> response to the gospel than would have been likely had their lives not been interrupted in this manner.[25]

Many of the former captives eventually made their way home and carried with them the new faith. Such was the case at Abeokuta. Thus out of the tragedy of slavery emerged the highway for the introduction of Christianity into Nigeria. At the same time, as soon as it was clear that the entrance of Christianity meant the elimination of the slave trade, determined opposition to the new faith arose from chiefs and traders for whom that trade meant profit and commerce.

Freeman was overjoyed to find on Christmas Day of 1842 that a Church Missionary Society worker, Rev. Henry Townsend, had landed at Badagry with the intent of working at Abeokuta among freed slaves who had returned from Freetown where they had belonged to the CMS church. Samuel Crowther joined the work there in 1846, and the first converts were baptized in 1848. The Nigerian Church had begun.

At the same time we must remember that there were political and material motivations in this spiritual advance. The missionaries represented a political as well as a religious incursion, a fact which neither the missionaries nor the Egbas forgot. Ayandele points to this situation with the use of some very strong language:

> Neither the Egba nor the Efik chiefs had the least interest in the white man's creed *per se;* none of them wished the spiritual side of missionary enterprise any success.[26]

The Egba needed British military aid against slave raiding from Dahomey — that was obvious — and the missionaries could and did help them to obtain it. In fact, Dahomey might well have taken Abeokuta around 1851 had it not been for the military defense organized by the missionaries.[27] Naturally, the Yoruba chiefs saw what was going on, and soon several Yoruba towns were opened for missionary residence. Missionaries were also quick to sense the advantages of participating in these power plays. However, when in 1861 the British occupied Lagos, the climate of welcome abruptly changed as the Yoruba chiefs saw the extinction of their powers looming on the horizon. Unfortunately, the British advance was itself marred at this point by duplicity and broken promises.[28]

---

[25]Grimley and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 270.
[26]Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[27]*Ibid.*, p. 10.
[28]As, for example, in the treacherous capture and deportation of King Jaja, graphically described by Sir Alan Burns, himself a former Governor of Nigeria. Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

The dolorous history of missions to West Africa had spread the conviction that evangelization could not be carried on by planting Europeans on a station and letting them preach the Gospel. The Niger Expedition had further strengthened the impact of that lesson. Some thoughtful Christians thereupon considered that the Lord was indicating that the work should be carried on through former slaves and through Europeans already acclimatized to the tropics. It was especially in Jamaica where this point of view found expression in the Jamaican Presbytery of the United Church of Scotland. Out of this inspiration came the project of Rev. Hope Waddell to settle at Calabar with Negroes from Jamaica. Actually, the idea of getting West Indian Negroes to settle in Calabar proved to be futile, and Waddell finally recruited from Sierra Leone many of the carpenters and teachers he needed, rather than from the West Indies.[29] The intrepid Mary Slessor arrived in Calabar in 1876 and, though a missionary, was appointed Vice-Consul by the government which saw in her the only means of gaining cooperation with the people.[30] The tie of temporal and spiritual authority was not unnatural to the African, and the attempts of missionaries to separate the two at great pains have not impressed the African to this day.

The name of the CMS in Nigeria is bound to that of Samuel Adjai Crowther. As a child Crowther was put on a Portuguese slaving ship, but the ship was intercepted and the Yoruba lad was taken to Freetown, and later sent to England to be ordained.[31] In 1841 he sailed on the ill-starred Niger Expedition, and later worked at Abeokuta with Townsend. In 1864 he was consecrated bishop over a huge tract of West Africa, and by 1880 the CMS could count eleven stations and a thousand adherents.

From Badagry, Abeokuta, and Calabar, the missions pressed inland. The Roman Catholics did not plant their first station in Nigeria until 1868, but their growth has been impressive. The *Nigeria Catholic Directory* lists the number of Roman Catholics as 2,390,666.[32] They, too, entered from the coast at the time when the great cultural cleavage of the nation-to-be was deepening, for it was from the centers on the coast that contact with the outside world was made for all of the south. True, the *jihad* had touched the Yorubas, but the contact of the West with the domains of the emirs to the north was to be one of distrust and antagonism. Missions thus have played an important role in the creation of the ideological poles

---

[29]Ajayi, *op. cit.*, p. 46. Incredibly, Ayandele omits from his account the entire history of the Calabar settlement.

[30]Crowder, *op. cit.*, p. 237. While obviously impressed with the work of Mary Slessor, Crowder adds, "Like her fellows she saw almost nothing that was good in African society."

[31]Stock, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

[32]Lagos, 1967, p. 103.

of north and south in Nigeria. From their entrance at Badagry and Calabar at both ends of the coast they moved inland and inevitably became a formidable cultural and political influence, producing great social change, which the *jihad* in the north had never done on such a scale. As Ayandele points out:

> Islam integrated and assimilated, preserving vital indigenous and social units like polygamy, slavery, and the family. Also in the way it was propagated in Northern Nigeria, the higher classes — chiefs, district and village heads — were among the first converts to Islam and it was through them that households and the masses came under the banner of the Crescent. On the other hand, Christian missionaries perceived no wisdom in compromising with indigenous customs and institutions; the new wine of European Christianity had to be put into new bottles. Furthermore, missionaries sought to convert individuals.[33]

In this section we have attempted to show that the ideological polarity of the Nigerian nation is a combination of ethnic, political, religious, and historical factors. The confrontation of these polarities gained momentum through the years until it finally became overt in the civil war in 1967. Nevertheless, deep in the heart of Nigeria lies a belt of land which has served to restrain the confrontation. Composed of a congeries of pagan tribes penetrated by Christian missions, yet within the sphere of northern and Islamic dominance, lies the Middle Belt.

C. THE MIDDLE BELT

The central belt of Nigeria forms a distinctive geographical and cultural entity. J. Grimley, who has written a wide-ranging study of church growth in the area, states that the Middle Belt occupies about four-sevenths of the area of the northern group of provinces, and thus covers about 160,000 square miles between the tropical rain forests to the south and the dry savannahs and arid edges of the Sahara to the north.[34] Inside these geographical boundaries lies the Middle Belt, an area of sparse forests, hilly grasslands, and "bush country" between the desert and the jungle. Grimley counts 110 tribes in this area, but many of these tribes are in reality groups of tribes and enclaves.[35] The Tiv tribe, with over a million people, is by far the largest tribe in the Middle Belt.

Though the explorer Hugh Clapperton had set foot in Kano already in 1823, the first expedition into the north was that led by an officer

[33]Ayandele, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.
[34]Grimley and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[35]*Ibid.*, p. 24.

of the Royal Navy, Dr. W. B. Baikie, in 1854. This new Niger Expedition was a far more modest attempt than that made in 1841, for only one ship was engaged and only a handful of Europeans took part. Quinine now formed part of the medical kit, and though the group traveled up the Benue for nearly 400 miles, all returned safely. It was on this journey that a European first encountered the Tiv and reported their existence to the outside world (and that in less than glowing terms). They were at that time called the *Munshi* or *Mitshis* (a Hausa designation resented by the Tiv because of the derogatory suggestion of cannibalism in the appellation). The Jukun term for the Tiv is quite similar, viz. *Mbitse* or *Mbichi*, meaning "stranger settlers".[36]

Samuel Crowther accompanied Dr. Baikie on the expedition and returned fired with the possibility of planting the Church along the Niger and the Benue. In 1857 he went up the Niger again on a famous but ill-fated trip in the *Dayspring* which ran aground on the Jebba rocks. However, he was able to leave personnel at Onitsha to found the Niger Mission there. The Roman Catholics followed the CMS to Onitsha and the Holy Ghost Fathers founded a mission there in 1885 as a center for evangelizing the Ibos and as a springboard for penetration into the unexplored interior.

The High Commissioner, Lord Lugard, was, especially in the beginning, very sympathetic to missionary advance. As time went on however, the danger of mission penetration becoming the spark to touch off anti-British war, a *jihad*, could not be discounted. The imagined hatred of the Hausas for the Fulani, as Ayandele details from mission publications,[37] did not appear to be based in fact; the "oppressed" Hausas did not race to accept either the new faith nor release from the Sultan. Lugard's pro-Christian attitude also left little doubt in the mind of the Sultan that British occupation would mean Christian proselytism.[38]

In 1903 Lugard did occupy Sokoto. The old Sultan proclaimed a *hegira* for all the Muslims and many Fulani fled to the Sudan. Another chief proclaimed himself the *Mahdi*, still another the prophet Jesus. It was ironically these "Jesus-followers" within Islam who in 1906 wiped out a whole company of infantry at the same time that Lugard's forces were tied down quelling a riot of the Tiv at Abinsi. The hasty withdrawal of the troops from Tivland at the time

---

[36]R. M. Downes, *The Tiv Tribe*, Kaduna (Nigeria), 1933, p. 1.

[37]Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[38]The Sultan's letter read, "From us to you. I do not consent that anyone from you should ever dwell with us. I will never agree with you. I will have nothing ever to do with you. Between us and you there are no dealings except as between Musselmans and Unbelievers, — War, as God Almighty had enjoined on us. There is no power or strength save in God on high." From Crowder, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

inspired a feeling among the Tiv that the English were in fact unable to conquer them.

Lugard's successor, Sir Percy Girouard, was far less sympathetic to missionary penetration.[39] The famous principle of Indirect Rule through the emirs and chiefs was now firmly established and missionary activity restricted. By that time, however, the missionary advance could no longer be quelled within the Middle Belt. The first party of the Sudan Interior Mission, led by Walter Gowans, reached Lagos in December of 1893. Rowland Bingham, founder of the mission, took ill and stayed in Lagos while Gowans and Thomas Kent pushed inland to Bida, where Kent was sent back to the coast for supplies. Gowans thereupon started alone for distant Kano, but came upon hostile tribes and was robbed of his trade goods. He reached Zaria, seriously ill, and died nearby.[40] Kent returned to Bida and on November 30, when unknown to him Walter Gowans had already died, he wrote, "The road is now open to Kano and we hear that Walter has gone on to that place." Kent never learned of the death of Gowans, for on December 8, he himself died at Bida.[41] Bingham returned home the next year and later wrote, "On my return the whole expedition was written down as a failure. What was there to show for the effort? Nothing but two graves."[42]

A second venture led by Bingham landed at Lagos in 1900, but within three weeks he had to be invalided home. "It would have been far easier to have stayed and died," he wrote.[43] What he did not know was that the rest of his party had also become ill and were sailing home in his wake. It was the third effort that finally planted a station at Patigi in 1902.[44] The Sudan Interior Mission spread its stations throughout the Middle Belt and into the far reaches of the Sudan. At its seventieth anniversary the Mission announced that an astonishing total of 1,911 missionaries had been sent out and that 67% of these were still in active service.[45]

On January 1, 1900, Northern Nigeria was declared a British Protectorate. That same month an expedition of the CMS started for Kano under the leadership of Bishop Herbert Tugwell, and on the way the group learned that their visit would be most unwelcome.

---

[39]As may be seen, for example, in a letter written by him to Lugard, in 1908. Girouard wrote, "Personally I should like to see the Missions withdraw entirely from the Northern States, for the best missionary for the present will be the high-minded, clean living British Resident." From Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[40]J. Hunter, *A Flame of Fire*, Slough, 1961, p. 59.

[41]Not, as Ayandele avers, at Girku. Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[42]*Sudan Witness*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, New York, 1963, pp. 2-3.

[43]*Ibid.*, p. 4.

[44]R. Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years*, New York, 1943, p. 30. One of the members of this third party died there and two others were invalided home, leaving one survivor. Cf. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[45]*Sudan Witness*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, New York, 1963, p. 8.

They pressed on nevertheless and arrived at the walls of Kano on April 19.[46] The emir carefully showed his disdain for these intruders. The interview was hopeless from the start and further complicated by the announcement of the bishop that his party consisted of messengers from God, which to the Muslim is blasphemy and places one in the select company of Nabi Musa (Moses), Nabi Isa Roh'ullah (Jesus), and Nabi Muhammed (Mohammed). Needless to say, the party was summarily dismissed. In 1905, however, one of the party returned to Zaria and opened a dispensary inside the city. From that beginning has come a great outreach of the CMS into every part of the Middle Belt.

The mission which most influenced the Tiv is the Sudan United Mission. The founder, Dr. Karl Kumm, first arrived with three others in Nigeria in 1904, and after consultation with Lord Lugard, determined to establish their station at Wase, north of the Benue. The group left the Benue at Ibi, a trading station of the Niger Company. A few days later the party was forced to halt by the illness of one of the men, and Dr. Kumm went on toward Wase alone. Soon all the others were ill and Dr. Kumm was recalled in haste. J. Lowry Maxwell, one of the group, wrote,

> It was a grim enough prospect that the Doctor had to face when he arrived. To have three sick men on his hands at once, away out in the bush, far from help, knowing that one of them at least was seriously, if not dangerously ill, was a very unpleasant plight.[47]

In the end it took the party over a month to traverse the eighty miles to Wase. Wase proved, from a human point of view, to be an unfortunate choice for a station. It was situated in a Muslim area, just a day's journey south from the pagan tribes of the Bauchi Hills, where the British branch of the SUM would eventually carry on its largest work. The station was finally abandoned in 1909. With the formation of an American branch of the mission, new staff came to reinforce the original group and additional stations were opened. Two stations were opened among the Jukun people, and also among the Birom of the Bauchi Hills at Bukuru in 1907.

A station was opened at Ibi on the Benue River in 1908 and Ibi became the headquarters of the mission for many years. The first convert from the area was baptized in 1911.[48] Throughout the years branches of the mission were organized in many areas of the world. Sixty-five stations are now operated in the northern provinces by the branches of the SUM.

[46] "... outrunning; all discretion, tact, and common sense" in the assessment of Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
[47] J. L. Maxwell, *Half a Century of Grace*, London, n.d., pp. 41-42.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

The fruits of this work are now many, but one significant example may be cited in the formation of the *Tarrayyar Ekklesioyoyin Kristi a Sudan* (the TEKAS), which is a fellowship of the churches that came to birth through the channel of the SUM. This body was registered in Nigeria in 1956 as an incorporated organization and presently consists of eight branches or denominations. The 1967 report[49] shows the following picture:

Places of worship	3,737
Average attendance	412,237
Local Churches	207
Ordained Nigerian pastors	141
Communicants	64,237
Active Communicants	48,065
Communicants added in preceding year	12,916

These efforts exemplify the way in which the Gospel was planted in the Middle Belt. Several other mission bodies have also been at work in the area, and Grimley summarized their work as follows:

> Fifteen different mission societies are active in the Central Belt, one having entered the country as early as 1857 and one as recently as 1959. These missions maintain at least 177 mission stations, which reach eighty-one of the 110 Central Belt tribes.[50]

The creation of the Benue-Plateau State in 1967, one of twelve new states of the federation, gave to several of these tribes the partial realization of their drive for separate identity. Vigorous tribal animosities are not lacking within the area; however, with immediate control of their affairs closer to the people themselves, the decree was greeted with wide acclaim. Within the TEKAS, the specter of tribalism among Christian brethren is yet present, but avenues of communal Christian effort are being sought, and the Theological College of Northern Nigeria provides a center for common theological education for church leaders.

Islam has long been a powerful force in the Middle Belt; nevertheless, the Middle Belt is not a Muslim area. The majority of the people still hold to tribal religions, though during the period of Hausa and Fulani domination, the pressure of Islamization was widely felt. The Middle Belt has thus provided the historic meeting-ground for the age-old influences from the north and the east which molded northern Nigeria, and the more recent economic and religious forces of the West which came largely via Christian missions. This confrontation

---

[49]Minutes of TEKAS, Numan, Nigeria, January 4-8, 1967.
[50]Grimley and Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

is now taking place at a heightened tempo and Tivland today finds itself in the heart of this crucible.

Additional Note

NIGERIA AS A POLITICAL ENTITY

Nigeria was widely lauded in the years following its independence for the stability of its government and for the promise it exhibited of proving the success of British colonial policy. Though there is great respect for the British heritage in Nigeria, the obstacles to stability were immense and always seething under the apparently calm façade presented to the outside world. The background to the civil war of 1967-69 was inexorably being formed in those post-independence years as ancient hostilities were at last brought into the open.

The main political parties at the time of independence followed the major tribal lines: the ruling Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) among the Hausa, the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) among the Ibo, and the Action Group (AG) among the Yoruba. The latter group eventually split over an ideological dispute between Chief Awolowo and Chief Akintola, and Akintola eventually left the party to form the United People's Party.[51]

In 1963 the NCNC championed the formation of a new region, the Mid-West, and the Binis of that region aligned themselves with the NCNC in common cause, so that the NCNC showed promise of becoming a truly multi-tribal party. In 1964 the entire power structure of Nigerian political life underwent a shift with the publication of census figures which gave overwhelming power to the North. The Ibo-led NCNC, which had been in coalition with the NPC, became less enamored of the bond and joined in the chorus of doubts as to the accuracy of the count. On the basis of the new census, the North obtained 167 seats in the federal parliament and the other regions together held but 145 seats.[52] The NCNC charged fraud and allied itself with the former opposition, the Action Group, into a new entity called the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

The national elections at the end of 1964 put the NPC and its allies (among whom was also Chief Akintola and his United People's Party) into power. Charges of election rigging were rife, especially in the West where Akintola was in power. The dream of the UPGA to break the domination of the NPC by the creation of a new region in the North (the Middle Belt State) was shattered. Dissension over these issues mounted during 1965 and culminated with the violent

[51]T. Monsma, *The Role of Tribal Loyalties in Nigerian Politics*, unpublished, Kalamazoo, 1965, p. 4.
[52]Crowder, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

overthrow of the government by sections of the army on January 15, 1966. A Northern publication details the events in this way:

> In the early hours of 15th January, 1966 there was what was described as an "Army mutiny" in Nigeria in which the casualties were all, with but few exceptions, Northerners. North's popular and respected leaders, the Right Honourable Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of the Federation, and Alhaji the Honourable Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Northern Nigeria, along with some high-ranking officers of Northern Nigeria origin in the Nigerian army were mercilessly and brutally killed by the mutineers in Lagos, and the Federal Minister of Finance, Chief F. S. Okotie-Eboh along with some top-ranking Army officers of Yoruba origin were also cold-bloodedly murdered by the same mutineers.[53]

Major General Aguiyi Ironsi (an Ibo) was given control of the military government and banned all political parties. On May 24, 1966, Ironsi announced in an address to the nation that the former Regions had all been abolished, and that all public services would be united under one Central Public Service Commission. These attempts at federalism naturally met with intense disfavor in the North, and on May 29, widespread disturbances and anti-Ibo feeling broke out. In the army this feeling finally manifested itself in the form of a counter-coup on July 29 which again placed the power in the hands of a Northern army officer, Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Yakubu Gowon. Ironsi was killed.

The resentment against the economic domination of Nigeria by the Ibo now burst out with full force. In the words of the previously cited Northern publication:

> The head start which the Ibo like the Yoruba before him had over the Northerner in Western education, placed him in strategic and influential positions in the employment of Government and Commercial houses . . . Ibos also used the influential positions they held . . . to the detriment of the Northerner . . . Having covered most of the strategic places commercially, the Ibo trader indulged in what was the most perverted form of monopoly . . . Not only that, all trade between North and East was carried on in Ibo lorries.[54]

During October and November of 1966 the anti-Ibo disturbances erupted with tragic consequences. The number of Ibos killed is impossible to ascertain ("Radio Biafra" maintained that the figure must be placed at 40,000). Nigerians not in their native regions attempted

---

[53] *The Nigerian Situation*, Zaria, 1966, p. 4.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. Crowder adds an additional note regarding Ibo expansion: "Poor land, and in parts chronic overpopulation, have forced many of the inhabitants of the Eastern Region to seek work in other parts of the federation. Crowder, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

to live home in great numbers as the vision of a united country was violently shaken. The following table[55] shows the subsequent disintegration and the massive return of Ibos to the East:

Region	Number Fled From	Number Returned To	Population Gain or Loss
East	20,000	1,600,000	+ 1,580,000
West	40,000	10,000	— 30,000
Mid-West	13,000	45,000	+ 32,000
North	1,580,000	6,000	— 1,574,000
Lagos	10,000	2,000	— 8,000

After these events the Ibos had no further desire to remain in the federation, and on May 30, 1967, the Ibo leader Colonel Ojukwu, announced the secession of the Eastern Region and the creation of the Republic of Biafra. On July 7, Federal forces penetrated the frontiers of the breakaway region and began a long and agonizing armed struggle to reunite the fractured country. Famine and dislocation followed and these problems are but one index of the rebuilding that lies ahead as the nation attempts to deal equitably with its many ethnic groups.

The words of the report of Section IV to the 1968 assembly of the World Council of Churches give articulation to the hope and task of Christians in a multi-tribal land such as Nigeria:

> Minorities can be insensitive and tyrannical, and minorities may need protection. This is a special responsibility for the Church of Him who is the Champion of the oppressed. But if pressed too far the rights of minorities can destroy justice and threaten the stability or the existence of the nation, and majorities no less than minorities have their rights. . . . The Churches must defend minorities when they are oppressed or threatened. They must at times urge restraint upon minorities in the pursuit of their ambitions. But also they must help majorities to respond creatively to the impatience of minorities in their struggle for justice.[56]

[55] *The Nigerian Outlook*, Vol. 1, No. 3, May, 1967, pp. 10-11.
[56] *Church, Society and Peace in International Affairs*. Report of Section IV, Geneva, mimeographed report, Uppsala, 1968, p. 3.

3 THE SONS OF TIV

"I turn aside from the Drum of Death, that it may pass me by."[1]

Before we investigate the manner in which the Gospel was carried to the Tiv, we must delineate the milieu into which the Gospel message came. This task grows more difficult with the passage of time, for, as the Tiv would express the problem, the old mushroom is decaying and the new mushroom growing in its place. Furthermore, this chapter cannot provide in any sense a complete ethnography of Tiv society and its traditional institutions. Ten years with the Tiv have shown the author that he still has much to learn of the tribal mythology and ethos. Yet in order to analyze the religious life of the Tiv and the birth of the Church among them, we shall attempt in this chapter to examine various aspects of the Tiv world-view, which was their fundamental response to the self-revelation of God. It was this response which influenced their attitude toward the Christian message, and which still influences the manner in which the Church expresses itself in Tivland today.

Almost all of the traditional patterns of tribal life are now in crisis, as modernity inexorably disrupts and destroys them. The new situation, spawned from the old, is a complex amalgam of tradition and the death of tradition, of respect for venerable folkways and a casual flaunting of them, of allegiance and emancipation. This trauma permeates Tivland today, and constitutes much of the challenge to anyone who would provide religious or cultural assistance to the Tiv as they take their place in the "New Nigeria." The old "mushrooms" (for the reference of the aphorism is to people) have themselves passed on, and on their heels has come a huge and rapidly increasing progeny. Rupert East, writing in 1965, says that in 1939 "the Tiv were said to number 530,000; recent estimates put the figure at

[1]Tiv incantation, from the original manuscript in Tiv of *The History of the Tiv* (unpublished, no date), written by Benjamin Akighirga Sai. Portions of this lode of Tiv lore were translated and published by Rupert East as *Akiga's Story*, London, 1939, reprinted 1965. Akighirga Sai (abbreviated to Akiga) wrote the history in 1935. He died in May, 1959.

800,000, and the tribe is still expanding."[2] The most recent estimates place the figure well over a million,[3] a truly astonishing growth, even when increasing longevity and improved methods of tabulation are taken into account.

The Tiv presently occupy an area between 6°30′ and 8°10′ north latitude and 8° and 10° east longitude.[4] There is constant pressure for expansion as population increases, and the ongoing migration at times brings the Tiv into hostile contact with neighboring tribes. Tiv ideas concerning land tenure and migration, which form part of their traditional world-view, are already in the process of being challenged, and this challenge will probably constitute the next major threat to their traditional ethos.[5] The unrest of 1964-65 caused the return to Tivland of many Tiv who had settled outside the confines of the tribal area and intensified the problem. An increasingly significant form of movement is into the major cities of Nigeria, where tribal ghettoes are an important feature of urban demography.

Within Tivland, the administrative center is located at Gboko; five miles east lies Mkar, the center of Tiv Church activity and the headquarters of the Protestant mission. All of Tivland lies within seventy-five linear miles of these centers. Tivland is thus located within the confines of what for many years was the Northern Region of Nigeria. With the promulgation in 1967 of the decree by the Supreme Military Commander creating twelve administrative territories or states, Tivland becomes part of the Benue-Plateau State of the Northern Group of Provinces. This decree was greeted with delight by most Tiv who saw in the edict a means for increased tribal self-expression and freedom from the domination of inimical groups residing outside the Middle Belt.

We may group the material for our study of the ancient culture and world-view of the Tiv under the following heads:

A. Traditions of Origin and Migration
B. Social Organization
C. Traditional Religion

---

[2]R. East, *Akiga's Story*, London, 1965, vii. Dr. East was a District Officer of the colonial government. Actually, R. Downes, another District Officer, had already in 1933 estimated the number of Tiv at 600,000, *cf.* R. Downes, *The Tiv Tribe*, Kaduna, 1933, p. 1.

When East writes in 1965 that "recent estimates put the figure at 800,000," he is referring to P. and L. Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London, 1953, p. 9. Thus already in 1953, the Bohannans gave the figure of 800,000, which East can scarcely hold to be "recent." In the twelve years from 1953 to 1965, the tribe increased over 100,000, thus making East's estimate already obsolete.

[3]P. and L. Bohannan, *op. cit.*, p. 9, estimate on the basis of tax assessments over ten years that the population growth was 1.4% per year. If this rate is applied to the 1953 estimate of 800,000, we arrive at a current population of one million.

[4]Not as Downes, *op. cit.*, p. 1, reports, *viz.* 8-10 latitude and 7-9 longitude.

[5]Cf. P. and L. Bohannan, *Expansion and Migration of the Tiv*, Africa, Vol. XXIV, Jan., 1954, pp. 2-16.

1. *Aôndo*
2. *Tsav*
3. *Akombo*
4. *Adzôv*

D. Salient Characteristics of the Tiv World-View

A. TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND MIGRATION

The Tiv traditions of origin are now shrouded by antiquity, and various versions exist even among elders of the same lineage segment. The greatest dispute in the mythology centers around a personage *Takuruku* and his (her) relationship to the supreme deity *Aôndo*. In some versions *Takuruku* was the original deity, now departed, who created *Aôndo*, who thereupon created the world and man. *Takuruku* has also been presented as the brother of *Aôndo* and as the progenitor of man, while *Aôndo* (which in Tiv means sky or firmament) then exists as the controller of the forces of nature. This is the view of the early missionary Strijdom, who wrote:

> Everywhere in their land the following story is told regarding the origin of man. Takuruku, they say, was the first man. His wife was named Olenolen. He had three children, namely (1) the white man, (2) Uki (that is, the progenitor of all the other black races); and (3) Tivi.[6]

In this view, *Takuruku* and *Aôndo* exist in eternal tension, though *Aôndo* has acquired the greater authority and virtue in this mythology and *Takuruku* continues as a lesser god with control over inimical influences, and thus serves as a counterfoil to *Aôndo* and as explanation for evil. This myth currently enjoys little support, possibly due to a reluctance to identify *Takuruku* with the Satan spoken of by the missionaries. Still another view holds *Takuruku* to be the wife of *Aôndo;* from their union all men have come forth.

In all of these presentations the duality of God is a reflection of the necessity to explain the more somber features of the world, and as a reflection of the duality of light and dark, good and evil, sky and earth, macrocosm and microcosm, male and female. Yet this duality in the deity should not be given undue prominence, for the Tiv are quite willing to ascribe to the will of *Aôndo* any dire calamity, and they acknowledge no deity other than *Aôndo*.[7] The earth is, of

---

[6] J. Strijdom, *De Soedan,* Stellenbosch, 1919, p. 27 (my translation).

[7] Downes, *op. cit.,* pp. 49-52, devotes some space to "the earth God" of the Tiv, that is to say, to the earth itself as God. Downes, an early investigator, was struck by the Tiv respect for the soil, and tried to make a comparison with the religions of many Bantu tribes on this point. The entire section is, however, most tentative and exploratory, and was published, Downes later maintained, without his permission.

course, highly honored by the Tiv. Akiga Sai, himself a Tiv, wrote in 1935: "Formerly and nowadays, too. the Tiv honor the earth because of two things. They say, 'Food grows in the earth,' and the other thing they say is, 'The earth is a thing of importance because every man who dies is buried in the earth.' "[8] The Tiv did not have the Western distinctions between honor, veneration, and worship which have now been imported, and hence it would be impossible to state at which stage of honor the ascriptions of deity might begin. But to speak of the earth as a deity, using Western categories, would be inaccurate. Though all Tiv recognize the divinity of *Aôndo,* there is no word for god in Tiv. If pressed to use Western terms, however, the Tiv will deny that the earth is (a) god or that his ancestors thought so, though it is greater than man and less than *Aôndo.*

Nevertheless, the Tiv are puzzled by the presence of *Takuruku* in the mythology and by the subsequent disappearance of his name and line among men. The genealogical necessity for his appearance in the cosmos is not known, and his appearance in the genesis accounts is a subject for speculation among the elders themselves. The view that *Aôndo* is indeed the supreme and original creator is supported by the word for "creation," which is *gbaaôndo.*[9] As theism and especially monotheism gain ground among the Tiv, it is likely that *Takuruku* will be relegated more and more into the background and eventually pass from the genealogy. His presence may once have been sociologically of importance as explanation for evil, but this is no longer the case.

The Tiv attitude toward genealogy is significant at this point. One's genealogy is important to the Tiv as securing one's place within the tribe. The sense of corporate responsibility is great because of the common ancestry of the group. Each individual has a stake in the woe and weal of all; in fact. the individual is submerged into the group with whom he is identified. The genealogy also greatly influenced the selection of office holders in the local political structure, though these were not always the actual leaders, as we shall see. In fact, the genealogy formerly provided the door to all social organization and indicated the available marriage partners. Nevertheless, no two Tiv are likely to agree regarding all facets of a genealogy. This might appear to be destructive of any stability, yet such is not the case. The genealogy has no importance per se; its importance is

[8]A. Sai, *The History of the Tiv People,* my translation. This section may be found in East, *op. cit.,* p. 231.

[9]This view is now widely held, though Christian influences may have been at work in the formulation, since the Christians use *Aôndo* as the term for the God of the Bible. Pastor J. E. I. Sai, for example, a brother of Akiga, defends the originality of *Aôndo* with an appeal to the term *gbaaôndo,* and asks rhetorically, "Has anyone ever heard of "gbatakuruku?" Obviously not; hence *Takuruku* cannot be held to have been the creator.

supremely existential, that is, its importance lies in its bearing on the particular issue being debated at the moment. The antiquity or even the sex of the ancestor is not important, and the genealogy may be fluid and changeable as long as its pertinence to the point at issue can be demonstrated. Laura Bohannan indicates in this connection the difference between the Western and the Tiv view of truth.[10] She points out how that the truth of the genealogy is upheld by the insertion of changes from time to time and from place to place to correspond to the needs of new situations. It would take a Western mind to point out that the subsequent versions contradict the former, and hence both cannot be true. To the Tiv the genealogy is true, for it corresponds to the present structure of the tribe and illuminates it, even as a previous version corresponded to a former arrangement of the society.

It might appear, therefore, that the Tiv view of truth is utterly pragmatic and bound to result in flippancy. To the Tiv, however, truth is that which corresponds to the observable harmony of the cosmos at a particular moment. That which serves to preserve the balance of the macro- and microcosm, that which upholds the equanimity of the totality, produces the greatest good and as such is true to the structure of the whole. As new situations arise, new relationships will maintain and explicate the new mode of life.

We turn now to a new figure in the genesis accounts, a figure who is either the father or son of *Aôndo* in most versions, whose name is *Shon,* which may be translated as "the person or thing just referred to." *Aôndo Shon* could therefore mean either, *"Aôndo* whom we just referred to," or *"Aôndo,* son of *Shon."* If *Aôndo* is thought of as the original creator, then *Shon* is the first man, from whom came many children, including *Tiv* and *Uke* (foreigners, especially the Hausas) and more lately also *Buter* (white man). Other offspring are thought of as *atôatiev,* "bush people," a pejorative term.[11]

Tiv also had children, either two, three, or four. In any case, the first two are of paramount importance for the genealogy; they are *Ipusu* (i.e. "uncircumcised"), the eldest, and *Ichôngo* ("circumcised"). The other two sons, whose immediate descent from Tiv stands open to debate, are *Poor* and *Awange. Poor* is said to have died while his brothers were still living and they vowed to immortalize him by keeping one of his bones, possibly his skull. One of the most

[10] L. Bohannan, *A Genealogical Charter,* Africa, Vol. XXII, Oct., 1952, pp. 301-315. Mrs. Bohannan indicates how writing has tended to fix the genealogies and thus destroy their fluidity and hence their usefulness in securing tribal harmony in new situations.

[11] L. Bohannan, in: *Tribes Without Rulers,* London, 1958, pp. 34-36, mentions a later accretion due to Christian influence: Adam was the father of *Batule* (i.e. *Buter*), who begot all white peoples, while *Shôn* (i.e. *Shon*) fathered all the black.

solemn of all Tiv rites, the *akombo a biamegh,* used as its emblem the ancestral skulls called *Poor* heads. Another emblem, the *imborivungu* ancestral pipe, was said to have first been made from the tibia of *Poor.* The presence of the fourth figure, *Awange,* is explained by many Tiv as a memorializing of the first metal objects owned by the Tiv (*awange* are spears). The Tiv say that at first they did not have metal, but acquired it from the south, and the first acquisition was a spear. Metal and blacksmithing are imbued with special qualities by the Tiv, and magic power is ascribed to iron. The bellows, the hammering, and the sparks of the forge all invite comparison with the power of *Aôndo* and his thunderbolts.[12]

Only the first two children, however, are of central import for the genealogy. The original name of the first son, *Ipusu,* is no longer known, but it was not *Ipusu* (uncircumcision, or literally, foreskin), since father Tiv did not learn what circumcision was until after the first son was born. The act was explained to Tiv by a stranger, whereupon Tiv was himself circumcised by the stranger. Tiv then circumcised the son subsequently born and named him *Ichôngo* (circumcision), and called his elder son *Ipusu.* Whether or not he then circumcised *Ipusu* is unknown; all the offspring of both, however, were circumcised down to the present day. Nevertheless, all Tiv are divided into these two groups which form the primary distinction in the social organization of the tribe. The Christians presently take pains to minimize this division, which is a source of rivalry and friction within any organization which aspires to embrace the entire tribe.[13]

Tiv all agree that their original home was to the south. In the genealogical tables, approximately eighteen generations are recorded from father Tiv to the present. The last five generations may often be traced with a degree of unanimity, and also the original five, but in the center the genealogy becomes hazy. Tiv are uncertain as to the time when they began their migration northward, but it was probably about eleven generations ago. Downes estimates that the really general migration into the present tribal area began around 1800,[14] and Tiv were present south of the Benue River in large numbers by 1850. The various clans shifted position until 1890 when the boundaries were rather well-established and permanent settlement undertaken. The greatest infiltration was thus going on at the time of Baikie's his-

[12]The explanation of the view that *Awange* was also a son of Tiv, I owe to Ngukpa Agwabi. The view that Tiv had but two children is widely held, also by J. E. I. Sai, a brother of Akiga.

[13]In 1965, the Synod of the Tiv Church ordered the elimination of any reference to the distinction between *Ipusu* and *Ichôngo* in a mission publication in the Tiv language.

[14]Downes, *op. cit.,* p. 4.

toric voyage up the Benue in 1854, when he first wrote of the Tiv and brought them to the attention of the outside world.[15]

Much of the lore of the Tiv stems from this stupendous sojourn northward, though the point of departure is itself no longer known.[16] Around the beginning of the nineteenth century the Tiv were living, according to what one must surmise from the available evidence, on Ibenda Hill, ten miles south of Turan. Both on the way to Ibenda Hill and in their subsequent migration the tribe came into contact with other peoples who profoundly influenced them, and Tiv readily acknowledge that many of their skills and foods were introduced to them by these peoples.[17] There must also have been a powerful dynamic within the people themselves which drove them on tirelessly through the midst of the bush tribes. This vitality and aggressiveness, so striking to all who live among the Tiv, has apparently lessened not a whit, and still inspires and sometimes disturbs those who know them. From the Chamba, Jukun, Udam, and Fulani they acquired new tools and knowledge, but they could not be contained by any of the peoples in their path. The Tiv say they themselves did not know weaving or blacksmithing; they had little skill at war, and were looked on as inferior by the Jukun and Hausa who constantly raided them for slaves. Yet the determination to survive and flourish set them apart as their momentum grew and they emerged from the *atôatiev* and moved into the rich farmlands they now occupy. This elân is yet a source of bewilderment to the surrounding tribes; the explanation evidently lies in their drive to imitate, adapt, and overcome.

The Tiv encountered a new threat in 1900 with the coming of the British. Colonization was vigorously resisted and no serious penetration was attempted until 1907 when the English moved into Tivland from Ibi and Wukari which lie northeast. By 1908 they were established at Katsina Ala, and by 1912 British officers toured nearly all of the tribal area, and Tivland east of the Katsina Ala River was

---

[15]Baikie's report, *Narrative of an Exploring Voyage up the Rivers Kwora and Binue in 1854*, was published in 1856. However, in 1954, S. Koelle's *Polyglotta Africana* was published, and in it one may find a rudimentary Tiv vocabulary, secured by Koelle from a liberated Tiv slave at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

[16]The stages of the trip are likewise in dispute. R. Abraham, *The Tiv People*, London, 1940, p. 13, and Downes, *op. cit.*, p. 2, feel that about two hundred years ago the Tiv began to move down from the Sonkwalla Hills where they were living at that time. These hills are located a few miles southeast of the town of Obudu (and about sixty linear miles south-southeast of the Tiv administrative capital of Gboko). East and Akiga locate Swem Hill (which is the Tiv name for the hill so revered in their history) about thirty-five miles further southeast from Sonkwalla and they feel that the Tiv moved from here on to Ibenda Hill, the next stage on their journey.

[17]A. Sai, *op. cit.*, Chap. 6. A translation and commentary may be found in P. Bohannan, *The Descent of the Tiv from Ibenda Hill*, in: Africa, Vol. XXIV, Oct., 1954, pp. 295-310.

opened to missionary travel and settlement. By the end of World War I, taxation had been levied, though it was not safe to travel to all points of Tivland without armed escort until 1923.[18] Tivland was the last area of consequence in Nigeria to be brought under British control, which fact illustrates both the independence of the Tiv and the tact and patience of the administration.

B. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The Tiv understanding of authority and power arises from a surprising view of leadership which is not amenable to the imposition of either elected or appointed chiefs. The Tiv had no chief who ruled over the tribe as a whole. Nor, in the Tiv view, did mere geographic contiguity have much to do with political groupings or alliances. To the Tiv, authority resides intrinsically in the very personality of the leader; he cannot be clothed with it artificially simply by an appointment. Furthermore, the authority is valid for those who are organically bound through their kinship to the holder of the authority. On this basis there could be no chief of all the Tiv, for there was no one who could be at once *Ipusu* and *Ichôngo*, uncircumcised and also circumcised. The Tiv did finally begin to see the necessity in the modern situation for such a figure who could stand for the tribe, and the office was established in 1946, but then with the implicit understanding that the chieftainship would alternate between the *Ipusu* and the *Ichôngo*.

The social organization of the Tiv thus rests on kinship. A man could be chief only over those of whom he was a part, and he came to his authority because he was strong in personality, rich in witchcraft potential, and master of many of the rites used to "set right the land." He inspired respect by his nature. An early British attempt to install chiefs for the thirty-four clans was doomed from the start, for younger men were given these posts, men who possessed no inherent authority in Tiv eyes and whose witchcraft potential had not been proven. The District Heads thus appointed sometimes knew little of the genealogy of the segment over whom they were to rule, and were thus unable from the outset to cope with the problems they encountered. In an attempt to preserve their authority, the District Heads made vain attempts to employ both witchcraft and dishonesty, with an opposite result from that intended by the government.

Social organization in Tivland was construed in terms of *tar*. *Tar* refers to any area containing a group of people bound together by kinship relationships. The term, however, does not refer so much to territory as to the society inhabiting the area. A *tar* is a place, but

[18] M. Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, London, 1937, p. 123.

primarily a *peopled* place. When a Tiv is asked where his *tar* is located, he will reply in terms of the lineage segment occupying the place. *Tar* is, in short, the area inhabited by a lineage. When we consider all of Tivland as the descendants of one man, then we are speaking of *tar* Tiv. We may also speak of a more recent ancestor and thus narrow the *tar*. The smallest *utar* (plural) vary widely in size and number of inhabitants, but average about four square miles and include twenty to thirty compounds. For more narrow identification, the Tiv speak in terms of a living leader rather than in terms of the ancestor after whom the *tar* is named. The compound as such usually contains from five to fifty huts, with twelve being average.

At the other end of the scale as far as size is concerned is the *tarnyagh* or the world. The earth in the Tiv mind was a cone of land surrounded by the sea (*uzegembamgerev*). The summit of this cone cannot be very far away, for the Tiv remember that their ancestors left the height and descended as they moved into *tar* Tiv. All rivers flow from this summit and go through all lands, also Europe (for did not the white man ascend the river on his way to Tivland?). All other black men live nearby, but the white man lives farther down since the summit is south or southeast, while the white man lives to the north or northwest. One journeys in Tivland either "up," "down," or "across"; there are no words for the points of the compass. Likewise, distance is measured not so much in terms of space as in terms of the *utar* which must be crossed on the way. Both direction and distance are thus described in terms of people. Similarly, the authority to be wielded over an area must be thought of in terms of the people who inhabit it, and hence the borders of the *tar* are determined not by the hills, rivers, or "natural boundaries," but in terms of the lineage present in the area being discussed.[10]

The intimacy of the union of earth and people is here evident, and suggests a feature dominant in the Tiv world-view: the symbiosis of man, nature, and the cosmos. The *tar,* the people now alive, and the ancestors are joined together in various sacred rites of the Tiv. We have already referred to the ancestral *Poor* skulls used in the awesome *akombo a biamegh* rites to "set at ease" the *tar*. The dead, the living, and the *tar* merge in this effort to maintain cosmic harmony. In a similar way the ancestral pipes (*imborivungu*) played a solemn role in Tiv life and served to unite the ancestors and the *tar* with the living. These pipes were made, in their original and pure form, from a human bone, and as a group emblem required a human life to set its force at ease. In the secret language of the mysteriously potent elders, who alone might blow the pipe, it was actually called the *tar*. When

[10]Cf. P. and L. Bohannan, *A Tiv Political and Religious Idea,* in: Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, vol. XI, no. 2, 1955, pp. 127-149, *passim.*

properly used by the initiated, the harmony of the *tar* and the invisible forces was restored; the people could be serene again and the barren would conceive. Here the land and people, earth and sky, living and dead, are all brought into one panoply of cooperation. When in 1929 the colonial administration forbade performance of the *biamegh* and *imborivungu* rites because of the human sacrifice allegedly involved, the Tiv were thrown into general dismay because of the dire cosmic consequences undoubtedly ahead. The white man had by his action precipitated the ruin of the *tar*, and all subsequent calamity could be traced to this catastrophe.

The unity of power in man and the *tar* may also be seen in the early practise of preserving the excrement of leaders who left the tribal area. When the time came to go back to his *tar*, the leader carried his excrement with him and threw it away at home. Abraham quotes a Tiv man on the subject as follows: "His excrement is one of the sources to which his beneficent power (*tsav*) adheres; by leaving it all abroad, this would mean an increase of power to the foreigner and a loss of power to his own country.[20] The potency in man, that is the potency of men of much *tsav*, may thus be communicated to the soil, even as the soil gives its power to man day by day. In this continuity of power between man, food, and land, the *tar* is preserved. A time of prosperity is said to be a time of eating the *tar*.

The essential continuity of the animate and inanimate (to use a Western distinction) is seen in the relation of a baby to the placenta. When a baby was born, the afterbirth was buried carefully and a stone placed over the spot so that no animal might come and disturb it, for then the life of the child would also be in jeopardy. Likewise, when the baby was washed, some of the water was poured out over the place where the placenta was buried in order to refresh it and preserve its well-being. In these first few crucial days of life, every precaution was employed to avoid the Drum of Death, that Death might pass by.[21]

A common Tiv ceremony in bush areas, the *hamber ifan* (sprinkling the curse), also serves to indicate the way in which the unseen forces are joined to man and the *tar*. In this ceremony those present spit water out of their mouths, one effect of which is to refresh the land by a symbol of rain. The other and more immediate effect is to purge one of any evil which could have an inimical effect on the *tar*. When people come together to conclude important business, they may *hamber ifan* lest the unspoken curse (*ifan*) which may be in

[20] R. Abraham, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[21] The description of the birth of a Tiv child is found in A. Sai, *op. cit.*, Chap. 11, *Aeren a Tiv* (Folkways of the Tiv). The translation is in R. East, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-303.

their hearts open the way for disaster to enter the *tar*. If, however, man is at harmony with himself and other men, then the workings of the macrocosm may continue undisturbed; the two exist in the most delicate balance.

The social organization of the Tiv is thus marked by the continuity of man and the *tar*, and man and the cosmos. Essentially the same continuity applies to the individual in his place in the community. A basic factor in the traditional Tiv society was the exchange marriage, which illustrates how the continuity and balance was sought. To obtain a wife, a Tiv male would give his sister (in the sense of unmarried female agnate) to the brother of his intended. That is to say, in its simplest form it was an exchange of sisters. This basic form was modified by a series of complicated priorities, so that sometimes a woman might be owed to someone even before she was born. The elder sons took their sisters as wards first, and a younger son might need to wait until another daughter was born or came of age in the compound. He then claimed this daughter for exchange. In the patrilocal society of the Tiv the loss of the daughter is thus balanced by the wife who comes in and becomes her proxy. Thus nothing is upset or lost; in fact, to the Tiv the new wife *became* the woman who was given away. Though the flesh of necessity was transferred elsewhere, the procreative potential has remained within the compound. The sister who was given away was in effect the mother of the children who were born to the woman who came in her place; nothing was lost or disturbed.

The web of interdependencies in the segment thus became most intricate. In fact, a man acted not so much as an individual as he did as a member of the group on whom he was dependent. Filial respect was encouraged by this state of affairs, and group unity was established by the exchange marriage. The whole compound had a stake in its *angôl* (marriageable women), and all were involved in the success (productivity) of each exchange. If there were many daughters born rather than sons, this was no real loss, for they could be exchanged for additional wives. In fact, older men often acquired multiple wives before the younger men could marry at all, and thus the latter had to wait until they were well into their twenties or thirties before they obtained a wife. Nor could an exchange wife long be maltreated, for her family was in a position to take immediate revenge on the offender. The procreative potency of the male was also enhanced by levirate marriage. If the husband died after the birth of a first child and the wife was then received by an agnate, all succeeding children would yet be his and called by his name.

The colonial government and the missionaries were chagrined, however, by the apparent use of the woman as voiceless chattel in these transactions and by the fact that the young men were often

required to wait to marry until there were sufficient *angôl* in the compound. Exchange marriage was abolished by fiat in 1927 in favor of another form, the *kem* marriage. *Kem* is cumulative bride-wealth, beginning with small gifts to the intended's parents and concluding with gifts at the birth of each child. The new sauciness of the women and breakdown of communal control dismayed the Tiv immensely, and the case load at the courts shot up rather than down. Young men with money usurped the control of the elders, and brought from the elders new accusations that the white man had spoiled the *tar*. The carefully maintained equilibrium of the community by this form of social control collapsed.

The placement of the individual was thus determined by kinship. Genealogy was definitive for man's location in the *tar*, for his understanding of authority, for marriage and family. It located him in the group where he could find security as he became part of the whole and submerged himself within it.

When one Tiv man asks another concerning his *nongo* (line), the answer is in terms of a prominent living elder representative of the father's patrilineage. He might possibly be one's compound head. The head of the compound (*orya*) may also be called father, and he may call all the other men his children; in addition, the married women in bush areas will call him "great husband" (*nom u tamen*), in which case the woman's husband may be called "small husband" (*nom u kiriki*). If one is at some distance from his *tar*, however, and wishes to speak in terms of a living leader, the reference will probably be to the clan head.

The continuity of the individual and the group may also be seen when one seeks to locate the individual in terms of an ancestor. The question is then: What is your lineage segment? and the answer will be in terms of the patrilineage (*ityô*). The *ityô* covers the lineage at any distance one wants to discuss it — the broader the segment envisaged, the more distant the ancestor referred to. The entire group is the *ityô*, but the term also applies to each individual within it. Any man may refer to any other man within the specific lineage as his *ityô*. At first this appears most puzzling to a student of the Tiv; actually it is quite consistent with the Tiv view of the continuity of the individual and his group. The Tiv do not separate the two with our precise distinctions. Each is part of all: man, the group, the earth, the universe. The *ityô* cannot be referred to *in abstracto;* it is always the *ityô* of a specific person, never "that *ityô*" or "the *ityô*." Akiga Sai described the *ityô* as all those who have come from the womb of one woman.[22] We do have matrilineal overtones in such a definition,

[22] A. Sai, *op. cit.*, Chap. 7, *Kwase Yamen* (Marriage, literally, The Trading of a Woman).

but it should be remembered that the woman here indicated is not the woman who actually bore the children, but the woman who went away as the exchange partner! She may never even have seen the children herself. Thus we have a complex fusion of matrilineal and patrilineal strains. The *ityô* is more basic than the *nongo*, for the emphasis is on one's descent, rather than on the living leader. These groupings identify the individual, while the relationships between the various groups is thought of in terms of the *utar*.

With this understanding of the social organization of the tribe, we are in a position to make some concluding remarks regarding leadership. We have seen that the chief's authority was intrinsic and came through his mastery of many of the sacred rites and possession of magic potential. His authority, however, was not arbitrary; he was the expression of the people themselves, and had skillfully to apply the common mind to specific situations until all would concur. The group always has theoretically a united front; Tiv in their meetings discuss an affair until ultimately the opposition wears down and all accept the decision thus forged. A public show of hands to settle a matter is a Western innovation, and to the Tiv inconclusive, for it shows that in the end some yet opposed the proposition under discussion.

Leadership is not hereditary among the Tiv, though of course, the son of a "strong" man has the obvious advantage of learning from the father and becoming as the father is. Age naturally brought a man a certain deference and an advantage in aspiring to leadership. The very fact that he had escaped death for so long indicated that he had acquired rare knowledge of the life forces and the power to enable him to overcome malice directed at him, both physically and mystically through witchcraft. He evidently knew how to preserve the *tar* as he had preserved himself. The power of the elders was thus immense; Tivland was ruled in many respects by a gerontocracy.

We have seen that leadership is circumscribed by specific controls. A further control stems directly from the Tiv need to preserve the harmony of macrocosm and microcosm. Anyone who expressed unusual individualism, anyone who tended to move out from the common mold and stood apart from the time-honored forms for maintaining the serenity of the totality, was potentially dangerous to everyone. He was moving on untested pathways and might commit any number of unpropitious acts and upset the carefully structured balance of the whole. The individual who through ability or good fortune rose above the mass thus imperiled the entire group and threatened to arouse inimical forces in the cosmic whole. Conformity to the status quo was essential, and the result was among the Tiv a deep-seated egalitarianism. Since the individual is continuous with the group and the universe, the effects of individualism will be felt by

all, and the offender must be whittled down to size. To flaunt or disregard this cosmic balance is tantamount to "sin." To be unique is evil; the "I" should forever be swallowed up in the "non-I." This view of the Tiv is shared by other Africans and illustrates how that in the midst of great differences in the various tribal structures in Africa, there are also basic patterns of similarity. J. V. Taylor in a generalization on African cosmology has these words which could have been lifted straight from Tivland:

> Happiness is not to be sought through a rapacious individual grasping of the power-force latent in other beings. That way lies witchcraft. A man's well-being consists, rather, in keeping in harmony with the cosmic totality. When things go well with him he knows he is at peace, and of a piece, with the scheme of things, and there can be no greater good than that. If things go wrong then somewhere he has fallen out of step . . .[23]

Man's relationship to the world then was not one of exploitation, but of cooperation, and where this was flaunted, malice was imminent. This egalitarianism in Tiv social organization had far-reaching implications. The untried was dangerous: the *tar* would be spoiled by it, the rains would cease or the women abort, and hence the censure of society lashed out at those who would not be placed on the altar of the common weal. To the Tiv, the world was not objectified; one could not look at nature as though from a distance, for one could become truly "I" only insofar as he also became "non-I." "I" was liable to be the schismatic, the heretic, for in his uniqueness he separated himself from the past and from his kindred. He objectified the world, rather than allowing himself to be swept along in this timelessness. Such self-consciousness, the African *hubris*, is the invitation to the Drum of Death.

In the final analysis, the determination of right and wrong came from the understanding of the macrocosm and its influence on the microcosm. In this sense, *cosmos* also became *nomos*, and the whole was taken out of temporality into timelessness, for change was itself jeopardy. "The Tiv have liked change," writes Margaret Mead,[24] but this is true only in so far as innovation and imitation could be fitted into the basic pattern. The changes ultimately approved were those which led *toward* security. Here lay the great threat of the British conquerors who would introduce change by fiat and so spoil the *tar*. Where their authority intersected the higher, cosmic laws, there lay peril for the tribe. The motivation for cultural life came from the past rather than from the open challenge of the future. This thralldom of the past for the Tiv has led some writers to characterize the Tiv as

[23] J. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, London, 1963, p. 74.
[24] M. Mead, *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change*, New York, 1955, p. 122.

backward.[25] One ought, however, to understand that behind this "backwardness" lies a profound estimate of the structure of the universe, a deep loyalty to and respect for the ancestral heritage, and a reverence for forces which guide the movements of the world. With this "backwardness" they sought to turn aside from the Drum of Death.

The social organization of the Tiv was thus structured in harmony with his cosmology and evidenced in his thought in the symbiosis of man, society, nature and the cosmos.

C. TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The foregoing has already brought us into contact with various mystical forces which the Tiv acknowledged. We have noted the entrance of a duality in the thought of the Tiv, beginning at the tribal level with the *Ichôngo* and *Ipusu,* and seen also in the idea of the microcosm and macrocosm which live together in intimate relation. We have seen in this duality a need for the maintenance of a cosmic, tribal, and personal balance and harmony. In this connection it is necessary to set out several concepts in which these ideas are incorporated.

1. AÔNDO

We have referred to *Aôndo* in our discussion of the origin and history of the tribe. Though it is difficult in a study of traditional African religion to plot the point at which respect and honor merges into reverence and worship, with respect to *Aôndo* there can be no doubt. *Aôndo* is God, the High God, the Creator. *Aôndo* has personality; he can be angry, and expresses his anger even today in his roar of thunder and in spitting out the storms.

At the same time it must be stated that *Aôndo* is not thought of in personal terms among Tiv who are not Christians. He is addressed in prayer only in a moment of intense crisis, when the Tiv may cry out for help from the highest power in the universe. He may also be indirectly and ceremonially approached through one of the sacred *akombo* rites. Nevertheless the Tiv maintain that at one time *Aôndo* lived near man and communed with him, and there exists a Tiv legend to explain his departure, which also preserves the memory of a previous "golden age." In the beginning *Aôndo* dwelt near the earth and personally watched over it. One day, however, as a woman was preparing food by pounding yams in her mortar, she struck her pestle against *Aôndo,* and he in hurt anger left the earth and now

[25]For example, M. Perham, *op. cit.,* p. 342, "the backward area of the Tiv."

dwells in the heavens.[26] Indeed, the word for sky is *Aôndo,* and the clouds are his "spots." He now abides in distant majesty, and the Tiv day by day deal not so much with *Aôndo* as with the nearby forces of *tsav* and *akombo* on which the weal and woe of the tribe more immediately depend.

Aôndo thus corresponds to the thought of many African tribes whose otiose deity is faroff and whose attributes are vague and undefined. It is difficult at present to uncover how the Tiv traditionally thought of God, for the concept has now been filled with meanings taken over from the missionaries. Tiv say that once they were very ignorant of *Aôndo's* characteristics, but now the white man has explained his nature to them.

The early missionaries' decision to take the traditional term *Aôndo* and fill it with Christian meaning has itself modified Tiv traditional religion and magnified the status of *Aôndo.* On the other hand, the traditional view of *Aôndo* has doubtless colored the thinking of the Tiv Christians as well, who now know *Aôndo* both as the skies and as Yahweh. The difficulty may be seen, for example, in the fatalism of the Tiv, who shrug their shoulders in the face of catastrophe, and say, with all the overtones of the old world-view, "It is *Aôndo.*" This fatalism also provides a means of absolving one from personal blame in an avoidable calamity: it was God's will; who am I to try to avert it? There is a certain old arbitrariness in the decree of *Aôndo,* and it is useless for man to attempt to contravene his unknowable design. Thus the lack of use of personal ability and opportunity may be excused on religious grounds.

Aôndo was a name not profaned in Tivland under the ancient world-view. Nowadays the term *Aôndo* is used quite flippantly, a practise acquired from Hausa traders, in their casual use of the name of Allah, and from "Europeans" (this term in West Africa applies to all white men), whose profanity still shocks some Tiv. A further modification of the idea of God is seen in the use of oaths in courts. The Bible is commonly preferred for swearing at present, even by many pagans, though the traditional pot of leaves, ashes, and stone celts (the "axes of *Aôndo*") is quite available. This pot and its contents, called *swem,* was used for ordeals and for determining truth under the old world-view. The preference for swearing by the Christian God is due to the desirability of being thought of as advanced, as one whose eyes have been opened (*a bugh ashe*) rather than as a pagan.

Because of the remoteness of *Aôndo* to the traditional Tiv, most aspects of daily life were not touched by special commands or taboos

[26]The identical legend is reported for other West African tribes by G. Parrinder, *West African Religion,* London, 1949, pp. 27-28. Other Paradise myths of Africa are collected by the same author in *African Traditional Religion,* 1954, pp. 40-41.

in his regard. The social well-being of the tribe revolved around the more immediate *akombo* rites far more than around the sky god, even though in tribal legend and daily talk reference might be made to him. This does not mean that there were other, lesser gods to be encountered among the Tiv, for *Aôndo* alone commanded what to the Western mind is worship. The Tiv system was thus a monotheism, but with the deity in practise playing a relatively minor role, and with the other power systems in the foreground. These forces, created by *Aôndo* for the regulation of life, occupy the center of the stage and brought one in touch with the *dunamis* of the universe, the cosmic powers. The religion of the Tiv is therefore a dynamism, a belief in which cosmic forces are held sacred and operate as the major influences in the life of man. The High God, *Aôndo*, whatever he may have been to the Tiv hundreds of years ago, was, at least in this century, relegated to the heavens to dwell in distant majesty. The traditional religion of the Tiv finds expression rather in *tsav* and *akombo*.

Similar examples of a High God identified with the sky are found in many African societies, for example among the Yoruba of western Nigeria (whose deity *Olorun* means owner of the sky), among the Kikuyu of Kenya (whose High God, *Murungu*, is the possessor of whiteness, that is, the sky), and among the Ashanti of Ghana (whose supreme deity, *'Nyame*, rules over the sky).[27]

Aôndo is for the Tiv the final answer to the inscrutable phenomena of the universe, but he is himself inscrutable, hidden in the heavens.

2. Tsav

Tsav is a complex factor in the religion of the Tiv and is translated in a variety of ways by expatriates. The closest English approximation is probably "witchcraft potential," but one should take away most of the ominous overtones of that phrase. *Tsav* may be used malevolently by malevolent people, but its genius is not vicious. *Tsav* was rather a cosmic potency internalized in man and thus formed one of his qualities as a part of his personality. Tiv would say that it grew on his heart as an actual substance, which might be investigated by a post-mortem operation.[28] The virtue or evil of the man's *tsav* could thus be exposed by looking at the heart, and in some cases it became necessary to perform this operation to determine whether death had been caused by "cosmic retribution" against the evil use of *tsav*, or whether the victim was the object of foul play. Or there may

[27]G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, London, 1954, pp. 33-35.

[28]A description of the actual opening of a deceased man's body to search for *tsav* may be found in P. Bohannan, *Justice and Judgment Among the Tiv*, London, 1957, p. 201. *Tsav* was "found" in two engorged sacs near the heart.

have been no *tsav* growing on the heart at all, in which case he was referred to as one of the empty-chested. Tiv thus differentiated *tsav* into good or bad, and the investigator may be misled by this distinction, for the difference is basically due to the nature of the possessor and not originally to the *tsav* itself. The evil man grew bad *tsav* through his insatiable appetite for human flesh and his lust for power, while he should have been using his power to set right the *tar*.

Through the years the malevolent side of *tsav* power gradually came to the fore and the possessors of *tsav* as a class became known as the *mbatsav* and were greatly feared for the terror they brought through causing disease and death. It was against these *mbatsav* that anti-witchcraft movements erupted at various times in Tiv history, precisely because the dark side of *tsav* power had become dominant in the Tiv mind. The current attitude toward *tsav* is a degeneration from the traditional belief, for Tiv elders yet agree that *tsav* is not as such evil, but was used to repair the *tar*. Young people no longer think of *tsav* in that way, but construe it, first, *in malem partem*, and secondly, as a substance.

Tsav is supernatural potency personalized in man. Those with much *tsav* are the men whose yams are largest and whose wives are most fecund. They can enhance or jeopardize welfare through the use of supernatural processes, and the empty-chested are at their mercy. Thus *tsav* is both feared (in others) and desired (in oneself). The dread which *tsav* inspires was a fearsome weapon, and in a fiercely egalitarian society such as that of the Tiv, the tension of distrust coupled with envy was heightened. A man found guilty of witchcraft obviously would not deny the accusation. Though the finger might be pointed at him as the cause of death in the compound, he would accept this attribution of potency and announce that he had indeed been the cause. Death to the Tiv mind did not arise from "natural" causes; the idea is itself an impossibility. Causation exists within the macrocosm-microcosm continuum in which all lives and flows together, and so death finds its cause in human maladjustment. Its explanation must be sought in the action or intent of man.

That intent may be explained as follows. In order to renew or develop *tsav* the consumption of human flesh was necessary, even at in the second power system, the *akombo*, human life was the ultimate sacrifice, to be given for the renewal of the *tar*. Death in the human realm is therefore ascribed to the *mbatsav*, who desired the flesh of the victim for their consumption. A complex array of fleshdebts developed from this principle, since the *mbatsav* who ate the flesh incurred thereby a debt to the supplier. As soon as it was suspected that the *mbatsav* had held a communal meal in the deep of the night, the compound lived in dread, for soon someone would claim to satisfy the debt of the eater. When the potential victim

was determined by the *mbatsav,* he was thought of as already dead, though he might live for some time. At the time life departed from him, he died his second death. Of course, no one knew of the first death at the time it was pronounced except the *mbatsav.* Nothing killed a man if his doom had not been sealed by the *mbatsav;* he could be shot in the chest or fall from the highest peak, yet he would not die unless the *mbatsav* had sealed his fate.[20] Whether the *mbatsav* society actually killed for cannibalistic purposes or waited for someone in the compound to die is at this stage in time a moot point. Either way, of course, the theory is satisfied.

The somber side of *tsav* power is the more sensational and in course of time outweighed the beneficent side. The preservation of the *tar* was a much less striking consequence of *mbatsav* activity, and in this century a reaction to the *mbatsav* arose on several occasions. The elders were accused of personal lust for power, of insatiable hunger for meat (*akor kôr un*), and of private vendettas against those they disliked. The abuse of *tsav* called forth violent anti-witchcraft movements and the *mbatsav* lost all respect in the public mind. It must be remembered also that in this century the tribe suffered the incursions of the white man with a possible loss of faith in the efficacy of the *mbatsav* to save the people, thus inviting reaction to the malefficent side of *tsav* power.

These developments thus represent a degeneration from the original conception of *tsav* power. Actually the preservation of the land and the revitalization of the people was the main communal function of the *mbatsav.* In order to accomplish this, the idea of *tsav* was joined with the second major system of Tiv religious practices, the *akombo* ceremonies. It was the *mbatsav* who with their individualized power became the masters of these rites and thus set right the *tar.* Here the personalized potency of *tsav* met the impersonal, abstract, hovering forces symbolized by the *akombo* emblems, and they so manipulated the emblems and people that the cosmic disharmony was corrected and the vulnerability to calamity was erased. In the joining of these two systems may be seen both the vitalism which lies at the heart of Tiv religion and the beneficent side of *tsav* power. Through the *akombo* rites, performed by those who could become cult masters (and, of course, only those who were strong in *tsav* were adequate for this task), the *tar* is maintained and the fields and women are fertile.

An example of the joining of these systems may be seen in the manipulation of the ancestral pipes (*imborivungu*). The rite surrounding the *imborivungu* involved pouring human blood upon it as part of the enlivening process. Only the *mbatsav* dared aspire to

[20]East, *op. cit.,* p. 251.

this manipulation, and only they could provide the blood for the ceremony. The *mbatsav* then washed their bloody hands and this water was thrown upon the field and into the well. The crops would then be good and a woman who drank from the well would soon be pregnant. Thus in this rite we see how the blood of the one given for the many joins the *tsav, akombo,* and ancestors for the good of the land, the people, and the cosmos.

It would be incorrect to call the *mbatsav* a secret society, though they are known as the people of the night, and generally performed their rites in secrecy. Nearly everyone knew who the people were with great *tsav,* and their cultus did not exist outside the theoretical structure of the society. Nor are the *mbatsav* an ancestral cult, as though their function was the acquisition of the support of the ancestors. At one time the invocation of the ancestors was apparently an important feature of Tiv religion, done to secure their cooperation. The idea lives on in the *Mku* rite, which is performed in order to please the forefathers after one has had a dream about a dead ancestor, and in the ancestral pipes and *Poor* skulls. At most we have a ceremonial tying of the present with the past, the symbolic statement that all of life is one, and that each nourishes and is nourished by all.

In the idea of *tsav* we see the appeal to the supernatural forces, ultimately through the use of human blood, the most precious of all sacrifices. Through *tsav,* the life of every individual was placed in peril, and yet *tsav* was most fundamentally an expression of the reverence for life, the effort to escape the Drum of Death. *Tsav* also provided a powerful social control which enhanced the authority of the elders and molded the young into acceptable forms of behavior as demanded by the community. Finally, *tsav* served to provide part of the answer to the riddle of life — the unceasing enigma of success and cataclysm, of weakness and power, of the unexpected and inexplicable.

3. AKOMBO

We have already indicated a second system of forces which play on the life of the *tar,* intimately related in Tiv religion to the power of *tsav.* These forces are symbolized by the Tiv in everyday objects which we shall term their guardian emblems (*iyangenev*). These may be pieces of pottery, bones, feathers, etc. set up in specific spots. The difficulty of finding the point at which respect merges into worship has previously been mentioned, but it can forthrightly be said that the Tiv do not worship the *iyangenev.* Students of African religion such as G. Parrinder have repeatedly pointed out the inadequacy of the term "fetishism" as a designation for the reverence

accorded material objects thought to influence events.[30] The Tiv do not worship sticks and stones nor do they "in their blindness bow down to wood and stone." The early missionary Strijdom summarized Tiv religion as follows:

> Their religion consists of the worship of a series of idols (akombo), to which sacrifices are regularly given. There is an idol for the hunt, for the harvest, for sickness, for a birth, etc.[31]

It would be uncharitable, after the developments of half a century, to judge this summary too harshly; nevertheless, the Tiv have no idols and no pantheon of deities, nor do they worship spirits, in fact spirits play a strikingly meager role in their day to day religion. The *akombo* refer rather to those mysterious forces which may be violated or disturbed (*pev,* literally pierce) by the disregard of certain taboos or the breaking of specific laws. In common parlance, the *akombo* thereupon inflicts a certain woe upon the offender. More fundamentally, however, the resultant woe is vulnerability to malevolence which, when the *akombo* power "catches" (*kôr*) the violator, produces specific calamities.

The awesome power to which *akombo* refers is thus different from that of *tsav* in that the *akombo* power is impersonal and is not itself internalized in any man's heart, and secondly, that it is not positive or overt. We have here subjected the *akombo* power to analysis which the average Tiv does not himself undertake. In his everyday thought, *akombo are* positive and overt; *akombo are* diseases or calamities. He avoids the intervening steps which come to light only after some investigation. Tiv do not themselves comprehend all of the religion which they traditionally profess; they deal rather with everyday needs and dangers, and no one, Tiv or expatriate, has been able to understand and explain all the relationships involved in their complex religious practices. There are, for example, several hundred *akombo.*

Akombo are spiritual forces created by *Aôndo* to regulate the cosmos and to protect it from malfunction. The existence of these forces may be discovered by man, as well as the ways in which their equilibrium may be restored when they have been disturbed. This restoration requires the manipulation of certain paraphernalia and often involves a sacrifice of blood or beer above the guardian emblems. Those who are initiated and thus have obtained the right to manipulate the *akombo* emblems may in this way restore order to a situation in the human realm in which brokenness is present and calamity hence breaks out. The *akombo* power is violated (inten-

[30]G. Parrinder, *West African Religion,* London, 1949, p. 12 ff.

[31]J. Strijdom, *op. cit.,* p. 29 (my translation).

tionally or otherwise) through disregard of specific taboos or through the handling of sacred objects without proper initiation or mastery. One must, of course, have a mastery of the rite, but the writer feels that it is not strictly correct to say that the *akombo* power as such is mastered or modified by man. Rather the specific conditions are established through human effort whereby life returns to normal, the unnatural is turned back, and the pollution contained, and it is in this sense that we shall speak of *akombo* mastery. Here again we face the "shortcut" taken by the Tiv who says that he has mastered the *akombo*, that he in fact owns it, and can make it leave him alone.

Tiv feel that it is natural for things to function properly, for fish to bite, women to bear, and crops to grow. This state of normalcy can, however, be upset in countless ways and thus the delicate equilibrium of the universe is disturbed and things go awry. For this reason life is beset by so many dangers, and for this reason so many *akombo* exist. At every turn the universe, so to speak, may be thrown out of kilter by human fumbling. When this happens, the *akombo* power has been violated (*pev*) and the violator stands vulnerable.

What happens next? Most of the literature and also many Tiv say that at this stage *akombo* attack, that they produce disease, or symptoms of disease, or other troubles. At first blush this would appear to be the expected sequence of events. Yet here caution should be exercised, and if they are carefully questioned, many Tiv say that actually the *mbatsav* must be brought into the picture at this point, though in everyday talk one simply says that an *akombo* itself attacks. It is rather the *mbatsav* that mete out the punishment upon the offender (evil *mbatsav* may also strike at the innocent). The violation of the *akombo* has thus provided the vulnerability to this attack, has split the seam, as it were, through which the *mbatsav* may now pour in mystical and physical malice.

In any case, trouble has come. The offender may be totally unaware of his transgression, but goes to the diviner for analysis of his problem and for information as to which *akombo* has been violated. In the case of a group calamity, the diviner is also called upon to indicate the specific individual at fault as well as the *akombo* which was transgressed. The diviner may also, if paid an additional fee, indicate whose *tsav* is causing the trouble. Thereupon the offender sets out to "set right" (*sur*) the *akombo*. *Sôr* is more than "repair"; the idea of encouragement is also present. To accomplish this, he seeks out one who is "master" of that *akombo*, that is, one entitled to carry out the appropriate rites. When the ceremonies are carried out properly, normalcy and harmony again return and life goes on as it should.

To obtain *akombo* mastery, one must *kôr* (catch, take hold of)

the *akombo,* which means that through initiation and the satisfaction of certain requirements one is in a position to perform the ceremony for those who desire to set right (*sôr*) that *akombo.* Not everyone is adequate for this position and honor, however, and the requirements depend on the gravity of the *akombo* in question. To *kôr* one of the "great" communal *akombo* such as *akombo a biamegh* required obvious evidence of great *tsav* in the applicant. In fact a life must be given before the *biamegh* rite could be attempted, and the applicant for initiation faced death if he proved unworthy, that is, if he made a pretense to the possession of *tsav.* Thus when the time for the rite approached, the compound was pervaded by a general aura of dread, even though outwardly there was great festivity.[32] Only the elders felt strong since their *tsav* was abundant. The announcement was made well in advance, for not only was the life required, but also a large sum of money to be paid to the *akombo* master. Thus many of the elders in their intense desire to obtain this mastery would go to any length to acquire money at this time. The selling of slaves was one way of obtaining such funds; even children of the compound might be sold in the interest of the acquisition. Nor were all the applicants with sufficient money necessarily accepted; it was generally understood who were adequate and who were inadequate (*kuma ga*). The latter thereupon faced intense shame and mockery for their presumption and delusions of grandeur.

When one did at last *kôr* the *akombo a biamegh* and so became a member of this select cult (*orbiam*), one had acquired an avenue to great wealth and prestige to be given by future applicants. Furthermore, the *akombo a biamegh* operated as a powerful restorative force when hunting was poor, and in later times also when crops failed. Thus the applicant felt that his cause was eminently moral and just.

We have already mentioned the symbolic emblems of the *akombo,* called its *iyangenev.* The *akombo* force is represented by these emblems, which are material objects of specific kinds: feathers, bones, scraps of cloth, seeds, shells, etc. The emblems of the *akombo a biamegh* are the most awesome of all; the skulls of ancestors. In popular usage the *akombo* force is identified with the *iyangenev* so that the *akombo* is casually said to *be* the *iyangenev* itself. Basically, however, the *iyangenev* is a protective emblem: it prevents (*yange*) people from doing the thing guarded against because it is a constant, visible reminder to them. But the *iyangenev* is more than a sign: through its manipulation, further evil is prevented, and the retribution contained. At its core, the *iyangenev* idea is that of a

[32]These notes on *akombo a biamegh* I owe especially to J. E. I. Sai.

visible symbol of a spiritual force; one may find comparable symbolism in the bread and wine of the Christians.

The "great" *akombo* are utilized for communal welfare, but there also exist many lesser *akombo*, held privately or by a lineage. These lesser *akombo* are usually housed in a pot or gourd in the meeting-hut of the compound. This pot is called *lough* and is a sacred object, inasmuch as it is the home of the *akombo* (*ya u akombo*). If you touch the *lough*, you *pev* (pierce, viz. violate) the *akombo* and must go through the usual ceremony of propitiating that *akombo*. *Akombo* may be offended (*pev*) in the following ways:

1. An enemy may leave the *iyangenev* of a certain *akombo* in a place where it will be stepped upon, touched, or unintentionally violated.
2. An area or person covered by an *akombo* taboo is not recognized as such, and is violated by physical entry or touch, for example, sleeping with a menstruous woman.
3. The *akombo* may be intentionally defied in the hope of personal gain, as for example, stealing the paraphernalia out of the *lough*, a foolhardy act at best.
4. A person may eat taboo food such as dog meat, meat found dead, or human flesh. Only the *mbatsav* would knowingly do the latter; only they could overcome the guilt brought on by the act.
5. A person may eat food used in the *sôr akombo* rites, and if that person is not himself a member by initiation into that *akombo* cult, *pev* occurs.
6. Some *akombo* prohibit observation of the *iyangenev*. If one looks into the bin where the *Poor* skulls of the *akombo a biamegh* are kept, for example, or into the basket where the *imborivungu* pipes are housed, *pev* occurs.
7. Sexual intercourse with a virgin or with an old woman wearing the *mceram* emblem entails *pev*.[33]

Thus the *akombo* provide a basic means of social control against harmful action and help to secure the prosperity of the tribe so that it may "eat the land" (*ya tar*). The *akombo* power parallels the individualized *tsav* power, and the interaction of these two systems regulates the community. The average Tiv farmer, to be sure, does not think of these matters in this way. To him the *akombo* object *is* the force itself, and an evil force at that, liable at any time to interfere in his life and strike at him. These developments indicate how the passage of time has had its influence upon Tiv religion. The casual observer will conclude that the *akombo* system is a form of animatism whose anima is located in the

[33] I am indebted for this classification of *pev* to H. Bergsma, *Traditional Tiv Religious Practices*, unpublished manuscript. The author kindly provided me with the manuscript; the discussion of *pev* is found in Chapter 3, Part 2.

iyangenev. Materialization of the spiritual is a human tendency, and it has undoubtedly happened among the Tiv.[34] Evidence of this fact exists today in the rise of the use of charms and homeopathic magic. All Tiv will maintain that charms were not originally a part of their religious armory, but their use has grown immensely in recent years, especially since the recent violence in Nigeria.

The very compilation and analysis of *akombo* runs counter to the genius of Tiv religion, whose continuity derives so much of its strength from being surrounded by the aura of the unknown. In this wonderland of mystery, the control by the *mbatsav* can be carried on, and the *akombo* can call forth the faith of the people. This and any analysis of Tiv religion thus dilutes an understanding of its strength, which rests so largely on mystery and flexibility.[35]

The way in which the *akombo* system rests upon the *tsav* system of internalized power should now be apparent. The *akombo* do not, in the final analysis, mete out their punishment *ex opere operato*, though in everyday parlance such an expression might be acceptable. Basically, to *pev* the *akombo* is to produce vulnerability to punishment, while the punishment itself is meted out by the *mbatsav*. It is in this activity that the two power systems ultimately coalesce.[36] This fundamental interdependence may be seen in the use of the word *kôr*. To *kôr* the *akombo* implies that one has the necessary insight and strength to obtain the right to perform the ritual which "gladdens" the *akombo*, and this requires *tsav* in the initiate. The *akombo*, however, can also *kôr* the offender, that is to say, *tsav* has been used against the person in a particular way so that the

[34]This development in Tiv religion causes obvious difficulty to the investigator. R. East's majestic study of the Tiv illustrates the problem, for the reader is not always sure whether East is discussing the theoretical "pure" religion of the Tiv or the everyday degenerated form. East writes, for example, (*op. cit.*, p. 179), "The *akombo* are liable to interfere with the course of nature," which is indeed the way Tiv will initially present the idea. The fundamental idea is, however, that when the course of nature is interfered with, then *akombo* force is felt. Likewise he writes (*op. cit.*, p. 180), "When the master of the *akombo* fashions the emblem, he makes the disease itself." Strictly speaking, the *iyangenev* is not the disease, and the Tiv know it symbolizes the disease. But the statement does indicate the undoubted trend whereby the spiritual is made corporeal or material.

[35]The difficulty is succinctly acknowledged by P. Bohannan in: *Peoples of Africa*, New York, 1965, p. 539, who presents his own "anthropologist's myth" which organizes religious data and thereby reduces the diffuseness upon which the religious system rests.

[36]This view of the dependence of the *akombo* system on the *tsav* system finds support in W. Malherbe, *Tiv Beliefs and Practices re Death, Burial, and Witchcraft*, Dutch Ref. Ch. Mission Press, Mkar, 1959, p. 19, "It must be remembered that the akombo are the 'instruments' with which the witch doctors *(iyormbatsav)* 1. preserve social order and command respect for property; 2. secure success in farming, hunting and fishing, and fertility in man and beast; and 3. effect cures in case of illness." Malherbe's information is especially valuable inasmuch as it was obtained around 1929.

calamity associated with the offended *akombo* is activated against the one who is vulnerable by reason of his violation.

To press the concept *akombo* to its ultimate roots then, we find that *akombo* is based on the communal consensus. It serves both to explain phenomena and to provide control. The *akombo* are established by the community; they are the agreement of the people. They are ordered, either actually or by tacit consent, to provide accord with the ways discovered for the achievement of serenity. In the Tiv mind these spiritual forces exist in manifold forms, and through trial and error the proper, that is, the effective form of *akombo* emblem and ritual is provided. Thus new *akombo* are constantly coming on the scene and old (apparently ineffective) *akombo* fall into disuse. New conditions arise and with them new dangers, and so new methods of setting right the *tar* must be found and activated. Through the activity of the *mbatsav* who punish the evildoers, the *tar* is constantly repaired and the cosmic harmony maintained.

4. ADZÔV

We must now deal briefly with the problem of the spirits of men and their place in Tiv religion. Spirit (*jijingi*) plays no major role in the religious life of the Tiv in the traditional view. They profess to know very little about the spirit, though nowadays they accept much of the information of the missionaries as supplementing their previously sketchy ideas. *Jijingi* is the spirit of an animate being, in distinction from *mure,* which is the shade from a tree or inanimate object, or even a corpse. The reflection of anything in water or in a mirror (*ajingi*) is, however, its *jijingi* rather than its *mure.*

The *jijingi* of a man identifies him as more than flesh and bones, but beyond this intuition, Tiv say very little about the spirit. The *jijingi* is not the real person to them, not the personality nor the essential being. The spirit does not depart from one in dreams, but only at death. Then it goes to the abode of the dead (*mbakuv*), and that is the end of information on the matter. The spirit does not return to attack enemies, and does not need to be placated. There are a few rites in which the ancestors are involved, but in general there is no fear among the Tiv regarding a visitation from the personal *jijingi* of the departed.

We have already indicated that ancestor worship has no integral place in Tiv religion, at least not in this century. This fact is obviously of one piece with the lack of theorizing about the spirit. The dead have disappeared, and their individual characteristics have also been obliterated. They live on only in their children.

There is, however, widespread allegiance to the idea of *adzôv,*

fairies or sprites. Here the spirits are again active, though not in the form of recognizable individuals. The *adzôv* are always hovering about and one should never carelessly throw water out of a doorway, lest one strike the *adzôv* and they be angered. The idea of *adzôv* is especially alive among the young, partly because the *mbatsav* are the "property" of the elders and hence out of reach of most others. Since the *adzôv* are also busily wreaking vengeance on evil-doers, it is here that the young men have found their instrument for revenge and correction. During the post-independence rioting and compound-burning in Tivland in 1960, the author encountered "*adzôv*" on several occasions as the young took matters into their own hands. These gangs of young men roved the countryside, disguised with nets, leaves, and shrouds, to punish those whose party allegiance had in the minds of most Tiv, given the few a stranglehold on all the rest. These young men had, for the moment, themselves become *adzôv*.[37]

Akiga goes so far as to link the origin of the *adzôv* with the anti-*mbatsav* movement.[38] When the *mbatsav* became rapacious in their lust for human flesh and personal power, the anti-witchcraft movement known as *Ijôv* began (*ijôv* is the singular form of *adzôv*). Because of this history the *adzôv* have attained a rather specific position, somewhat separate from the traditional religion, as a necessary corrective to its degeneracy. The *adzôv* as such are quite unpredictable and may be met suddenly in out of the way spots on the trail or deep in the bush or hidden in clefts of the hillsides. They may assume grotesque shapes to frighten the beholder and the tales of such meetings are legion and sure to impress any audience.

Because the *adzôv* hold a rather unique position on the periphery of the Tiv cosmology, belief in them continues even while the traditional world-view collapses in the face of modernity and Christianity. It is safe to say that the Tiv as a whole, including many Christians, still believe in the *adzôv*.[39] The *adzôv* form a vague link with the past, but the link is not basic to the main corpus of Tiv religion. Quite likely the belief will not, therefore, be abandoned for many years to come.

---

[37]An elder warned me not to call any of the *adzov* by name and thus imply that they were frauds and so infuriate them still more. Rather the elder called out in a desperate attempt to save the condemned compound, "*Adzôv*, listen! Do not do violence to repair the *tar*! *Aôndo* will himself take revenge on those who are evil. Let *Aondo* do his work!"

[38]In East, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

[39]Traders sometimes play on Tiv credulity by selling "pictures" of the most famous of these sprites. A monster which has captured Tiv imagination over the years is the *mammiwata*, said to lurk near the Makurdi bridge.

[40]Cf. P. Bohannan, *Justice and Judgment Among the Tiv*, London, 1957, pp. 47-51.

D. SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TIV WORLD-VIEW.

The foregoing pages delineate the main features of the religious system encountered by the Gospel as it confronted the Tiv. The traditional religion of the Tiv is far more than an undifferentiated animism with few claims to profundity, or a low fetishism unable to elevate man to the life of the soul. Rather a fundamental human urge for the unification of all knowledge and activity within a related whole has been operative among the Tiv. The world-view that resulted from this basic drive was complex and effective, for it organized all of life and encompassed the individual, the tribe, the land, and the far reaches of the universe in one majestic totality. Kinship bound man to man and structured the compound; the idea of tar bound man and his land; the concepts of *tsav* and *akombo* provided a union of man with the cosmic powers. With this data before us we can now attempt to distill the basic features of the traditional world-view of the Tiv. This will indicate in summary the character of Tiv society as it entered this century and encountered an invasion of alien values.

The first characteristic of the Tiv world-view to be noted here is its *comprehensiveness*. We have previously observed that social control among the Tiv was so extensive because of its basis in the common ancestry. The individual understood his obligations to society, to his work, and to his elders in the terms of this kinship. The proper niche for the individual was thus secured, and uncertainty as to appropriate action and decorum was minimized. This moral control and sense of responsibility regulated virtually every aspect of life. The comprehensiveness of the Tiv world-view derives even more fundamentally, however, from the traditional religion. Through the hundreds of *akombo*, each with its own area of human behavior under its guardianship, all of experience could be given cultural and religious value. Influence on all aspects of behavior was achieved. This control, too, served to secure the placement of the individual by provision of a path to serenity in the relationship he might have offended. This was the way to "repair" the breach and continuum.

The [illegible] thus rested on a conviction of the *symbiosis* [illegible] These two flowed together and partook of a [illegible] Dr. Hendrik Kraemer has referred to the [illegible] "totalitarian thinking" with words that apply [illegible]

[illegible] thinking is meant that in an unreflective, spontane[illegible] from the conception of totality and of unbroken [illegible] which comprises and dominates the whole range of

> reality in nature and human life. . . . Natural phenomena and social institutions, the sexes and the social classes, animals and plants, water and land, mountains and plains and so many things more, have their place and rank and defined inter-relation in the whole cosmic-human order.[41]

When something was amiss in the realm of nature outside of man, the situation was indicative of disharmony ("sin") in the human realm with which it was essentially continuous. All was of a piece; through all swirled the same cosmic influences and causation. The concept *tar* embodied this conviction. The *tar* could be "eaten" in times of prosperity, and "spoiled" by human error.

This leads us on to the next feature of the Tiv world-view: its *communality*. No Tiv was an island. The fundamental urge toward the unifying of all phenomena found expression also in the microcosmic tribal life. Here was reflected the essential harmony and unity of the macrocosm. The fortunes of the individual were reflected in the lives of all other members of the community, and each had a stake in the destiny of the other. Individuality was minimized, at least outwardly, in the interests of the clan, as we have seen indicated in the case of the marriage wards. These women, the *angôl*, were used in the exchange of "sisters" to procure wives. Hence the entire compound was knit together in a series of priorities and dependencies by the *angôl*. In order to secure an exchange wife, the individual had to function with the group.

On the other hand, this sense of communality must be seen against its proper background, that is, as a collection of persons interested in their individual lives and fortunes. Dr. Paul Radin has taken great pains to point out what he calls the "personalism" that lies behind the so-called tyranny of the group and provides its real power. This qualification adds a necessary complexity to a description of the Tiv. Behind the communality of the Tiv lay an intense individualism, even though the development of individual self-consciousness was not allowed to become a laudable value to the Tiv. Yet every Tiv sought the respect and approval of others for himself. He sacrificed for prestige and hungered for glory. Dr. Radin's point is therefore well-taken: the idea of group-think as a stage on an evolutionary road to a final individualism may sound appealing, but all the while the group is of value to the individual just because it brings to the primitive

> . . . what he most desires in life: prestige and a heightened sense of existence. All that we know of primitive man when we come to know him at all intimately and are able to look below the surface, bears

[41]H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. New York, 1938, p. 152.

this out. Individualism, what might, in fact, be called "personalism," everywhere runs riot.[42]

These conclusions of Radin were later criticized by Dr. Ruth Benedict as generalizations constructed from insufficient data;[43] nevertheless, Radin's insight is valid for Tiv society. It indicates how we must cut through the obvious characteristic of homogeneity among the Tiv to see that at the heart of this surge lay the wish of the individual. It was through communality that the person became truly person.

The suppression of overt individualism is closely aligned with another feature of Tiv society, its *egalitarianism*. We have observed that the development of individual self-consciousness was squashed by social controls which prevented Tiv from moving away from their time-honored patterns of behavior. To be unique was to imperil the whole by placing the community in cosmic jeopardy. The past became the arbiter of universal equilibrium for the Tiv and serenity lay in conformity to it. The violation of this canon by the politically-empowered elders under the British rule brought on the violent witch hunts in Tivland which we shall shortly describe.

This power of the past in the determination of Tiv folkways lends emphasis to a characterization of Tiv society in terms of *timelessness*. Any fundamental change was viewed with the utmost suspicion, for such innovation might well carry within it the seeds of retribution from the unseen forces. To launch out into the unknown was dangerous in that it might disturb the precious balance of the human-cosmic whole. It is true that the Tiv have been great imitators. Yet this was done in the interest of the more effective retention of their own basic way of life. In the end it was indeed the change introduced by the white man that forced the disruption of the ancient and static folkways and which proved the fear of change to have been well-founded.

The Tiv world-view gained much of its force because of the *sacralism* which unified experience and homogenized Tiv cultural institutions. More specifically, there was an *akombo* for every area of life, to minimize its dangers and to integrate it into the totality. This urge to unify all realms meant that in Tivland economic life could never be divorced from religion, or jurisprudence from morality. In Tiv religion, all behavior was invested with mystical and religious significance. The aura of the unseen forces hovered over every field and path. To disregard them there threatened not only the crops or good luck at hunting, but struck at the whole of the cultural struc-

[42]P. Radin, *Primitive Man As Philosopher*, New York, 1957, p. 37.
[43]R. Benedict, Configurations of Culture, in: *Primitive Heritage* (Mead and Calas, eds.), New York, 1953, p. 93.

ture. Thus the *mbatsav*, with their witchcraft potential, could control behavior in every realm and so "repair the land."

It will be apparent here that Tiv cultural patterns were not so much intellectually determined, as *instinctive*. Truth was not construed primarily in terms of logical coherence, but rather as that which produced equanimity, that which most harmoniously solved the difficulty at hand. Thus when migration or expansion presented problems in determining kinship, the genealogy could be adjusted to meet the new situation. The response of the Tiv to the problems of life in general was not first of all cerebral, but rather welled up from a personal and subjective involvement. Patterns of conduct which proved ineffective could be discarded without loss of truth, for that which was ineffective and jarring was also essentially invalid and untrue. The Tiv man did not seek the truth in an issue by standing outside of it to analyze it objectively. He could solve his problems through his own immersion in them. His response was instinctive and existential.

Tiv life and culture was, finally, *rural* and *agrarian*. Here the basic centripetal surge toward the unifying of all experience found its reflex in the centrifugal movement of the tribal components. These apparently contradictory movements were actually not at all in conflict. Rather, the centrifugal movement, the peeling off of family groups in the expanding Tiv society, actually enhanced the authority of the local family head and the immediate social control of the compound. Tiv egalitarianism wanted no one man to assume exceptional power and where this occured new compounds were likely to split off from those already established. Tiv society was thus structured so that none of its members would be lost in a faceless city, and this meant in turn that Tiv society was agrarian. In this way the movement of the expanding component groups could complement the centripetal unifying cultural urge of the society as a whole. The control was near and immediate and thus cultural roles and obligations could not be lightly disregarded. The centrifugal movement did not, as one might suspect, encourage atomization, but rather served to prevent it by insuring the immediacy of the group to which the individual belonged.

Such, then, were the salient points in the traditional world-view of the Tiv and it was upon this view of the universe and man that the white man in this century made his novel impingements. Later in this book we shall return to these features and observe the ways in which they were refashioned in the emergent society, and how the Church has tended to conserve basic values which these features embodied.

Within the totality of this world-view the placement of the individual was effectively secured and social control established. Fur-

thermore, the structure contained an inherent indestructability, for it held within it the means for whittling down to manageable size any individual who might endanger its continuance. Yet for all its strength, the system today totters on the verge of collapse as a means of ordering Tiv life. An unknown enemy, the outside world, has come to lure the young and to break by superior force the authority of the ancients. Modernity has brought literacy, the scientific investigation of genealogy and witchcraft, as well as written records to fix what must remain mystery for the world-view to survive.

There was a second, an ultimate, enemy as well, which we shall call, with our own definition: truth. To the Tiv, truth was at heart the harmonious working together of the cosmic whole, and whatever interfered with that equilibrium was discordant and hence to be discarded. Truth, for the Tiv, was not timeless and immutable, but stood dependent upon that which determined it, viz. the unseen powers. From this highest court flowed the truths of a particular moment, and truth was that which served the maintenance of that harmony at that time and place. To the Tiv a lie could be an act (*er ayie*) as well as a statement (*ôr ayie*), and meant in general, "a bad thing," and the truth was the good, the harmonious.

This book, however, takes the position that the truth is Christ, and from that standpoint, truth pronounced an ultimate judgment upon the traditional religion of the Tiv. This religion was bound to be thrown into crisis when it met that truth, even as the truth in Christ judges the ways of the Western world. Christ is equally the crisis of the Western world-view with its atomism and secularity, and of the Tiv world-view with its *mbatsav* and *akombo*. In the chapters which follow we shall investigate how the Gospel came to this society and confronted the whole of Tiv life and thought with the claims of Christ.

4 COMMUNICATING THE GOSPEL, 1911-1961

Into the matrix of Tiv culture and religious life there entered in the early years of this century several influences which were to bring that culture and religion into its paramount crisis. One such influence came from the surrounding tribes, especially the Jukun to the east, and from them the Tiv adopted various forms of social control,[1] and several magical charms and talismans. A second influence came from the influx of Hausa traders who began to settle in the area and brought with their wares the practice of Islam.[2] The encroachments of the white colonizers were felt in their subjugation of the tribe and in their commercial enterprises. Taxation, for example, brought with it the necessity of growing cash crops and partially accounts for the introduction of beniseed into the Tiv economy.

In this chapter it will be our purpose to analyze the influence of yet another force that confronted the Tiv, namely the Christian Mission, and more specifically, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission of South Africa, widely known simply as the DRCM. It was ultimately in the confrontation with the Gospel and the work of the Mission that the traditional religious fabric of the Tiv was most directly challenged. Out of this confrontation came to birth finally in 1957 the *Nongo u Kristu ken Sudan hen Tiv*, the Tiv Church of Christ. In our consideration of this influence we shall discuss:

A. The Advent of the Mission in Tivland.
B. Missionary Attitudes of the DRC in South Africa.
C. Missionary Attitudes and Policies of the DRCM in Nigeria.
D. Factors Inhibiting Acceptance of the Gospel.
E. Linguistic Problems.

---

[1]As, for example, the drum chief, *tor agbande*, originally an office imported by the elders to provide them with a figurehead puppet with which to awe the people and insure obedience.

[2]The Muslims were originally called by the Tiv, *mba kumen itiouv inya*, "those who bump their heads on the ground," because the ritual of Muslim prayers includes the touching of the forehead to the earth in the direction of Mecca.

F. Relationships of the DRCM and the Roman Catholic Mission.
G. The Turning Point.
H. Expansion and Dissolution of the DRCM.

A. THE ADVENT OF THE MISSION IN TIVLAND

In June, 1907, Dr. Karl Kumm, founder and driving spirit of the Sudan United Mission, visited South Africa to present there the need of the Sudan, that vast sub-Saharan belt which girdles Africa from north of the Gulf of Guinea in the west to the Nile in the east. His advice to the newly-formed South African Branch of the SUM was: evangelize the Tiv.[1] With this goal in mind recruits were sent out to Nigeria, only to find that the American Branch of the SUM viewed Tivland as their terrain for future expansion, once the work among the Jukun and Kutev peoples was well established. At the end of 1909, therefore, the South African missionaries planted a work much farther up the Benue River among the Mbula. In 1910, however, at a conference of Protestant missionaries working in Northern Nigeria, it was decided that missions should seek first the evangelization of tribes with at least fifty thousand members. Shortly after this the American Branch offered the Tiv field to the South Africans as it became obvious that the work among the Jukun and other East Benue tribes would consume all its resources for many years to come. The South Africans thereupon abandoned the work they had begun among the Mbula, a tribe of eight thousand, and turned toward Tivland, the goal which they had set out to reach upon their departure from South Africa in 1908. It was now April, 1911,[2] and nearly time for the first furloughs.

The original SUM station at Wase also proved to be an unfortunate choice and was abandoned after several years of work. The choice of the area was made, not by Dr. Kumm, who intended to go toward the Bauchi Plateau which lies north of Wase, and which much later did prove to be a most fruitful field, but by the British High Commissioner, Lord Lugard. J. L. Maxwell, a member of the original SUM party, described the event in these words:

> His Excellency had approved our project for opening Mission work among pagans. The doctor had told him of our proposal that we would open work among the people in the Bauchi hill country, whereupon His Excellency had suggested that there was no need to go so

---

1. G. Strijdom, *De Soedan*, Stellenbosch, 1919, p. 20. Akiga Sai, in his unpublished *History of the Tiv*, p. 333, writes that the missionaries first settled among his people on May 11, 1911. His date must be taken as erroneous, however, for every DRCM source contradicts it. Rev. Strijdom, for example, was himself a missionary at Saai, and came to the field in 1912. Akiga was then just entering his teens.

> far. Why not start at Wase? This is a town about halfway between the river Benue and Bauchi. Dr. Kumm agreed, and the matter was settled.[4]

Somewhat later in his reflections, Maxwell writes:

> I have sometimes thought that it was a pity that we did not, right at first, settle it in our minds that we would not dig ourselves in anywhere until we had done a good deal more investigation. We were too easily brought to follow the suggestion of the High Commissioner, and stay at Wase. If we had looked around us more we might have done better both for ourselves and for the work which was the reason for our coming to the country at all.[5]

A preliminary trek from Ibi, where they left the Benue, to Bauchi would have shown that Wase was a Muslim town and that the area of the pagan Bauchi tribes began just one day's trek away. However, the missionaries settled at Wase without scouting the area thoroughly or knowing the comparative challenges to be faced elsewhere. They were eager to begin their work, the trek had already been long and arduous, and they doubtless longed for the psychological satisfaction of a symbol of permanence and a roof over their heads. God's providence rules also through the foibles of men; it is not, therefore, superfluous to add that the station at Wase was also caught up in his plan.

Hindsight does well to be charitable, yet one is mystified by the unfortunate choice by the South African missionaries of the Mbula. The somewhat haphazard manner of the choice comes through clearly in E. Casaleggio's account:

> Not until January 17, 1909, did Dr. Kumm and Mr. Hosking depart from Ibi up the Benue River toward Yola in search of a station. Having arrived there, they found it a rather swampy place and thus not suited for the placement of a station. They thereupon went further up the river, seeking a suitable spot for a station, until they came near a good-sized village lying not far from a knoll. Without further investigation Dr. Kumm decided that the South African branch must begin its work there. The impression given them by the spot was that this was a thickly-populated area and that the knoll offered them a suitable terrain for the placement of a station. . . . This knoll lay in the land of the Mbula, of whom they had no further knowledge.[6]

Two years later the South Africans left the Mbula and thus it was not until April of 1911 that the one missionary remaining on the field began work among the Tiv at Saai. (The full name of the

---

[4]Maxwell, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[5]*Ibid.*, p. 54.
[6]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 23 (my translation).

compound is Saaiutu or *saa i utu,* that is, "except the affair of the night," a reference to the *Mbatsav,* signifying that energy and fearlessness could here be found in every sphere "except in the affair of the night," when evil machinations were performed.[7]) The Hausa pronounced the word as Salutu, and this corruption gained large currency on maps and in reports, since Hausa was the *lingua franca* and the language of the interpreters and servants hired by the expatriates until they learned Tiv themselves.

The Tiv were little interested in the contacts attempted by the missionary, and it was equally difficult to obtain employees from them to serve as servants. Finally Sai, the compound head, consented to allow one of his children to work for the missionary, a child named Akiga, blind in one eye and left by a runaway mother. This child, the least promising in the compound, was to become one of the most famous of his tribesmen and an able politician in later years. On January 21, 1912, Akiga declared Christ to be his personal Savior.[8]

The Tiv in general, however, did not respond to the introduction of the Gospel with any enthusiasm. With this wall of resistance confronting them year after year, it is astonishing that the missionaries succeeded at all. The first baptisms among the Tiv did not take place until December 30, 1917, when four converts were baptized, including Akiga. A year later, however, it was discovered that all four were living sinful lives, and all four were put under discipline.[9] By 1922 two more Tiv had been baptized, but no further baptisms took place for eight years. Thus after nearly nineteen years of frustration, the number of baptized adults in 1930 still stood at six.[10] The missionaries numbered in that year twenty-one. Prospects for the eventual establishment of the Church among the Tiv appeared exceedingly dim.

With this understanding of the situation in those early years, it is now necessary to analyze somewhat further the causes for this paucity of impact. This will be done, first through a consideration of the missionaries' attitudes and motivations, and secondly, through an investigation of the encounter from the point of view of the Tiv.

---

[7]The meaning is explained by Akiga as follows: "Sai said that the Tiv actually pronounce his name as Saaiutu, that is to say, nothing of the affairs of the daytime could overwhelm him, but the matter of the night [the *mbatsav*], that would indeed overwhelm him." A. Sai, *op. cit.,* p. 300 (my translation).

[8]Though Akiga himself writes that it was later: "After a few years, I also accepted Christianity; I professed the name of Jesus Christ in public; I became a Christian." A. Sai, *op. cit.,* p. 1 (my translation).

[9]Casaleggio, *op. cit.,* p. 52.

[10]In 1924, the General Mission Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa reported "The work continues to be extremely difficult and unfruitful." W. J. van der Merwe, *The Development of Missionary Attitudes in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa,* Capetown, 1936, p. 214. Van der Merwe also stated in 1936 concerning the Tiv field, "Of all the Foreign Fields of the Dutch Reformed Church, this latter field was the least fruitful." *(Loc. cit.)*

Additional Note

The following is a translation of the section entitled *Mnyer u Mbatesen hen Tiv* from Akiga Sai's *The History of the Tiv.* This material from the hand of the great chronicler, as well as the other selections presented in this chapter, are here published for the first time, by permission of the Sai family, owners of the manuscript.

THE ENTRANCE OF THE MISSIONARIES INTO TIVLAND

Concerning the coming of the missionaries into Tivland, it should be noted that they did not come all at once and then spread out as they are today, but rather they entered gradually and followed one upon the other.

In the beginning a certain white man came ahead of the others; he came from Ibi to Wukari and passing there came to Sai on his way to Takum. His name was Dr. Kumm and he came in 1908. When he arrived at Sai, he sat down at the roadside and sent one of his men into the compound to call Sai. Sai came out to meet him and they sat in the shade of the tree on the east side of the road. Some thought it must be Chafa Godi [Captain Goldie, the District Officer], as he was Chafa Godi's size, but he had no large retinue such as accompanied Chafa Godi, nor policemen; in fact, his entire party numbered only five. When many people had gathered, he said to his guide that he should greet the Tiv and tell them that he was not a government officer. His work was rather to travel about the countryside and when he had seen the land, he would go back and send other white men who would speak to the people about God. When the Tiv heard this they said, "How would someone go about speaking to the people of God?" But Dr. Kumm simply reiterated to the Tiv what he had said and then, having greeted them, he rose and went on his way to Takum. He stayed there about three days and then again passed by on his journey back to Ibi. There the matter rested, and no one heard anything further concerning missionaries.

After a long time, certain Tiv from Sai went to market in Gaba to sell beniseed at the canteen. When they returned, the elder next in line to Sai, whose name was Bayor, brought back with him a small image of a human figure (a doll) and gave it to Sai. He said that as they were going to the market and came into the marketplace they met a white man, not a judge nor a trader, who called them and brought them to his house. He then gave them groundnuts and was very cordial to them. Thereupon he gathered many of the Hausa children in a large building and together with the Hausa children sang a song, as follows: *"I samu samu, I samu samu."* The words of that song are actually, "Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me." They also related that when the song was finished, he said to the Hausas,

"Isa dan Allah," and when he said this all the children fell silent, not one opened his mouth. When he finished they all bowed their heads and closed their eyes. After they opened their eyes he dismissed them.

When the children were gone, he began speaking to the Tiv and inquired who was their elder. They told him it was Sai, and he said that they should receive something and give it to him. The figure pleased Sai so much that he took great pains to take good care of it. It was known simply as "Baby," and anywhere there was a dance Sai would take it along. He would put it in the pocket of his robe and take it out just once and suddenly lift it up high in the air. The people would see it and cry out with consternation. Then he would put it back in his pocket. In the end he gave it to his eldest son who sold it to Ukpar in Tombo Mbalagh; there Gen bought it for the price of a cow.

After about three months had passed, that white man himself appeared one day and Bayor said to Sai, "That is the white man I saw." He stayed at Sai overnight and in the evening he gave the people medicine and washed their sores. Many Tiv gathered and he treated many types of sickness. When he was finished, he gathered together the Chamba boys whom he had brought with him and also called the Tiv to come and sit down. He sang with the Chamba boys, but it was just the same song which the group that had gone to sell beniseed had told us about. He also began to speak and mentioned something about *"Isa"* in the Hausa language, as follows, *"Isa Al-masihu maichoton mu."* We heard the words but understood not a whit. The next day as he rose to go, he took out some picture cards on which the prophets and Jesus were portrayed and passed them out to all of us children. Then he went on to Wukari. The Hausa call him *"Malam Bugaagindi,"* but his name in the white man's language is Mr. Banhard.

A long time later, two white men came, namely Mr. Guinter and Mr. Botha. Mr. Guinter was accompanied by his wife and this was the first white woman that the Tiv had ever seen. The thing that particularly astonished the Tiv about that woman was her manner of dress. Her dress was drawn tightly around her waist like a bracelet, but around her chest it was very voluminous [the Tiv cloth is tight around the chest and not tied at the waist]. Her husband had golden teeth which he pulled out and showed the people. When the Tiv saw this, they cried out in astonishment, "The white man's magic power surpasses all!"

On the day they came to Sai they arrived early in the morning and asked Sai to invite all the elders who lived nearby to meet together. Then they said to the Tiv that they would like to settle here to speak to the Tiv about God. The Tiv asked, "What has God done?" They answered that they would explain to the Tiv that God

is the Father of all and loves all the peoples of the world including the Tiv. The Tiv thought about that and wondered if they meant to herald God's coming or what did they have in mind? It puzzled the Tiv no end, but they said that the missionary should come, it was very agreeable to them. So toward evening the white people mounted their horses and began looking around for a suitable place, and we who were children followed them. They looked everywhere and when they returned they finally decided on a spot that pleased them on the outskirts of Sai's compound. When they had inspected the spot well, they returned and retired for the night. The next morning they returned to Wukari. This was in the year 1911 on May 11.

Shortly after they left, the missionary who was to settle there did indeed come. It was in that same year, 1911, and in that same month, May. That was the beginning of the settlement of the missionaries at Sai in Tivland. The name of that missionary was Mr. Zimmerman. When he came he first stayed in Sai's village with the villagers, because his compound was not yet built. He slept in Sai's compound and at daybreak he began work on his own compound. He was alone; all his workmen were Hausa.

B. MISSIONARY ATTITUDES OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA

Since the missionaries who brought the Christian faith to Tivland came from South Africa as a branch of the Sudan United Mission, it is necessary to inquire as to the manner in which their own cultural and religious heritage influenced their attitude toward the Tiv. The South African Branch of the Sudan United Mission was interdenominational and thus drew its personnel from both Afrikaans- and English-speaking inhabitants of the country. Though the relation of the missionaries was cordial, the first item on the agenda of the first field conference of the branch, held at Saai in April, 1913, was the following: The division of Tivland between the Afrikaans and English-speaking sections of the branch. The decision was that the time was not yet ripe for such a step.[11] The same issue reappeared on the agenda in October of the same year, indicating that the matter had by no means been put to rest.

The following April the question was again raised in the field conference, and the personnel expressed the feeling that the Dutch Reformed Church should assume responsibility for the entire Tiv field and thus release the English-speaking missionaries for work elsewhere. The conference felt that there should be no dividing of Tivland into two sub-sections of the same branch, but rather that the entire field should be worked as one entity. Nonetheless, the English-speaking

[11]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

members of the staff (i.e. those who were not members of the DRC), preferred to work apart from the Afrikaans-speaking members. The following year the DRC signaled its agreement to such a plan, which went into effect in 1916. A DRC missionary on the field at the time, Rev. J. Strijdom, gives insight into the situation from the DRC point of view:

> In "De Kerkbode" warning voices were heard concerning the undesirability of congregations in our Church as such undertaking to support missionaries of the S. U. M., a mission in which the Church did not have the right to exert an influence with regard to doctrine; in which she could not bring to bear her rich experience in the area of missions, since the control of the work lay in the hands of individuals outside the Church.
>
> The Church was justified in this view. She could not sit with folded hands and simply allow a stream of men and money to go forth without having any control over them whatsoever. However, the warning helped not at all. . . .
>
> Thereupon followed the decision of the Synod of 1915, in which the General Mission Committee was granted the authority to assume for the Church the responsibility for the work in Tivland as quickly as possible.
>
> Already in 1915, a decision had been made on the field by the missionaries themselves, in which it was plainly evidenced that those not belonging to our Church would rather look about for another area of labor, with the aim of leaving the work in Tivland exclusively in the hands of the Dutch Church.[12]

The Afrikaans-speaking members of the staff thereupon resigned from the Sudan United Mission, and the English-speaking members left Tivland to take up work north of the Benue River. Thus Tivland became the responsibility not of the Sudan United Mission, but of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission.

The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa brought to its mission in Tivland a complex heritage of missionary attitudes and relationships with the Africans. Ethnic and cultural tensions were already active in the 18th century in the relationship of the DRC and the Moravians who undertook mission work among the Hottentots. The efforts of the Moravian missionary George Schmidt were viewed with disfavor by the DRC which saw in his work a schismatic attempt to plant a mission church outside of the established church. The DRC was finally able to force his withdrawal, though the Moravians returned at the close of the century. Groves' classic four-volume work, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa,* shows the relatively minor role played by the DRC. Groves' silence is eloquent. Equally eloquent is the statement, "There were devoted ministers to

[12]Strijdom, *op. cit.,* pp. 23-25 (my translation).

be found in the Dutch Reformed Church" (in 1838-40), that is, they could be found if one looked diligently enough.[13] No such reticence marks the work of W. J. van der Merwe, *The Development of Missionary Attitudes in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa,* who with meticulous scholarship presents a critique of his own denomination. Van der Merwe notes that while the DRC urged the recall of Schmidt, "they themselves (i.e. the Cape ministers) seem to have done very little toward converting the Hottentots. . . . The view was gradually adopted that slavery was the proper condition of the Black race."[14] This view was not, of course, confined to the DRC, nor to South Africa.

The DRC naturally found the Moravian work disruptive sociologically, and the same held true for the work of the London Missionary Society among the Bushmen. The Boers felt that the LMS drained their labor supply and, together with the Moravians, attracted the lazy and those in discipline in the established churches. The LMS was thought to have incited Hottentot rebellion as well as Xhosa riots in revenge for land taken from them. The LMS missionary Vanderkemp reported the Boer attitude toward the natives: "They are the offspring of Canaan, youngest son of Noah, and are accursed of God to a perpetual servitude of them."[15] In 1873 the Synod required the consistories "to see to it that colored persons should not be educated, nor worship in buildings with the white population."[16]

Van der Merwe further delineates the rise of missionary commitment in the DRC in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The inspiration came from a general religious revival in the Church, sparked by men such as Andrew Murray, and from a shift from an intellectualistic, formal Christianity to a personal and active faith. Nonetheless, the friction between the English and the Boers made a harmonious relationship between them difficult, even as they searched for a way to work together with the native tribes. Though missionary interest had been aroused, it was most easily diverted to the more romantic faraway fields than to the problems to be faced right at home.[17] Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, "inland missions were not greatly emphasized."[18] Though there had come an injection of evangelical fervor, it had always to contend with the historical bedrock of paternalism. Van der Merwe goes on to cite the thought of a prominent DRC writer, Dr. P. de Klerk, who wrote in 1923,

---

[13]C. P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa,* Vol. 1, London, 1948, p. 269.
[14]Van der Merwe, *op. cit.,* pp. 60-61.
[15]Cited by van der Merwe, *op. cit.,* p. 137.
[16]Van der Merwe, *op. cit.,* p. 140.
[17]*Ibid.,* pp. 176-177.
[18]*Ibid.,* p. 195.

> The Bantu, after all, belong to a lower race which cannot be placed on an equal footing with White, either in the family or in politics, or in the Church. No, here are lines drawn by the Creator Himself, which man may not wipe out on his own accord, without it having evil effects.[19]

Concerning those who were touched by the Gospel message and wished to become Church members, the time of preparation stipulated by the DRC missions was usually three years.[20] This practise was early adopted on the Nigerian field of the DRC and continues in force in the Tiv Church of Christ to this day. This time is customarily divided into two parts, the first segment of a year's duration for "seekers," and a second segment of two years' duration for "catechumens." The Tiv in general prefer these carefully defined regulations, which describe for them "where they stand" in the scheme of things. The regulations serve to locate them in the social order at a specific point from which security is drawn as a substitute for the placement effected by old and discarded folkways. The obvious objection to this system is that it is legalistic and based on the meeting of certain obligations rather than on spiritual maturity.

In the light of the development of the DRC, one can well understand how the rise of missionary fervor was retarded. Though the attitude may be sympathetically understood, the conclusion of Latourette cannot be avoided:

> The non-European Christians were overwhelmingly Protestant. The Dutch Reformed Church had a share in their conversion, especially after the impetus given by the younger Andrew Murray, but was not as active as the British and tended to treat them in a paternalistic fashion.[21]

It must be remembered, finally, that the history of conflict of the Boers with the Bantu tribes made mission work among them particularly difficult and the whole panoply of the apartheid controversy enters the picture. The "Parallel Institutions" policy of General Smuts and the evolvement of the philosophy of apartheid coincided with DRC opinion to a large extent. It was thus from this context of the evangelical awakening in the bosom of a historically conditioned conservatism that the DRC sent out its members to join in the odyssey of the Sudan United Mission in Nigeria.

---

[19]P. de Klerk, *Kerk en Sending in Suid-Afrika*, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 167, cited by van der Merwe, *op. cit.*, p. 140. Van der Merwe himself writes the following: "The unique and universal redemptive power of God in Christ can uplift also the Bushmen, even if they are a deteriorated race." *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[20]Van der Merwe, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

[21]K. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, London, 1955, p. 1307.

C. MISSIONARY ATTITUDES AND POLICIES OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION IN NIGERIA

It must now be asked to what extent the attitudes delineated above also characterized the mission work of the DRC in Tivland. Here there was, of course, no history of Boer conflict, no resentment of another mission's encroachment upon previously claimed territory, no non-Reformed competition against which to maintain refined theological positions, and no need to face the segregation issue in the formation of the Church. This air of freedom was of the greatest significance for the DRCM work in Nigeria. Furthermore, the DRCM missionaries were the children of the evangelical revival and came to Tivland fired with a passion for the souls of the Tiv. Whatever stolidity and impassiveness characterized the Boer in South Africa, in his relationship to the Tiv the missionary was driven with evangelical fervor. This warmth and love for the Tiv comes to light again and again in the reports of the early missionaries.[22] In their crusade for the souls of the Tiv these pioneers drove themselves unstintingly to the very limit of human possibility. The obvious reserve of the DRC in South Africa regarding a close and warm relationship with the African was thrown aside in Tivland; the missionaries slept in Tiv huts, ate Tiv food, lived into their sorrows and literally embraced them in their joys. Undoubtedly the missionaries were glad to live in this liberty, made so difficult in their homeland by the tragic events of history and the complexity of the ethnic relationships that evolved there.

The irrepressible vision of Karl Kumm also exerted a continuing influence on the attitude of the missionaries. Under his leadership the meaning of evangelical Christianity was brought into the heartland of the DRC as a new air of opportunity and openness. On the field, the contacts with the rest of the SUM strengthened the feeling of being one family, a single fellowship at work for Christ in the Sudan. In the homeland, the call of the SUM reached deeply into the DRC as an unsettling but regenerative force in a conservative church. The SUM gave fresh impetus for the expression of this evangelical zeal. The pleading for prayer and financial support involved thousands in the DRC in the work of the SUM, and through letters and furlough appearances the missionaries sought to mold the church into a body geared for Mission.

The approach of the South African missionaries was comprehensive. This fact appears already in the letter of the American branch of the SUM which offered the Tiv field to the South African, and which reads in part:

---

[22]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 66, 73, etc.

> The Munchis are an agricultural people.[23] This would give your branch special favor with them as you favor industrial work. As far as I know the country, there is some excellent farm land near Salatu. I think that horses, cattle, and other livestock could be kept there.[24]

The first nurse arrived on the field in 1913 and the first doctor in 1918, though the latter returned home the same year, stating that his talents could be better utilized in South Africa.[25] In the view of the DRC missionaries, these were evangelistic efforts aimed at conversion of the soul. The same is true of the schools. Casaleggio writes, "For us the schools are a means of evangelism."[26] In the mind of the missionaries this methodology was joined to a strong aversion to the teaching of English and Hausa. It was feared that through these avenues the influence of secularism and materialism would creep into Tivland. The Tiv, therefore, must be educated in the vernacular and so be sheltered from the inimical forces about them. Rupert East, the annotator of *Akiga's Story*, has high praise for this view of the missionaries. He writes:

> From the beginning, the aim of the Mission has been to train the pupils for the work which they are to do, without taking them out of their environment. It has sheltered them from the harmful externals of Western culture, and encouraged them to develop along their own lines . . . The genuine, and essentially African, tone of Akiga's writings proves the success of this policy. Indeed the value of the book to us lies in the fact that the author has been so little affected by European ways of thought. He has learnt a little English, but not enough, fortunately, to have read any literature or be influenced by foreign models.[27]

East's sympathetic report of the DRCM philosophy of isolation of the Tiv from the corruptive forces of the world, was not, however long shared by the Tiv themselves. The young especially were eager

---

[23]Munchi is an older, now discarded name for the Tiv, and implies that they are eaters of human flesh.

[24]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[25]Rev. Strijdom, writing in 1919, states the procedure of the medical work as follows: "Those who come for medicine must attend the morning service and immediately thereafter they receive medical treatment." Strijdom, *op. cit.*, p. 31. The purpose of the work he finds to be:

"The medical work does much to gain the confidence of the heathen, and to show them that the missionary is burdened for their physical as well as spiritual welfare.

"The medical work is furthermore a means to lay superstition and idolatry open to scorn, and so to make them powerless." *Op. cit.*, p. 32 (my translation).

[26]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 187. He adds,

"The Mission in the Sudan always made it its purpose not to view the instruction as an end in itself, but as a means to win the heathen for Christ and as a place for the development of Christlike characters." p. 179 (my translation).

[27]East, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

to be exposed to the outside world with its promise of financial betterment. Here they clashed with the DRCM in the end, though in the early years the wall could be held intact. Certainly here the ancient heritage of the DRC exerted its influence on the missionaries. The openness of the evangelical strain they had known was now to be influenced by the need for protective isolation. The Roman Catholics quickly seized on instruction as the choice means to attract the Tiv and as an avenue to lure them from the DRCM. The DRCM, however, insisted that the Tiv remain Tiv, and school children who affected foreign ways were soon brought to heel. Corporal punishment, given by the missionaries themselves, was common for those who essayed to speak English, to wear shoes, or to ride a bicycle.[28] When in 1930 the Government went in the direction of introducing Hausa into the schools in the third form (grade), the Mission refused to accede and continued its instruction solely in Tiv. The DRCM had no desire to see Hausa become the medium of instruction and in time, the language of the Church.[29] This has never happened, and today the Tiv would find the idea unthinkable, though at the time the fear was very real. English has, of course, entered the school, and in a few places, become the language of one of the worship services.

The South Africans were certainly not alone in an attitude of paternalism. The prestige of the white man and the obvious power and wealth at his command encouraged the habit also in Tivland. One early DRCM trekker, for example, carried a switch to assist him in gathering an audience. With this instrument he entered the huts of the compound and drove out the reluctant to the spot of assembly. The Tiv submitted to this coercion without much ado; the very brazenness of the act was impressive, and the Tiv, in his heart, was curious as to the "good news" which the missionary purported to bring. His reluctance stemmed from the possibility that basic changes in his way of life might be in the offing, and this fear warred against his desire to hear the message brought by this man who had obviously gone to a great deal of trouble to reach this distant place. The reluctance was strengthened by a nagging doubt that the missionary was so altruistic; quite possibly the man had a design to use the Tiv for his own gain in spite of his disclaimers. This uncertainty of the Tiv as to how far they should go in their resistance to the missionary allowed him to be authoritarian in the attainment of his aim.

Thus the heritage of the DRCM influenced the way in which the missionaries prosecuted their work, and at the same time various

[28]These facts have been related to the author by many Tiv elders of unquestionable integrity.

[29]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182.

aspects of that heritage prompted a reaction as the missionaries found avenues of freer expression of evangelical zeal than were open to them in their homeland. The Tiv reaction to their approach was ambiguous, and can be illustrated from the following passage from Akiga,

> There are medicines at every Mission station, and treatment is given to the sick. Of all the work which the Mission does this pleases the people most. Nevertheless, when for some reason or other they are angry with the missionary, they belittle his medical work, too. "The missionary," they say, "is of no significance. All he does is to cure people's ailments. The Governor has given all the other white men work, but to the missionary he gave the task of washing sores, saying, 'Go, wash the Tiv and pray!' No one who is given mission teaching can do anything with it, except clean wounds and say prayers."[30]

Beneath this assessment lay the bedrock of the antagonism of the Tiv world-view to the ultimately shattering innovations suggested by the missionaries. The features comprising the massive resistance which the Gospel faced as it confronted the Tiv must now be examined.

Additional Note

The following selection from Akiga Sai's *The History of the Tiv* is entitled *Tom U Mbatesen* (The Work of the Missionaries), and presents several aspects of the reaction from the Tiv side to the efforts of the missionaries.

THE WORK OF THE MISSIONARIES

The missionaries came to Tivland to teach religion, to teach the children in the schools, to heal diseases, and also to teach handicrafts. This is the work which the missionaries carry on among the Tiv day by day.

The Christian faith did not make swift progress among the Tiv. Sometimes when the missionaries would settle at one of their stations and begin to teach, the people would quickly accept the Christian faith, but after a few days they would fall away, and in the end there would remain but a few individuals who in God's mercy remained stedfast. Of those who became Christians among the Tiv, the majority were young people and also a few of the women. The elders, however, preferred to put their trust in the *akombo* and the *mbatsav*.

The matter concerning which the Tiv had the least understanding is the matter of eternal life. They simply were never able to understand it, and they say, "When a man dies, that's the end; his affairs

[30] Akiga, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

are finished. His corpse is taken and buried; the *mbatsav* then exhume it and eat it." It was on this matter that the elders would constantly harass the young as well. If the young people accepted the Christian faith, then the elders would continually badger them with the thought of the *mbatsav* and the *akombo*. They would point out that the *akombo* were their own unique heritage as Tiv, and that if a lad would cease to reverence the *akombo*, then the *akombo* would seize him and he would die. They went on to say that if a man wanted to propitiate a certain *akombo* by killing a man, and had a son who had accepted the Christian faith, the father should not spare him, but should kill him and set right the *akombo* by this means so that the crops would grow well. "Let him be taken away as an utter fool; the Christian faith is an idle nonsense."

The commandment which most irritated them among the Ten Commandments was the seventh, which states, "Do not commit adultery." Even some of the young people who previously accepted the Christian faith are leaving it and falling away on this account, saying that this commandment is frightfully difficult. They go on to say that if this commandment could be removed they would accept the Christian faith in great numbers.

The commandment which most displeases the elders is the fourth, which states, "Remember the Day of Rest, and rest from your work." They maintain that this simply delays people's work. Nevertheless, the missionaries reply that as far as they are concerned they found these commandments as well as all the other matters concerning God in the Bible, and thus they are unable to change anything and teach it differently. The Bible itself says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Hence they will not give more weight to the voice of man than to the word of God.

The people among the Tiv who formerly were most greatly angered by Christianity were the chiefs. They maintained that because they had risen to the chieftainship, they excelled all others; nothing bothered them anymore and they certainly would not plead to God, for they lacked nothing. They heaped abuse on the missionaries, but the missionaries simply kept on teaching.

Formerly no Tiv would allow their children to leave their work and go to school in the mornings. Hence the missionaries set the time for attending all their schools in the afternoon, so that the children could first work for their parents and then go to school in the afternoon. But even this displeased some; for them the whole idea of school was simply a waste of time. "The knowledge of books is not the business

of the Tiv," they would say. "It is the white man's affair, his own natural heritage."

The thing that most pleases the Tiv about the missionaries is their treatment of sickness and their teaching of handicrafts. But if they bring a sick person to the doctor they first propitiate an *akombo* and take all the necessary precautions and then finally bring him to the doctor. They claim that if they do not first propitiate an *akombo* for him, the doctor will never be able to heal this disease medically. They also claim that if the *mbatsav* have not previously given leave for the sickness to depart, the doctor can treat the patient endlessly but the illness will not subside. Should the doctor perform surgery on someone or treat someone and the case becomes too much for him and the patient dies, then they maintain that the *mbatsav* had already killed him previously and simply reserved him to expire at the hands of the doctor. They say then that it was not actually the doctor or the missionary who killed him.

The missionaries established their major school as well as workshops of various kinds at Mkar. Whenever the chiefs and elders come and see it all, they are full of praise. Thus nowadays opinion about the missionaries is changing among the Tiv. Even concerning Christianity itself one does not hear the chiefs and elders saying such slanderous things as formerly. Their scoffing has subsided, and a few of them are thinking carefully about their walk, and certain of the elders have actually accepted the Christian faith. These elders have publicly thrown out their *akombo* before great crowds of people, and they want to be baptized. Some of the chiefs too, have begun to see the difference between those who are Christians and those who are not Christians.

The missionaries have also established a girl's school at Sevav, and some of the chiefs have allowed their daughters to go there to study, and they are there studying right now. Had it been as it formerly was at the time when the missionaries first came, the chiefs and elders would certainly never have allowed their children to attend. Nowadays, however, they grant permission gladly, and others, too, sound as though they are going to send their children as well.

At one time it was said that the knowledge acquired in the schools was simply the knowledge of the white man, but nowadays the elders and chiefs plead with the missionaries to establish a school in their area so that the children may acquire the knowledge of books and religion, too. At times the missionaries do establish them as they request and in accordance with the desires of the Government. Sometimes, however, if they ask the missionary simply to give them some capable lad as a teacher and there is no such teacher available, then a youngster from the area, who formerly went to a school of the missionaries and may have a bit of learning, will simply begin a

school by himself with the permission of the elders. All the children from the area come together there to learn for themselves both the knowledge of books and of religion. These small schools exist in great numbers in Tivland at the present time. When they are established, the women also attend, and even some of the older men will go; it is not merely children who attend. Thus the knowledge of the Christian faith and of books, too, is gradually and effectively spreading among the Tiv nowadays, and the number of those who profess their faith is also gradually on the increase. The work of the missionaries of the DRCM is thus a different matter than it used to be. Through the power of God it is now making good progress.

D. FACTORS INHIBITING ACCEPTANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The tenacity of the hold of the traditional religion and world-view on the Tiv showed itself in the paucity of converts to the Christian faith during the first decades of missionary settlement in Tivland. It soon became obvious that the presentation of the missionaries was directed squarely at the *akombo* system, and that acceptance of the missionary's message meant rejection of the *akombo*. This involved the entire pattern of Tiv life in a vigorous opposition to the alien theory, and the tribal social controls went into effect. It was apparent that the Christian system would disrupt tribal life through its denial of the possibility of manipulation of mystical forces in the *akombo* rites. Adherents of the new faith, therefore, who disregarded *akombo* taboos or professed immunity to *mbatsav* mystical malice, were estranging not only themselves but the entire community from the harmonious working of all things.

Three points are thus evident: 1) The individual could not propose to reject only *certain* elements of the tribal religion and imagine that he could participate in both the traditional system and Christian worship. All of the religious system of the Tiv was bound up together; this is seen especially in the dependence of the *akombo* system on the *mbatsav* system. 2) The community itself was closely knit, and great social pressure could be placed on anyone who departed from the established mold. The non-conformist endangered not only himself, but the functioning of the whole community, for the cosmic retribution might be general as well as specific. 3) Change was itself viewed with great suspicion. The life of the tribe was oriented to the past, for there the ways of harmonious existence in an easily disturbed universe had been established. For example, should a compound head agree to allow one of his children to attend the missionary's school and learn his religion, the child's mother would be terrified. Her child would be changed, would wear strange clothes, speak a strange language, flaunt the *akombo,* would in fact

scarcely be recognizable to her as her son. He might also manifest the insolence toward traditional authority so noticeable in the hangers-on of the white man. The mother would flee wailing to her father's compound. There resided, of course, the exchange wife from the *tar* of the boy's father, and soon the threat would be delivered: do not consign the child to the white man, for your sister lives with us. The threat was a potent deterrent.

These elements were in the tribal makeup as guards against dangerous innovation. In addition to this must be mentioned the natural aversion to acceptance of the way of life of people as strange as the white men were. The white man was impressive in certain respects, and obviously the possessor of great power. On the other hand, he appeared laughably childish and incompetent. For example, he found the Tiv language extremely difficult, while any Tiv knew that the Tiv language was the height of orderly simplicity. The missionary was ignorant of the names and uses of many of the most common trees and crops. He was often not physically robust and seemed to be subject to prostrating disease and appeared gaunt even when well. His food appeared particularly distasteful, though the world's most tasty dish, *ruam*, could be obtained at any time. He was apparently devoid of sexual appetite for long periods of time and even spurned offers of companions. This fact was brought out still more plainly in his proposal that men restrict themselves to one wife. He carried on little constructive work as far as anyone could see, but spent lengthy periods in a chair with a book or pencil and seemed to be lazy. As a mark of prestige and leisure, this avoidance of physical labor was impressive, to be sure, but the clothing of the missionary seemed to fly in the face of this possible affluence, since he owned no fine robes. Furthermore, his presence and inquisitiveness were most suspicious. He did not engage in trade for the mutual benefit of himself and the Tiv, but seemed instead vitally interested in obtaining large stores of information about the Tiv, which he carefully set down. He might well be engaged in a plot to acquire sacred powers, since he appeared especially interested in the *akombo* while professing that they were quite inadequate. Though possibly not of the same immediate group as the government officials, he was apparently on good terms with them and did not show the customary deference given them by subjects of a chief. They were quite possibly linked together in spite of missionary disclaimers on this point. All these factors combined to engender a vigorous distrust of the missionaries and the projects they undertook.

In addition to these more immediate sources of resistance, the Tiv religious structure was itself deeply antithetical to the presentation of the missionaries. First among these items was the impression that

the missionaries, while professing an intimate acquaintance with God, seemed in many respects to be less religious than the Tiv themselves. The missionaries did not think of *Aôndo* as grumbling in the thunder and spitting with the rain. In the schools of the missionaries far different explanations for these phenomena were profferred. Through scientific exposition of natural laws the immediate involvement of *Aôndo* was pushed into the background. Even though to the Tiv *Aôndo* was an otiose deity, the far-off High God, yet he was also more immediate than the *Aôndo* of the Christians for whom natural laws explained events and processes. The Christians furthermore seemed to have few rites and little sacred paraphernalia for use in propitiatinig the deity. The immediacy of the spiritual world was thus felt by the Tiv on the basis of their religion to an extent which they considered as superior to that of the Christians.

Secondly, the Tiv religious system seemed to give greater expression to the need to escape from disease and death. Elaborate *akombo* rites provided avenues for expression of this reverence for life and fertility. These were paramount concerns. The Christians, on the other hand, were more concerned with deliverance from "sin," which apparently meant transgressions of the laws set down in their book. For them release from physical disease and death were matters of lesser import. This basic shift of emphasis away from the wellsprings of life and the reverence for life was itself to the Tiv a fundamental "missing the mark," a sin.

The range of problematic concerning sin, the hamartiology, was a third matter of deep antithesis. For the Christians sin was construed as an offense against *Aôndo,* a more troublesome criterion since the will of *Aôndo* was so often difficult to ascertain. Even so the Christian view of sin was sharply defined, and sinful acts were apparently sinful *under all conditions,* whether anti-social or simply personal, whether endangering the community or not. The Tiv had no such precise definition of sin. True, there were the obvious *akombo* taboos, but beyond this lay whole areas of uncertainty where divination was necessary and where sin was relative. To the Tiv an act was sinful when it upset the delicate equilibrium of all things and endangered the harmonious functioning of cosmic powers.[31]

The problematic surrounding the nature of sin may also be seen in the fact that certain of the items termed sin by the Christians did not seem to the Tiv to be in any sense vicious. The idea that no one should work on one day out of seven confirmed the suspicion that the white man was lazy, and the Tiv rejected the idea as a waste of valu-

[31] J. Taylor writes in *The Primal Vision,* London, 1963, p. 180, "The essence of sin in the primal view is that it is anti-social. The sin that offends God is the sin that is against Man in his solidarity."

able time. The Tiv week comprised five days rather than seven, and the passage of time was noted in terms of the various markets which were held every five days. It was thus most difficult to remember which day was the seventh, for the seventh day came on the day of a different market each week and seemed to have no intrinsic rationale as a day of rest. Furthermore, not all white men followed this rule,[32] and even the missionary was exceptionally active in his work on that day.

A further illustration of the problematic surrounding the nature of sin may be seen in the attitude of the missionaries toward polygamy. The missionary proclaimed monogamy on the basis of the superiority of the love of one man for one woman. This proved to be a most difficult concept to explain to the Tiv, for no exact translation of the term "love" existed in the Tiv language.[33] The word used by the Tiv was *soo*, literally, like, or want. To like something or someone was also to desire to possess that object, though the word could also have overtones of tenderness and embodied, when used between lovers or between a child and his mother, a declaration of cordial affection. That this relation should of necessity be confined to but one woman was an idea quite startling and unacceptable to the Tiv.

Tiv feel that a woman should abstain from sexual intercourse until a child is weaned. The burden this placed on a monogamous husband was enormous,[34] and polygamy provided a means for the solution to this problem. However, polygamy as an institution has meaning far beyond the sexual avenue to which it is often solely tied

---

[32]Casaleggio trenchantly relates the confession brought to the Tiv mind by the white man on this point:

> "It is sometimes difficult to comprehend the actions of the Resident [the highest colonial official in the province]. On a certain occasion he refused to sell a plot of ground in Makurdi to our mission without providing the slightest reason for his decision. On a following occasion he appeared at a meeting of the chiefs and told them that if our mission preaches Sabbath observance, the Tiv should not let themselves be bothered by it. It is not a thing of the Tiv, nor is it a command of the Governor.
>
> "He himself does not observe the Sabbath. . . . Here were thus two responsible bodies represented by whites in a heathen land, and the one openly and decisively contradicts the proclamation of the other.
>
> "As a consequence of this, a certain chief then said that he had observed the Sabbath, but would now stop inasmuch as he could no longer tell what was right." Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150 (my translation).

[33]The term finally adopted by the missionaries was *dooshima*, literally, that which is good for, or pleases, the heart. "I love you," thus means, "You please, enrich, make well, my heart." The full reach of agapic love is not attained with this word, for the emphasis is subjective and states the value of the love to the speaker. Love as outgoing, as giving, as directed to the loved one, lies yet hidden in the term *dooshima*.

[34]"A Tiv man would never be able to desist from sleeping with a woman for a month, unless something were giving him intense pain and thus make it impossible for him." A. Sai, *op. cit.*, p. 238 (my translation).

in Western minds.[35] Polygamy was not for the Tiv so much an avenue for expanded sexual relationships as a means of acquiring and demonstrating affluence. Indeed, the addition of a junior wife could be an act of courtesy to a respected senior wife, who might herself ask for such assistance. This enabled the first wife to stay near the compound and fix the favorite food of her husband and receive the respect due to a senior wife. The institution of plural marriage which the Mission sought to displace by monogamy thus proved impossible to dislodge.

The next feature which we may note as antithetical to the Christian faith stemmed from the comprehensiveness of the tribal religion. In the Tiv view each individual was bound to all others in all he did and implicated them all in his actions. Much of life was involved in the safeguarding of this normality. The Christian faith, however, seemed to manifest less appreciation for this necessity of living in harmony with the cosmic whole. The Christians set right no *akombo* to safeguard themselves against inimical influence. They appeared far less concerned for the equilibrium of the totality and much more concerned about the individual, and by their disregard left themselves open to mystical malice from the *akombo* and *mbatsav*. Of course, the white man must have his own form of magic potential, witness his obvious power and mechanical skill,[36] but this was undoubtedly his own peculiar heritage and quite alien to the Tiv. As far as appreciation for living in harmony with the cosmic forces which daily touched all that the Tiv did, the Christian faith appeared deficient. Religion seemed to affect a much smaller segment of daily living and left wide areas untouched. This freedom from concern and fear was indeed inviting; the disregard of supernatural retribution appeared, on the other hand, myopic and dangerous.

The Tiv could generously excuse the missionary for his ignorance on this score; after all, he had never been acquainted with the *akombo* and the *mbatsav*. What was more disturbing was his evident lack of personal sensitivity in the area of religion. Here then was a man who came to teach religion and who was himself insensitive to the unseen forces which swirled about him. Would the Tiv agree that

---

[35]As, for example, Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Grand Rapids, 1951. These commentators seek to find a connection between polygamy and the "Hamitic curse." Not only do they agree that the curse which rested on Canaan spread to all the descendants of Ham, but they add that in the sin of Ham "there lies the great stain of the whole Hamitic race, whose chief characteristic is sexual sin." p. 157. This speculation leads on to further comment: "the curse which Noah pronounced upon this sin still rests upon the race," *loc. cit.* The implication of sexuality and polygamy among Africans as a result of the so-called Hamitic curse must, however, top the list of examples of fabricated exegesis.

[36]The author was once asked by a villager whether the white man made his automobile himself or brought it with him from another world.

they should be taught by a man who lived outside this awareness, even though he called much to *Aôndo?* Not easily.

A further feature of the antithesis of the Tiv world-view in its confrontation with Christianity necessarily follows. Western Christianity is far more rationally oriented. Tiv religion was ready to insist that man be swept along as part of the whole, that he submerge his individuality in the common goal. In this connection, some words of J. Taylor are illuminating:

> Any attempt to look upon the world through African eyes must involve this adventure of the imagination whereby we abandon our image of a man whose complex identity is encased within the shell of his physical being, and allow ourselves instead to visualize a centrifugal selfhood, equally complex, interpermeating other selves in a relationship in which subject and object are no longer distinguishable. "I think, therefore I am" is replaced by "I participate, therefore I am."[37]

In the Tiv world-view this separating and compartmentalizing, this dispassionate investigation of nature, was tantamount to a disintegration of the whole, a kind of Christian *hubris* unwholesome to the Tiv. Yet it was the tribal religion that ultimately deified man, for it made him manipulator of the cosmic forces. From the awareness of his stance as created being, as finite and fallen being, there could grow humility. Yet through Christ the way of passionate involvement with God and all men was open.

Christianity not only objectified man and nature, but, and this was even more ominous, it individualized. The emphasis of the missionaries upon a personal relationship to *Aôndo* was not as disturbing as the evident neglect of the relationship of the individual to the clan, the *tar,* and the unseen powers. Christianity placed one individually before the face of *Aôndo* and in the final analysis placed him there alone, sundered from his brethren. The missionaries stressed personal guilt and salvation, while the Tiv sought rather to lose the individual in the smoothness of the whole. Self-consciousness was a fruit ultimately denied and submerged beneath other values. Christianity called the individual to reach the limit of his potentiality, to search out the new and untried. Out of the encounter of these views of life would come at last the individual-in-communion, the Christian at work in the Kingdom of God.

A further antithesis of the tribal religion to Christianity may be observed from the difference in the use of the term *Aôndo.* While the Christians did adopt the name *Aôndo* for the deity they proclaimed, they evidently denied that he was responsible for human

[37] J. Taylor, *op. cit.,* pp. 49-50.

misery. The equilibrium of all things was referred back by the Tiv ultimately to the nature of *Aôndo* himself, and in his will they found the cause for all that transpired. In the absence of a Satan as the final cause for calamity, the reason for calamity had finally to be placed in the will of *Aôndo*. As was noted in the preceding chapter, there is among some Tiv the view that *Takuruku* is a lesser god with control over inimical forces, who serves as explanation for the emergence of evil. This view does not enjoy wide support, but does serve to indicate that the problem did exist for the Tiv. In the absolute will of *Aôndo* most Tiv placed the final cause for death and catastrophe, and this fatalism was deeply felt by every tribesman. The irresistible will of *Aôndo* was also a convenient means to excuse oneself for failure; *Aôndo* was benefactor, but he could also be a capricious deity. The early missionary Strijdom wrote in 1919,

> Aôndo is for them naked power, who wills or refuses . . . If the Tivi wants to do something and he is unsuccessful with it, he gives Aôndo the blame.[38]

The Christians, on the other hand, rejected this view and pointed the finger of guilt at man for his misery. Though the DRC missionaries were predestinarian Calvinists, they were insistent upon placing man in a position of responsibility for catastrophe, both personally and through Adam.

There were also more immediate results of the Christian way of life to fire the antagonism of the elders. Christianity gave to women a place in the scheme of things quite foreign to the Tiv way of life. To the Tiv, woman represented the principle of fecundity and so was akin to the second great source of growth and fertility, the soil. From the implanted seed in woman and in the earth all things came forth. Woman was thus closely related to the earth, and her life and work, too, were bound to the soil. Men did hoe a farm for their wives and performed certain of the tasks which opened the way for her cultivation of the crops, but the day to day care of the farm, its nourishment and harvesting, was the task of the woman. The male represented, on the other hand, the authority over against the woman, the force that impregnated the woman, even as the sky gave fertility, through sunshine and rain, to the soil below. The Christians threatened this system by suggesting a fuller equality and a richer communion of the men with their wives, and by proposing that the unmarried women have a voice in the selection of their mates. Rev. Strijdom writes:

> One of the most abominable customs of the Tiv is certainly their manner of marriage. The poor women are as it were just so many toys in the hands of the men. They are sold, exchanged, or stolen.

[38]Strijdom, *op. cit.*, p. 30 (my translation).

> They are literally merchandise and are spoken of as such. The father, for example, exchanges his child, the brother his sister, for a wife.[39]

It was precisely because the missionaries felt that women were viewed as voiceless chattels that they endeavored to abolish exchange marriage among the Tiv. Whatever value the abolishing of exchange marriage produced is not here the point. What is evident is simply that in the mind of the Tiv elders the missionaries threatened the existing and to them, satisfying, position of women, and hence opposed the new faith as engendering haughtiness among the women.

This fear was even more open with regard to children. The elders saw in the rising emancipation of the young a threat to the structure of their authority within the tribe, which indeed it was. This was especially true for those who attended schools and there learned to disregard the taboos, flaunt the *akombo*, ridicule the *mbatsav*, and leave the tribal mores. This was no idle threat, for through this means the whole tribal world-view was shaken in the years ahead.

All these points of antagonism between the traditional world-view and religion of the Tiv on the one hand and Christianity on the other provided the stuff for the wholehearted rejection of the Christian faith by the Tiv. As we have indicated, at the end of nineteen years of mission work in Tivland, there were but six baptized Christians. In the hut of the Tiv, the *akombo* and *tsav* systems held their ancient thralldom.

E. LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS

The first literature produced in Tiv was a small reader published in 1914 called *Zua Tiv* (The Tiv Language), which was followed in 1916 by the Gospel of Mark. With the publication of this Gospel the use of *Aôndo* as the name for the Christian God was made final. We have already noted how that to the Tiv mind the nature of *Aôndo* on the traditional basis was at variance with the Christian meaning of the term "God," in that *Aôndo* was thought of in terms of ultimate will, unknowable and inscrutable. Not only was he distant in the heavens, but he was the final rationale for calamity as well as beneficence. We must now consider this problem somewhat more closely. Two points especially demand attention.

The first matter of concern is that *Aôndo* did not exist in the Tiv mind apart from the entirety of his work as creator, more specifically as creator of the *tsav* and *akombo* systems. It was precisely in these systems that the awesome power of *Aôndo* came to expression in the day to day life of the tribe. Now, however, the Christians declared

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 29 (my translation).

that these constructions were fictitious, and in any case, that *Aôndo* did not create them and that they were abhorrent to his nature. The question arises whether all of this could be divorced from *Aôndo* and still leave him as *Aôndo*. Would the advantage of using this name so familiar to the Tiv outweigh the difficulties of a name so tied up with other aspects of the religion which had to be discarded? Could the name be used in such a way that the Tiv would not ascribe to the Christian God all the attributes of *Aôndo?*

A second difficulty devolves from the nature of *Aôndo* as the High God, distant and inscrutable. The Christians sought to change the idea of *Aôndo* from a remote deity to a near and dear God, the loving Father. This presented a formidable challenge, given the impersonality of the traditional Tiv religion. Among the Tiv, the ancestors are respected, but there is no personal worship of ancestors. The *akombo* represent impersonal forces to be feared, and the *iyangenev* are symbols for harmonization of the *tar* and the supernatural powers, but there is no personal relationship to them. The Tiv profess to have known nothing of an after-life or judgment. In all of their religious life, then, there was scant opportunity for the development of personal piety. According to Father Adrian Edwards, a Roman Catholic anthropologist resident among the Tiv, the greatest inimical force to the acceptance of the Christian faith resident in Tiv culture is this very impersonality of Tiv religion. The Tiv, maintains Father Edwards, are not used to personal religion and are not quickly amenable to it, while this is the very essence of Christianity.[40] To utilize the term *Aôndo* then did nothing to thwart this approach to religion. It was necessary to alter radically the connotation of the term to incorporate these elements of nearness, dearness, and personal relationship.

Such were the difficulties posed by the term *Aôndo*. Prof. J. H. Bavinck has maintained that in this type of situation we do not find a true point of contact between Christianity and the tribal religion.[41] Certainly in the term *Aôndo* we do not have a value of like nature with the Christian value, out of whose common essence we may then fashion an understanding of the meaning of God as a message to preach to the Tiv.

Nevertheless the value of the term *Aôndo* as a means of translation for the English word "God" cannot be summarily brushed aside. Through the use of the name *Aôndo* the Tiv confessed the existence of God, and that tremendous advantage had to be conserved. Though

---

[40]Personal interview, June 27, 1967.

[41]Bavinck elaborates on this point in many of his writings, e.g. *Religieus Besef en Christelijk Geloof*, Kampen, 1949, p. 119; *Alzoo Wies Het Woord*, Baarn, n.d., p. 165; *The Impact of Christianity on the Non-Christian World*, Grand Rapids, 1949, p. 109; *Inleiding in de Zendingswetenschap*, Kampen, 1954, p. 145.

the meaning of *Aôndo* as used by the Tiv would have to be discarded, yet the fact of God's self-manifestation lay evident. In this fact the missionaries found their point of contact, or to use Bavinck's term, their *aangrijpingspunt*. Rev. Strijdom writes concerning the Tiv.

> Concerning a gracious, personal, loving God they know nothing. Inasmuch as they do, however, have a conception of God, the missionary does have a point of contact for the proclamation of the Gospel.[42]

The Tiv were, moreover, ready to acknowledge that they possessed meager knowledge of *Aôndo*, and this admission provided the missionaries with the avenue they needed to reach the heart of the tribe. No other word for God existed in the tribal tongue, and the problems of posing a rival God over against *Aôndo* would be horrendous. To do so would give the Tiv an opportunity to come at once to the defense of *Aôndo*, and to clothe him with much the same attributes as those proclaimed by the missionaries. The difficulty of finding a suitable term is also apparent: would one choose *Teosi* (transliteration of the Greek *theos*), *Goddi* (from the English *God*), or *Allah* (from the Hausa and Arabic)? Obviously, any euphonious collection of phonemes would be as adequate, without borrowing from another language. At first the areas of misunderstanding arising from the use of *Aôndo* would be significant, but with the passage of time it could be expected that the Christian meaning would thoroughly change the traditional connotation of *Aôndo*. This has indeed occurred, so that at the present time even the non-Christian Tiv apply the Biblical attributes to *Aôndo*. For the Christians the connection with the *akombo* and *tsav* systems has been completely severed and *Aôndo* has become the object of intensely personal worship and devotion. The awesome semantic experiment has proved a success. A certain fatalism concerning *Aôndo* remains, it is true. This was always present with the Tiv and the difficulty was possibly not lessened by the predestinarian position of the missionaries. With the current emphasis on leadership training in the Church, it may be hoped that the necessary distinction between the Reformed faith and this fatalism will be clarified.

Similar problems of communication arose with regard to other concepts for which no equivalent existed in Tiv, for example, hope, grace, faith, sacrament, etc. These terms could be translated only through the coupling of various Tiv words (e.g. hope is translated as *ishimaverenkeghen*, from *ishima*, heart, *veren*, to place, and *keghen*, wait, with an approximate meaning in Tiv of "expectant waiting"), or by the manufacture of an entirely new word (such as *sakramenta*).

[42]Strijdom, *op. cit.*, p. 30 (my translation).

A related difficulty arose through the use of a single Tiv term as a translation for two English terms, viz. "Father" and "Lord." The Tiv word for father, *ter,* is used also as a term of respect to a superior or elder. Thus God the Father is *Aôndo Ter,* while the Lord Jesus Christ is *Ter Yesu Kristu.* The ambiguity lies imbedded in the Tiv language and expresses the relationship in the Tiv mind of kinship and authority. In the Bible, however, the ideas are often distinct. Another word for Lord was available, viz. *tor,* chief. The use of this term would, of course, incur the rancor of the chiefs who would see in it the rise of a rival ruler. It would confirm the suspicion that the missionaries were indeed seeking the political subversion of the Tiv. The Lordship of Christ was, in truth, more like that of a *ter* than a *tor.* The final solution was to print *ter* in italics when used in the sense of Lord. In one's speech the ambiguity often remains.

A more serious semantic problem arose in the early years of mission work with the choice of the words *kwaghyan u utu* as the designation for the Lord's Supper. *Kwaghyan u utu* means literally "food of the night" and provided a convenient way of translating "supper." The full name was *Kwaghyan u Utu u Ter,* but was shortened simply to *kwaghyan u utu.* The difficulty arose in the fact that the *mbatsav* were the "people of the night" who were thought to carry on their malevolent activities, such as the eating of human flesh, at their nocturnal assemblies. In the minds of the Tiv there quickly arose the suspicion that the Christians had a similar rite. Though the other meetings of the Christians were public and all were urged to come, it was understood that the *kwaghyan u utu* was for initiates only. Furthermore, it was alleged that the Christians openly said that at this meeting they symbolically consumed flesh and blood. Thus one feature piled on another to make the sacrament highly suspect to the Tiv with his fear of the *mbatsav.* In the end the evening Communion had to be discarded and the name changed to simply *Kwaghyan u Ter.*[43]

F. RELATIONSHIPS OF THE DRCM AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSION

A further difficulty in the establishment of the Church in Tivland stemmed from the division within Christendom itself. The practise of comity, followed by the majority of Protestant missions, was rejected by the Roman Catholic Church, which saw as its mandate the planting of the one true Church in every place. The Catholics began their first attempts at mission work among the Tiv around the middle of 1919. Whereas the DRCM began its work in the eastern part of

[43]Information of Pastor Varem Ayaka, NKST Sevav.

Tivland among the *Ipusu* and moved westward, the Roman Catholics began work in the west among the *Ichôngo* and subsequently moved eastward. As it turned out, the *Ichôngo* were even less amenable to change than the *Ipusu*, and though Roman Catholic emphases and methods were different and her missionaries had the advantage of following the pioneers of the DRCM, nevertheless the growth was small. The relation between the two missions was far from cordial, especially since the Roman Catholics soon found their most fertile soil in those who had already been contacted by the DRCM, particularly children and young men. Roman Catholic work was thus often carried on in the vicinity of DRCM stations or worship centers where the Catholics offered several inducements to attract the Tiv, including the teaching of English.

The Roman Catholic missionaries soon found another means of ingress through attracting former DRCM converts who had been placed in discipline or who had left the Church because of strict DRCM regulations. The emphasis was always on education. Through this means the Roman Catholics felt they would attract the young and though in this generation little understanding of the faith could be inculcated, a base would be established for reaching succeeding generations. That this expressed a widespread Roman Catholic strategy may be seen from a statement of Arthur Hinsley, who in 1927 was appointed Visitor Apostolate to Catholic Missions in the British African Colonies. Hinsley wrote with regard to cooperation with the various governments:

> Collaborate with all your power; and where it is impossible for you to carry on both the immediate task of evangelization and your educational work, neglect your churches in order to perfect your schools.[44]

The Roman Catholic strategy among the Tiv has thus been more in the direction of getting a hold on the society as a whole rather than, in the preliminary phase, of securing individual conversions. According to Father A. C. Edwards of the RC Mission in Tivland, the Church does not appear at once full-blown on the scene, but is built up gradually through stages, including in the beginning semi-pagan or pre-Christian elements. Only in succeeding years does one see the actual Church and the mature Christian believer. The RC Mission has thus not been averse to the placement of pagans on committees sponsored by the Mission, with the understanding that in this way a later stage of greater Christian maturity may be most effectively reached.[45]

This emphasis on education, coupled with the tireless trekking of

[44]In: Groves, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 117.
[45]Personal interview, June 27, 1967.

the Fathers into the "bush," has now given the Roman Catholic Church an impressive impact on the Tiv. (Easter duties were performed by 21,111 persons in Tivland in 1967, i.e. they attended Confession and received Communion on Easter Sunday. "Easter duties" refers to the day and method of tabulation selected by RC Missions for compilation of Church statistics. The figure is thus meant to indicate the number of practising Catholics, excluding children, but including significant numbers of non-Tiv residing in the area. The number of attenders is naturally much higher.[16]) At the present time the SUM missionaries devote comparatively little effort to trekking, while the Fathers indefatigably continue to carry on this means of reaching the Tiv. One explanation for this pattern lies in the fact that among the Protestants a large number of Tiv pastors and lay leaders may be found, who themselves reach the Tiv in bush areas, while the missionaries concentrate on leadership training in more central locations. The Protestant missionaries have suffered loss of linguistic fluency and contact with the grass roots of the tribe through this development, while on the other hand it is now possible for the Protestant Tiv to evangelize the Tiv and themselves develop the life of the Church.

Throughout the decades of their work in Tivland, the RC Mission has been hampered by this lack of indigenous priests. (Even at this writing there is no Tiv in the priesthood, though presently a Tiv ordinand is completing his studies in Rome.) The high academic qualifications necessary and the celibate life demanded by the priesthood proved to be insurmountable obstacles to the Tiv. The acceptance of holy orders by a Tiv man as a vocation was sure to meet with stern disapproval from his kin. For one thing, the long process of education required could provide a far more lucrative position than the priesthood. The family which assists in paying for the education has a stake in the result, and in typical Tiv fashion, they expect the recipient in later years to contribute significant sums toward the education of his kin. This the Tiv priest would scarcely be in a position to do. Furthermore, the prospect of celibacy, of having no offspring to carry on the family line, struck the Tiv as catastrophe. Voluntarily to allow one's line to die out is contrary to all the heritage of the Tiv and few were amenable to such thoughts. Few of the virile Tiv wished to abstain in any case, and of those few who did so resolve, still fewer were able to carry through their decision.

Further difficulties which faced the Roman Catholics in Tivland should here be mentioned. First of all, with their specific emphasis on education, the eventual nationalization of the schools would prove

[16]Courtesy, The Diocesan Office, Makurdi.

to be a formidable blow. The RC Mission found the schools to be so effective that it did not go in the direction of building dispensaries or the production of literature in the vernacular. This loss of control of the schools did in fact occur in 1967, and resulted in a basic rethinking of Roman Catholic mission methodology. Secondly, with the emphasis on schools a number of scholars were produced whom the RC missionaries hoped would be the channel for the further propagation of the faith in Tivland. As a matter of fact, however, the graduates found themselves able to procure more lucrative appointments in the large cities of Nigeria, far away from the bush areas of Tivland. Thus the education policy, says Father D. Murray, Acting Bishop of the Diocese of Makurdi, "educated the people right out of the tribal area." To that extent at least, the education policy accomplished exactly the reverse of what was intended.[47]

A highly successful element in the strategy of the RC Mission in Tivland was the introduction of the "bazaar." The bazaar became a very popular fund-raising and evangelistic tool of the RCM in Tivland. One form involved the sale of seats of honor at the program to the highest bidder. Since the chief men attending represented their particular *tar* as they vied for positions of prestige, the entire community was involved in the outcome. A second form emphasized the auction of items brought by various Bible schools, and here again each group represented a specific *tar*, so that the competition became keen and the urge toward participation very strong. The bazaar thus became a potent magnet for the RCM everywhere in Tivland.

The Protestants, on the other hand, inveighed vigorously against these practises as being an unwholesome means for parading vanity. In the end the Protestant elders forbade attendance when gambling, actually quite illegal, became intimately associated with the bazaar. The Catholic missionaries themselves, it should be added, did not allow gambling on the premises while they were in attendance. However, the gambling was then carried on just outside, and native policemen were loathe to involve themselves in enforcement of the law. The Father usually left at sundown, and then the bazaar became somewhat more unwholesome. The Tiv Protestants were highly indignant regarding the bazaar, and it remains a point of great irritation to this day, though bazaars are yet highly popular with most Tiv. The RC Mission is currently making a strenuous effort to improve the character of the bazaar.

The Roman Catholic Prefecture of Benue was established in 1934 and in 1959 the Prefecture was raised to the status of Diocese.[48]

[47]Information of the Very Rev. Donal Murray, CSSp., Vicar Capitular of the Diocese of Makurdi, May 26, 1967.

[48]*The Official Nigeria Catholic Directory*, Lagos, 1967, p. 75.

Throughout the years of their relationship, the mutual attitude of the DRCM and RCM was one of open hostility. The first DRCM missionary to settle at Uavande, the final station opened by the DRCM, wrote as late as 1956, "Here there were no Christians on hand to welcome us! On the contrary, our nearest neighbors are the Roman Catholics."[10] In a succeeding chapter we shall consider the changing relationship between the RCM and the SUM at the present time.

Additional Note

As one of the evangelists working with the DRCM, Akiga Sai well knew the problems brought to the DRCM by the coming of the Roman Catholics, and he gives an evaluation of their work. The following selection from his *History of the Tiv* is entitled *Kwagh u Mbaroma* (Concerning the Roman Catholics).

CONCERNING THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

When the bridge over the Benue River was being constructed at Makurdi and Makurdi became a boomtown, the Catholics settled there. The people they placed were native teachers, one in Makurdi on the south side, another on the other side of Makurdi to the north. At that time I had also been placed on the south side of Makurdi by the DRCM missionaries in order to teach there. The CMS missionaries also placed several teachers there, one on this side and another on the other side, just as the Catholics had done. Other missionaries of various denominations also placed their employees there to teach the Christian faith and to teach the children in school.

When we had taken up our work in this way, our missionaries from our several denominations came to encourage us from time to time. At that time no disturbances came to our ears at all. We all lived together in harmony and there were no disparaging remarks made among us. Of course, we did inform those who wanted to know the difference of our teachings from the teachings of others, but that was all.

After some time, a Roman Catholic missionary came to Makurdi and began to walk through the market looking for Tiv lads who had already been in school. At that time there were some boys whom the DRC missionaries had dismissed because of their character, and they were wandering about Makurdi looking for work. When the Catholic missionary was looking for boys who had already been in

[10]From the Uavande station daybook, in: Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

school a bit, they enrolled, and the missionary took them to Naka in Iharev, established a school there, and began teaching them in English. He then placed some in Makurdi and another of their missionaries settled in Makurdi as well; still another one traveled about Tivland. As the latter knew no Tiv at first, he hired a Tiv lad who understood English. This boy's name was John; he had previously been a builder in the European style and also had constructed bridges. They hired this lad and then went about everywhere in Tivland to tell the Tiv their message — they would tell him and he in turn would tell the Tiv. The message of the Catholics to the Tiv was this: they said that they were the Church of Christ, the real root of the genuine religion, and all other missionaries were teaching improperly. This was because they were teaching the Tiv to read in the Tiv language, which was not good, and would actually be harmful to the Tiv. Now that the Catholics had come, they would teach the Tiv children to read very well in English so that someday they would become clerks. They also paid their teachers more.

The elders of the Tiv, however, paid no attention to their deliverances regarding their relationships with the missionaries of the DRCM, and no matter what they taught, the elders did not get very upset about it.

The young people, on the other hand, when they heard about making a lot of money and learning English in order to become clerks as the Catholics were saying, were all eager for it. Those who were in DRCM schools as well as in government schools began leaving in droves to go over to the Catholics. All those who had no work and were just wandering idly about also were attracted, so strong was the pull of the Catholics in those days. Nothing else was talked about other than these matters of the Fathers. As the lads enrolled with them, they increasingly sought to tempt those who had not yet gone over. The temptation they used was to buy European trousers, and the small dishes used for food and gravy, and also handkerchiefs. Then they traveled among the Tiv to tempt other youngsters, but the children they especially worked on were those who were with the DRCM missionaries. When they came to a place where there were youngsters studying under auspices of the DRCM missionaries, they put on all their European things, and took their dishes and showed the others that since they were with the Catholics they no longer were so crude as to eat from a calabash as did the Tiv. Then they ate from the dishes as white men do, and declared that they were not in poverty as were the children who went to the DRCM, and moreoever their teachers received five pounds a month. So at times the children who were with the DRCM went with them and joined the Catholics in order to do things as

the white man does them. If there were places where they could not go, they would send a snapshot.

One lad who formerly was Rev. Botha's steward and had grown up in his care and accepted the Christian faith and was doing well in school, finally left him at Turan because he got involved with a woman. When the Catholics came around he went over to them, and it was this man who was such a great help to the Catholics. One day he decked himself out in all the accoutrements of the white man and had a photo taken of himself. He sent this photo to his former companions at Turan and sent a letter together with the picture. He wrote that this is how Catholic young people dress, just as the white man, and the letter, too, he wrote in English.

The missionary at Mkar whom the Tiv call Ortese Agee, when he saw that the children were leaving his school and going over to the Catholics, did not become discontented, but simply said, "We missionaries did not come to Tivland to engage in work for ourselves, but we came to do the work of God; it is God who sent us to do His work. Therefore if God wills to tear down His work, so be it, and if, on the other hand, He wills that we do His work among the Tiv, no thing or person exists that will be able to tear down the work which God sent us to do." He constantly said this to the school children whenever he met them; so that if anyone among them desired to go over to the Catholics, he was free to go — it would not bother him. For to have a hundred children who were not stedfast toward him, or five who were wholeheartedly committed with him to doing God's work — why, he would rather have the five. This was the point he constantly made.

The Catholics are still going ahead with their work in Tivland. Such is the situation with regard to their mission.

G. THE TURNING POINT

The paucity of response to the message of the missionaries is understandable when one considers the enormity of the factors which inhibited the acceptance of the Christian faith. That the mission survived those barren years is itself astonishing. Yet one discovers in the annals of those years no relaxation of theological stance in the interests of swift conversions and no enticing of the Tiv through promise of financial gain. Discipline was strict and entrance into the Church difficult. Furthermore, the policy of self-support was an integral element of the day to day strategy. A financial dependence on the mission which would in later years be difficult to sever was stringently avoided. In the DRC mission in Nyasaland, now Malawi, a policy has been established whereby projects on the outstations were supported financially by members of the Home

Church in South Africa. However beneficial this may have been in arousing interest in missions in the Home Church, the financial dependence that followed proved to be an obstacle to the development of a self-supporting church on the field. One of the missionaries in Tivland, Rev. Botha, was so convinced of the evil of such a consequence that he remarked that where the indigenous church had not been taught to stand on its own feet, it would be best to break down everything that had been with so much difficulty built up in order to begin all over.[50]

These practises were not calculated to bring in large numbers of Tiv in the early years, but they followed from a firmly believed philosophy of Mission. This policy is today paying its dividends in the understanding of indigeneity on the part of Tiv Church leaders. The Chairman of the Tiv Synod stated publicly in 1967 that he realized that the missionaries had made no mistake in not coddling the Church financially, though once it appeared heartless. Today, he continued, the Tiv Church (the NKST) stands as an autonomous body and is known everywhere in Tivland by its own name, while every other religious group is known only by the name of its mission. The Tiv Church alone supports its pastors and evangelists and erects its church buildings without subsidy from the Mission.

The planting of the Gospel in Tivland followed a course marked by several significant phases. The first twenty years comprise a period of putting the seed into inhospitable soil through a determined penetration of all of Tivland. At the time of the original entrance of the DRCM into Saai in 1911, work was confined by government order to the Tiv that might be living east of Saai, and Saai was itself on the eastern edge of Tivland. In 1912, however, the entire area east of the Katsina Ala River was opened for missionary travel and settlement. A second station was thereupon opened at Zaki Biam in 1913, and in 1919 at Sevav. In 1923 permission was received for the first station west of the Katsina Ala River, to be established at Mkar, which would later become the headquarters of the Mission.

With the westward press of the Mission, the question arose as to the future of the original station at Saai. The work there had proved to be most unfruitful and the village itself lay in the far eastern reaches of Tivland in a sparsely populated area. In 1926 it was decided to close the station at Saai in the interests of better penetration of Tivland as a whole. The personnel from Saai were placed that same year at a new station, Turan, and in 1927 a station was built at Kunav, also in the southern portion of the tribal area.

A few years later a further westward expansion was undertaken

[50]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

with the establishment of a station at Makurdi in 1931, and at Shangev in 1935. The latter project was undertaken particularly with an eye to Roman Catholic activity in western Tivland. The DRC Home Board, however, found itself unable to finance the opening of the station at that time. The missionaries were nevertheless so convinced of the necessity of the project that they among themselves promised to pay for the establishment and maintenance of the buildings for three years. The map on page 124 indicates the location of these stations and the manner in which Tivland was penetrated.

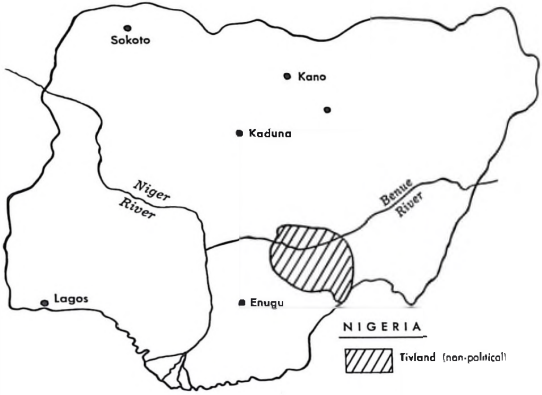
The expansion in breadth had thus covered a span of 24 years. After 1935 no further stations were opened in Tivland for twenty years. The Mission was established within thirty linear miles of almost any point in Tivland by the opening of these seven stations. One day's cycling could take the missionary from his compound to the most distant village of his area. After 1935 the expansion of the work was in depth rather than breadth, with the growth of the various departments and the rise of institutions.

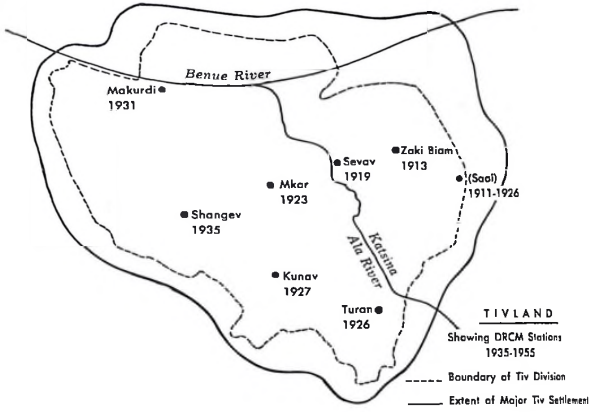
The same point of demarcation, i.e. approximately the year 1935, is valid also for another distinction of importance. Up to that time the work had been characterized by unresponsiveness and resistance. Rev. W. Gerryts, a DRCM missionary, wrote, "After 25 years there was the meager harvest of not more than 25 baptized Christians."[51] That was in 1936. By the end of 1941, however, the number had risen abruptly to 214. What were the factors lying behind this long awaited breakthrough?

Obviously no single cause can be noted as determinative here. One important factor was the significant increase in personnel in the years immediately preceding this turning point. In 1930, the staff of the DRCM numbered but twenty-one missionaries, but by 1933 this number had risen to an unprecedented thirty-five missionaries. The effect of the witness of these new staff members in the years ahead is undoubtedly an important consideration.

A second explanation for the turn of the tide may be traced to the rise of the "bush" Bible schools during that period. Young men who had received some form of education and contact with the Christian faith began to find ways to put their knowledge and faith to work in their own compounds. More or less spontaneously they began to teach their fellow villagers and to hold services on Sunday. It soon became apparent that the presence of such a "school" was a mark of prestige for a compound. Furthermore, such a "school," while bearing the impressive aura of the white man's learning, yet

[51] W. D. Gerryts, in: *The Coming of the Gospel into Tivland*, Mkar, Nigeria, n.d., p. 3.


Sokoto
Kano
Kaduna
Niger River
Benue River
Lagos
Enugu
NIGERIA
Tivland (non-political)


Benue River
Makurdi
1931
Zaki Biam
1913
Sevav
1919
(Saal)
1911-1926
Mkar
1923
Shangev
1935
Katsina Ala River
Kunav
1927
Turan
1926
TIVLAND
Showing DRCM Stations
1935-1955
Boundary of Tiv Division
Extent of Major Tiv Settlement

eliminated many of the suspect features of that learning. For one thing, the teaching was carried on under the very eyes of the local elders, who had little idea as to what might be taking place in the schools conducted by the white men on their distant stations. Here, parents and elders could themselves observe and question. The bush "school" also permitted the elders to maintain their lines of authority over the young far more than could be done when the children attended primary schools. As the idea of the bush school took hold, the children were asked to contribute a small sum and to hoe a farm for the teacher.

It should be noted here that this "Bible school" movement was not primarily the result of missionary prodding, but arose among the Tiv themselves. It became in the end the most powerful means of evangelism in Tivland.[52] The Mission soon put its influence behind the movement, as is shown in the following statement of the Field Council, which also reflects the financial situation in Tivland at the time:

> With an eye to expansion in villages which have no leaders, but which request them, the Council decides that in such cases competent leaders shall be sent in and a maximum of nine pence per week shall be paid. In such cases the children shall pay one penny school fees per quarter. The nine pence shall be obtained from collections, school fees, free will offerings, and where this is yet deficient, it will be supplemented from mission monies.[53]

It was this fully indigenous and spontaneous movement among the Tiv that finally broke the massive wall of resistance to the Gospel. The low salary precluded the leader from assuming the ostentatious ways that the elders had observed in many of the educated. The Bible school leader could not hope to succeed if he flaunted the authority of the elders; in fact, the school actually extended the authority of the compound head by establishing a new unit under his control. While the salaried and haughty well-educated son might spurn the traditional controls and go elsewhere, the Bible school leader was humble and diligent in his own compound or one very similar to his own. While the former exhibited the threat which the white man posed to the traditional way of life of the tribe, the latter provided a link, so sorely needed by the mission, between the elders and the missionaries. The compound head now warmly greeted the missionary when he arrived to "inspect his school," and together they could discuss the problems faced there. The Bible school also gave to the primary school leaver an opportunity to do

[52]*Ibid.*, p. 5, "It is estimated that about two-thirds of the baptized church members are products of these schools."

[53]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 101 (my translation).

something useful in his community. In every way the Bible school was a tremendous success. Each day thousands of children in Tivland at last heard the Gospel, and on Sunday the school became a church.

Unfortunately, just at this juncture the Mission began to encounter a severe staffing problem. The missionary personnel would not again number thirty-five until 1949. During the period of the Second World War, the number sank to twenty-four, and at one point only ten missionaries were on the field.[54] Nevertheless, in that same year (1944), the number of bush Bible schools had climbed to eighty-nine.[55] The Tiv were effectively carrying the Gospel to the Tiv.

H. EXPANSION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE DRCM

With the opening of Shangev station in 1935, the expansion in breadth across Tivland had been accomplished. The next quarter century was marked by an intensification of effort within departments and institutions. Within the evangelism department a most significant step was taken with the publication of the complete New Testament in Tiv in 1936. The following year a class for the training of evangelists was begun at Mkar. The course was a lengthy one, for not until 1943 was the initial class graduated. The matter of pastor training proved to be even more difficult. Not until 1950 was the first class selected for training, and even then the academic standard of the class demanded that two years be spent in giving them a fifth and sixth grade education. This class of four men began its theological training in 1952 and was graduated in 1956.

The medical work of the DRCM was established by the building of a hospital at Mkar in the decade between 1930-1940. In 1937 a smaller hospital was also constructed at Kunav. In 1940 an orphanage was begun, and that same year the first personnel were set apart for leprosy work. This aspect of the work grew to such proportions that by 1959 the Mission cared for more than 15,000 leprosy patients in Benue Province.

An indication of the expansion of the work of education may be seen in the increase of the number of children in DRCM schools, from 461 in 1935 to 760 in 1940. The most spectacular growth in this area depended on the preparation of teachers, which was also undertaken at this time. Hence, the following years saw an even greater increase in the number of students, from 760 in 1940 to 2,984 in 1948, in spite of the staffing problems caused by the war.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

A school for women was also opened at Mkar in 1940, and a youth organization known as Boys' Brigade was formed.[56] Thus on various fronts the Mission was now able to sharpen its impact and channel the energies of the Tiv converts toward taking the Gospel to their fellow tribesmen.

In 1934 the first steps were taken toward the establishment of church life on a denominational level with the creation of a Council of Congregations with limited powers. This Council continued to exist until 1957 when the *Nongo u Kristu ken Sudan hen Tiv*, the Tiv Church of Christ, was organized as a fully autonomous body with nearly 1800 baptized members. Twenty-three thousand Tiv attended her worship services each Sunday.[57]

During all the years of the DRCM work in Tivland, the missionaries had lived under the conviction that it was through God's direction that the DRC had received the Tiv field from the SUM. This conviction was given new strength when the Tiv at last began to respond to the Gospel in great numbers. In the DRC in South Africa, however, there had always been some reservations regarding the advisability of undertaking such a massive project as the work in Tivland would entail. It was felt that the DRC should not make such a huge expenditure of funds and personnel so far from home while the area near the DRC itself was a ripe mission field. Already in 1931 the DRC Mission Committee in the homeland expressed a doubt as to the possibility of occupation of the entire tribal area. In 1934 the DRC Secretary of Missions visited the field and in passing asked certain missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church of the U.S. whether that church might be able to take over the work among the Tiv. The CRC at that time carried on no mission work in Nigeria as a denomination, though several members of the CRC were working for the SUM in the area directly to the east of Tivland. These missionaries replied that the possibility was then out of the question.[58]

The Second World War brought two new factors into the discussion. First of all, the DRCM encountered severe staffing problems. Difficulties of travel and supply curtailed this most distant work of the DRC. Secondly, the Tiv themselves began moving eastward into the area which had become in 1940 the responsibility of the CRC as a branch of the SUM. The question was then posed whether these migrating Tiv should not be reached by the CRC. This was a somewhat different problem than that previously faced, but out of this new situation grew the idea that a partial transfer of the work

---

[56]*Ibid., passim.*
[57]H. Gray, *The Tiv Church in Nigeria*, unpublished, 1966, p. 9.
[58]Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

to the CRC should be considered. A striking feature in this connection is that now the question was being posed by the missionaries themselves, whereas originally opposition to the idea of any transfer had been strong among the field personnel. The transfer, however, was to be partial and limited strictly to the area east of the Katsina Ala River. The 1949 session of the Field Council stressed that a total transfer of the field was not in the picture.[59]

Thus in 1949 the idea so abhorrent to the missionaries in 1914 was once more being proposed. In 1914 the possibility of the division of Tivland between English- and Afrikaans-speaking missionaries was rejected; there must be no division of the land or people and the DRC should therefore assume the work in its entirety. In 1949 the position was equally awkward, for the possibility had to be faced of one indigenous church being served by two missions. The Council of Congregations was naturally greatly disturbed by the proposal, but in the end the decision was carried out and Tivland was divided. The first CRC missionary was posted to Zaki Biam in 1950. That same year the DRC reiterated its determination to carry on an intensive program in the portion of Tivland which remained its responsibility.

The following year, however, the problems of two missions nourishing one budding church became more obvious, and feelers were put forth from both sides regarding further transfer. Imminent Nigerian reaction to the politics of South Africa could not be disregarded. By 1954 the total transfer of the work in Tivland to the CRC was agreed upon, though the decision was rejected by the Council of Congregations. The transfer was nevertheless effected and in 1956 the CRC placed personnel west of the Katsina Ala River for the first time, at Turan. The year 1956 also marks the zenith of the DRC missionary presence in Nigeria, with 49 missionaries under employment of the DRCM. That same year the exodus of the DRCM began, until at the time of the final transfer to the CRC in 1961, there were but 25 DRC missionaries remaining in Tivland. At that point the CRC had 57 missionaries working among the Tiv.[60] The remaining DRC missionaries became employees of the SUM (CRC Branch), and the DRCM ceased to exist after 50 years in Tivland.

In her odyssey of one-half century with the Tiv, the DRCM had witnessed, and been the catalyst for, tremendous change. For almost twenty-five years her missionaries had carried the Gospel amid rock-like resistance and with little apparent result. At the end of the half-century, the situation was vastly different. The Tiv Church of

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 222.
[60] *The Coming of the Gospel into Tivland*, p. 32.

Christ had come into existence and numbered fourteen congregations. The Gospel was brought to the Tiv each Sunday in 730 worship centers to an audience of over 50,000 Tiv tribesmen. On the foundations put down in the long, hard years of initial contact and communication, was rising a vigorous self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating Church. The statistical report of the Tiv Church for 1961 may serve to outline the situation:

Communicant adult members	3,642
Adult baptisms in 1961	715
Catechumens and inquirers	8,374
"Bush" Bible schools	548
Primary schools	53

In these statistics lay hidden the promise of an imminent hour of yet greater acceptance of the Christian faith, an hour which the DRCM now relinquished to a sister mission. Nonetheless, the Gospel had been brought to the Tiv. The Mission was no longer an object of ridicule, but her influence was welcomed in every part of Tivland. The DRCM could bring her era of work to a close with a sense of accomplishment borne out of a crucible of the most bitter frustration and heartbreak. With her departure the pioneer phase of the mission endeavor in Tivland was also finished. A new era had already been launched, an era which would be marked by the problematics of partnership.

5 THE TRANSFORMATION OF TIV SOCIETY

The problems facing the swiftly developing churches of Africa are not merely layers of abstract ecclesiastical questions which arise because a new institution has been founded alongside others already in existence. Rather, the Church itself is a symbol of the metamorphosis of a society whose world-view faces dissolution. The Tiv Church stands in the center of the collapse of ancient traditions and there proclaims a new integration of life, as old values are left behind or transformed. This phase of transculturation adds a basic dimension to an understanding of the problems of Church and Mission in Tivland.

We must now turn, therefore, to a study of the forces undermining the traditional world-view of the Tiv. The existential character of the issues facing the Church today may in a large part, we shall see, be traced to this breakdown of the old world-view and to the uncertainty as to what is needed. We must here analyze the tensions now present in the emergent society and indicate the role played by the Church in that evolution.

We may consider the transformation of Tiv society under the following major heads:

A. The Erosion of the Traditional World-View
B. Contours of the Emergent Society
C. Forces Retarding Assimilation

A. THE EROSION OF THE TRADITIONAL WORLD-VIEW

The crisis brought to the venerable tribal religious system of the Tiv by the message and activity of the Christian missionaries was discussed in the preceding chapter. The points of antagonism and resistance, we saw there, were formidable, and Christianity demanded from the Tiv the repudiation of basic items in his religion (e.g. the practise of magic). With the discarding of belief in the *mbatsav* and the *akombo*, a mortal blow had been struck by the Christian be-

liever at the whole fabric of his culture. For example, ideas about health and disease were altered. The authority of the elders, based as it was on *tsav* power, was undermined. The place of women in the scheme of things was revised. Schoolchildren contradicted their parents and felt less the dread of mystical malice. Slowly the Church arose as a haven for the spiritually dispossessed.

This erosion of the ancient world-view of the Tiv was accomplished by a variety of forces. It is our purpose to indicate here the way in which this modification took place and to note how these multiple forces took part in the transmutation of Tiv society. We may list these influences as:

1. The introduction of money and taxation
2. The abolition of exchange marriage
3. The advent of schools
4. The impact of Western medicine
5. The imposition of rule by chieftain
6. The anti-witchcraft movements
7. The rise of the towns
8. Christianity

1. The Introduction of Money and Taxation

Tiv are fond of markets and trade, though the Bohannans maintain that the Tiv associate them with insufficiency of food and money.[1] Tiv had long used as a form of currency for commercial purposes strips of brass which they called *bashi.* Since *bashi* were everywhere familiar to Tiv, their use in the place of barter constituted no problem in the Tiv economic setup. The standard of payment was also indigenous: a *tugudu* cloth, which was also called "a twenty" inasmuch as such a cloth was made of twenty strips of material sewed together. "A twenty" was thus anything deemed to be of the same value as a *tugudu* cloth, and "a ten" something the value of half a cloth. The introduction of "European" money, however, became a disintegrative force in Tiv society, for closely allied with the coming of money stands the imposition of taxation.

The humiliation of foreign control is a tremendous psychic wound for a culture to bear, and this is often felt most immediately in the demand for tribute. The convulsion was somewhat lessened in the case of the Tiv by the fact that they had no central chief. Subservience to British rule could be more easily accepted since no such symbolic figure needed bow to the conqueror. Taxation was, however, felt by every Tiv as an indication of his subjugation and served to

[1] P. and L. Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria,* London, 1953, p. 53.

undermine his confidence in the absoluteness of the Tiv world-view. Nevertheless, the Tiv did not greatly resist the introduction of British taxation, for the white man carried with him the aura of power and purpose so impressive to the Tiv.

The most inimical effect of the use of money was that it became the means for driving a wedge between the older and younger generation. It was the younger generation that most profited from the introduction of money, which they could secure through work on the railway being constructed through Tivland or on the bridge being built across the Benue at Makurdi. Here wages were secured in a totally new context and the young Tiv did not feel the pull of the old obligation to share his rewards with the other members of the compound. Here the money was secured, after all, from strictly personal labor which bore no relation to the compound. The younger generation had here obtained an economic tool with which came the possibility of opposing the authority of the elders. This fact was to have far-reaching implications in the erosion of authority and the disregard of traditional mores.

2. THE ABOLITION OF EXCHANGE MARRIAGE

It was especially in conjunction with the abolition of exchange marriage that the possession of money by the young became a potent means of tribal disintegration. We have previously noted how that exchange marriage preserved a basic cultural value for the Tiv by retaining the reproductive force within the community. The children born in the compound were thought of as the children of the sister who had been exchanged. The compound's productivity had been preserved. Exchange marriage also illustrates how the younger males were dependent on the elders, in this case for the very basic need of securing a mate.

Nevertheless, there were also endless lawsuits and deep animosities. Many of the young men had to wait year after year for a wife. The women themselves had little voice in the exchanges. The DRCM felt that the women had become mere goods for barter in the eyes of the elders, and urged the government to outlaw the custom. The young men and women could be expected to sympathize with such an appeal. Rupert East, however, indicates that the position of women under the system of exchange marriage was not as intolerable as it might seem when viewed through Western eyes. East writes:

> It would be wrong to suppose that under the exchange system the wife was a mere chattel. Her status was far higher than, for instance, in Muhammedan tribes, which use the bride-price. She had complete control of the food supply, and her authority in domestic affairs was

> hardly questioned. She held an honourable position as the true representative of her husband's sister, to bear children and carry on the direct line from his mother.[2]

The abolition of exchange marriage went into effect in 1927, and marriage by bride-price became the sole legalized form. The women and younger men generally welcomed the change. For the women the new situation meant that they had a greater choice of marriage partners or at least a voice in the selection, since they were now no longer restricted to the one compound involved in an exchange. Furthermore, no woman was to be compelled to marry by male coercion. This made it theoretically possible for them to refuse the old men and marry men of their own age. Furthermore, the threat of retaliation against a woman for an evil done to her husband's distant sister was now removed. Maltreatment of a wife would have to be avenged in some other way by her relatives, for there would no longer be a sister of the errant husband close at hand to be beaten in reprisal.

The young men were pleased because they no longer had to wait many years until a woman in the compound became available for use in an exchange, or until the prior claims of older brothers were first satisfied. They were now able to use personal funds for the obtaining of a wife, if they had them. As the wage earners, they were the group who stood to benefit from the change, and thus the hold of the elders on the other members of the tribe was weakened.

Obviously the young men who most benefited from the new scheme were precisely those who had left home and loosened communal bonds to go to work for the white man. The abolition of exchange marriage could easily be viewed as a reward for their repudiation of tribal culture and the authority of the elders. The controls of Tiv society had traditionally prevented such brazenness or else punished it, for those who left the group naturally found it difficult to get wives. Exchange marriage was thus a powerful deterrent against tribal disintegration. Now, however, the situation was reversed and those who had separated themselves from the authority and obligations of the community were rewarded. The elders, the gerontocracy, now discovered that one of their most potent holds on the rising generation was collapsing, and further, that they themselves must suffer. Of course, they did have one great means of retaliation, one desperate weapon to retain control, viz. witchcraft. This they now proceeded to use increasingly, until the dread of the *mbatsav* gripped all Tivland. In the end, violent anti-*tsav* movements broke out as a result, as we shall see below.

---

[2]East, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

While the abolition of exchange marriage enhanced the position of women and possibly reduced immorality by enabling the younger men to marry, it also hastened the atomization of the tribe. The load of litigation in the courts was not lessened, though now the suits were of a more ominous nature. The accusations charged the old men with abduction and murder through witchcraft. In many cases the elders simply assented to these charges in order to inspire dread and respect in the young. Often, of course, the charges were utter fabrications, and innocent elders were punished for what they had never done (though they might liked to have performed the very deeds with which they were charged). The machinery for investigation eventually ground to a standstill. Margaret Mead, in a study of the Tiv, draws the following conclusions regarding the new system:

> To get a wife, he had to please a woman: his acts were motivated by future aims, not by the established past. It was not enough for a man to become more and more Tiv by going through the pre-established stages of social development. It was not necessary to incorporate the community any more, or to act as a member of a unit. The past, embodied in the elders, had lost its meaning.[3]

It was the abolition of exchange marriage more than anything else that brought from the elders the charge that the white man had spoiled the *tar*. The impertinence of the women angered them immensely, and it soon became obvious that under the bride-price system the woman could leave her husband with the flimsiest excuse. The expectations of the missionaries were never really fulfilled in this regard. Some evils were rectified, but the DRCM missionary Casaleggio writes:

> This "bride-price" marriage, which was looked forward to with such great anticipation, degenerated from its inception into a commerce in human lives because of the materialistic disposition of the Tiv.[4]

On the other hand, the shattering impact of tribal breakup was doubtless bound to come as the Tiv moved into modernity, and hence it is of little use to speculate on the effects of an alternative compromise regarding marriage. The missionaries were convinced that the pagan culture was of a seamless whole, bound up at every point with religious values and ultimately in the service of Satan. There could be no new buildings on old foundations, for the foundations were themselves shot full of pagan religious ideology. Casaleggio states:

[3] M. Mead, *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change*, New York 1955, p. 124.
[4] Casaleggio, *op. cit.*, p. 68 (my translation).

> Regarding the religion of the Tiv, the mission can find nothing that can be purified from its heathen elements and made useful in the Tiv church.[5]

Hence the missionaries felt themselves justified in working for the overthrow of exchange marriage. Anthropological scolding at this point should be qualified by the understanding that the traditional culture was bound to topple as the Tiv met modernity and their institutions cracked. The question remains as to the speed with which the change was accomplished.

The connection of exchange marriage and the traditional religion was intimate. The fertility of the wife was thought to be enhanced by *akombo* which were placed outside the house of the wife. The sons that came from this marriage "set right" this *akombo* when necessary to secure health and fertility for their own wives. It is apparent here how the mother represented the principle of the fecundity of the family, even though she was a woman of another compound. As exchange wife she represented the woman whose place she had taken. On her death, the *akombo* was set up outside the hut of her "daughter," that is to say, the woman who came in as exchange for her daughter. The chain of life and fertility thus remained intact through the generations. With the abolition of exchange marriage, however, this *akombo* could no longer be erected, for no wife was entitled to it: no wife represented either the mother or the sister of the husband. The whole idea of the marriage *akombo* was now nullified, and the belief in the ongoing, unbroken fertility of the group was overthrown. Thus in the abolition of exchange marriage the mission had struck a far-reaching blow at the traditional religious beliefs of the Tiv as well.

It is facile to suggest that this overthrow of a superstitious belief was all to the good, even though with it the whole corpus of Tiv culture cracked. Though it could be hoped that marriages would now be contracted on the basis of mutual affection, the permanence of wedlock was threatened. Formerly the community had a stake in the success of the marriage, for if it were dissolved, the woman given in exchange would also have to be released. This built-in safeguard for good conduct has now been removed, and the husband can maltreat his wife without fear that his sister in a distant compound will suffer like treatment.

Even more fundamentally, the tribe now stood in danger of supernatural affliction, for the means to protect against human pollution

---

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 206. There is, however, one exception: "After the harvest had been gathered in, the Tiv always made an offering to their 'akombo' of the various types of grain. This is in fact the only practice of the Tiv which could be used by the Tiv church," p. 78 (my translation).

had been removed. There was no adequate way to guard against miscarriage or to encourage abundant conception. Since the woman was related to the earth and embodied the same fertility as the earth, the natural repercussions in the yield of the fields could be ominously foretold. Even more dreadful was the fact that now the possessors of evil *tsav* could move in to strike at their defenseless victims at will. The elders indeed sensed this opportunity for control, since the traditional control had disappeared. This use of witchcraft was one factor which brought on the violence of the anti-witchcraft movements.

3. THE ADVENT OF SCHOOLS

In the abolition of exchange marriage we have noted one potent factor in the breakdown of the power of the gerontocracy. At the same time we have observed how religion, home life, farming, courtship, and authority were all interrelated. The coming of Western education struck further blows at both this power and interdependence. The schools were the constant catalyst to the upheaval and gave the encroaching world-view an especially forceful hold on the young. Hendrik Kraemer has summarized the influences of Western schools on mission fields as follows: (1) Western education loosens the bonds which tied the pupils to the compound and the traditional culture. (2) Western education arouses a critical attitude toward the environment, and (3) Western education awakens a desire to reflect on other religious possibilities.[6] These influences were real also among the Tiv, as we may swiftly indicate.

In the first place, the schools cut into the ties of compound and culture both intellectually and physically. The boarding school meant separation, not merely from the parental compound, but from many of the controls of society. The same was true to a lesser extent even where the school was local. Hence the Tiv vigorously opposed the establishment of schools, and only through intense pleading with parents could pupils be found at all, and then only those children deemed most promising for the future of the compound. In 1926 there were [illegible] only six schools in all of Tivland.[7] This fear on the part of parents and elders of disaffection of the young proved well-founded. A superficial attitude toward "bush" tradition often resulted, coupled with an intellectual discarding of *akombo* and *tsav*. It must be added that the discarding was often no more than intellectual, for the roots of the belief were deep, and many who returned to the compound would yet in actual fear of the *mbatsav*. Belief in the *adzôv*, sprites,

[6] J. Merle Davis, *From Mattonfield to Independent Church*. London, 1958, p. 138.
[7] Kraemer, op. cit., p. 417.

continues even in many school leavers to this day. Yet the grip of compound and culture was greatly diminished.

Together with the discarding of *akombo* and *tsav* came, in the second place, a skepticism regarding the whole house of folkways, and a subsequent cultural vacuum. Pupils saw natural phenomena explained without recourse to supernatural intervention. As the young acquired education and the ability to secure money and position, the traditional values appeared more and more quaint. In court it became a mark of emancipation to swear on the Bible rather than on the traditional pot of *swem*. The distrust of the elders was often heartily reciprocated, and it became increasingly difficult for the school leaver to be reabsorbed into the society of which he had become critical. For one thing, he now looked at the tilling of the soil with some distaste and preferred to live in the towns. It must be added that the DRCM recognized this danger of detribalization and in order to mitigate its anguish opposed the introduction of English or Hausa in the schools as well as the adoption of the trappings of the Westerner. In the end this involved the Mission in the charge of isolationism and suppression of the Tiv, and the position had to be relaxed.

Thirdly, the rise of the critical attitude toward tradition made possible a more sympathetic reaction toward Christianity. The growing alienation of the younger generation encouraged reflection on the possibilities offered by Christianity. Christianity also acquired some prestige among the young as the religion of the book. Often "literacy" and "Christianity" became interchangeable terms. The author has more than once asked a Tiv, "Are you a Christian?" and received the answer, "Oh yes, I read quite well." Education brought forcefully into focus the idea that Christianity represented the wave of the future for Tivland. Islam, on the other hand, stood as the religion of the Hausa, and laid much less stress on education.[8] Thus the coming of Western education became a powerful force in the breakdown of the Tiv world-view. It cut at the fabric of traditional respect, exposed superstition, and by scientific analysis eroded belief. Then it gave status to these disenchanted ones.

4. The Impact of Western Medicine

The use of Western medicine in Tivland was much more than a case of the discarding of native concoctions and herbs in favor of European preparations. The practise of healing formed a large part of the *akombo* system, and so native medicine and religion were intimately intertwined in the Tiv mind. Therefore when the white

[8] In 1951, for example, there were 610,000 children in all primary schools in Nigeria. Of these, 558,00 were in church schools. M. Warren, *The Christian Mission*, London, 1951, p. 100.

man's medicine succeeded where Tiv medicine or ritual failed, there a blow had been struck at the Tiv world-view as a whole. Yet Tiv belief manifested a surprising resiliency in the face of this threat. In the first place, *akombo* had come and gone throughout the decades, and it was not uncommon for an *akombo* to fall into disuse when it no longer fulfilled a useful role in the community. Thus an *akombo* particularly hard hit by the coming of European medicine could disappear and another spring up without undue agitation. Secondly, European medicines were not in all cases superior to the indigenous remedies and the Tiv delighted in tales of patients released uncured from the dispensary who soon recovered in the bush. Thirdly, the white man's medicine often failed because he received the patients under the most adverse conditions after everything at home had failed. After three days in labor a woman might at last be carried half dead and filled with murky potions to the dispensary where the white man was expected to preside at a normal delivery.

A fourth and more significant influence was the alignment of the indigenous system of medicine with the European. In the face of the threat to the entire *akombo* system, the Tiv elders gradually took the position that it would be quite proper and efficacious to attend the dispensary, provided that the appropriate *akombo* had previously been "set right." If this were not done, however, all the ministrations of the doctor were likely to be doomed to failure. Since, after all, it had been the power of *tsav* that had been the cause of the illness, only the prior treatment of this basic problem would allow the medicines to remove the discomfort. Should the doctor then still be unsuccessful, this was not his fault; it was simply that the *tsav* power was too potent for the medicine to eradicate. This readjustment of the traditional practise in the face of the European threat[9] was effectively carried out in order to use the best of both worlds, and it is still widespread today.

The following example will illustrate the nuances of this readjustment. The author on a certain Sunday left his car in a Tiv compound to proceed on foot to a more distant village to conduct a worship service. Suddenly a woman in intense pain was carried into the compound and laid at my feet with the request by her parental family that I take her to the dispensary upon my return from the worship service so that she might be treated for a back ailment. When I returned, however, a large company of elders from several compounds had assembled and forbidden the woman to leave. The elders were studiously engaged in determining whose *tsav* had caused the ailment. The woman's family soon came forward with the suggestion that the husband had been maltreating the wife and had now maliciously used

[9]All white men are referred to as Europeans.

tsav power upon her. Questioning of the husband by the elders convinced them that this was true, especially since the husband adroitly implied that he was indeed the possessor of such awesome power. He did not actually admit that he was the instigator of this malady, in fact he roundly denied it, but at the same time he skillfully created the impression that his power had laid the woman low. The delicacy of the situation is apparent: for the husband openly to admit culpability would arouse the righteous wrath of all present. The woman's family would have cause to involve their entire community in retaliation. The elders as guardians of the *tar* would also be obliged to take steps against the man, which they had no desire to do, since he was obviously one of the *mbatsav,* even as they. The husband for his part had to walk the tightrope of creating the impression of great *tsav* while yet denying nefarious use of it. During the discussion the husband cautiously pointed out various misdeeds of the wife and her family which might have angered him if he had been the kind of man to use *tsav* malevolently. The wife's brother was thereupon called and confronted with his alleged sins and after some debate a solution was agreed upon. The husband then announced that, while he certainly had wished the wife no ill in the first place, he had now removed whatever anger had lodged in his heart. All present understood that what he actually conveyed by this statement was his agreement to lift the influence of his *tsav,* so that his wife could now hope to be cured at the dispensary. The elders were greatly pleased with this solution, for they had uncovered the rancor present in the family and had brought peace to the community as elders should. They had, after all, solved the basic problem present in the situation, and had also pointed out their important role in the life of the group. The husband was highly pleased with his increase in prestige as an acknowledged possessor of *tsav.* He had also emerged as the one offended rather than as the offender. The more immediate problem of the woman writhing on the ground excited relatively little concern as the hours slid by. The deliberate, unhurried form of the discussion also contributed to the aura of gravity which the elders thus created. The point was obvious: their work here was far more important than the mere release of this woman from pain. The problem of the adjustment to the presence of the alien dispensary had been astutely solved.

Western medicine was, nonetheless, a corrosive force and finally became the means for the rejection of the *akombo* by many Tiv. Similarly, medicine became the opening wedge to create receptivity to the Gospel. Many Tiv Christians relate the process more or less as follows: "I tried many *akombo,* but was not cured. At last in desperation I went to the dispensary and was healed there. Therefore I now know that Christianity is true and the *akombo* are a hoax." This

reasoning seems at first blush quite shocking. It says in effect: scientifically prepared medicines heal, therefore the Gospel is true. To the Tiv Christian this reasoning, however, is quite adequate. If it be objected that a Hindu doctor might make the same claim for his religion, the Tiv Christian replies simply that it is, after all, the God of the Bible who created natural laws and gave all truth, and a demonstration of truth simply manifests that God is God. This the Tiv believer finds inescapable as he is healed and faith and reason join. He does not mean that the truth of the Gospel depends on the healing of medicine, but rather that he has now seen the truth of both facts in their unity, neither of which he had accepted before. Given this combination of the Tiv and Christian apprehension of reality, his coming to Christ via the dispensary may well be understood.

Because of the intimate relation of healing and religion in Tiv thought, the introduction of European medicine assisted in the breakdown of faith in the traditional religion. Various practises of the Mission left no doubt on that score. At the Mission dispensaries in the early days of the DRCM, attendance at morning prayers was mandatory. There was the folding of hands, the bowing of heads, the closing of eyes, and the reading from the sacred book, all of which at first must have been likened to the ritual for *akombo* gladdening on the Christian basis. To attend the Mission dispensary meant more than a quest for medicine, but involved also the exchange of basic religious and cultural values. Once this was accomplished, however, the use of morning prayers was thought of by many Tiv to be a valuable antiseptic ritual. It would, for one thing, call in protection against the *mbatsav*. It was precisely this fear of attack by *mbatsav* that caused such great initial reluctance to submit to the vaccinators sent out by the government to immunize the Tiv against smallpox. Rupert East, in commenting on this fact, observes that,

> Our vaccination is carried out by a stranger, the quality of whose blood and disposition is unknown, the danger of magic interference is apparently disregarded, and worst of all, it is done in the presence of a large crowd of people, a circumstance notoriously favourable to the *mbatsav*.[10]

As the fear of *mbatsav* retribution slowly subsided, the appeal of the dispensaries and hospitals grew enormously. Nowadays attendance at the dispensary is a respected social pastime, especially among the women and at those times when money is most abundant, though the government dispensaries are free. The medical work has become a widespread means of evangelism. Pastor Shinyi Ugô, a Tiv clergyman, states:

---

[10]East, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

> If you go about asking Tiv Christians where they first heard the Gospel of Christ, about sixty percent will tell you that it first came to them at hospitals or dispensaries.[11]

5. The Imposition of Rule by Chieftain

One of the greatest factors contributing to culture change in Tivland was the *pax Britannica*, which made it possible for the Tiv to travel where they had never ventured before. In the lands of the Hausa and on the Bauchi Plateau the Tiv observed new ways of meeting problems. Actually, however, this new openness to foreign influence did not detribalize the Tiv as much as one might at first expect. Historically the Tiv have always been quite ready to adopt elements from other cultures. In fact, Akiga goes so far as to say:

> The white man supposes that everything in the Tiv culture is indigenous, and hence he considers that if he prohibits a certain practise, it will bring evil effects. But this is not necessarily so. The indigenous heritage of the Tiv is comprehended in one thing, and this is exchange marriage. All the other customs of the Tiv they received from other peoples.[12]

Transculturation was thus nothing new for the Tiv, and it was part of the tribal genius to modify attractive foreign customs and use them to enhance the basic values of the Tiv world-view. Of all the institutions taken over from other peoples, none played such a profound and ultimately unsettling role in Tiv history as that of the *tor agbande*, the drum chief, an office adopted from the Jukun even before the white man arrived. In the *tor agbande* the British colonizers thought they might find the instrument through which the tribe could be administered. This miscalculation coupled with the abolition of exchange marriage brought on a violent reaction from the Tiv.

In 1929 the British officials in their intensive investigation of Tiv life had concluded that there existed a nefarious group, the People of the Night, known as the *mbatsav*. This group they considered to be essentially a fertility cult, which was called in official documents "the *mfe* cult," since a central item in the initiation involved the use of the horn of a cob or bushbuck known as the *mfe* horn.[13] This

[11] Rev. S. Ugô in: *The Coming of the Gospel into Tivland*, Mkar, Nigeria, n.d., p. 22.

[12] Akiga Sai, *op. cit.*, p. 327 (my translation).

[13] Abraham, *op. cit.*, p. 90, thinks that the *mfe* refers to python excrement used in *mbatsav* ceremonies in a rather minor way, and that "*mfe* cult" is a misnomer. Another early writer, Capt Downes, *op. cit.*, p. 51, says the *mfe* is a horn used to rejuvenate the energies of the earth god. This idea has now been laid to rest. The name "*mfe* cult" was misleading as an indication of the *mbatsav* group. The important point is that all authorities agree that the eating of human flesh was introduced as the way to enhance the power of the *tor agbande*, who was the holder of the *mfe* horn.

horn, filled with poison covered with human fat, was held by the *tor agbande* as its custodian, a man whose power grew to awesome proportions.

The Tiv had obviously long felt the need for chieftains, an institution denied them by their own egalitarian system, but which impressed them with its pomp and power. The Jukun, an old and aristocratic society, were especially impressive in this regard and the Tiv soon sought to copy their titles, dress, ritual, and offices. The elders soon observed this desire for imposing rulers, and gradually they saw in the Jukun king a means for solidifying their hold on the tribe. This they set out to do by granting the chieftainship to a younger man who would impress the people but whom they, the elders, could control.

Accordingly, the elders of an area brought a suitable young man to the Jukun king and by appropriate payment and deference received for the chief-elect the title and insignia of drum chief, *tor agbande*. Then the elders informed the chief-elect that as the price of his chieftainship he must provide each of them with a meal of human flesh "to set right the land," that is, to ensure the fertility of the *tar*, which is one great work of a leader. At this point the accounts become somewhat contradictory and indicate just how difficult it was for the British administration to discover what actually took place.[14] Furthermore at the time of the British investigations, some of the *utor agbande* (plural) had outlived the elders who appointed them, and had thus acquired power in their own right through personal prowess in war and mastery of the *akombo*, while retaining the political prestige of *tor agbande* as well. Their power was fearsome, for they now became religious as well as political potentates. This changing role increased the difficulty of understanding the power structure of Tiv society at the time. Naturally the Tiv were also most reluctant to make information on this dangerous topic.

Thus at the early British administrators sought to find native chiefs through whom they might work with the Tiv, they eventually came upon the *utor agbande*. These were apparently rulers among the Tiv and men of great prestige. It was they who were generally appointed by the British to be district heads with the calamitous results that soon followed. Many of the *utor agbande* were under control of the elders and had no intrinsic authority. As tools of the *mbatsav*, they were especially engaged in witchcraft to enhance their standing. Gradually the fear of death through mystical killing crept through the tribe.

[14] Paul Bohannan has kindly provided me with the results of his research in this matter. I have omitted the mass of detail and ceremony surrounding the office of *tor agbande* in order to concentrate on the ominous road taken by the elders in their struggle to retain control of the tribe.

The sacrifice of a human life to "repair the *tar*" was not unknown to the Tiv. The great *akombo,* for example, the *akombo a biamegh,* required a life in order to be "set right," and to the Tiv this work of the *mbatsav* was not malicious, but done in the interests of the group. Now, however, the deaths of more and more people were being required, and that not directly to "repair the *tar,*" but as the price of approval and respect from the elders. This ominous round of flesh-debts designed to enhance individual prestige was a development quite out of line with the ancient conception of the role of the *mbatsav.* The popular acclaim for the *utor agbande* was replaced by revulsion.

The more ominous side of the *tor agbande* experiment now becomes clear. As long as the traditional understanding of the use of *tsav* and human sacrifice was maintained, the people found satisfaction within the system, even at the expense of some lives given for the benefit of the whole. The contact with the Jukun, however, provided a means for exploiting the power of *tsav* by the elders. Thus the *tor agbande,* ostensibly a chief, became in fact a tool of the elders as long as they lived or until he rose as high in *tsav* and *akombo* mastery as they.

Now no one knew who might be the next victim of their greed. The former respect for the *mbatsav* changed into terror. Nor was the situation changed when the *tor agbande* himself became an elder and the elders who had appointed him passed away. Then it was he who became head of the *mbatsav* and controlled the new generation of elders. According to the report filed by Captain Downes, who in 1929 was touring officer for the Munshi (Tiv) area, there were three annual feasts which now required human sacrifice: millet, guinea corn, and yam sowing. Additional sacrifices were given in cases of crop failure. Sixty-two *utor agbande* were said to be living east of the Katsina Ala River at the time, and if each required a minimum of three lives a year, the total would be at least 186. It must be added that no actual case of cannibalism against a Tiv was ever proven, but killings doubtless occurred.

The virtual passing of the control of the community out of the hands of the elders as a whole into the hands of the *utor agbande* was a turn of events which the elders had not foreseen in the beginning. This new development meant that the *tor agbande* assumed, in addition to his cultic functions such as care of the *mfe* horn, also the control of the elders and hence great authority in political matters. With the British sanction for the *utor agbande,* the ground was laid for open rebellion. The appointment of these men as district heads increased still further their despotism. Even among the elders they could now move with impunity.

At the same time, the younger generation was becoming more

attitudes and independence through education and acquis
money. The threat to the elders was thus unprepared. In
human they allied themselves with the new opinions as the best
of retaining a semblance of power, even though this meant t
cultural progress of human society. When complaints of
reached the ears of the British officers the investigation mem
above was instituted. The elders agreed with the British admi
tion that the *new episode* should be carried out, but they were
solved so deeply involved in the web of falsehoods that they co
little without implicating themselves. Out of this impossible sit
arose the anti-witchcraft movements which convulsed the tribe.

6. The Anti-Witchcraft Movements

The British designation of the new episode as district heads
clearly been an understandable misjudgment. All the evidence po
to the elders and the chiefs as the oppressors. While no cas
ritual killing could be proven, the common theory held the lan
dread. The administration therefore ordered the confiscation
cultic paraphernalia in the hope that the "fire cult" could thereby
forced into extinction.[1] Local police were ordered out to collect
cultic items whose use was to be henceforth forbidden. Police saw
this order the opportunity to loot and punish the elders, and
populace in general found in the order a chance to accuse th
enemies as witches. Many grasped at the opportunity and the stre
of accusations became a flood. As the movement gathered momentu
it took the name *Kwakui Iwanlii* "throw away things" before
District Officer). Huge amounts of paraphernalia were collected a
even those innocently charged rushed multicoloured items to bri
to the District Officer so that the might be released. The intimid
tions soon grew to such proportions that it became apparent th
nearly every elder was suspect and that if the movement continu
there would be no one left who could function as administrati
agents.

In the end the investigation had to be stopped. What had come
light was the astounding fact that the genuine leaders of the vil
were the witches and that their power was theoretically intended fo
the benefit, not the destruction of the tribe. This theory had bee
popularized by the introduction of the new cultic office from th

Jukun, and therefore it was the destruction of *this* position and not of the *mbatsav* society as such which was a political necessity.

The *Haakaa* movement thus came to an abrupt halt and the administration began a new effort to work out an administrative system compatible with the power structure of the tribe in terms of the *mbatsav* society. Finally, the *Haakaa* movement illustrated the complications brought to the indigenous society by the introduction of an alien and ultimately uncongenial institution, the *tor agbande.*

An equally portentous reaction against the power of the *mbatsav* took place a decade later, in 1939. This movement took the inscrutable name of *Inyamibuan,* a term which may be translated by "beef," but whose meaning the Tiv themselves no longer understand. It became even more disastrous than the *Haakaa.*

Subsequent to the *Haakaa* movement the government reorganized the administrative machinery of Tivland in an effort to seek out the real leaders and give them a greater degree of control. It was realized that the idea of a paramount chief and an imposed district head was inconsistent with the tribal world-view, and that the fundamental authority in the tribe lay with the elders who were the spiritual as well as social leaders. Accordingly the interests of the people were placed in the immediate control of a council of elders by the government. Each clan established such a council with every kindred being represented by an elder. The council elected one of its members as the *orliam* or "spokesman," rather than as chief, though it must be said that the Tiv immediately thought of the man as *tor* or "chief."

It was difficult for the elders to adjust to this new method of government, which was a genuine attempt on the part of the British administration to preserve the indigenous structure of authority. But this council was a new and foreign creation, and the elders still felt themselves forced into the white man's mold. The new power was granted with few checks to guarantee its responsible use in a swiftly changing society. As court members the elders were open to the temptations of bribery in their unfamiliar judicial environment and the Tiv felt that extortion and corruption were more rampant than before. The experiment was not turning out to be the hoped-for success. Especially the younger Tiv felt that the new regime was simply setting back the clock of progress by the removal of chiefs and the installation of a ruling council of elders. Other even more advanced societies had chiefs and kings, they reasoned, why should this be denied to the Tiv? And above all, the new honor given to the elders appeared to be a tacit approval of the use of *tsav.*

Thus the reorganization, so carefully thought out, was heading for major peril. We must also note an economic crisis which halved the price of beniseed sold by the Tiv between 1936 and 1938, while the

tax rate remained constant.[16] While this was serious in itself, the basic meaning of the crisis was that the elders were obviously not doing their work, that is, their work as *mbatsav*, of "setting right the land." Since the *tar* was plainly "spoiled," and it was the work of the *mbatsav* to avoid or correct such a situation, it was apparent that the elders were not carrying out their task. More than that, it was likely that they themselves were the breakers of the cosmic harmony and had brought on this evil themselves. The retribution of the unseen forces was now at hand, and the dread of doom settled over the land. It was in this context that the *Inyamibuan* movement was born.

The *Inyamibuan* movement had actually begun in 1934 by a man named Shiki, who enjoined the abandoning of certain forms of witchcraft to the evil effects of which he could render his adherents immune.[17] Shiki was not himself a Tiv (again the foreign influence!), but one of his Tiv patients added some Tiv elements and began to make money from his practise. He averred that his medicine could protect against the *mbatsav* and also give eternal life! The intimate connection of these two claims will be apparent when it is recalled that according to Tiv belief death occurs through the will of the *mbatsav*. If, therefore, a means of protection against the intent of the *mbatsav* could be found, death would be *ipso facto* ruled out.

In the face of the corrupt use of power by the elders, the alleged increase of *mbatsav* activity for personal aggrandizement, the economic peril, and the rising opposition of the young, this means to frustrate the *mbatsav* was eagerly grasped. By the end of 1938 news of the cult had spread throughout the tribal area and thousands came to be initiated. The ritual involved the payment of a small fee, the sacrifice of a chicken, the drinking of the wondrous potion, and the surrender of all magical paraphernalia and fetishes. Here the political and religious aspects of the revolt merged. In addition to the medicine, the initiate received a leather-covered stick and a fly whisk. With the whisk he was enabled to find out those with malicious *tsav*, or in the Tiv idiom, the *ijebu* or "counterfeit," and by pointing the stick at the adversary his evil would recoil upon him.[18] The new believers were also warned to guard their dead against the predatory witches, since the *mbatsav* killed in order to secure a meal of human flesh,

---

[16]Report of the Wukari District Officer, Mr. R. Underwood.

[17]Report of the Tiv District Officer, Mr. D. McBride.

[18]This is the version of the British officials. Casaleggio provides an alternative; *op. cit.*, p. 116 (my translation):

"They maintain that there are people in the stick. If the recipient goes somewhere and the 'mbatsav' come out to kill him, then these people come out of the stick to fight with the 'mbatsav.' They then chase the 'mbatsav' away. The whisk is for rain. Whenever it rains they wave the whisks and say, "If this rain is for the Inyamibuan," let it rain in peace. But if this is raining for the "Jebu," then it must not rain."

or to pay off a flesh debt to another, and so corpses should be well guarded to insure the starvation of the *mbatsav*. Therefore for five nights the grave was guarded by the *Inyamibuan* devotees until the corpse was quite decomposed, and then the body was pounded up so as to be unrecognizable and useless to the *mbatsav*.

As the *Inyamibuan* adherents gained in numbers and boldness, they began to spend more and more of their time seeking for *ijebu*. Those who protested innocence were made to prove this through the sasswood ordeal, that is, by drinking a dangerous concoction made from sasswood which, if vomited, established their innocence but which otherwise poisoned them. The Wukari District Officer asserted that twenty people had died in his area either from drinking the sasswood brew or from the *Inyamibuan* medicine itself, which contained a strong cathartic to purge away evil in the initiate.[19] The mass hysteria meant also that little farm work was carried on and a famine was imminent. Collection of tax became an impossibility and all existing authority was roundly flaunted. An *Inyamibuan* hierarchy came into existence with its own courts, chiefs, policemen, messengers, "doctors," and "missionaries."[20] The power of the family and clan heads was usurped and the usual social processes came to a standstill. Public health was endangered by the medicines made, by the sasswood ordeal, and by the treatment of corpses. Adherents were so exultant and caught up in *Inyamibuan* activity, that there was no time or energy left for food production. The religious services of the Christians were stopped in many areas and several Bible schools had to be closed. They were no longer necessary in any case, it was said, for the *Inyamibuan* would usher in the millenium, since if the *mbatsav* were starved and died out, there could be no death. The *Inyamibuan* had become a full-fledged rival religion.

In the *Inyamibuan* we have a vivid illustration of the coalescing of the religious and political aspects of Tiv social control. Only in the light of this unity can the violence of the reaction be understood. The anthropologists P. and L. Bohannan emphasize the political nature of the movement by finding in it essentially "a revolt against the established Native Authority."[21] The DRCM missionary E. Casaleggio, on the other hand, objects to such an analysis and provides another:

---

[19]Report of the Wukari District Officer, Mr. R. Underwood.

[20]During the ceremony, which might take several days the procedure was as follows: the new applicants were conducted by the "policeman" to the "chief" who received the initiation fees and sent his "messenger" to secure the ingredients for the life-giving medicine which were then given to the "doctor." The "doctor" prepared the potion. The "missionary" then admonished each applicant and received his confession of evil and promise never again to bewitch. Only then could the medicine be consumed.

[21]P. and L. Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London, 1953, p. 39.

> This was no uprising against the native administration. In its essence this was the old, ingrained fear of the Tiv, who in his struggle against the powers that would kill him, was in search of a means that could give him eternal life.[22]

These remarks separate the two aspects of control as the Tiv did not. The *Inyamibuan* adherents most certainly did revolt against the native administration, which to them embodied far more than mere political control. They refused, for example, to pay their taxes to the government, and went on to set up their own courts and police as overt illustrations of their revolt against the political structure. The Bohannans, on the other hand, concentrate on the political aspects of the movement while most basically the struggle concerned the deeply human yearning for escape from death and the possession of eternal life.

On September 8, 1939, the Tiv District Officer reported that Rev. De Lange, a DRCM missionary, and his family, had to be evacuated from their station at Shangev, and the Catholic fathers were evacuated from their posts at Korinya.[23] Rev. Visser of the DRCM communicated to the government his view that the movement should be quelled with a minimal use of force, since the Tiv greatly respected the District Officers and since the revolt was not anti-European, even though the refusal to pay tax may have created that impression. Rev. Visser pointed out that the discrediting of *tsav* should not be received with unmixed joy, for without the respect for *tsav*, future control would be perilous. At the heart of the movement, said Rev. Visser, was the revolt of the young against an autocracy based on *tsav*.[24]

The movement ended abruptly. The last entry in the government file is dated November 11, 1939. The Native Authority made an order forbidding the movement and the stark fact of impending famine made it necessary to return to the soil. Those who drank the *Inyamibuan* medicine died in spite of their pretensions to unending life. A

[22] Bohannan, *op. cit.*, p. 113 (my translation).
[23] Report of the Tiv District Officer, Mr. D. McBride.
[24] Comparison of Dr. H. Gray, S. U. M. Takum. Here then is the crux of the problem: Administration of the tribe must rest with the elders, yet it is precisely with the elders that *tsav* rest. Rev. Visser's caution manifests a real insight into the problem. A somewhat similar statement of the situation before the *Inyamibuan* movement may be found in M. Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, [illegible] 1937), p. 372. Rev. Visser's warning against hasty change reflects Miss Perham's comments regarding swift imposition of Western education and social forms [illegible] p. 350.
[25] "Let essentially fine tribe is not to be weakened by the destruction of all [illegible] of what is good in our eyes together with what is bad, that [illegible] evolution should be slow, for it should not be pushed too far ahead [illegible] understanding of the people, upon which alone co-operation with them [illegible]."

basic reorganization of native government was again undertaken in which the Tiv themselves could more fully participate. The larger lineage groups were recognized and incorporated into the administrative structure. The *Inyamibuan* hysteria expired and is today remembered by the Tiv as a mistake best forgotten.

In his study of the *Inyamibuan* movement, P. Bohannan maintains that we have in that revolt an instance of a necessary evil in Tiv society.[25] The normal process in Tivland leads, Bohannan feels, to a corruption because of the absence of adequate checks such as those found, for example, in a democratic society where oppressive rulers may be voted out of office. The power structure in Tivland inevitably overrode the egalitarianism so fundamental to the Tiv way of life. It may be asked, however, whether this is a valid theoretical criticism. In the Tiv view, the *mbatsav* were to use their ability for the preservation of life and the fertility of the *tar*. Thus when the elders sought personal aggrandizement through *tsav*, this was certainly in flagrant violation of the cultural values of their own tribe. They placed themselves in effect outside their own culture. The *Inyamibuan* set out to destroy them because they had actually already destroyed themselves. They had turned traitor to their own world-view.

Thus the flaw lay in individual greed, in the heart of men who turned against the fundamental values of their own culture. Bohannan's view naturally leads him to conclude that the *Inyamibuan* was not a nativistic movement, not an organized attempt by the society to revive its culture. The question is thus whether the Tiv actually felt their world-view as such was faulty. Were they against the *mbatsav* idea as such, or against the individuals who corrupted themselves through their lust for power?

This question can be answered and the answer lies in the word *ijebu*, "counterfeit." With the fly whisk and painted stick, the *Inyamibuan* adherents sought out the false, illegitimate *mbatsav*, the *ijebu*, the ones who would destroy the tribe. They were not bent on rooting out *tsav* as such, but only the false leaders who used *tsav* for private ends. The use of the sasswood ordeal also demands this conclusion. The *ijebu* would succumb to the ordeal, but those with beneficent *tsav* would survive. The tribe was bent on rooting out such cannibalism and returning to the basic form of their political theory. In this sense the movement was certainly nativistic.

While the *Inyamibuan* was a desperate cry against perversion and oppression, it was also a cry for life, an attempt to find hope. Out of the chaos came new introspection and a turning toward the Resurrection and the Life, the Life the *Inyamibuan* could not provide. Several

[25]P. Bohannan, *Extra-Processual Events in Tiv Political Institutions*, American Anthropologist, ix, 1, Feb. 1958, pp. 1-12.

new Bible schools were opened in the bush and many Tiv turned to seek eternal life in Christ.

7. THE RISE OF THE TOWNS

The upheaval caused by the *Inyamibuan* has been cited as a particularly cataclysmic event in the transmutation of the Tiv, and we have seen that it came as the result of many factors, one of which was the growing cleavage between the younger and older generations. This cleavage was further widened by the Second World War and the enlistment of thousands of young Tiv in the army. Here they were abruptly thrown into a highly secularized situation and brought face to face with new ways of life, generally urban. Their return to Tivland brought further disintegration of tribal mores.

The lure of the cities was an increasingly powerful corrosive force. School leavers were often reluctant to return to the parental compound in the bush, and also showed great aversion to cultivation of the soil, which their exposure to Western life had made them feel was undignified for anyone with education. The city offered the possibility of a sedentary life and the chance to acquire and exhibit the trappings of prestige. Since there were few towns in Tivland, much of the exodus was to cities such as Kaduna, Jos, Zaria, and Ibadan. Unfortunately there were far more school leavers than job opportunities, and the unemployed wandered through the streets searching for purpose. Often pride prevented them from returning to their ancestral homes. The exodus to the towns consisted largely of males, which entailed new problems of morality where the customary checks of Tiv society were absent. Daniel McCall has written in this connection:

> The scarcity of women in towns militates against the fidelity of a town wife, who is increasingly importuned during her husband's absence at work by numerous womanless men. A husband sometimes sends his wife back to the village, where his relatives can guard her chastity, and then, perhaps, he begins to prey upon some other man's wife, or forms a liaison with an unmarried woman, or consorts with prostitutes. Sexual infidelity is a frequent source of friction and a significant factor in the brittleness of urban marriage.[20]

The effect of the rise of the cities was thus not limited to those who resided there, but was and is felt deep into the bush. The city is in a sense a frame of mind as much as a locality. Every tribesman who goes to the city finds there the roaring of lorries, the language, religion, and homes of other tribal enclaves, and the materialism and atomiza-

[20] D. McCall, *Dynamics of Urbanization in Africa*, in: Ottenberg, Cultures and Societies of Africa, New York, 1960, p. 529.

tion of urban life. Kinship is less important than connections based on common interests, and even these are much more casual and do not involve the totality of life. Social control of behavior is impersonal. One's elders are at a distance and the authority of the *mbatsav* is more readily dismissed. If the city dweller had not already abandoned the *akombo,* he found their role quite diminished in the new surroundings. Thus many of the forces of change centered in the city and spread out from there to contribute to the transmutation of the Tiv world-view in the hinterland.

8. Christianity

In the preceding chapter several factors in the Tiv world-view were observed which inhibited acceptance of the Christian message. Nevertheless, Mission and Church formed a significant force in the change brought to Tivland, even though this influence can seldom be isolated from the other forces acting on the ancient world-view. Christianity had deeply affected the spiritual, moral, and social values of the Tiv. We discuss them in that order.

In the first place, Christianity modified the traditional conception of *Aôndo,* the High God. On the one hand, it proclaimed that God was not a distant and impersonal deity as the Tiv had thought, but a God who was near and dear, worthy of fear and love. It demanded a personal relation to this God and announced that man stood individually as well as corporately responsible before him. Yet on the other hand, through its schools, the Mission pushed back the immediacy of the supernatural through the scientific explanation of natural phenomena. Christianity also came with an upsetting conception of sin which it defined in terms of offense to *Aôndo,* and more specifically in terms of transgression of commandments laid down in its sacred book. These acts were therefore to be considered sin in an absolute sense, and not simply because of the disharmony they might bring to the compound or the cosmic whole. Furthermore, the new religion announced that the *akombo* taboos and ritual were quite unnecessary, ineffective, and even abhorrent inasmuch as spiritual forces could not be manipulated by man's hands. Acceptance of this view was tantamount to collapse of the ancient world-view for the new believer. Likewise the *tsav* system was rejected by the Christians and with it the control of the *mbatsav* over the tribe. The whole orientation to the past was challenged by new standards for the regulation of behavior outside the thralldom of *mbatsav* control. The spiritual life of the Tiv was forever altered.

Christianity also presented moral ramifications which conflicted with the ancient world-view. The rejection of polygamy and the abolition of exchange marriage implied a major revamping of the

place of women by giving them new power and leverage in compound and marital affairs. The prohibition of drinking and Sunday labor were difficult to fit into the traditional mold. The exposure of corruption and the prohibition of bribery invited the rancor of local chiefs and court members. Often a moral vacuum resulted where forbidden practises were not replaced by others amenable to Christianity. The loss of traditional controls brought ethical uncertainty where a full development of Christian morality had not yet been achieved.

The social implications of Christianity also contributed to the erosion of the old world-view. Often Christians formed separate compounds where major elements of the old world-view were rejected. Even where this did not occur, Christians were a disruptive element in the functioning of society in the venerable mold. The fact that their repudiation of many facets of traditional behavior did not result in their death or ruin shook the confidence of the populace in the efficacy of the *akombo* and *mbatsav*. Christians declared themselves brethren with peoples of other tribes and races and found their horizons broadened beyond the confines of the tribal boundaries.

In another sense, however, Christianity made them aware of their Tivness and provided them with distinct tribal institutions. Of these, the Tiv Bible was a special focus for tribal pride. Tiv hymns and chants united people in thousands of compounds as did, even more powerfully, the rise of the Tiv Church. The Christian schools and dispensaries were other focal points for the discrediting of many cherished tribal values. These institutions became the catalysts for the inexorable clash of the younger and older generations. And finally, Christianity proclaimed that from the love and life of Christ there would arise a new brotherhood and a new kingdom to replace the old. Thus the Gospel came to Tivland with a judgment and a promise to build where the old had been destroyed. It judged and exposed the *mbatsav*, so the Tiv could see that at its heart the *tsav* system brought not cosmic balance, not the worship of the Creator and Sustainer, but the deification of man as the final arbiter of life and death. In the death of Christ, the killing by the *mbatsav* was made forever superfluous and repugnant. The *mbatsav* could not exist unmasked, and the Gospel unmasked them. It demanded from the Tiv a recognition of deception, the deception that the *mbatsav* themselves well knew in their heart of hearts. The Tiv themselves finally revolted against the lust for power and the deceit of the *mbatsav* as they struggled for a way out from dread. Though the children might think that the *mbatsav* flew as owls through the night sky, the *mbatsav* knew well the fabrication they perpetrated. They well knew the tension between truth and deception in which they lived. In

Christ this tension could at last be resolved and the aura of dread lifted away.

Likewise the Gospel exposed in the *akombo* the pretense of man to divine authority. The Gospel demanded that there be no more sacrifice of human blood to be poured out over the *imborivungu*, for in the blood of Christ such sacrifice was forever done away; no selling of slaves in the interest of mastery of the *akombo a biamegh*, and no poison ordeal to show innocence or guilt.

But after this judgment there came promise. In Christ the hope of eternal life and the assurance of salvation would provide the impetus for a new world-view to rise from the wreckage of the old.

B. CONTOURS OF THE EMERGENT SOCIETY

The erosion of the traditional Tiv world-view was marked, we have seen, by the breakdown of authority as vested in the elders and established on kinship lines. Secondly, *akombo* control decreased under the press of Western influences so that religious values were no longer intimately bound to careers and filial respect. Thirdly, the role of the *mbatsav* was muted in a complex series of changes. They themselves assisted in this decline through the selfish use of *tsav* power. *Tsav* became to the Tiv a malevolent force and never again was it restored to its original place in the Tiv world-view.

The transmutation of Tiv society has thus made the series of adjectives with which the Tiv world-view was summarized in Chapter 3 no longer applicable. In their place we must now provide a characterization using adjectives which portray the society today emerging from the old. The stance of the Church in this emergent society is complex; it is at once radical and conservative. On the one hand, it has been in the forefront of the forces of change which justify the new descriptive terms we shall utilize. On the other hand, the Church is also one of the most conservative bodies in Tivland. In its bosom many of the values of the ancient society are retained and cherished, as we shall observe in each instance. This stance within both worlds is the source of many of the tensions which now mark the Church.

In the first place, the comprehensiveness of the Tiv world-view has been broken and the new world-view must be characterized as *limited*. Where once all areas of experience stood in relation to one another, the fragmentation of the world-view has diminished the aspects of behavior which can now be regulated by group controls. Marriage by bridewealth, for example, is less effectively incorporated into the system than was exchange marriage. Variant political allegiances also cut into the monolithic structure of the tribe, as well as the divisions between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Treatment of disease

with Western medicine whittles away at the unifying power of the *akombo*. The integrating function of the *mbatsav* has been challenged by the scientific explanation of death and disease. The Church has here been a most disintegrative force, undermining acceptance of the traditional religious system which bound together the varying strands of activity. It struck at the religion which held the monolith together and which made its world-view cosmic. At the same time the Church presents to the Tiv a principle for unifying all of experience: the concept of the Kingdom of God. Here marriage, daily work, life's goal, and death itself are brought within the Christian purpose. It is true that this ideal has not yet proved as powerful or comprehensive for many Christians as was the traditional system, and the Church has not progressed beyond the opening stages of its journey. In the idea of the Kingdom of God, the Christian faith sets out to integrate all reality.

Where once the Tiv thought of all natural forces as interrelated and of all life as symbiotic, the emergent culture in Tivland is *compartmentalized*. The union of man and nature, and of both with the unseen forces in the symbiosis of macrocosm and microcosm has been discarded as a regulator of tribal behavior. This control was lost when men no longer felt that natural catastrophe was to be ascribed to human disturbance of some cosmic equilibrium, but rather was explicable in terms of scientific law. The cosmos was sundered into its parts. Here, too, the Church has been an agent of change. In the schools of the Christians, natural law was the immediate explanation for cosmic processes. The instant and immediate intervention of God through hailstorm or disease gave way to scientific explanation. At the same time the Christian faith proclaims a providence which ultimately joins into one process all life and all natural events. In this doctrine all the occurences of life regain their cosmic significance within God's plan. Each is part of all, and thus in the doctrine of the providence of God the Church articulates the value which the Tiv wished to conserve with the conviction of symbiosis.

The power of the community has been greatly eroded in recent decades in Tivland, so that the new society is a far more *atomistic* one. The ancient power rested on the respect for the authority of the elders and the continuity of the individual with the group. The abolition of exchange marriage, the rise of job opportunities, and the use of money struck at the mutual dependence of the individuals who made up the group. The subsequent atomization (physically, but especially culturally and spiritually) decreased the obligation one felt toward the group, and also deprived the Tiv of the serenity found in belonging. Today the compound can be left behind and its obligations largely forgotten. The role of the Church in this process is apparent. It taught that salvation was a personal matter, and that

one stood finally before a personal God to give a personal account. Furthermore, the Christians could not participate in many of the practises of the community and they became catalysts to the breakup of the ancient ties. Yet the Church offered a new and vital community to the Tiv. Here once more is a place to identify with a group; here a new focus for loyalty. The Church hierarchy is in many cases a substitute for the lost oligarchy of the compound. The pastor serves as the great father, and the authority of synod, classis, and elders provides serenity and a secure placement of the individual in a well-understood niche. The roles of attender, seeker, catechumen, and professing member provide specific goals, not to mention the offices of deacon, elder, evangelist, and pastor. The communion of the saints speaks to the loneliness of the Tiv shorn of former associations and duties.

In like manner the egalitarianism of the old society has been broken. The self can stand out and his personal distinctiveness be developed, for the new society is *heterogeneous*. The fear of *mbatsav* malice against innovators has been decreased. The fear that change would imperil the group through supernatural retribution on the *tar* no longer deters the development of individual selfconsciousness. Society no longer submerges those who seek to rise above the mass, but rather praises them for their daring or their wealth. The Church has been active in this process both negatively and positively. Negatively, it taught the rejection of *tsav* and the spurning of *akombo* taboos, both of which held back innovation. The abolition of exchange marriage meant that one was not as dependent on the group for the securing of a mate, and individual choice was allowed. Positively, the Church has encouraged individual effort and demanded personal conversion. It taught that each man stands before God in personal accountability, for each is distinct and unique.

Yet the Church at the same time preserves the value which was basic in the egalitarianism of the Tiv, viz. the possibility of retribution by the cosmic powers. Formerly the Tiv sought to avoid this retribution through avoiding change. He demanded allegiance to the ways of the harmonization with cosmic processes that had been carried on down through the generations. The Church also seeks to live in the favor of God, not by the suppression of innovation, but through submission to his Law. In the law of God lies the standard for divine blessing and judgment. Thus the Christian presentation of the law of God preserved the value cherished by the Tiv in his egalitarianism. For the violator of this law, Church discipline and the possibility of excommunication stood as grave warnings. Thus, checks to unacceptable behavior were again established. But even more, the Church teaches a self-denial for Christ's sake. Its most beautiful picture is that of the selflessness of Christ, who lived out

the example of humility and preached that the first of this world would be last and the last first. In the imitation of Christ, the Church transforms the old egalitarianism.

The emergent society in Tivland has also now discarded its orientation to the past and to a static timelessness. It is now a society that is *dynamic* and *devoted to progress*. Its very genius is innovation. The thundering lorries exhibit this change, and change is their cargo. Indeed, this devotion to the new and modern carries with it an imitation of externals without the background of experience to cope with the new situation. This trauma is made up of a disdain for the soil, a use of English even when no one within hearing can understand, and an unbridgeable gulf between the generations. The timeless past has been rejected as the norm. The new society is future-oriented and there lie its goals.

The Church has occupied a unique position in this change. On the one hand, no other institution has done more to foster change in Tivland. The Church called the Tiv to freedom from the prison of the past. Time, it said, is not cyclic, but an upward-sloping line. In Tivland, as elsewhere in Nigeria, the majority of schools were Christian,[27] and a common complaint of missionaries was that the Tiv identified being a Christian with attending school, and being litérate. On the other hand, it is equally true that the Church is a conservative body, highly resistant to innovation. The controlling forces in the Church are the elders, and suggestions for modification of a traditional stance are sure to be defeated at classis or synod. For example, all efforts to modify the length of pre-baptism instruction (usually three years or more) have been rejected. No change appears possible on the refusal of the Church to allow polygamous husbands into catechism classes. Boy-girl friendships are absolutely forbidden, though the young people often disobey the prohibition. No drinking is permitted.[28] As yet the younger teachers and pastors who might challenge this conservatism have made no impression on the Synod whatsoever. The point here is that the Church speaks to the tribe as a conservative institution, highly resistant to change. Its reluctance to admit change does have the positive value of providing each adherent of the Church with the knowledge of just where he stands and what his obligations are. In a situation of great flux such as exists in Tivland today, the stability

[27] In 1951 there were 40 secondary schools in Nigeria, of which 38 were run by missions and churches. M. Warren, *The Christian Mission*, London, 1955, p. 100.

[28] The synodical minute reads, "Synod again explicitly forbids the drinking of liquor by Christians. At no time in the past has Synod ever permitted the drinking of liquor by Christians, and the time when it will be permitted will never come." Minutes of Tiv Synod, November, 1967 (my translation).

of the Church continues to be attractive. Its very conservatism, legalism, and inflexibility give it permanence in a time of storm. The Church continues to preserve the resistance to change which marked the ancient Tiv world-view.

The fragmentation of life which we have previously noted suggests also that the new society is *secular*. The traditional culture, thoroughly permeated with religious values, has given way to a world-view in which religion is divorced from many of life's activities. The old world-view provided a pragmatic ethical code based on the possibility of immediate supernatural intervention. To steal was thus not so much an injustice against one's fellow man as an act likely to cause disturbance in the economic cycle. With the loss of fear of supernatural retaliation and the lack of faith in the *akombo* taboo, this ethical code could no longer be maintained; indeed, the very values it sought to safeguard were themselves no longer valued. Especially in the cities did this erosion of the traditional morality make itself felt. The tasks to be performed in the city were less obviously related to religious values, whereas the cultivation of the soil brought the Tiv farmer into daily contact with nature and the processes of birth, growth, and death. Fertility and life were both immediate and ultimate concerns, and these depended on the unseen forces who gave the sunshine and rain, who caused the fish to bite and the women to bear. The clerk at the canteen, on the other hand, had less immediate cause to reflect on such matters, nor did the houseboy, the lorry mechanic, or the scribe. In the noise and speed of the towns the secret whisper of the invisible powers could scarcely be heard. Dr. J. Verkuyl details the anguish of the new city dweller with these questions:

> Where is God's voice to be heard? Where are His deeds to be seen? God seems to be so still. Because He delivers no lectures, commands no armies, edits no newspapers, produces no sporting events, directs no films, erects no buildings of steel and concrete, He seems not to be present or else He appears no longer to be of importance.[29]

The secularizing process has, nonetheless, been welcomed by various mission scholars and theologians as playing a necessary part in the dethroning of cosmic powers which the primitive had deified.[30] This desacralization demonstrates the createdness of the creation. Harvey Cox writes in this regard:

---

[29]J. Verkuyl, *De Taak der Missiologie en der Missionaire Methodiek in Het Tijdperk van Secularisatie en Saecularisme*, Kampen, 1965, p. 7 (my translation).

[30]For example, H. Cox, *The Secular City*, New York, 1966, p. 17, "Far from being something Christians should be against, secularization represents an authentic consequence of Biblical faith. Rather than oppose it, the task of Christians should be to support and nourish it."

[illegible] values must be desacralized, which means the destruction of many traditional religions. This destruction took place in the past century mainly under the auspices of Christian missions.[31]

This "disenchantment of nature" provided man with the freedom to investigate the creation without fear. From this liberation could arise the expansion of knowledge and the rise of technical skills. In this sense missions have been in the forefront of the secularization process. Such was certainly the case in Tivland. The mission struck at the mystical power of the *akombo*, and aborted the desacralization of their political authority. The mission taught that the *akombo*, fashioned by man's hands, were devoid of moral power, and that the very fashioning of them was a repudiation of man's finitude. It taught the relativity of Tiv cultural values and robbed them of the ultimate place they once occupied in the allegiance of the Tiv. The ethical grip of those values was also shattered by the process. "Things Fall Apart" is the title of one of the best-known novels written by a Nigerian.

Yet it is also the Christian faith that conserves the value so precious to the old world-view, viz. the cosmic purpose, the sacredness of experience and life. Desacralization of the Tiv world-view is but one side of the coin, for a secularization that results in a closed secularism is no emancipation but rather a sophisticated re-enslavement. Dr. Verkuyl writes emphatically in this regard:

> It appears to me mortally dangerous for us to say Yes to secularization without at the same time to speak of the enthroning (of the living God) and to arouse men to kneel before the Lord.[32]

It is with this emphasis that the Church in Tivland strikes out against the amorality of secularism and calls to the reintegration of life within the purpose of God's plan. Admittedly, we stand now at the beginning of this reintegration, though the chants of the Christians are sung throughout Tivland, and many Christians carry the first yam from the field to the Church as a sign of their dependence on God's grace for the growth of the crops. This reintegration is a uniquely indigenous process in which missionary contribution can be little more than supportive and encouraging. Nevertheless, it is only the Church that preserves for the Tiv his ancient understanding of the interrelatedness of life within the framework of religion. This fact has gripped the Tiv deeply in this frightening time when he does not want to feel lost. In addition to the tribal upheaval which has placed in jeopardy all his venerable standards,

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[32] J. Verkuyl, *De Taak Der Missiologie. . . .* Kampen, 1965, p. 27 (my translation).

the Tiv are witnessing a vicious civil war in Nigeria which has shown just how deep is the divisiveness among the tribes of their nation. Beyond any doubt, it is this feeling of confusion and lostness which has made the Tiv so aware of the call of the Church, where the strands of experience are again joined into a whole. The Tiv says with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Tiv thought and behavior, which we have described as traditionally instinctive, have become in the transmutation of Tiv society much more *cerebral* and objectifying. The *akombo* ritual, for example, often made use of imitative magic to secure its end. In the rite known as *hamber ifan*, evil was washed out of the body by the spitting out of water. Akiga likewise relates the origin of the *akombo* known as *Icieshe*. If this *akombo* was violated the result was likely to be the loss of all sense of decorum or shame. The guardian emblem of this *akombo* is the feather of a hawk, a bird so immodest that it will take your young chicks right from under your eyes.[33] This sensuous immediacy of the response to challenge brought to the Tiv a personal involvement in natural processes. He could not make a complete cleavage between self and non-self. The encroachments of the Western world have modified that feeling of involvement with nature and encouraged an objectifying and dispassionate look at reality. This exaltation of the rational principle meant that the individual became a closed entity viewing reality from a distance rather than as swept along by it. The Church has often assisted this process. Here the *akombo* could no longer serve as a means to cope with the world, for one could not both objectify reality and give allegiance to the *akombo*. Truth was removed from a pragmatic frame of reference as that which secured harmony, to a cooler position discovered by logical analysis. In the face of such an attitude the *akombo* had to fall.

At the same time it may also be maintained that the Christian faith retains the value the Tiv cherished in the instinctive manner of facing reality. Of all the institutions now present in Tivland, it is precisely the Church that has called men to see the mind as more than brain, and knowledge as more than reason. *Credo ut intelligam* is a testimony of the heart that yet speaks to the Tiv. In the final analysis, the Christian faith demands a passionate allegiance to a Person who is himself the truth. He is God intimately involved with man. Through him the emotionless distance of reality seen as object is transformed through the total participation of the whole self in its surrender to the lordship of Christ.

Finally, the old agrarian and rural culture of the Tiv is in the

[33]Akiga Sai, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

process of modification by the rise of the towns and the magnetism of the distant cities. The new society is potentially *urban*. This displacement has taken place on a very limited scale among the Tiv and that largely among the school leavers. Nonetheless, urbanization refers to more than the city as such, for it stretches out its fingers to influence life even in rural areas, and city values tend to seep deep into the rural as exciting and welcoming. As D. McCall points out,

> Rural life has been transmuted by the same forces that have given rise to the towns. Money transactions are replacing traditional exchanges of gifts in kind and service. Crops are grown for export now as well as to fill communal storage pits.[34]

It must be added, however, that the city is more of a context or container, or frame of mind, rather than a value in itself. Cox writes of the city that "it is the 'shape' of the new society which supports its peculiar cultural style."[35] Similarly in Tivland it might be said that the rural way of life was the arena for particular cultural goods. In the city these goods could be easily lost. This process has been abetted by the Christian mission which through its schools enabled graduates to obtain salaried jobs in the cities. Indeed, the Roman Catholic Mission, which based its impact so strongly on education, laments that it has educated potential Church leaders right out of the tribal homeland and so lost them for Tivland to be swallowed up instead in the distant cities of Nigeria.[36] Thus the Church in the tribal area remains basically a bush Church. This is true also of the Protestant *Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv* (the NKST). Though it has no principial interest in remaining rural or of conserving an agrarian way of life, the NKST is, as a matter of fact, a rural Church. The overwhelming majority of both attenders and members are from the bush.[37] The makeup of the Synod is also rural and unsophisticated, and the educated and more Westernized members of the communion are looked upon with some reservations by the controlling powers of the Church. Thus we find that the Church has in fact preserved a rural and agrarian setting while at the same time offering opportunity for urban drift.

Thus the position of the Church in the transmutation of Tiv society has been unique. On the one hand, it has assisted the collapse of the ancient world-view on almost every front. Yet it has also

[34]D. McCall, *Dynamics of Urbanization in Africa*, in Ottenberg, Cultures and Societies in Africa, New York, 1960, p. 525.

[35]H. Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[36]Information of the Very Rev. Father Donal Murray, CSSp, Vicar Capitular of the Diocese of Makurdi.

[37]Eighty-six per cent of the African population is yet rural, the highest percentage in the world. R. Dickinson, *Line and Plummet*, Geneva, 1968, p. 26.

conserved the basic values of the old culture in the new context of the Christian Faith. It has done this, not through acceptance of institutions or practises of the old society, for these were inevitably bound together in the matrix of the traditional religion. This religion was totally rejected by both Mission and Church. Rather, the fundamental religious values and needs which the traditional world-view recognized have been strikingly brought to light in the message of the Church. It is this fundamental speech that reaches so deeply into the heart of the tribe at this hour of its transformation.

C. FORCES RETARDING ASSIMILATION

The movement toward the integration of the Tiv into the Nigerian nation is not an uninterrupted evolution. Recent years have been marked by several influences which have intervened in the transculturation process and we now turn to a consideration of the factors which have retarded the smooth transfer of culture and Church into the new society.

The first of these phenomena has to do with the reformation of tribal life in the cities. Large colonies of Tiv have appeared in such cities as Kaduna, Ibadan, and Jos. Here a new form of tribal solidarity reappears, highly modified, but nurtured by the rise of tribal self-consciousness in the midst of alien groups. Particularly in the post-independence years this trend has become apparent with the rise of the tribal ghetto and the awareness of Tivness. Now that Tiv are more aware than ever before that they constitute a significant force in Nigerian life, their splintering has been checked. In some cities, such as Kaduna and Jos, the Church has become a focal point for this solidarity and for the "re-Tivizing" of life. A closer study of the group in Kaduna will illustrate this latter-day phenomenon.

A union church which Tiv attended existed in Kaduna for some time, and was known by the names of the interested missions (the Sudan Interior and the Sudan United Missions) as the S.I.M.-S.U.M. Central Church. This group appealed to the Tiv Synod of the NKST for assistance in 1960.[38] The Fellowship of Churches of Christ in the Sudan (TEKAS) sought to preclude the splintering of the Church in the large cities by taking a strong position against the establishment of churches in these centers along tribal lines. In 1962, however, the Tiv Christians in Kaduna were already calling themselves NKST Kaduna, and this appellation was acknowledged by the Tiv Synod in its minutes, even while these Christians formed part of the union church in Kaduna.[39]

With the encouragement of the TEKAS Fellowship a more for-

[38]Minutes of the Synodical Committee of the NKST, August 3, 1960.
[39]Minutes of NKST Synod, April 9, 1962.

really organized union church (HEIKAN) was established in Kaduna as an outgrowth of the old S.I.M.-S.U.M. Central Church. HEIKAN thereupon became one of the members of TEKAS and was approved as such by the Tiv Synod in 1963. Nevertheless, it was proving difficult for Tiv to assimilate with HEIKAN, partly because of the language barrier. A non-Tiv pastor was provided for HEIKAN, but proposals to send a Tiv pastor to work in the Tiv section of the church were resisted by HEIKAN as divisive. This resistance was considered to be in line with the TEKAS directive against the establishment of churches in the cities along purely tribal lines. The value of the union church to the Tiv, however, appeared minimal and in 1967 the NKST Synodical Committee expressed its irritation in a letter to the TEKAS Executive Committee regarding the appointment of a Tiv pastor:

> To the Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Committee of TEKAS,
>
> Now it seems to us that we have certainly tried our best, and quite unsuccessfully, so we now request you to look into the matter of the NKST and HEIKAN . . .
>
> In the beginning they said they would think about it [the matter of a Tiv pastor] and let us know. They finally informed us that they had insufficient funds for the payment of a pastor, and the Tiv give very little in the offering, just a penny each. So we said that we would help them to pay for such a Pastor, but no reply was given. In the end they said that they would think about it and let us know. At the meeting of the Tarrayya at Numan in Jan., 1967, we asked them their opinion on the matter we had presented. At that time they maintained absolute silence."[40]

Obviously HEIKAN was not interested. The letter goes on to state the desirability of the provision of a Tiv pastor. We reproduce the letter at length here, for the points will illustrate several of the problems faced in the current intertribal urban context, where tribal churches attempt to work together in the interests of Christian unity. The reasons for a specifically Tiv pastor are stated as follows:

> 1. (a) The large numbers of Tiv in Kaduna, Zaria, and Kano warrant the provision of someone who may provide spiritual food for the attainment of new life in Christ. Indeed, they exceed one or two thousand souls, and many of them simply exist there, ignorant of the worship of God, and also bereft of the ways of our fathers.
>
> (b) Those who are Christians and who do go to church number many hundreds, yet they have no one to help supervise them as the Lord's undershepherd. They simply teach one another, except that on occasion someone provides the sacraments or conducts a service in another language which only the educated understand . . .

[40]Letter of the NKST Synodical Committee, February, 1967 (my translation).

2. Among the seven groups which joined to form HEIKAN as the eighth member of TEKAS, the Tiv are the largest segment in Kaduna. If the seven groups are separated, the Tiv section is by far the most numerous. Thus would it not be sensible that they have a minister in HEIKAN?
3. The Tiv have a Bible, hymnbook, catechism, and religious items (books) of all kinds, thus what should prevent them from having a minister in HEIKAN to teach them systematically?

To do so would provide HEIKAN with progress in its Tiv section, and would serve to strengthen the fellowship of the NKST with its members who are outside its confines. The way to be in a larger fellowship is not by canceling the smaller fellowship to acquire fellowship or progress. Besides this, the Tiv are prevented from using their indigenous musical instruments in their worship.[41]

The obvious reluctance of HEIKAN to go in this direction exhibits the wariness in regard to granting undue prominence to any one group in the union. If the request were granted, the door would obviously be open for each tribal group to do the same and the unity and even the existence of the congregation would be threatened. On the other hand, the Tiv point with compelling reason to the language difficulty, which is of particular weight among them, since Tiv use little Hausa in their area. The other tribal groups, being smaller, depend on Hausa as a trade language and use Hausa also in religious services. The Tiv Church continues to press forward with efforts to send a pastor to Kaduna in spite of all HEIKAN opposition. The union church ideal thus faces great difficulties where the language problem is a factor. Confessional differences also play an increasing role, though up to the present these have not been used as grounds for separation in the Kaduna Church. The Tiv are now, however, becoming conscious of themselves as not only Protestant Christians, but also as Reformed, and they may soon be expected to add this as a reason for a separate church in urban centers. The recent NKST request for a separate Reformed seminary in their area is a harbinger of this rising confessional distinctiveness.

The rise of the cities thus presents a unique stage in the transmutation of the culture of a primitive society. The city itself represents a frame of mind foreign to the traditional Tiv way of life. Yet with the reawakening of tribal self-consciousness which occurs particularly among the educated, that is to say, especially among the city dweller, the atomization of the tribe is retarded and selected items of the traditional heritage are conserved. Here the ideal of Christians of many ethnic groups joining together as a single expression of the body of Christ awaits a new development. This

[41] *Ibid.*

means, not the negation of the bonds of blood, nor a pessimistic acceptance of the status quo, but the acceptance of the duty to keep before the Church the vision of the brotherhood of all Christ's children joining together to build his Church, for today the focal point for retribalization is often the Church.

A second factor slowing assimilation is the rise of party politics in Tivland. Once the Church stood alone as the great cause for which the idealistic young Tiv could spend his energies. The Church then represented the wave of the future, the avenue through which the Tiv would enter the bright days that lay ahead. But the emergence of politics brought to the young Tiv an alternate great cause, a pertinent and tangible way to give himself for his people. Politics began to divert from the Church men of ambition and leadership qualities and by 1960, the year of independence, the whole tribe was enmeshed in party struggle. The Church saw the threat posed to her by the new great cause and several pastors warned against involvement in politics of any kind by affirming that Christians had nothing to do with such matters of the world, but belonged instead to "the party of Jesus." This view was strengthened after the elections revealed that political hegemony lay with the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), dominated by Hausa and Fulani. Intimidation of Tiv local chiefs by the NPC galvanized the Tiv as a whole into resistance against the chiefs, and resulted in the *Wanishôhô* movement of 1960 in which twenty thousand huts were burned down in Tivland in rebellion.

Thus, far from suppressing political involvement by the masses, the government policy inspired continued opposition and a growing sense of tribal identity. A similar rebellion flared up in mid-1964 with the *Kongo* movement in which many killings of pro-government Tiv and non-Tiv were reported. Oppressive measures by the Nigeria Police spread terror everywhere in Tivland and only the intervention of the impartial Nigerian Army saved the situation. These experiences slowed the assimilation of the Tiv into the Nigerian nation and made them acutely conscious of their existence as a tribal body faced with powerful forces bent, as it seemed, on their subjugation. Under such circumstances the Tiv were not ready to assimilate. Many Christians sensed religious motives as basic to the struggle and viewed the NPC pressures as in reality a slow *jihad* (holy war) of Muslim origin. In fact, it became only too clear to some Tiv that their future could be enhanced by the performance of *salla* (Muslim prayers) and the public embracing of Islam. Koranic schools began to spring up in bush areas, sometimes brazenly erected on the very plots occupied by Christians. This incipient Muslim surge was, however, halted by the assassination of the Northern Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, on January 15, 1966, and the overthrow of the NPC

government by the Army. The subsequent creation of the Benue-Plateau State is undoubtedly a step toward the gradual integration of the Tiv into the Nigerian nation, while also providing a more local administration.

Along with these political developments has come, as a third factor, the renascence of tribal self-consciousness. The Tiv now know themselves as a people strategic in the Nigerian nation and prominent in the Middle Belt, with manifold reasons for pride in their tribal heritage and ability. This new tribal feeling of the Tiv manifests itself everywhere, also in the councils of the NKST. The birth of the autonomous Tiv Church in January of 1957 was one more instance of the taste of heady wine of tribal power. It was followed in 1962 by the request that the Mission be split so that the Tiv tribe could be nurtured by a mission whose attention was focused on them alone. Mission institutions were increasingly thought of by the Tiv as "theirs", i.e. as tribal. The request of the Tiv Synod in 1967 for a separate seminary is a further indication of this trend, even though the NKST is one of the co-owners of the TEKAS union seminary, the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. In a sense these institutions planted on the tribal soil take the place of previous now-discarded cultural institutions to form the cement which binds the tribe together. Thus while the new institutions are geared to the present age and entail the rejection of the old world-view, yet at the same time they make a unique contribution to the rebirth of tribal awareness and pride. In this respect they postpone the assimilation of the Tiv into the nation.

National independence and anti-imperialism exhibit still another facet in the resistance toward Westernization. The advent of independence brought a policy of the Nigerianization of the social services and government administration, and this was shortly thereafter followed by a policy of Northernization in the former Northern Region. Deference toward the white man and his programs could no longer be taken for granted. Many Tiv no longer hold the view that the white man is intimately acquainted with the ways and will of God. Politicians are not afraid to work against the aims of the Mission and it is tempting to view the Mission as the government's detractor and competitor in the realms of medicine, education, and general influence. Missions are easily seen as the last remnants of colonial power and interference. A Nigerian official, for example, stated publicly that the tiny Mission airplanes were likely doing observation work for the U.S. government, and he expressed strong concern over the little bush transmitters which he felt might become a communication net for a foreign power. The imposition of Western frames of reference was retarded at every level. Even deep in the bush it was suspected that soon the white man might be leaving.

Akiga, in fact, relates that the fathers had prophesied this long ago.[42] The swift transmutation of Tiv society was retarded by this rise of national feeling and anti-imperialism.

The final disruptive influence to be noted here is the Nigerian Civil War which began in 1966. The war made explicit deep-seated divisions which had long existed in the nation, a nation whose boundaries were carved out arbitrarily by European nations to form what Chief Awolowo termed "a geographical expression called Nigeria." These divisions were muted in the common surge for independence, but exploded finally in the dawn of January 15, 1966. Since that time, tribal awareness has been etched more deeply than ever before and economic progress stymied. Obviously, it will take a long time before tribal and national loyalties can be brought into alignment. The immediate result is the slowing of the process of tribal transmutation.

Akiga once wrote for his tribesmen, "And you, no matter how much learning you have, know that you are a Tiv! However, do more than simply be a Tiv; know the affairs of the Tiv, for that is your glory."[43] In his remark one senses the tension of today. There are powerful forces operating against the smooth departure from the old way of life, forces which would conserve Tivness in the context of modernity. While this tribalism has prevented rapid assimilation with the world outside, it has given impetus to tribal development internally. Thus on the one hand, it has been a force toward conserving elements of the ancient heritage, and toward a new self-confidence and pride in tribal values that were being questioned. On the other hand, it has been a force pushing toward the acquisition of institutions thrusting the Tiv down the road to modernity. These two emphases often conflict and produce an uncertainty of direction. As the Church stands together with the Mission in the phase of partnership, this search for direction gives rise to the difficulties of mutual obedience to the same Lord. In that search for direction lie the problematics of partnership for Church and Mission in Tivland.

[42] Akiga Sai, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 8 (my translation).

6 THE PROBLEMATICS OF PARTNERSHIP

On January 9, 1957, the *Nongo u Kristu u ken Sudan hen Tiv*, the Tiv Church of Christ, was established as an autonomous body. It had taken forty-six years of toil and frustration to reach that day of organization. The total communicant membership of the new denomination was only 1800, and the pastors numbered but four, yet the astonishing thing was that she existed at all. The crucible of her birth had been the unrelenting resistance of half a century. At that time 23,000 Tiv attended her services each Sunday, a figure still Lilliputian against the background of a tribe numbering a million.

The bell that tolled on and on at the Mkar Church that day to celebrate the birth of the NKST also signaled the end of the era of sole Mission authority and responsibility. In its place had come a time of mutuality and the need to face the mind-bending complexities of partnership. To the description and study of those problems this chapter is devoted. They comprise the particulars of the joint journey of Church and Mission and illustrate the unvarnished confrontation of ideas in conflict on that journey. It is to these specifics, the raw stuff of concern, that we must now address ourselves.

Since that natal day of the NKST, the Gospel has spread like a flame through Tivland. Attendance at worship centers and communicant membership both doubled in the first five years. During 1963 attendance at worship services reached one hundred thousand, and it became alarmingly apparent that a leadership gap of major proportions had to be faced immediately. A new pastors training class, taught in the vernacular, was organized as an emergency measure, and facilities of the Benue Bible Institute were expanded to provide improved training for lay leaders and local Bible class teachers. This school first opened its doors in 1961 as a response to the challenge of the "bush" classes in literacy and Bible which had sprung up everywhere in Tivland. These classes are known as

CRI's (Classes for Religious Instruction), and the classrooms are usually found under straw roofs set on poles. One mud wall painted black serves as blackboard and the school benches are often logs pulled inside under the straw roof. The opportunity to assist this truly indigenous movement through the provision of teachers and local leaders inspired the opening of the Benue Bible Institute. By 1963 there were 665 of these bush classes, attended by 16,000 children unable to attend regular primary schools. Through the provision of basic education for the young villagers who taught these classes, Mission and Church found a way to reach the heart of the tribe.

In November of 1964 the Tiv Bible was published at last in complete form, and Tiv became the seventh language in Nigeria in which the Bible was printed. That same year new political dissatisfaction brought bloody rioting to Tivland. A wave of introspection followed the disillusionment with the aims of the ruling party, which seemed to many Tiv to be bent on their suppression. Though the Church meticulously avoided any political adventures, she nonetheless became the arena for the welding together of the tribe in the search for a common mind over against the ominous world at her doors.

In his study of the growth of the Church among the Baganda, John Taylor points to the importance of crisis and the conflict of loyalty as the climactic stage in the process of Church-making.[1] Choice and commitment are demanded where life is suddenly laid bare and the people are forced to search their souls. Among the Tiv also, the political harassment following the Nigerian independence coupled with the growing awareness that the old age had irretrievably passed, brought thousands to the Church, ready to consider the answers of the Christian faith. At the end of her first decade of existence, the NKST had established nearly 1500 worship centers in villages throughout the tribal area. Membership and attendance showed an increase of nearly 600% over the 1957 level.

The pattern of growth in the second decade has remained fairly consistent. All the pastoral candidates were immediately swept into vacancies, and in 1968 eight new congregations were organized. Thus the number of growing edges is increased and local enthusiasm more readily generated. The following statistical summary indicates, by way of approximation only, the outlines of that development:[2]

---

[1] J. Taylor, *Processes of Growth in an African Church*, London, 1958, p. 10.

[2] Compilation of NKST statistics is often an exercise in futility, and at best the figures serve to indicate general trends. The NKST Synodical Committee itself rejected the statistics gathered during 1965, but errors abound in the years since then as well. The official figures have here been altered when errors are obvious.

	Sunday Attendance	*Communicants*
January 1, 1957	23,000	1,800
1958	24,258	1,900
1959	29,000	2,300
1960	35,790	2,872
1961	46,888	3,200
1962	54,000	3,642
1963	73,140	4,400
1964	100,000	5,879
1965	109,837	7,000
1966	129,492	8,200
1967	143,000	10,100
1968	160,000	12,100
1969	180,000	14,381

Thus while the first major change which the birth of the NKST brought to the Tiv was that of her partnership with the Mission, the second was the matter of dealing with unprecendented response. Where once the Christians had to travel deep into the hinterlands to plead with the unbelieving, now every worship center was filled and the Church faced gladly the problems of blessing.

A third major change had also to be weathered by the NKST in her first decade of life. The DRCM decision to withdraw from Nigeria was put into effect and the field was transferred to the Mission of the Christian Reformed Church of the United States and Canada. The CRC had been active in Nigeria since 1940 as a branch of the Sudan United Mission in the area immediately to the east of the Tiv. The difficulties surrounding this decision have been discussed in Chapter 4, but in spite of Tiv objections the transfer was initiated in 1950. Through a series of negotiations it was finally decided that complete transfer would be effected by 1964. This plan was, however, disrupted by inquiries from the Nigerian government addressed to the SUM regarding the presence of South African missionaries on her staff. The unsettling implications of the inquiries gave ominous urgency to the need for a more speedy transfer. The transfer was therefore completed on November 1, 1961, and the CRC branch of the SUM assumed responsibility for all institutions and activities of the DRCM in Nigeria.

The Tiv Church did not view these proceedings with equanimity. The idea that the "Mother Church" should now desert the "daughter" and give her to a foster parent elicited little happiness among the Tiv. Especially disturbing to the Tiv was the fact that the new mission already had her own daughter just to the east of the Tiv and might not look upon the adopted orphan with the same love and care which

she expended on her own child. Assurances that no doctrinal differences of consequence existed did little to assuage the doubt. In general, the Tiv Christians wished to have their "own" mission pledged solely to their nurture, and not to be one church among others ministered to by a single mission.

The phase of sole mission control thus came to an end amid unprecendented Church growth, political unrest, and new partnership. The second phase in the participation of the Western Church in the *missio ecclesiae* in Tivland is the stage in which the young Church is planted, but the role of the missionary remains a major one. Hans-Reudi Weber finds the following features characteristic of this second phase: "the concentration on the building up of the membership, structures and ministries of the younger Church; the predominance of missionary institutions, and the prevailing other worldly piety."[3] These distinctions are pertinent to Tivland today. Dr. J. Verkuyl, in a discussion of the stages of Mission participation, speaks of this phase in the past tense and warns against the reluctance of missions to face the fact of their decreasing role as the makers of policy. He writes, "This period has also passed. And where this phase is not yet completely passed, its disappearance is imminent. That is the case, for example, in many lands of Africa."[4] These words indicate just how swiftly time is moving in Tivland. The second phase of the mission's life has but recently dawned and already it is time to press on to a new stage. This third phase is that in which the young church assumes complete responsibility for the ministry of the Church in all its facets. The indigenous church may invite one (or more than one) Western denomination to share in this multi-lateral ministry, yet the nature of the participation is that of assistance and service to an autonomous body which posts all personnel and regulates their activities. The role of the Western Church is found by Prof. Verkuyl to be richly symbolized in the footwashing. Unstinting service is the mandate placed upon the Western churches in this stage where the mission withdraws her authority and becomes the assistant to the fully independent church.[5]

Each of these phases presents a galaxy of problems, yet the issues are most delicate and incendiary in the stage marked by transition. There the roles are in a constant process of redefinition, and the lines of authority at times overlap and conflict. There the emergent church stretches impatiently toward maturity and the mission faces the painful issues of devolution. It is especially in this climate of constant rephrasing and tension that all the resources of patience and under-

[3]H. R. Weber, *The Younger Churches*, in: The Layman in Christian History. (Neill and Weber, eds.), London, 1963, p. 349.
[4]J. Verkuyl, *Daar en Nu*. Kampen, 196?, p. 51 (my translation).
[5]*Ibid.*, p. 52.

standing are needed. Here, too, the contours of the future begin to manifest themselves, and through a comprehension of the problematics of partnership we can fruitfully plan for a speedy passage to the third phase of Mission, the age of complete Church responsibility.

We may group the issues which loom large in this stage of transition under the following headings:

A. Towards a Theological Response of the African Church.
B. Meeting the Cultural Trauma.
C. Internal Problems of Church and Mission.
D. Church and Mission — The Hesitant Handclasp.
E. Church and Mission — Drinking of One Spirit.
F. Community Relations — The View from Outside.
G. Ecumenical Relations — Searching for Soulbrothers.
H. The Home Base — Growing to Maturity.

A. TOWARDS A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH

In his study of indigenization, Alfred Koschade points to a continuity between older and newer churches of the Gospel message, of Scripture, and of the Church itself. On the other hand, Koschade speaks emphatically of a theological discontinuity.[6] This discontinuity he finds to be not a curse but a necessity since:

> . . . the whole framework of Western theology is out of place in the areas of the younger churches, where different categories of thought prevail. The theology of the church in central Europe cannot be the same as that of the church in central Africa, even though it is the same church, one body in Christ. The theology of the North American with his excessive individualism must surely be different from that of the Papuan with his deep sense of community, even though it is the comprehension and proclamation of the same Gospel.[7]

Though discontinuity may not be the most accurate term to use in this connection, yet Koschade's argument is sufficiently precise and points to the tasks ahead for the African Church. The Western theological stereotypes are so deeply embedded in missionaries that they will never produce this theology for Africa. Missionaries come with the weight of centuries of cultural influence upon their worldview and with theological emphases which have proved meaningful in the Western context, but which speak far less to the African.[8]

---

[6] A. Koschade, *New Branches on the Vine*, Minneapolis, 1967, pp. 38-68.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 53.
[8] In a searing criticism of missionary ethnocentrism, an Ibo, Mbonu Ojike, writes, "If you look into the bag of an outgoing missionary, you will find five tools with which he must condemn and evangelize. These are: absolute religious dogmas, Western legal thought, Western political ideas, Western social philosophy, and Western economic theories." M. Ojike, in: *Christianity in Africa as Seen by the Africans*, R. Desai (ed.), Denver, 1962, p. 62.

gregation to operate a boat at the river crossing as a means of securing church income. The Tiv is quite eager for the Church to be engaged in the operation of medical dispensaries. All of this is deemed appropriate for the Church as organization.

This urge to rewrite ecclesiology from the African point of view rests on at least two powerful historical influences. The first of these is the totalitarian viewpoint of the old religion from which the Christians but recently emerged. The African Christian takes with him into the new aeon the conviction that religion must structure his world, and the more committed he is, the more he works for that goal. The Church appears as the obvious institution to carry on this quest, with its influential voice and growing resources. Why should this voice be organizationally confined to converting sinners and perfecting saints? Tivland will not have it.

The second influence toward the rewriting of ecclesiology is the mission itself. The mission is the form in which the African meets Christianity; he knows no other church. To him the mission is obviously the model, the way the indigenous church will someday develop. The new Christian naturally assumes that the mission structure is the structure that the church herself must assume: the daughter emulates the mother. And what is the image the mission presents? Obviously one in which diaconal services and institutions play a tremendous part. Field Council meetings are concerned for the most part with the problems of these institutions. The "comprehensive approach" of the mission naturally becomes the "comprehensive life" of the church. If missionaries sometimes chide the younger church for giving undue attention to the problems of management of social ministries rather than toward developing more specific evangelistic fervor, the reply is immediate, "Physician, heal thyself!" Thus the dual influences of the old aeon and the structure of the mission support the conviction that the scope of activity of the church as organization is to be conceived on the broadest possible basis.

Nor is the traditional conception of the relationship of the Church and the Kingdom of God a satisfactory one to the Tiv Christian. The idea of the Kingdom of God, presented by L. Berkhof as "the rule of God established and acknowledged in the hearts of sinners,"[11] is a fundamental principle readily understood and accepted by the Tiv. The further presentation of the distinction of Church and Kingdom, however, becomes incomprehensible to the Tiv Christian. Berkhof finds that believers constitute the Kingdom in its initial realization of the ideal order *in* the present world, while they constitute a Church in their separateness *from* the present world.[12] The Tiv can under-

[11]Berkhof, *op. cit.*, p. 568.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 569.

stand no such limitation of the Church. Furthermore, Tiv pastoral students find needless confusion in the view that:

> It is also a mistake to maintain, as some Reformed Christians do, in virtue of an erroneous conception of the Church as an organism, that Christian school societies, voluntary organizations of younger or older people for the study of Christian principles and their application in life, Christian labor unions, and Christian political organizations, are manifestations of the Church as an organism.[13]

Berkhof gives as his reason for considering this view to be a mistake that "this again brings them under the domain of the visible Church."[14] The Tiv Christian, on the other hand, has far greater reservations regarding the divorce of the Church from active participation in such endeavors. It should be noted well that Berkhof's strictures here deal not with the Church as organization, but as *organism!* Even as organism, says Berkhof, such activities are out of order for the Church. The Church as organism, he avers, may not even establish "voluntary organizations of younger or older people for the study of Christian principles and their application in life." The Tiv Christian finds such distinctions quite unacceptable. Out of his own experience and wrestling with the intent of Scripture, he is ready to see the Church set out into all of life. Traditional Western ecclesiology brings insufficient illumination for his situation and awaits a rewriting at his hand for the nourishment of the Church universal.

An example of the direction which this development may take is found in a study presented by the Christian Council of Nigeria for the use of local congregations, entitled *The Duty of Christians in Independent Nigeria*.[15] The opening section of the report calls for the Church to manifest her concern for national and political issues. This concern is valid since 1) God is King of the whole earth, 2) The Old Testament prophets serve as our examples, 3) Christ has shown us a pattern of love, and 4) The Christian is the yeast of the whole loaf, the salt of the whole earth.[16] One detects here not only a conviction of the totality of the Church's involvement, but also an easy movement between the duty of Christians and the duty of the Church.

But not only in ecclesiology will the African Church present her unique understanding of God's Word. Certainly in *theology proper* there arises from the African consciousness an emphasis on God as immanent in the world, as the guide of history, for this is his ancient conviction. This understanding also suggests an appreciation for the trinitarian life of God which goes beyond forensic justification in the

---

[13]*Loc. cit.*
[14]*Loc. cit.*
[15]Ibadan, 1961.
[16]*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

blood of Christ and places God at the nerve center of all of life. The analysis of R. Desai represents the grossest misunderstanding when he writes,

> The Africans cannot accept the concept of the Trinity, with the equality of father and son, because in their society the father is always above his son. Hence, they feel that one cannot pay respect to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the same breath.[17]

This understanding to be sure, does not carry the nuances of three hypostases or arise from the "substance" controversy of the Schoolmen, but is expressed as joint possession of the divine essence. As Desai intimates, for the African the father is "above his son." Ontologically this is eminently Biblical: the Father is not begotten by the Son; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. Therefore the Son can also say, "My Father is greater than I," John 14:28. This the Tiv understand, but this implies for them no inferiority or subordination of essence. Thus they pay equal homage to the persons of the Trinity and that "in the same breath." The idea of the economic Trinity involves the Tiv in no rationalistic attempt to remove the mystery of the Trinity. The African has always been surrounded by mystery, especially the mystery of God's majesty. That, too, Desai has forgotten.

The African Christians will add to the study of *anthropology* new awareness of the self in relation to others, and of the self in relation to nature. To use Taylor's phrase, this awareness is the heritage of their "primal vision." The self is not the disparate unit, but the self-in-participation, open to the cosmos. In the first place this implies that man's position over against the cosmos is not one of exploitation, but of relationship, of ecological cooperation. The union of man and nature in God's plan lies well nigh unexplored in the theologies of the West. A second vista opens from the first. The understanding of the self-in-participation is necessary for a new chapter on corporate responsibility, of man in community before God. This emphasis will complement the Western thesis of the ultimate responsibility of the individual self, seen as alone before God. The third possibility follows: Western theologies have stressed the self as rational unit and exalted the intellect. In Taylor's words, the void of Western Christianity is that:

> . . . it has left untouched the great deep of the subliminal, and unredeemed the glories of the elemental energies of man. The incalculable has been left out of account, the supernatural played down, the mystery glossed over . . . This is the inner significance of the complaint that Christianity is the white-man's religion.[18]

---

[17] R. Desai, *Christianity in Africa as Seen by the Africans*, Denver, 1962, p. 19.
[18] J. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, London, 1963, p. 21.

Here then a new chapter on man in the image of God awaits its African author, a chapter needed to supplement the anthropology of the West.[19] That chapter will tell of God as the God of nature and history, blending man and nature to his purpose.

The study of *hamartiology* will also draw from the ancient heritage. Western theology has stressed sin as the personal offense against God, and immorality largely construed in terms of the individual sinner. Since Africans did not so sharply delineate the individual, they were sometimes thought to lack finesse in the understanding of sin. H. Van't Veld lists several instances of this conclusion in a study of *The African and Sin*.[20] He goes on to give some generalizations regarding the ancient view of sin, whose essence was in its anti-social character:

> Therefore drinking is bad only when it leads to quarreling. Therefore polygamy is not bad as long as one does not favor one woman and quarrel with the others. Therefore the act of adultery is not in itself bad, but rather because the consequences may involve future, yet unborn children. Therefore to be contentious is also a chief sin.[21]

Van't Veld warns that such generalizations may be too broad, but they do serve to show that the African thought of sin as that which disrupts the relationships of man-in-community, or of man and nature. Stealing, for example, results in the breakdown of the economic harmony of the community. The Tiv may be expected to carry this ancient understanding into the new aeon as an influence to bear upon his theological formulation. His hamartiology will define sin as the offense against God and also as that which destroys man or nature and their relationship. He knows of sin as that which corrupts man and the earth, as the demonic and chaotic, as the destructive force which endangers the harmony and order of the community. This is the affront to God which may well receive new emphasis in an African theology.

Like the breadth of this appraisal of sin, so wide is its *Christology*. For Christ does all that the traditional religion once did: He unifies all of life (Eph. 1:10). But more than that, he brings together men whose tribal animosities had prevented them from ever conversing

---

[19] After a discussion of man as prophet, priest, and king, the author's Tiv pastoral students pointed out that surely authority or dominion was a prominent item in the image of God in man. Knowledge, they suggested, was indicative of the prophetic capacity; righteousness, the priestly; and dominion, the kingly. This more natural perception of the *imago dei* finds immediate support in Gen. 1:26 and Ps. 8:5-6. Cf. also Heyns, *Gereformeerde Geloofsleer*, Grand Rapids, 1916, pp. 61-62.

[20] H. Van't Veld, *De Afrikaan en de zonde*, in: De Heerbaan, Nov.-Dec., 1965, pp. 330-346.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 332 (my translation).

before. Tribal hostilities still cut deeply, but one may hope that Africa will finally relate to the world that here there is no "barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

We have earlier noted that an African reformulation of ecclesiology rests on a conviction regarding the scope of salvation. The problem of the Church, therefore, goes to the very roots of the Christian message and asks, "What is salvation?" The *soteriology* to come from Africa will treat not only of the conversion of sinners and their justification in Christ, but in the words of the study document of the Christian Council of Nigeria mentioned above,

> We must not accept the world as it is. [Christ] has called us to transform it as the yeast transforms the bread . . . The yeast cannot change the bread unless it is mixed with the flour. We can only be used by God to change the world if we are fully part of the world. But, if we are part of the world then, as light changes darkness, so we Christians can be used to improve and change the world through the power of God shown in Jesus Christ.[22]

This comprehensive view of the *kerugma* of the Lordship of Christ is the view painted before the eyes of the African by the deeds of the Christian mission. It is the view that the African would also obviously carry with him as he left his traditional religion and entered the new aeon. Out of the confrontation of the Gospel with the African perception will finally arise an understanding of soteriology for the enrichment of the entire Church of Christ.

It is precisely this understanding which is now so urgently needed to deal with the problem of secularism confronting Africa as elsewhere. Here the whole arsenal of theology will ultimately be brought to bear to present God's claims to all of life. Dr. J. Verkuyl has expressed that conviction in these words:

> It is my growing conviction that the churches of the West may eventually learn a great deal from the manner in which the Christians in Asia and Africa maintain themselves in the process of secularization and wrestle with secularism . . . It could very well be that the contact with Christians from Asia and Africa will again stimulate us to see the whole of the cosmos in the light of Christos Pantocrator.[23]

It might be supposed that the African contribution to *eschatology* will be minimal. The Tiv share with other African peoples in a professed ignorance of "the end time." Dr. John Mbiti, an African theologian, writes, "The concept of 'the end of the world' is both absent and meaningless in African traditional life."[24] Where the afterlife

[22] *The Duty of Christians in Independent Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1961, p. 9.
[23] J. Verkuyl, *De Taak der Missiologie*, Kampen, 1965, p. 33 (my translation).
[24] J. Mbiti, *Eschatology and the After Life*, paper read at the Consultation of African Theologians, Ibadan, Jan. 5-19, 1966.

[illegible] a mechanical, inevitable [illegible] after all the ceaseless [illegible] offered no alternative. [illegible] a vista of hope [illegible] Although thought will [illegible] for the spirit [illegible] is, for [illegible] shows a rich [illegible] words.

[illegible] Christianity which has come [illegible] the spirit-world is [illegible] in the ultimate background.[25]

[illegible] we can expect good news for the world, [illegible] The acceptance of this message will help [illegible] the growth of the Church which Koschade [illegible]

3. [illegible]

[illegible] we have maintained, de- [illegible] The attractions of the West, how- [illegible] and the search for material [illegible] and this upheaval [illegible] in the life of the Church, both beneficial and [illegible] we view the surge to [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] a religious issue, for the new [illegible] and a loneliness [illegible] not only changing [illegible] where most religion pro- [illegible] the more true where the young [illegible] independ- [illegible] a measure of heavy con- [illegible] not only is the old [illegible] brought into [illegible] ancient patterns [illegible] work has [illegible] instances of this

2. The Devaluation of Labor and Agriculture

A painful example of the African ethical vacuum has to do with the valuation of work. Across Tivland there grows an increasing scorn for agriculture and manual labor of all kinds, and the exaltation of white collar positions. The dignity of hard work is a value of the old society which appears to be evaporating in the surge for education and the possibility of leaving the bush. The impossibility of ignoring this problem grows with each passing year, and in 1967 the Mission offered to its Home Board an apologetic for an agricultural ministry, based on five considerations: 1) It is not possible, in the Nigerian context, to feed man's soul and show no concern for feeding his body. The Nigerian sees these ministries as reciprocal. 2) The soil is practically the only wealth of the people. They must, therefore, be taught stewardship of this great talent entrusted to them by God. They must show the world about them how the Christian uses God's gifts. 3) This ministry does not spring from a modernistic theology of merely humanitarian concern. In the African context it is genuinely evangelistic. 4) The Mission cannot escape her moral obligation, because a) she has reduced mortality by saving the lives of tens of thousands, but she has not shown how to feed those thousands, and b) she has alienated the young from the land by showing them the glamor of the office, but not the dignity of tilling the soil. 5) The economic base of the Church is precarious. Poverty prevents many from adequately supporting her ministry, and Christian monogamy further reduces the available labor force.[20]

The Mission proposed that the agricultural missionary visit Christian congregations to teach groups of farmers on a local level with as little an institutional plant as possible. The farms of specific Christians will be selected as model farms to demonstrate visually what can be done. A Nigerian assistant will be trained simultaneously to assume the work as soon as possible.

3. The Loss of Personal Security

A further result of the breakdown of the cement of communal ties is the loss of a feeling of a significant role for the individual. Here the Church has done much to provide a meaningful series of steps and goals for its adherents, but these have not eliminated the unsureness and lack of purpose for the masses outside. The Church stands as a potent force for revivifying the society, yet it must be said that even in the case of Church members, a Christian style of life remains to be constructed in the new society. The variety of responses on the part of political involvement by Christians is an

[20]Minutes of Nigeria General Conference, April 10-13, 1967, Appendix C.

example of this need. On the one hand the pastors feel that the Church has every right to enter into education and medicine in one form or another. One might expect them to welcome the entrance of Christians into party politics also. Yet this has rarely been the case among the Tiv. The experience of the Tiv with party government has been unhappy, and charges of bribery and corruption are rife. In the second place, politics has tended to command such involvement and passion that it appeared to become a new religion with ominous overtones for the Church. Thus a crystallized view of the place of Christians with regard to politics has yet to be formed.

It would certainly appear that at the present time the Church offers the Tiv the greatest force for stability within the new society. The turbulence of the civil war is one indication of the violent breakup of a stable nation, and this must be coupled with the corrosion of the old world-view and the atomization of the group. Amid all this splintering and upheaval, the Church is a haven and a cause. It is the new purpose, the new community for thousands of Tiv.

4. THE JOBLESS ELITE

A further cultural trait complicating tribal life is that of education outracing the industrial base. Sir John Maud stated, "A nation's industry can grow and develop just as fast as its educational system."[27] In Nigeria, however, industry has lagged far behind the rapid development of education. As late as 1956 less than one-half of one percent of Nigeria's national income came from industry, and industry employed the minuscule total of 40,000 people.[28] Everywhere the problem of unemployed school leavers stares one in the face. Not only do they add to the urban problem, but at the same time they deprive the villages of the leadership they need to bring them into the present age. Here Church and Mission sense a new frontier for evangelism, following the era of geographical expansion and the multiplying of congregations. The idea of an urban ministry directed largely at the youth is novel for the emergent Church, and the initiation of the project as well as the personnel must at this stage come from the Mission. The integration of such a ministry into the life of an overwhelmingly rural denomination just finding its way into the traditional processes of growth appears difficult. Yet the Church is eager to try. The NKST Synod urges the Mission to proceed with the project, though the day of NKST participation in it is not yet at hand.[29] A youth center is being constructed in the tribal headquarters city

[27] J. Maud, *The Impact of Industrialization*, Oxford, 1957, p. 47.

[28] *The Duty of Christians in Independent Nigeria*, Ibadan, 1961, p. 24.

[29] Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov. 14-16, 1967, #1130: "Youth Work Report. The Synod encourages the Mission, since this is such a good thing, to try to go ahead with it quickly, and not to delay with it any longer" (my translation).

of Gboko, and a rural youth director has also been appointed to assist each congregation in its youth ministry. This is not an effort at finding or creating jobs, it is true. Yet in reaching the urbanized school leavers and the discontented youth in the bush, Church and Mission hope to meet and ameliorate this cultural and spiritual trauma of the new age.

5. Bridewealth and Marriage

A particularly abrasive element in the adjustment to the new cultural situation with regard to the youth is that of the skyrocketing bride-price. The abolition of exchange marriage in favor of *kem* (cumulative bridewealth) marriage never brought a solution to the problem of viewing woman as property, or of the abundance of lawsuits and palaver. Nor did it lessen promiscuity as had been hoped, even while it destroyed such basic cultural values as the retention of the reproductive principle within the community. The positive values of the new style of marriage (e.g. the opportunity for the woman to express her choice) were modified by the valuation of the woman in crassly materialistic forms. The temptation soon came to fathers to grant the daughter to the highest "bidder" and while the woman was able to refuse a suitor, great family pressure could be exerted upon her to accept. When daughters were sent to school, the cost of their education was often added to the bride-price to enable the father to recoup his investment. The actual effect of these moves was to raise the age at which men could marry, since it was increasingly difficult for them to find sufficient money to pay the bride-price. The price of twelve Nigerian pounds was totally disregarded, though this was the amount sanctioned by the Native Authority. At the present time fifty pounds may be considered average in Tivland, and a thousand pounds is not unheard of. One Tiv pastor related how that he was asked to find six hundred pounds to assist his son in securing a wife. The girl's father in this case remarked that this sum should not be too difficult for the pastor to find, since he would doubtless have the resources of the Church at his disposal.

Some Christians now reject the bride-price system entirely, at great personal sacrifice. That is to say, while they attempt to assist their sons in obtaining the bride-price which they must pay, they themselves demand no bride-price for their daughters. Where large sums have been expended to educate the daughter, the sacrifice is significant. That this trend will gather momentum is, however, doubtful. A more productive direction for attacking the problem of promiscuity would seem to be in the direction of insistence on the following of the Native Authority guideline with the price set at a resonable figure. As the Church becomes increasingly conscious of its power to speak

with government, such a process is quite likely to take place. This course is, of course, not calculated to find any favor with the majority of tribal elders.

The Church has insisted that Christians desiring marriage secure the necessary license from the local chief. This position of the Church has opened the way for scribes and chiefs to secure added income by overcharging applicants for licenses. Where others might then refuse and simply marry without a license, the scribes well know that the Christian must have the license. The scribes therefore often refuse to grant the license until, to use the local euphemism, "their pencil is sharpened." The pencil-sharpening often proves to be very costly, and its illegality is even more offensive. The NKST Synod finally adopted the following minute on the practise:

> Concerning the way in which women are registered, which is annoying the Christians, Synod agrees to see the Chairman of the Native Authority on this matter. At times one is refused registration on the grounds that only five shillings is profferred far too much of the time. Synod appoints a committee to see His Honour The Chief of Tiv on this matter.[30]

A related problem is that posed by women desiring baptism. Many have no marriage license, and their husbands (because they are not Christians) refuse to acquire one. The impossibility of demanding a marriage license in the case of these candidates soon became obvious and the NKST in such situations now agrees that these candidates be accepted for baptism. Thus the problems surrounding marriage are so glaringly difficult because they touch the cultural shift at so many points. The Church, which helped to throw the old world into crisis, has also done much to heal the wounds this century has brought. A Tiv man prefers a Christian girl for his bride, though he may not himself plan to become a Christian. Thus even though the stance of the Church regarding sex and marriage is still evolving, she already speaks to the tribe regarding love and honor in marriage.

6. TRIBALISM

A most significant cultural phenomenon faced by Church and Mission in Tivland is that of a resurgent tribalism. The Church, because of its Tivness, is an important focus for this tribal feeling while at the same time she must, in the name of man's equality before God, speak out against tribalistic excesses. The ambivalence of attitudes in this difficult position of the Church indicates that no satisfactory theory of the integration of the NKST into the wider context of Christ's Church has yet been evolved.

[30] *Ibid.*, #1123 (my translation).

The Mission has itself been a potent catalyst for this rise of tribal feeling. On the one hand, of course, education has shown the Tiv that their tribe is only one of many, some of which are far greater in numbers and more technically advanced. An exposition of the extent of the Jukun empire and its place in Nigerian history comes as somewhat of a depressing shock to many young Tiv when they first learn of these facts. Thus education broadens and humbles. On the other hand, education has given the Tiv a fierce pride in their own history and an eagerness to advance their position. Many are the Tiv who feel that their tribe has not received its just due in time past and must yet take its rightful place in the sun. "Why have the Tiv always had so much trouble?" asked an elder. He meant by his question: The Jukun scorned the Tiv and raided them for slaves, the Hausa oppressed them politically, the Ibo exploited them economically. The Tiv are now determined to change this state of affairs. Everywhere in the tribal area there is the swelling feeling that the Tiv yet have their hour of destiny ahead.

This aggressive outlook of the Tiv has not gone unnoticed. The Tiv were characterized at the beginning of the civil war by some as "The Ibos of the North" and as "Christian monkeys," and in these epithets lies a strain of fear. As the Church stands at the center of the Tiv cohesion, it has a great opportunity to channel tribal self-consciousness. As yet, it must be said that the majority of the Christians are scarcely aware of the problem at all and sense no reason for moderating the race for glory for the Tiv.

The stance of the Mission over against this problem is particularly precarious. Missionaries tend to view the tribal strivings negatively, in the interests of the urgent need for the larger unity of the Christian Church, even while they are committed to the spiritual and material betterment of the area in which they serve. An example of the delicacy of the problem is that of Mission employees who come from other ethnic groups within Nigeria. These employees are hired on the basis of ability and Christian commitment and are, of course, glaring reminders that no Tiv of similar qualifications are available. The pressure to hire less well-qualified Tiv in such instances produces a tension relaxed only through compromise on both sides. The example of houses with cracking walls and floors, built for the Mission by incompetent sub-contractors, is a price for harmony which Mission builders are reluctant to pay.

At the same time, the positive values of this renascent ethnic self-consciousness should not be overlooked or repudiated. Group loyalty and concern for one another are themes precious to Christians, and serve as a great motivation to Tiv Christians to carry the Gospel to other Tiv. J. B. Grimley in his study of Church growth, specifically

chooses the Tiv tribe to illustrate the value of ethnic distinctiveness. He writes,

> Communication includes more than just language. The total life situation and the feeling of God speaking to men in that life situation — not from without it or from over a barrier, but from within it — is very important. The Tiv Church has a tremendous advantage here in having one cultural background, one language, one "life-way." Each person understands every other within the context of one pattern. The hopes and fears, the temptations and the victories — all are in similar patterns for all.[31]

It has become quite customary to bemoan the negative values of tribalism to the point where nothing good is left to say. Africans, however, have reservations about such a view. The primal throb of the blood calls even the most emancipated among them. It is, to be sure, one call among others, but it cannot be bypassed for Africa by well-meaning Westerners who wish Africa to avoid the wrestling and pain of the encounter. The Tiv have decided not to accept the vicarious experience of the West as their own, but rather to make their own way through the confrontation. We know something of the disappointment ahead, but we cannot deny to Africa her own experience. The churches of the disparate ethnic groups will be foremost among the agents finally to provide the balanced statement.

Missions have a unique role to play in the resolution of the problem of tribalism. That role is one of keeping before the eyes of the ethnic church the larger part to be played beyond the tribal borders, and the responsibilities of Christians to the Kingdom which surmounts all boundaries. This the Mission *can* do, but often does inadequately, contenting itself with a refusal to provide funds or personnel for programs which could be divisive. The trauma of resurgent tribalism can only be resolved in the context of appreciation for the ethnic heritage of the Church. The great challenge to integrate the local church into the Church universal must be met, not by proxy through the experience of the Mission, but by accepting the tribal heritage with its riches and foibles. Out of this acceptance there may then arise the vision of obligation beyond the tribal borders.

C. INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF CHURCH AND MISSION

The problematics of partnership are complicated in the phase of transition by shifting areas of authority and the overlapping of responsibility. In addition to this difficulty, however, each of these bodies, Church and Mission, is being faced at the same time with

[31] Grimley and Robinson, *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*, Grand Rapids, 1966, p. 173.

internal changes. These internal developments modify the stance of each and further complicate the way in which they interact. A discussion of these internal problems will indicate specific concerns of each body as they meet one another. We turn first of all to look at the Church.

1. THE CHURCH IN TRANSITION

a. *Adjusting to Change*

In the case of the Church the problems often stem from the tempo of change in a yet conservative society. Within the Church councils, the resistance of the elders to change still dominates. The chafing within the traditional mold increases as the educated continue to pour from institutions of learning in even greater numbers. The Church now faces a major problem of how to incorporate her elite class into her life. In general she harbors a latent distrust of these liberated ones and seldom asks them to lead worship services, though one might suppose that they would be among the most qualified to serve. Parsons, in his study of the Ghana Church, relates how teachers there felt inadequately represented in the activities of the Church and had little power at Church synods.[32] Furthermore, few educated people turned to the ministry as their life's work.[33] Identical problems face the educated in Tivland. It must be said, however, that the educated give grounds for this distrust by the elders, and often go to great lengths to indicate their difference from the masses. A common sign of this is the constant use of English words when talking before a group of uneducated people. The graduate from secondary school spurns the hoe, and is also less likely to be in attendance at the mid-week prayer service. All of that is for the man in the bush.

The Church is certainly attempting to adjust to the facts of the new situation, but much is asked of her. Elders see the adulation once reserved for them now given to younger men. They must often bow to superior information where once they were the wise. The Church is asked to be concerned with problems of the city, while she is overwhelmingly rural. And she must make the difficult adjustment at the same time as she assumes new relationships to the Mission.

b. *Courtship*

The classic case of the rift between the old and new generations within the Tiv Church is the problem of boy-girl friendships. The educated young people have largely rejected the traditional Tiv man-

[32]R. Parsons, *The Churches and Ghana Society*, London, 1963, p. 139.
[33]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

ner of courtship which forbids casual boy-girl companionships. The prohibition guarded against premarital pregnancy, and a mother took great pride in presenting the prospective groom with a virgin wife. At the same time, many young men did have "companions" within their own clans, and Akiga describes this practise at some length.[34] With the coming of Christianity, these companionships were no longer tolerated among the believers, and the young were required to abstain until the process of *kem* had advanced far enough for the marriage to be consummated. As time went on, Tiv Christians were astonished to hear from missionaries an advocacy of Christian young people getting to know one another intimately (albeit not sexually) before marriage. The necessity and desirability of such contacts, and the deepening of mutual understanding and love between boy and girl before marriage, appeared as novel and very questionable values. Most troublesome, of course, was the problem of purity in a situation in which boy-girl companionships were permitted and even encouraged. This seemed to the Tiv to put insuperable temptation in the path of the young. Young people themselves, unfamiliar with the new freedom, did misuse it at times, but were in no mood to resign themselves to the traditional mode of courtship. It became evident that the trend could not be halted.

At this point the NKST Synod attempted to reverse the tide by fiat. In the minds of the elders the boy-girl friendships were the type that they themselves had repudiated when they became Christians, and now the missionaries were blithely encouraging licentiousness under the guise of "understanding" and "the deepening of love"! The Synod stated:

> Synod forbids the children of Christians from holding this type of relationship; it too much resembles an evil practise. Synod further states that formerly we Tiv also engaged in such companionships when we did not yet know of Christianity, but as we have now become Christians, it is good that we no longer again join with the world in ways which appear very evil. Synod asks the Mission that it join with the NKST to solve this matter jointly.[35]

The last sentence of this minute was directed particularly at the mission-operated institutions of education where young people were being taught a Christian view of courtship in the hope of finding a mate most compatible to themselves and offering the way to mutual growth. Library books advocating the Western Christian view of dating and courtship were also found objectionable. At the same time it must be said that stringent dormitory rules were maintained and few

[34] R. East, *Akiga's Story*, Oxford, 1965, pp. 125-130.
[35] Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov. 23-26, 1965 (my translation).

violations occurred at the schools. The difficulty usually arose during the vacation periods when students were off-campus.

Both students and teachers found it impossible to accept the synodical ruling. The futility of the synodical effort was also becoming clear to some of the elders, but the Synod as a whole has never deviated from its stand. The general effect of the position is an increasing disregard of synodical pronouncements. The idea that the Church stood at the forefront of the entrance into the new world ahead was rudely shattered.

In time men from the present generation will also be found in the ranks of the clergy, and then a significant dialogue may at last take place to ameliorate the growing cleavage between the conservative Establishment and the articulate and questioning cadres now being graduated from educational institutions. As yet this dialogue lies largely ahead as the Church secures its moorings in the forms once delivered.

c. *Stewardship*

A further difficulty confronting the Church has to do with its poverty. In one sense the unpretentiousness of the Tiv Church is one of its greatest assets and demonstrates that the Spirit's power is not tied to financial prowess. We must be careful here, therefore, not to construe the progress of the Church with economic criteria. Rather the problem to be faced here is one concerning the stewardship of the believers. The issue has many facets, the first of which has to do with the general attitude toward giving on the part of the communicants. Among the seekers and catechumens the collection of Church dues is less difficult, for these applicants understand that they are, in a sense, on trial. The level of giving is carefully scrutinized before baptism is granted. After baptism has been attained the communicant in some cases feels that now he can relax his efforts, for he is at last inside the fold and the Lord will understand his plight even if the elders do not. The majority feel that the Church should certainly be the one institution designed not to consume their meager finances. A favorite song among the Christians has this line: "The Lord wants our hearts, not our money." That is, succinctly, the view of many Tiv Christians toward the matter of tithing.

The missionaries, it must be said, have done little to rectify this situation. In the first place, most missionaries are reluctant to upbraid the slow givers or to urge greater charity, since they speak from a position of apparently incalculable wealth to the poverty stricken. Missionaries generally feel that they are hardly the people to cry for more generosity from the poor. Secondly, not all mis-

situation contribute to the local budget in the percentage expected from the wealthy. Several reasons are adduced for this fact. One of them is that missionary giving would then exceed the amount given by the rest of the congregation as a whole and so tend to discourage giving by local members. Another is that some missionaries feel that they should contribute to their American church and its programs even while they are in Nigeria in the service of the NKST. One pastor of a large congregation complained at the Synod that his congregation was in arrears precisely because missionary giving had not come up to expectations. Though this complaint was not supported by the facts, but was due rather to mishandling of funds by the elders, the feeling persists in some congregations that missionary tithing is not exemplary. Missionaries contribute to many programs beyond the scope of the local church in amounts unknown to anyone else, the local church included. Hence there sometimes arises the belief that missionaries give insufficiently. In these days it is no longer impossible for Nigerians to obtain a knowledge of the missionaries' income, and local churches may soon expect greater financial participation from missionary members.

Another negative influence on responsible giving lies in the attitude of many elders, deacons, and evangelists toward the monies of the Church. By virtue of their office they feel a certain lordship also over the funds of the local church, and on occasion "borrow" from these funds. The evangelists are often the couriers of the funds collected at the bush worship centers, and on occasions less is deposited in the congregational treasury than was received from the worship centers. The offending evangelist then "loses" the receipt. These practises do much to discourage giving when they become exposed.

This lack of conscience regarding the sanctity of the Lord's money finds its roots in the ancient way of looking at the goods of the group from the standpoint of the elders. In the old society private ownership of property was far less extensive and the elders could use the goods of the group with great impunity. It is therefore difficult to instill a deep sense of the reprehensibility of such abuse of Church funds. Church elders feel that they ought to be remunerated for their labor and so their use of Church funds is sometimes considered by them to be their just due. The idea that elders should do their work gratis, out of love for the Lord, is not welcomed with enthusiasm, and elders have been highly resistant to proposals of reform in this area. The salary among elders and evangelists varies from five to twenty-five dollars per month and is generally dependent upon attendance at courses of Bible study sponsored by a classis or group of churches. Thus the office becomes a springboard toward additional income. The situation does not elicit generous giving among local

Christians who are less than happy to see their tithes swallowed up by local office-bearers.

d. *Schism*

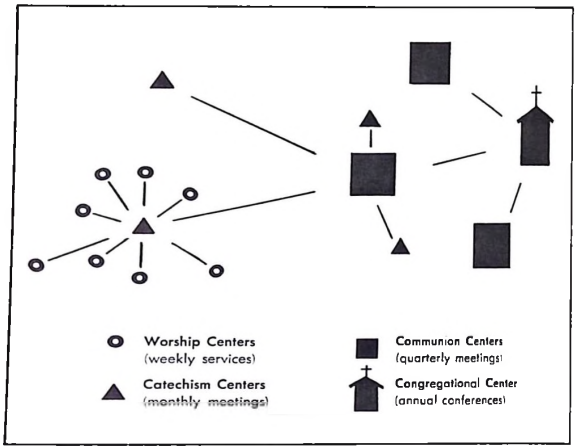
The need for reform was highlighted in late 1967 when the Synod was informed of the rise of a dissenting group within the Church. According to the leader of the dissenters, the NKST had fallen into an unbiblical legalism through the piling up of synodical regulations, expressed most specifically in the "taxation" of its members.[36] The Bible alone stands as the rule of life for Christians; nowhere do we read of Church orders or constitutions. The dissenters therefore refused to pay into the budget of the Church any specified amount, in order that "the left hand might not know what the right hand was doing." R. Parson's study of the Ghanaian Church describes a similar development there. Especially severe was the schism of 1937 which emphasized the illegality of the collection of Church dues.[37] In the NKST it was likewise the growing dissatisfaction with the manner of the collection and distribution of Church monies that provided a situation ripe for the birth of such a sect. That this sect could take hold indicates that there is a rebellion against the misuse of funds, and also that there is inadequate understanding of stewardship. Members complain of a double standard of judgment: one applicable to the average member, and another reserved for the ruling elders and men of prestige. Discipline is seldom exercised in such cases of embezzlement, and in general is reserved for adultery. The idea thus gains ground that financial irresponsibility is less heinous a sin and may be passed over quietly.

e. *Congregational Organization*

Some of the financial difficulty of the Church among the Tiv springs from her organizational makeup. Because of the problems of distance and poor roads and transportation, members of one congregation cannot all meet at the congregational center. Out of this necessity the usual scheme of congregational organization was evolved, whereby the congregation is made up of many local groups of Christians who meet in their own and nearby compounds. These compounds, the basic unit of the organization, are known as worship centers. Once a month the Christians from several of these worship centers meet together at a catechism center, where classes are held for catechumens and seekers, and where monthly reports are given. Once every three months the Christians from several of these catechism centers join

[36]Minutes of NKST Synod, Jan. 9, 1968.
[37]R. Parsons, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

together to celebrate the Lord's Supper at a communion center. There may be three or four of these communion centers in the congregation. Only once a year do all the Christians meet together at the congregational center for their yearly conference which lasts for four days. The congregational organization may be represented by the following diagram:



Thus a Christian at the edge of the congregational area may be two miles from his worship center which he attends weekly, six miles from the catechism center to which he goes one Sunday a month, twelve miles from the communion center to which he journeys quarterly, and twenty miles from his congregational center where he may well attend only once a year. This organizational setup, marked by its ever-widening circles and its regularity of meeting, serves to give the individual Christian a well-circumscribed niche in the Church family. He knows precisely where he is and how he fits into the larger whole. Thus he is united with the other members of his group in spite of their distance from one another. Here the Church serves to overcome the lostness felt by those who have, for whatever reason, left behind the old society with its comprehensive ties. At the same time, this far-flung congregation, meeting simultaneously

at dozens of worship centers, makes for complex bookkeeping. Bookkeeping would be difficult for the NKST at this point even under salutary conditions, but with its complex organization the level of bookkeeping is low, and often consists of scraps of paper in a can kept at the bush worship center. It is understandable that mistakes are made and that offenses occur. This difficulty can be solved as the Church matures, and there is every reason to expect much greater financial undertaking in support of her ministries in the years ahead. As the number of congregations increases, the need for many outlying catechism centers will be lessened and the organization simplified.

Some congregations, however, have shown a reluctance to organize daughter churches. In such cases the mother congregation is usually loathe to lose the income now received from the members of the prospective daughter congregation. Synodical admonition in 1966[38] finally broke this wall of resistance: two new congregations were organized in 1966, four in 1967, and eight in 1968. Actually, the NKST has grown most swiftly in precisely those areas where new congregations were organized. In these areas, when a communion center reached a total of one hundred baptized members, an effort was made to organize a new congregation. As in the division of cells, when churches divide they increase their growing edges, and each cell grows more rapidly than was the case before division.

2. The Mission

As Church and Mission stand in a changing relationship in the period of the transfer of authority and responsibility, the Mission also finds herself faced by the problems peculiar to her nature and background. She is herself undergoing rapid change while also meeting the swiftly changing needs and claims of the Church. For example, a basic change in methodology took place as the trekker became the teacher. The emphasis on wide-ranging missionaries located on bush stations and engaged in direct evangelism, declined as the Church herself assumed this endeavor, and the Mission found herself more and more engaged in Church-supportive ministries. It is this change which stands at the heart of much of the Mission's internal trauma. The threat of runaway institutionalism, the seeming secularization of the Mission's effort, the decline of language learning, the loss of intimacy with the local people, the diffusion of aims, are all charged in great measure to this change in the Mission's composition. These are the problems with which the Mission grapples in her changing relationship to the Church.

[38]Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov. 8-11, 1966.

a. *The Rise of Professionalism*

As the Mission grew, it became necessary to recruit personnel with specific areas of competence. The tasks to be performed were well-defined and could often be performed in a specific room or building. It was no longer necessary to the performance of one's task to get off the station. Clusters of missionary homes soon grew up around the institutions. The performance of one's tasks (e.g. bookkeeper, pilot, houseparent, secondary school teacher) did not depend on a knowledge of the vernacular and so learning the language received less and less attention. The urgency of uninterrupted staffing in these specialized tasks meant that language learning often had to be postponed or abbreviated. No one liked the trend, but it appeared inexorable. In any case, one could get by with English. Areas of common interest with other missionaries and nationals were also more limited. X-ray machines and airplanes showed the white man to be truly of another, infinitely distant world. Thus the advantages of technical proficiency were met by the disadvantages of a greater distance from the life of the people as the face of the Mission changed.

b. *The Altered Image of the Mission*

The rise of professionalism and the decline of the knowledge of the tribal tongue contribute to a further problem of the Mission, viz. the image now being created of what the Church is and does. In the beginning the aim of the Mission appeared untrammeled and vivid: she was there to convert men to Christ and to plant the Church. The majority of her workers were directly and obviously engaged in evangelism. Today all that is changed. The ministry is more comprehensive now and the majority of her specialized ministries are not immediately evangelistic. She seems sometimes less spiritual to the beholder, less specifically committed to the salvation of men's souls.

In the opening pages of this book, we emphasized the comprehensiveness of God's salvation, but also the necessity to face the realities that exist on the mission field. The fact is that the present makeup of the Mission suggests to nationals that the Christian's concern is overwhelmingly dominated by services other than those directly aimed at conversion. This altered image in the mind of the national is a problem of tremendous concern to the Mission, and can be ameliorated only by the lived-out devotion to Christ of each missionary, both within the framework of his daily task, and in his fellowship with the Church. It is this need for men of prayer and the Christ-like walk which is the most pressing requirement of the Christian Mission in this hour of her metamorphosis.

c. *Institutionalism*

The problems cited here are intimately related to the burning question in contemporary Mission practise, the question of burgeoning institutionalism. In the transition period the tensions on the field center upon the institution: the hospital, the school, the seminary. For example, Dr. K. Hagen writes regarding the situation in India,

> The crux of the problem of foreign missions in India today is felt most keenly in the institutions of the church. Since most of the foreign missionaries are concentrated in these institutions, and since a large share of the mission funds sent from the West is spent in these institutions, it is here that the new mission strategy must be worked out.[39]

Because this problem looms so large in Tivland as elsewhere, it demands a more detailed dissection. Dr. Hagen, himself a medical missionary, points out the difficulties brought by institutions in these words:

> Government institutions are rapidly arising which either duplicate their services or compete directly with them for public following. . . . Government restrictions are beginning to curtail their Christian witness. . . . They absorb an inordinate share of church and mission resources.[40]

Even graver misgivings are voiced by spokesmen such as Dr. D. McGavran, who finds that missions often turned to institutional work when direct evangelism brought initial frustration. He writes,

> Some missions retreated into service institutions. "If they will not hear the Gospel and obey Christ's call, let us serve them lovingly." . . . The dream of influencing the educated classes . . . led to the establishment of schools. That these did good work none can doubt. They lifted Evangelical boys and girls out of the masses and started them into the middle classes. . . . But they did not multiply churches.[41]

Dr. McGavran concludes his view of institutions with this indignant criticism:

> In the process of planting churches, many Christian missions build up large institutions, begun for all kinds of good reasons, to do all kinds of good deeds. These institutions help the public, help the younger Church, are indirectly evangelistic, give the Evangelical cause prestige — and they gradually use up larger and larger proportions of missionaries, budgets, nationals, and attention. They are insatia-

---

[39]K. Hagen, *Bells Still Are Calling*, Minneapolis, 1964, p. 101.
[40]*Ibid.*, p. 87.
[41]D. McGavran, *Church Growth In Mexico*, Grand Rapids, 1963, p. 45.

life. They attract able missionaries, and from them are chosen many of the executives of mission boards. The missionaries want them, the nationals want them, the boards want them, and the sending Churches love them. They appear to be an absolutely essential part of Christian mission. They divert a very large proportion of mission resources (cash and men) to excellent work which has only a slight connection with reconciling men to God.[42]

In general, however, these critics are not *against* institutions as such. They feel, nonetheless, that institutions properly follow the Church. Otherwise, "they assume a significance out of proportion to their actual contribution to the life of the Church."[43] Social service and "perfecting" properly come when the yeast cells are enormously multiplied and the total effort may be seen as the Church's ministry. If this strategy is disregarded, Church growth and personal salvation may easily be relegated to a secondary place; nationals at least will receive that impression. Then almost inevitably Mission becomes

> . . . renewal, witness, outreach, rapprochment, penetration — There is no limit to the vague, elastic words which have only one thing in common: they do not require the baptism of bodies, the salvation of souls, and the building of new, visible churches.[44]

The problems which institutionalism brings in its train may be grouped as follows:

(1) Insititutions impede mission mobility. The Mission is by nature a transitory phenomenon. It is sent to bring forth a reborn people and then to press on to "the regions beyond." It is not designed to enter ever deeper into the matrix of a foreign nation, so that its day of departure is delayed longer and longer by the continual increase and expansion of its institutions. The younger churches cannot bear the costs of this apparatus, and so the day of the transfer of financial responsibility is generally not yet in sight on fields where institutions abound.

(2) Institutions may present a false image of the Church. The daughter Church tends to assume the form of mother Mission. Thus it may well happen that the secondary schools and hospitals on a mission field are shining, well-equipped edifices, while the evangelistic and Church-growth facilities are beggarly. What impression does the average tribesman receive when he compares these institutions? Obviously, that medicine and education are greater concerns for the Mission than direct evangelism.

(3) Institutions cost excessively. Some institutions are government

[42] Ibid., p. 116.
[43] World Council Conference on Church, Grand Rapids, 1965, p. 165.
[44] Max Warren, "Church and Mission in a Secular Society," in International Review of Missions, Vol. LVII, No. 166, 1968, p. 153.

supported, yet in nearly every mission, institutional work is the most costly burden to be borne. To speak of "the most souls per dollar" is to be too crassly materialistic. Yet the critics of institutions see missions continually pleading for funds, see that two-thirds of the world's population is not Christian, and conclude that every penny is desperately needed to reach them. Humanitarian and civilizing services may do untold good, but their costs tend to keep us from reaching the millions yet untouched.

(4) Institutions tend to become the focus of Church-Mission tension. The wine of power is heady, especially in those areas of the world where nationalism has recently been unleashed. The clash almost invariably centers on control of institutions, for the younger Church sees here the greatest roadblock to her complete autonomy.

(5) Institutions may thus impede the maturation and independence of the Church. The institutions require the presence of the Mission for additional decades; thus the younger Church does not become truly and fully indigenous, since financial reliance upon the foreign benefactor continues indefinitely.

Such are the problems posed by institutionalism. On the other hand, it is equally true that Mission which is directed solely toward the numerical growth of the Church is neither consistent, Scripturally justifiable, nor always expeditious. The scope of God's salvation permits no such confinement of the Gospel message. To do so restricts the fullness of the witness and impugns its quality. One is reminded of Jesus' words, "*These very works which I am doing bear me witness*" (John 5:36). The following points in support of the institutional ministry may thus be adduced:

(1) Evangelism without the diaconal ministries tends to be less than honest. Preaching about the compassion and love of God for the Tiv may well be regarded as cheap unless the fine words are bulwarked by explicit manifestations of concern for healing and knowledge. Jesus himself instructed, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*" (Matt. 5:16).

(2) It is ultimately disastrous in Tivland to proclaim a Christianity divorced from daily life. The Tiv already know that religion is all-embracing. Therefore to impart a Christianity uninvolved in healing, wisdom, or agriculture, is to wage half a battle. It may destroy the old paganism, but gives in return an inadequate construction of the Christian life. To suggest that this effort wait until the indigenous Church is itself full-blown is unrealistic.

(3) Nothing has succeded in capturing the sympathy of the people as have the institutional services. The hospital and the school have been the wedges to break the wall of hostility where preaching

gathered only animosity. The institutions of the Mission have often gained a hearing for its message, down to the present hour.

(4) In situations where governments have been displeased by Christian evangelism, the service institutions have often secured continued government toleration of the entire Mission program. Sometimes it is solely in the institution where bright possibilities for witness still exist.

(5) Institutions are, in fact, places where souls are saved. Thousands of Tiv first heard the name of Jesus at Mission hospitals. Whether or not overt evangelism is their prime business is not here the issue. The fact is that many people have come to Christ in this way. And even among those who turn away, the witness has been made.

(6) Institutions provide the Christian community with its future leaders. If the Mission is ever to depart, leaders must come forward to replace the missionaries, men who can propel the Church to maturity. Without institutions it becomes exceedingly difficult to reach the influential classes.

(7) Roman Catholic institutions are sources of great attraction. Missions which do not utilize service institutions may well find that Catholic Missions gain the sympathy of the peoples through a comprehensive approach concentrated in institutions. It is unwise to avoid the fact, however unpleasant, that more than one mission exists and seeks the allegiance of the uncommitted.

Several trends become evident in this argumentation. Those who castigate institutionalism have an over-riding burden for the conversion of large numbers of souls. They cite statistics constantly and grimly; they are possessed of a feeling of urgency. They are pragmatic men, concerned with quantity, angry when money is expended without corresponding Church growth. They are not as interested in reaching the highly placed few as in giving the Gospel to the masses.

The defenders of institutions, on the other hand, use language such as "the Christianization of each realm of endeavor" and the "quality of social involvement." They are concerned to claim all of reality for Christ and to demonstrate this claim in every kind of work. We have a commitment, they contend, not only regarding the quantity of the men whom we must reach, but also as to the quality of the God whom we present. We are right, asserts Max Warren, in "refusing to allow that any aspect of man's life is outside the range of the Christian Mission."[45]

[45] M. Warren, *The Christian Mission*, London, 1955, p. 85.

The tendency to apply the term "modernist" to defenders of institutions and service ministries is unwarranted. Renewal, outreach, involvement, are unquestionably Mission, are certainly caught up in the *missio dei*. Institutions stand in the forefront of this participation. They are also utterly necessary for leadership training for the Christian community. The problem is that they tend to become insatiable and assume a permanence and investment which runs out of control. They then get top priority in staffing and finance. In Wold's words, "institutions have a way of becoming self-propelled and going off, each in its own direction."[46] In Tivland, as on a host of other fields, it is this problem with which missions now earnestly wrestle. This burgeoning institutionalism indicates as nothing else the changing character of the Mission in the era of transition. We shall return to it again in the following chapter in an attempt to move toward possibilities for solution of its problems in the years just ahead.

D. CHURCH AND MISSION — THE HESITANT HANDCLASP

The phase of transition is singularly marked by problems in the relationship of Church and Mission. This is the stage of mutuality which ever since Whitby, 1946, has been characterized by the phrase "partners in obedience." The phrase implies continued blessing and fellowship, and yet the relationship is not static. The aim persists of bringing change, until the Church will control Church and Mission functions and post the personnel. This means that the Church grows increasingly into a world where finance and organization intersect the apparently simple and straightforward call to preach the Gospel. P. Beyerhaus indicates the problem that easily arises in this situation: 1) The Mission introduces the Church to such heavy institutional burdens that the Mission itself must bear these burdens for many decades, and 2) The Church becomes increasingly placed *over against* the Mission in her effort to alleviate these burdens while yet striving for greater management of the institutional apparatus.[47] Thus the term "partnership," with its glowing connotation of brotherly effort, at times becomes instead the euphemism to describe the phase of increasing distance and growing suspicion. In this section we mean to indicate some of the facets of this relationship, and in the following section to deal with ways in which Church and Mission have joined together in positive confrontation of their mutual problems and opportunities.

---

[46] J. Wold, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

[47] P. Beyerhaus, *Die Selbstandigkeit der jungen Kirchen als missionarisches Problem*, Wuppertal-Barmen, 1959, p. 279.

1. THE FORMALIZATION OF ROLES

The fact that lines of authority overlap as transition takes place explains the trend toward the formalization of roles where once a greater freedom of interaction existed. It appears to be a necessity to be more impersonal and "business-like" in official relationships, especially at the points in which neither is sure as to precisely which stage of the transfer of authority has been achieved. The premise then is that better delineation will actually increase partnership, even at the cost of the friendly informality of former days. Two examples of this development indicate how deeply this matter of delineation cuts into the Church-Mission relationship.

a. *Discipline of Mission Employees*

The matter of the discipline of members of the NKST employed by the Mission trenchantly illustrates this problem. A time-honored though unwritten agreement existed between Church and Mission stipulating that when an employee of the Mission was put into discipline by the Church, his employment would also be suspended for the length of the disciplinary period. As time went on, however, it became apparent that this procedure punished only *some* members of the Church who were in discipline, viz. those having a salary paid by the Church or Mission. The great majority of disciplined members were not employees of the Church or Mission and so escaped the punishment. The household servants of the missionaries were affected, for example, but not those who worked for other church members as farm helpers or houseboys. Furthermore, it became obvious that the rancor of the disciplined members was directed not at the Church which disciplined them, but at the Mission which took away their employment. At times these disciplined members occupied responsible positions in hospitals or dispensaries and could be suspended from their jobs only at great hardship to the institutions they served. Community indignation against the Mission on these occasions was also considerable.

In the face of this dilemma the Mission proposed to the Church that the latter present a written request for suspension to serve as an official basis for the temporary dismissal. The Mission would then not refuse to suspend the employee, but could refer to the letter as the ground for its action. The Church summarily rejected the proposal and replied in effect, "We are brothers. It is not necessary for brothers to write each other notes. It is certainly not necessary to write notes asking for what the other knows very well is wanted." The reaction of the Church to the businesslike impersonality of formal

letters was immediate, and the attempt to further delineate the roles and increase mutuality proved a failure.[18]

b. *The Car*

On another occasion, however, the attempt to define roles more clearly did originate with the Church. Here the overture was made via a question presented by the NKST Synod to the Mission: "What fellowship exists in the Lord's work between the Mission and the NKST?"[19] The rather vague formulation of this question did not conceal its import, which concerned the communal use of Mission automobiles, equipment, and airplane. Here the stark fact had to be faced that at times the missionary's money is of greater practical value than he himself. From the Synod's point of view, the Mission's resources were not being used to full capacity, and the use of Mission automobiles by pastors and Church leaders would be of tremendous value as the Church took over from the Mission the task of direct evangelism and the establishment of congregations. If missionaries were too busy to be the drivers, then Nigerians could be found by the Church. The important thing was, in the mind of the Synod, that the Church and Mission use their facilities in concert and share them.

The automobile has played a tremendous role in the mission to the Tiv. How immensely it has aided us when workers were few and thinly spread! How enlarged our horizons and outreach! Yet it has inevitably dehumanized Mission. The missionary now sails past hundreds of Tiv among whom his predecessors walked and with whom he could identify. I cannot improve on the words of Prof. E. Jansen Schoonhoven:

> One hears nowadays at times the complaint that the present missionaries immerse themselves but little in the life, thought, and feeling of the people among whom they work. I would almost say — how could it be otherwise, if one is always sitting in his car? An important consequence of this is that the missionary . . . can usually come home again in the evening. Most pleasant, to be sure. But formerly one was gone from home for days at a time, he trekked with the people of an area through the bush, they ate together, talked together, rested together, and slept in the villages. . . . Thanks to the

[18]The situation may also be reversed and greatly embarass the Church. On one occasion a dispenser under discipline was duly suspended by the Mission and the dispensary closed. Public outcry against the Mission was referred to the local church. So great was the irritation of the church members and the community against the church that within a week the discipline was lifted and the dispensary reopened.

[19]Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov. 19-21, 1963 (my translation).

> car, the danger is far greater that the present missionary will remain a stranger his entire life in the land in which he works.[50]

The answer here is not to return to the days of Mission without cars. But our cars do not always take us where we should go, either literally or figuratively. It is harder to stand in the shoes of the Tiv now, to sense his life style and to know his heart. And now the Church wants to share these cars of ours. Prof. Schoonhoven confesses to having no answer to this facet of the problem.[51] In Tivland, too, the Mission found the question difficult to answer, though there was no question as to the direction the answer would take. It would be impossible to accede, to see the fleet of Mission cars constantly overloaded and undermaintained. Missionaries were already chauffeuring to a degree that many of them felt was harmful to the development of the local resources of the Church itself. Mission administrators had to face the fact that no appropriations were available for such increased use of Mission cars without Home Board approval. The burden was accordingly shifted to the Home Board in the reply of the Mission, which according to the NKST record took this form:

> The Mission replied that it felt that good fellowship existed, save only for a lack of understanding between us. It further stated that it had no power to change the rules of its Home Board, but that as the Church now stood in its own right, the Church had every right to inquire of the Home Board regarding its every need, as for example, concerning an automobile or any other instrument.[52]

The Church thereupon did ask the Home Board for a car, but the Home Board declined the request on the ground that it could not begin to provide automobiles for nationals on all its fields around the world. This reply impressed the Tiv and was accepted without rancor. The matter of a synodical car was then put into the Church budget and each member throughout the denomination was assessed the amount necessary to make possible the purchase of the vehicle.

Thus in both instances the search for adequate delineation of roles was only tentatively concluded and the illustrations indicate the delicacy of the relationships on the road to self-support. In the latter case, the difficulty arose through the apparent double standard of the Mission which, while it insisted that its aim was the conversion of the Tiv, yet withheld its apparatus from Church members explicitly engaged in that task. The appearance was thus given of

---

[50]E. Jansen Schoonhoven, *De Zending in het tydperk van de auto*, in: De Heerbaan, July-Aug., 1965, p. 260, (my translation).

[51]*Ibid.*, pp. 263-264.

[52]Minutes of NKST Synod, Jan. 28-29, 1964 (my translation).

an infinitely wealthy group of partners jealously guarding their riches from others whom they called their equals but who were prevented from using the goods of the partner. On the other hand, the missionaries were convinced of the harm that would devolve on the Church in the long run were the Mission to accede to the Church request. In the end the Church's own growth and maturity would be hampered. At the same time, missionaries have provided assistance to the Church day by day with their own automobiles and the Mission has unofficially transported Church leaders on many occasions.

2. Organizational Tension

The matter of increased Church authority over Mission institutions and equipment inevitably involves some organizational realignment. Here we confront another major area of tension, which for the NKST is complicated by the fact that two independent Nigerian churches, of which she is one, are nourished by the same mission. To the east lies the EKAS Benue Church whose membership is drawn largely from the Jukun and Kutev tribes, while immediately to the west of this area lie the Tiv. Each Church observes carefully how the Mission acts toward the other. Thus a contribution to an institution serving the needs of one Church must be carefully weighed in the light of the possibility of a like contribution to an institution serving the needs of the other. If this is not forthcoming, charges of favoritism are likely to follow. The problem is especially trying since the Tiv Church, the "adopted" daughter received from the DRCM, is far larger than the EKAS Benue, the "natural-born" daughter of the CRC Mission. The majority of Mission personnel are thus located in the Tiv area and the largest expenditure of funds is made there. To the EKAS Benue it therefore appears that the "foster child" has stolen the heart of the mother. The Tiv reply, on the other hand, in the publicly expressed words of a Tiv leader, "Does one give the same food to a mouse as to an elephant?"

Out of this mutual dissatisfaction the Tiv Church in 1962 requested the Mission to split into two. The fear then was that the nurses' training school, located at the inadequate hospital serving Tivland, would be transferred to a more adequate locale at the hospital operated by the Mission in the EKAS Benue area. To the Tiv this move was unthinkable. If in the eyes of the Mission the facilities were substandard, then from the wealth of the Mission should come repair and improvement, but not relocation. In fact, the continued location of the school in Tivland was of greater importance than the quality of the training available. A split of the Mission would thus preserve for the Tiv all Mission institutions

located in Tivland, and possibly acquire also those now located on the EKAS Benue side alone.

In the end the nurses' training school remained where it was and the issue faded. It was, however, obvious that some form of Mission reorganization was imperative. This fact stemmed not only from the need to offer the Church increased participation in Mission programs, but also from the need to decrease the areas of confrontation between the two churches. Especially in the activities of the Department of Evangelism the need was felt for increased merging with the Church to inspire her to assume fuller responsibility for this work. Both Churches also continued to request the complete division of the Mission into two.

The proposed reorganization provided for a separate Church-Mission Committee in each of the two areas of the field. Each Committee would include Church leaders and Mission personnel, and these committees could correspond directly with the Home Board and bypass the Mission. This arrangement also obviated the necessity for the Churches to confront one another in Mission forums. The two Church-Mission Committees would deal with matters of evangelism and Church growth, while the Mission retained control over the more complex and less specifically evangelistic institutions. The essential unity of the Mission was in this way also retained.

The Churches strongly disapproved of this latter feature, and expressed little interest in the rest of the plan. Tribal tensions were mounting and the Churches continued to press for two missions. Missionaries from both sections of the field comprised the Mission's Executive Committee, and the Tiv felt that missionaries from the EKAS Benue side would tend to be more reluctant in approval of programs desired by the Tiv. Here the Church felt that the missionaries were predisposed toward their own specific area and more sympathetic to its needs. The missionaries felt, on the other hand, that the presence of members from all sections of the field contributed a necessary balance and assured mature judgment upon enthusiastic requests from the area boards.

In the face of this apparent stalemate, adjustments in the new plan were necessary. In the view of the Mission, the plan presented an advance in the devolution of the Mission by providing for direct contact with the Home Board, and for the merger of the Evangelism Department with the Church. The Church, however, feels that these steps are inadequate and at some points irrelevant. The Church leaders point out that what they desire at this juncture is not greater power on boards or in Mission forums, but simply their "own" Mission, whose interests are not divided between two daughters. The Mission shows little willingness to go in this direction, which

it considers to be an unholy road of excessive tribalism whose interest is material rather than spiritual.

The implications of this state of affairs are somber and indicate that a subtle but profound change of attitude has occured. Though the cry of full cooperation is everywhere heard, the most basic obstacles stand in the way of its realization. It appears to be increasingly unrealistic in the present context in Africa to assume that the foreign Mission can successfully be submerged into the Church. The fascination of the Church for command of the Mission apparatus has not enhanced her urge toward dynamic evangelism. Tribal glory appears to be an increasingly obvious objective. Nor do Church-Mission relationships improve by submerging the Mission into the Church. The African Church, when saddled with Western facilities and the "blessing" of Western money, is tempted to lose her fire. "Rice Christians" are not confined to Asia, nor to Mission employees. In fact, Tiv Church growth has not depended on Western money. The "bush" Bible schools did not arise from Mission impetus, yet today there are a thousand of them in Tivland. They exist without a penny of Mission money. Mission money erects no church buildings in Tivland. They are there precisely because the Tiv never expected the Mission to build them and so they built them themselves. The Tiv Church learned how to obtain growth with its own tribal genius and with its own resources fired by the Spirit.

We now stand at the moment of asking if the Tiv Church is to assume control of all Mission finances. To answer affirmatively will mean for the Church a real change in the way of looking at nearly everything. It will mean the demand to use newly available money for erection of new churches and repair of the old. This result should not be defended as "preparing for the new age." It is no such thing. To submerge the Mission in the Church imperils self-support and eventually means the inability to face the new age. It is neither partnership nor kindness. Climenhaga and Jacques write:

> Thus partnership is conditioned upon the continuity of the identity of each partner. Mission and church should not become amalgamated or fused. Neither must absorb the other; although related as equal partners, they must retain their distinct identity.[63]

Organizational advancement thus involves training of Nigerians to assume positions of responsibility and their increasing presence on boards of governors. The control of local dispensaries is now being

[63]Climenhaga and Jacques, in: *Facing Facts In Modern Missions*, Chicago, 1963, p. 88. See also C. Forman, in: *Frontiers of the Christian World Mission*, (W. Harr, ed.), New York, 1962, p. 166, "Proposals for handing over the mission entirely to the younger churches fail to take account of the serious losses that would be involved."

given to the Christian community, and a new plan for further dispensary outreach has been developed. According to this plan, local communities themselves build the dispensaries, pay the dispenser, and receive all fees. The Mission provides regular visits by the doctor and sells medicine at cost to the dispensary. This exciting program of self-help has already proven successful in many communities, and appears to offer the key to the direction which should be followed in increasing the service of mission medicine. The disadvantages of simplicity are outweighed by the advantages of treatment in the local community with familiar surroundings, close to the local Church and integrated into its witness.

The changed Mission attitude takes cognizance of the fact that the swelling tide of Tiv self-consciousness will not soon be diminished. The problems that the Tiv will face in their relationships to the other peoples of Nigeria also still lie ahead. The Mission now faces the difficult task of learning to live with this self-consciousness and of adjusting to the mounting grasp of the Tiv people for progress of all kinds. Only as the Tiv see the Mission fully committed to the betterment of their people in every way will they say that partnership is a fact.

3. THE CRISIS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

This difficulty is particularly apparent in the area of theological education. For many years the NKST has cooperated with six other evangelical churches in a union seminary, the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, located at Bukuru, 300 miles north of Tivland. Many voices in the Christian Reformed Church in America expressed scepticism regarding the theological soundness of participation in a union seminary, but the Mission gave enthusiastic support to the venture from its inception. The Churches also appeared happy with the arrangement. Here for four years men of diverse tribal backgrounds lived with one another and spoke of their problems and aspirations as Christian brethren. Here the groundwork for many ethnic groups living together in Christian understanding could be laid, and the dream was alive that the Church would show the way in overcoming divisive tribal animosities. It is difficult to know the measure to which this effort has been successful or what Nigeria would be like without it.

In 1966 the Mission asked the NKST to project the need for pastors which it would face by 1972. The Synod replied that it foresaw that seventy new pastors would be needed by that time. It was evident that this need could not be supplied by the Theological College, for two reasons. First, it would be impossible to find that many qualified applicants in the NKST, and secondly, the College would be unable to

receive such a large number of students from a single denomination. In 1968 the entire enrollment from the six denominations was fifty. The NKST Synod thereupon requested the CRC Home Board for a separate Reformed seminary within the tribal borders to alleviate the problem and to provide training that was specifically Reformed.

The request for a separate seminary with a specific confessional basis points to an issue replete with the problems typical of the current Church-Mission situation in West Africa. The Mission had previously provided a vernacular pastors' training class in Tivland as an emergency measure in the face of the unusual need. Here the majority of the Tiv pastors had received their training. The limitations of this method, however, were excruciatingly obvious: the whole world of theological literature beyond their own Tiv notes was forever closed. Their rapport with the rising generation was curtailed and even radio and newspapers were of little value to them. The Mission therefore joined in the effort to upgrade the level of pastoral training. The way of choice appeared to be through expansion of the Theological College, owned by the churches themselves.

The Tiv, however, felt the time to be ripe for the establishment of a seminary devoted to their needs and built on a confessional foundation. Undoubtedly the desire to secure an additional institution for Tivland also was involved, but the NKST did not construe the request as divisive. In April, 1967, the Tiv Church sent directly to the CRC Home Board an appeal for a Reformed Seminary in Tivland. The letter is most instructive in understanding the mind of the African Church. The grounds for the request are as follows:

1. In these days it is very necessary for the Christians of Africa to be united, as it is necessary for Africa to be united in the things of national concern. And we are continuing to be united. Therefore it is so necessary that we have teaching in the Reformed faith that is both correct and right. Thus when we come together with our other brethren and their teachings, they will not be able to change us by their teachings, and we will be strong in our faith. Even more we will have something we can give them. If we do not have this seminary we will be lost among them, and their teachings will swallow us up. We will not have roots in order to stand firm.
2. Another reason for having a Reformed Seminary is this, the Theological College of Northern Nigeria cannot adequately supply our needs. In a short time there will not be room for all our men to enter that we will need for the future. . . .[54]

During the course of the same year the General Conference of the Mission sent to the Home Board a strong appeal for increased support

[54] *Agenda for Synod*. Grand Rapids, 1968, p. 304.

and expansion of the union seminary as the preferable course for theological training. The Mission stressed the viciousness of tribal animosities and pointed to the Nigerian Civil War as an instance of the tragic results of this divisiveness.[75] Furthermore, though the NKST might wish to enroll seventy students, it was difficult to conceive of how that many qualified applicants could be found. As to the doctrinal problem of the united seminary, the General Conference expressed its confidence that the Reformed faith could stand fearlessly in the ongoing dialogue carried on at the college. The NKST had never indicated any dissatisfaction with its TCNN graduates, and the Mission felt that the Tiv fear of "being swallowed up" was largely designed to win Home Board sympathy.

Faced with these conflicting proposals, the Home Board urged the NKST to continue its fellowship with the other churches in the Theological College and to reconsider its request for a separate seminary. The Board was aware that should it grant the request of the NKST, a similar request would be forthcoming from the "natural-born" daughter. the EKAS Benue Church. The Board therefore urged the NKST to consult with the other (Reformed) churches. The fear of the fragmentation of the TEKAS, the fellowship of the churches of the north, was a major deterrent to approval.

Church and Mission thus found themselves at loggerheads on an issue touching many strands of the problematics of partnership. The intense desire to preserve the unity of the Church in the face of imminent splintering by tribal considerations is met by the plea of the Church for the strengthening of her own confessional foundations. The tide of history appears to be with the Church in this instance, and the Mission's dream must necessarily be adjusted to the realities of the African situation. The NKST plea for a seminary will not down, and cannot forever, it would seem, be denied.

The problem of theological training is also a graphic illustration of the evolution of the relationship between the Home Board and the daughter Church. The position of the Board at the time of the beginning of the union seminary was one of great apprehension and reservation. The consideration of confessional distinctiveness was a major concern articulated by the Board. Through the years, however, this apprehension was gradually replaced by acquiesence and then by a desire for full-fledged participation in the union school. The shift likewise represents the broadening outlook of the home Church and a growing desire not to impose the history and schisms of the West upon the African Church.

At the same time another evolution was taking place within the Tiv Church. Here in the beginning the uncomplicated view of the

[75] Minutes of Nigeria General Conference, Nov., 1967.

world-wide Church held sway for a people but recently emerged from paganism. The union with Christians from other tribes was an exercise in Christian joy and a means of demonstrating strength and brotherhood. As time passed, however, the linguistic and doctrinal differences became more evident and an ethnic awareness entered the picture. Soon the confessional and ethnic distinctiveness joined hands to modify the nature and extent of the fellowship. The consciousness of being Reformed was heightened. Thus while the Home Board moved from adamant confessionalism toward broader fellowship, the NKST was moving from broader fellowship toward adamant confessionalism. The growing confessional unity between the two denominations will probably serve as a powerful motivation for the provision of a Reformed Seminary in Tivland.

4. The Fellowship Gap

It is apparent, that partnership has brought centrifugal as well as centripetal forces into the relationship of Church and Mission. Professionalism has narrowed the area of contact between the tribesman and the missionary. The man in the bush who could jaw with the trekker stands distant in the face of the paraphernalia of modernity. One Tiv pastor admonished a Mission doctor in the future not to put Tiv women in labor on an operating table, because it is proper for Tiv woman to have their babies in a sitting position. Likewise, the confinement of the missionary within the institution tends to preclude much contact with the man in the bush in his joys and sorrows. With all classes conducted in English, it is no longer necessary for the teacher to learn the vernacular. The formalization of roles disrupts the earlier casualness. All these factors combine to form a fellowship gap of alarming proportions. Only the most determined effort of missionaries driven by the Spirit can alleviate this problem.

One significant effort now being urged on missionaries is membership in the national Church, both as a Biblical principle and as a means to close this fellowship gap. It might appear superfluous to state the necessity of this union with the local Church with which one communes for years on end, yet some missionaries refuse to join the African Church. This reluctance speaks volumes to the observant national, and certainly cannot be justified on the basis of ties with a distant sending Church. A Christian is part of the Church in his locality. He naturally should be a member where he lives and works and fellowships with God's people.

During periods of stress in relationships between Church and Mission, some missionaries have declined to join the NKST. This action appears to some Tiv to be tantamount to voicing a doubt as to whether

the NKST is truly Christ's body. On the other hand, the opinion has been voiced that were a missionary to be a member of the local Church, his influence would soon grow out of proportion to that of other members.[56] Actually, membership need not be a factor in the influence the missionary wields. Here the matter is principial, and the practical problems must be dealt with as they arise. A Christian functioning in Christ's body and having fellowship day by day with that body, yet declining to have membership in that body, is an anomaly. But in the strength of true fellowship he grows close to the Church and they together increasingly drink of one Spirit.

E. CHURCH AND MISSION — DRINKING OF ONE SPIRIT

Church-Mission relationships in the phase of transition have been marked by their delicacy and tentativeness. The partnership, so eagerly anticipated, proved to be elusive and thorny. The formalization of roles led at times to rancor and distrust. It is well to remember, therefore, that a study of partnership is much more than an investigation of procedure and relationships. Church and Mission have together faced from the beginning the issues of unbelief, poverty, needless death, and ignorance. Beyond the problems of procedure lie the stark issues of these ills themselves. They are the problems that unite, the issues that give Church and Mission common cause. In some areas of Tivland, one half of the children do not grow up to be adults,[57] and in many areas not one child in ten attends school. Here are problems more profound than those of procedure. Likewise, the matter of efficient Church-Mission interaction must not divert attention from the fact that only 1% of the Tiv are baptized members of the NKST. The focus of attention thus remains on these challenging facts which are the stuff of Christian involvement. Here Church and Mission are in concert, facing the issues that unite them, "made to drink of one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13).

---

[56]M. Baker, in: *Facing Facts In Modern Missions,* Chicago, 1963, p. 48. Baker here invokes J. H. Bavinck, as well as Bishop Newbigin, and Max Warren, though none of these respected thinkers inveigh against missionary membership in the local church in the citations adduced, and give no support to Baker's argument. Baker also (p. 42) feels that Paul did not join local churches since he was "above" them: "his function as a missionary and church establisher gave him a spiritual leadership which organizationally was above and outside the local church." Baker, one suspects, would be loathe to have this comparison pressed very far to apply to missionaries today! But then, of course, his argument falls, too. He also goes on to claim (p. 50), "Spiritual fellowship and spiritual identification with the people are not dependent on church membership." That hardly seems an attractive missionary principle with which to instruct the younger churches. They will never grow if it becomes noised about. It is, in fact, evidence of a dual standard of conduct, appropriate for missionaries, but quite unacceptable for the local church.

[57]Source: Dr. E. Stehouwer, Medical Superintendent, CRC Mission, Nigeria.

1. Using Societal Structure for Church Growth

The resources of Church and Mission thus join in the building of Christ's Church and in confronting together the problems of Church growth. In several areas in Tivland the use of familial ties in the evangelistic program has been attempted with excellent results for Church growth. In time past missionaries often tended to stress man's unity before God which places him ultimately beyond the divisions of compound and kindred. This attitude, however, ignores man's natural planes of communication and interaction and fails to use societal structures in the service of Christ. It is these relationships which for thinkers such as Dr. D. McGavran are prime avenues along which God's revelation enters the human scene, and which suggest a new approach in bush evangelism.[58]

Very practical considerations also invite this approach. Widespread trekking, while it covers a broad area and reaches many potentially receptive individuals, brings a single-shot confrontation which is difficult to follow up effectively. The result is one Christian in this clan, another in that. These scattered believers cannot daily rely on one another for mutual encouragement over against the surrounding paganism and persistent ridicule. It is difficult for the distant Church to reach them at this crucial stage. How much better if nuclei of believers could gather together for worship and support according to subclan or segment lines!

In 1962 certain of the missionaries in Tivland introduced such a plan of evangelism. An appropriate social segment known as the *ipaven u ken iyou*, "the segment within the hut," was selected as the unit to be evangelized. This segment normally consists of from nine to twelve extended-family compounds. In cooperation with local Christians several such segments were chosen in unevangelized areas. Teams of two were then assigned to each compound in the segment and each team witnessed regularly in its assigned compound for fourteen weeks. At the end of the fourteen week period an evangelistic conference was held in the compound of the segment head and with his approval. At this conference a segment-wide decision for Christ was urged upon the people, with the understanding that those who responded would be enrolled in seekers' classes and that a worship center would be established for the segment in the compound of the segment head.

A typical segment evangelized in this way contained 350 people, of whom 105 were young people and adults. Out of these young people and adults, twenty-one people professed conversion and were enrolled in seekers' classes. Approximately the same results were

[58]D. McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, New York, 1956.

obtained in the other segments, and at the end of the year the worship centers were in full operation and most of those who professed conversion remained in the seekers' classes. In most of the segments visited, none of the people had been baptized. Here the traditional method of widespread trekking was abandoned in favor of an intensive approach to a particular group. Multi-individual decisions resulted in the formation of a nucleus of believers who are able to encourage one another in adversity and establish a center for outreach to other segments. These webs of relationship are used in an intensive saturation which demands decision.

On the congregational level, Mission and Church at one time agreed that clan boundaries should not be determinative as boundaries for the Church, lest clan be pitted against clan within the Church. It was fairly easy to maintain this position when congregations were few and each spanned several clans. Today, however, with the multiplicity of congregations this position is being covertly challenged. The Christians themselves ultimately vote with their feet as to where they will attend, and no drawing of boundary lines will deny them. At the same time the other congregations within the classis and synod serve as powerful checks to undue acquisitiveness on the part of any one congregation. Here, too, the lines of social structure are of value in Christ's service.

2. FACING OBSTACLES TO CHURCH GROWTH

The priority of Church growth has been the insistent call of Dr. McGavran. "Persistent pressure," he writes, "is felt today by all missionaries — and indeed all Christians — to de-emphasize conversion and church growth in favor of the relief of physical suffering and the provision of loaves and fishes."[59] In the same volume, however, Eugene Nida points out that the term growth cannot be construed only in terms of numerical increase, but refers also the maturation of the body.[60] Strengthening of the Church in its outreach to its community cannot be divorced from evangelism. The problem is largely one of discerning the stage of Church growth achieved, both qualitatively and numerically. Within the Tiv Church this problem may be described in terms of three of its components.

a. *The Attender-Member Gap*

The first of these concerns the significant gap between those attending the Tiv Church and those who become members of it. Over

---

[59]D. McGavran, *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, New York, 1965, p. 19.
[60]E. Nida, in: *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, (D. McGavran, ed.), New York, 1965, p. 57.

the years thousands of Tiv have become attenders at services of the NKST, but these attenders have not been shepherded into membership in the Church. The ratio of members to attenders has over the years averaged one to fifteen, and at times reached one in seventeen. No other Church in Nigeria has such a wide gap;[61] nevertheless, the problem is current throughout the Middle Belt and beyond. In commenting on this situation, J. Grimley writes,

> Adults are well represented in this Sunday morning attendance, but most of them are holding back from full commitment in church membership. There are many reasons for this, but a lack of willingness to believe in Jesus Christ as the Saviour is not usually one of them. . . . The high moral code of the Church may cause some believers to hesitate to make the break that sets them apart from the other adults in their community. . . . Also, some adults avoid the stiff catechumen courses because they fear they will not be able to learn to read, or learn the material of the course. Most adults do not wish to attend a children's class. The length of preparation for membership in some churches may be a discouragement for many adults who feel that a long period of being neither pagan nor fully accepted as Christian is a dangerous state in which to be. If fetishes are given up, "protection" within the Christian Church is a vital necessity.[62]

In the NKST, the stipulation is that an applicant shall attend the seekers' class for one year, and the adult catechism classes for at least two additional years before baptism may be administered. Polygamists and the illiterate are usually denied admittance to the catechism classes. Here then we have a partial explanation for the reluctance to take the decisive step toward union with the Church. Studies made by Dr. H. Gray of the CRC Mission indicate that many attenders wait from two to four years before entering the seekers' classes, and then three more years elapse before they become communicants. The danger is that the attenders become discouraged and stop coming or encourage the formation of a separatist group. The Yaounde Conference in June, 1965, expressed great concern regarding this lengthy pre-baptismal preparation period and declared that the Bible teaches the Church to baptize people when they repent.[63] The NKST, however, stoutly rejected this thesis and declared that the probationary period of instruction was necessary in order to keep the Church strong and to eliminate the fair-weather believers. Given the high rate of discipline in many African Churches, one can understand the NKST position.

---

[61]T. Monsma, *Our Task in Tiv Country*, unpublished discussion paper, 1966, p. 1.

[62]Grimley and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

[63]Source: Minutes of TEKAS, Numan, Nigeria, Jan. 4-8, 1967.

The way to approach the problem of the attender-member gap is thus not through further agitation to change the NKST rule, but rather to point out the changed situation that now obtains. Tiv pastors emphasize the necessity of attendance at worship services, still untiringly call the unbelieving to faith in God, just as they did in the era of reluctance and scepticism. The theme is a precious one, but it is not now the only theme. "Believe on Jesus" is still the appeal of nearly every sermon, and this must now be complemented by an emphasis on union with the Church and the importance of the sacraments in the Christian life. Here the Mission can be effective in its pastor training programs.

A second avenue involves making the road to Church membership more attractive to the responsive thousands. The provision of many more classes near to the localities of interested attenders will be an important stimulus. Separate classes for older people unable to read with the same fluency as the young will attract many who now hesitate. The NKST meets each Sunday in over 1500 worship centers, yet there are fewer than forty pastors to supervise this farflung body with its host of functions. Here the provision of pastors remains for Church and Mission a most critical need.

b. *The Sophisticate-Peasant Dichotomy*

The second component of the current Church-growth picture concerns the sophisticate-peasant dichotomy. Hundreds of graduates now pour from post-primary educational institutions in Tivland each year, and the Church faces the unfamiliar problem of incorporating this new elite class into her life and worship. Even though the elite class is small numerically in comparison to the multitudes in the bush, yet their influence in tribal life is far greater than their number would indicate. Here the previous minimal level of pastoral training shows its shortcomings and emergency character. Graduates from the vernacular classes are slow in grappling with the problems of an urban, secularized, fast-moving world. A more effective urban ministry is the new Mission frontier, and here the Church calls for help with the provision of urban facilities and personnel. Even more important is the establishment of dialogue within the Church itself, so that the forces of change which the new elite represent may be understood by the conservative leadership still suspicious of innovation. This dialogue is now only in its initial stages and the young pastors, trained at the Theological College, tread lightly in the Church forums as befits the young. It is from such men, however, that the dialogue will evolve, rather than from the Mission. The Church, now quite self-conscious, tends to resist the imposition of change by foreign agents and is suspicious of ecclesiastical imperialism. The Mission can, however,

speak effectively to the potential leaders now studying in its institutions and there show the quality of the tribal and ecclesiastical heritage which is theirs and the necessity of understanding. If this feeling of identity with the past heritage can be instilled, the dialogue can take place. If it does not take place, the danger of secularism will confront the elite more than ever. It is this danger that the older leaders have not well understood in their resentment of the radical changes desired by the new elite. It is therefore this situation which must be drawn for the pastoral students in the emergency vernacular pastors training classes.

c. *The Leadership Gap*

The third component in the Church growth picture has also to do with leadership. On the closing of the leadership gap in the NKST rests much of the resolution of the problems alluded to in these pages. As late as 1968 only one-third of Tiv pastors could speak or read English. The majority of the pastors had been trained in the vernacular, and the world of newspapers and radio is largely closed to them, as also the literature of the Christian world.

The problem the Tiv Church faces is typical of many African denominations: the difficulty of obtaining qualified pastoral students. In its crassest formulation, it may be said that the ministry is often the last resort of the culls, those unable to secure admission to advanced educational institutions or those who leave them with deficiencies. Appeals to students in secondary schools and teachers' colleges have not been richly productive. The financial emolument in the pastorate is insufficient to make it a serious consideration for some. One must not too quickly pass judgment here by maintaining that financial considerations should not be a deciding factor in entering the ministry. In the first place, the student is usually supported in his years of study by family members who consider him as an investment in the future as well as a brother. These relatives are willing to sacrifice for the student's education, for they know that education is the key to financial success in the new Nigeria, and that they may call upon the student in later years for help. These relatives are not likely to look with favor at the ministry as the goal of the student. The average Tiv pastor's salary is between $32 and $38 per month. He is scarcely able to repay loans made in earlier days.

This fact is even more telling when seen over against the salaries open to teachers and those in government service, whose salaries are often twice as much and may exceed $150 per month. The serious Christian student is not unwilling to face financial hardship, but he must also think in terms of the future education of his own children. Thus, if the first influence upon him is family pressure, the second is

his own sense of responsibility. In spite of these influences, some successful students do enter the ministry and secure a diploma from the Theological College.

The vast majority of pastors are, however, obtained through other routes. The first of these is training in the vernacular. The candidates in this case are usually men with long experience in the work of the Church, men respected and mature, though with little education. In the critical years of great Church growth in Tivland, these men fill an urgent need for leaders in many bush churches. The second route is through pre-seminary training for primary school leavers as a preparation for attendance at the Theological College. Here one faces the problem that the preliminary school appears as a last resort for students who have applied to various advanced schools and have been unsuccessful in gaining admittance. If all else fails, the pre-seminary school is thus yet an option. There are, of course, also those for whom the ministry has been the continuing goal. The problem of the poor academic quality of pastoral students, however, persists and Church and Mission seek to make the office more attractive.

One plan often suggested is that of Mission subsidy of pastors' salaries. Tiv pastors, whose forbearance in adversity has been amazing, have sometimes suggested that such a subsidy would be welcome. The Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands practise it in Indonesia. Yet such a mountain of missionary literature warning against initiation of the practise has come from the experience of many churches that there is no possibility of its being attempted in Tivland.[64] The Chairman of the Tiv Synod also publicly expressed the satisfaction of the Church that she had been led to financial independence, for without it, he maintained, the Tiv Church would not be the Tiv Church, but a part of the Mission and known everywhere by the name of the Mission. Churches founded by the Church Missionary Society are yet called CMS; even Catholic schools are known as the RC Mission schools, but Tiv Christians are known as members of the NKST. This seeming harshness of the Mission, he averred, had been one of its greatest kindnesses.

Another possible solution is that of a part-time ministry with pastors engaging in various business ventures to supplement their income. In a few instances, pastors have been accused of doing just that, and the populace is generally opposed to the idea. With the shortage of pastors and the wide area covered by each congregation, the public

[64]Cf. the Gereformeerde writer, Dr. J. Gilhuis, *Ecclesiocentrische Aspecten Van Het Zendingswerk*, Kampen, 1955, p. 61, who states,

> "'Foreign' money always has the tendency to dry up the indigenous sources by which life could be sustained. Again and again it may be seen that when such a process takes place, those sources are no longer seen or considered, and independent action is seriously retarded right from the beginning." (my translation)

irritation is understandable. Furthermore, the temptation of these business ventures to consume more and more time and attention, especially as they prosper, cannot be discounted. The Tiv will not accept such a solution. The possibility of some form of subsidy should therefore be left an open question at this stage. The problem will gain momentum as more men from the Theological College enter the ranks of the ministry and find their salaries far below that of other men with equal or even less education.

One effort made by congregations to assist the pastor financially is through provision of labor to hoe his farm. Tiv do not consider the ownership of a farm by their pastor to be out of place; indeed, it is most natural to this agrarian people that every man have a farm. The congregation here finds one way in which they can aid their pastor financially, while it is considered unseemly that the pastor should himself hoe the farm.

Though the Mission was opposed to subsidizing the salaries of pastors, a way was sought to assist the pastors in their financial plight and to make the ministry more attractive. This was achieved through the provision of scholarships to pastors' children entering post-primary schools. The Mission offered to pay 75% of the fees stipulated by the school, or $56 per child per year, whichever was less.[65] This provision is meant to indicate to the pastors the concern of the Mission while not damaging the local sense of responsibility. It is meant to enhance the quality of candidates desiring to enter the ministry and thereby to assist the Church in her own effort to upgrade the clergy. This aid is in addition to substantial support provided by the Mission for the students in the Theological College during their four years of training.

3. Maintaining a Sense of Urgency

The three components of the Church growth problematic in Tivland mentioned above indicate how Church and Mission work to achieve mutuality in the phase of transition. At the same time, one further line must be drawn — a surprising line made up of the fading of overt witness and evangelism in the Tiv Church. The casual observer, noting the lively planting of new congregations and the multitudes at worship, would not sense this somber fact. Yet here we come to grips with one of the most disturbing problems confronting the NKST in the face of its numerical success. In the days of her infancy, every member of the Church was expected to evangelize and this enterprise consumed many hours and days of the believer's time. Each year at least a week was spent in trekking in a specific area as a concerted

[65]Minutes of Nigeria General Conference, April, 1967.

congregational project. Sunday afternoons were given to visiting neighboring villages with the Gospel. Now, however, the situation is much different. So great is the number of catechumens and seekers that it is difficult to cope with them all, and it seems less than urgent to implore still more Tiv to attend the overflowing worship services. It appears difficult, therefore, to maintain the sense of urgency and of the need for personal witness to others in this climate of success and blessing.

In a symposium devoted to Church growth, Eugene Nida explores this problem of the reduction of fervor. A swelling tide of growth cannot proceed indefinitely in any group. All movements experience crisis or the gradual fading of enthusiasm. It is therefore necessary to anticipate these periods of entropy. In his words,

> The impact of the original message is greatly reduced by long acquaintance with it, and perception of the contrasts between the old and the new way of life becomes increasingly dulled by habitual contact and adjustment. Moreover, what at one time was obviously "news" is no longer new, hence the motivation to share it is weaker and the desire to hear about it significantly less acute. Accordingly, although the Church still possesses the "eternal Gospel" the members of the Christian community experience less and less concern for its propagation.[66]

This pattern is being exemplified in Tivland. In several parts of Nigeria in recent years an intensive program of evangelism has been carried on as the New Life For All campaign. Several missions and churches have appointed personnel to this program and various denominations have participated with striking results. Every Church member is enlisted for prayer and discipling over a period of several months. Prior training sessions and a retreat are part of the preparation as the entire denomination is mobilized. The energetic organizers of this movement also came to Tivland and generated a great deal of enthusiasm for the project among the pastors. The Mission was asked to translate the literature of the campaign into Tiv and to prepare it for publication. At the same time, reservations regarding participation were being voiced, which took the following form: First, the load of

[66]E. Nida, in: *Church Growth and Christian Mission*. (D. McGavran, ed.), New York, 1965, p. 173. Nida's remarks in this volume constantly serve as a cautionary check on the focus of the Church growth school, which is almost exclusively on the numerical multiplying of churches. Nida points out that all movements experience entropy and that it is well to face that fact and anticipate it. It is precisely in the upward, enthusiastic phase of the cycle that preparation should be made for the period when growth tapers off! In a gentle supplement to the rather unenthusiastic attitude of the Church growth writers toward "perfecting," Nida points out that missionaries must prepare for the period of entropy by combining perfecting with multiplying churches. Thus "by anticipating the downswings we can reduce their severity and at the same time prepare effectively for greater growth in the future." p. 175.

catechesis and shepherding is already so huge, what shall we do if even more come forward? Secondly, the methods already in use in the NKST appear to be so highly successful that it may be asked whether it is necessary to receive advice and motivation from sources outside. Finally in March, 1968, the NKST decided not to participate in the program.

This short history of an abortive attempt at new evangelism indicates the nature of the problem now facing the NKST as a swiftly growing church. The waning of the awareness of the necessity for personal evangelism on the part of the members implies also a greater formalization of the witness of the Church, a feeling that this mandate may be given over to the paid workers. This attitude resembles somewhat the situation in the Mission with the decline of direct evangelism and trekking. Missionaries find more and more of their time consumed in bookkeeping, in the accumulation of all kinds of supplemental tasks, and in maintenence of the organization. In committee meetings, the great majority of the time must be taken up with finances and institutional problems, and very little time is left to be expended in planning for intensive spiritual thrust and Church growth. It is not, therefore, surprising to find the Tiv adopting attitudes which seem less zealous and fervent than one could desire. In the words of R. C. Guy,

> Missionaries sometimes express regret for the lack of faithful, day-by-day witnessing on the part of national pastors. But is it not possible that national pastors have learned too well from missionary example? Have they perhaps observed that missionaries in this or former decades played an administrative rather than a basically spiritual role, and deduced that they should do the same?[67]

This danger has been sensed by both Church leaders and missionaries. At the Benue Bible Institute for the training of lay leaders and Bible school teachers, great emphasis is placed on visitation evangelism, and yearly evangelistic campaigns are part of the school curriculum. In another instance, Church and Mission cooperated into moving into the last great unevangelized area of Tivland. The Church sent many teams into the area on a voluntary basis. The Mission then established its last bush station there and also opened and staffed a dispensary. The Benue Bible Institute students and faculty blanketed the area in several campaigns. Individual pastors and missionaries took time out to trek. A dozen of the Bible Institute graduates volunteered to begin bush Bible schools in the area. These men became sacrificial missionaries on behalf of their churches and

[67]R. C. Guy, in: *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, (D. McGavran, ed.), New York, 1965, p. 147.

showed unusual willingness to accept loneliness and hardship for Christ's sake. Many built their own schools and dug their own wells. Political rumblings repeatedly put their lives in danger. Two Tiv pastors also gave themselves for work in the area, and the Synod mandated each Classis to send in a Bible school teacher or evangelist. The project caught the imagination of the Church and today several hundred catechumens and seekers have been enrolled and the first baptisms administered. Here the Church was presented with a concrete goal and asked to respond in a way with which it was familiar and expert. As the graduates of the Benue Bible Institute return to congregations in every part of Tivland, they provide a powerful new impetus for such visitation evangelism.

4. MEETING INFLEXIBILITY AND LEGALISM

An additional problem facing Church and Mission in this context has to do with the development of the Church on indigenous lines. Is it appropriate for the African church to place such great emphasis on organization and traditional Western liturgy? If these emphases are not truly African, why do they persist? Are they traceable solely to continued missionary insistence?

Indeed not. At least two other factors are operative here. The first of these is the ongoing resistance to change of the ruling elders. Experimentation is no virtue in the eyes of the elders, while the maintenence of the status quo allies the Church with the Church of those from whom the faith was received. The second factor is legalism. The ecclesiastical life of the Tiv is surrounded by laws, and in conformity to them the individual finds his proper placement and personal security. Dr. H. Boer points out that this legalism in the younger churches must be traced back to its roots in the traditional way of life, the "old aeon" where "life in the cyclic movement of existence *is essentially a life lived under law.* In a pagan society everyone knows his place, and everyone knows his duties, his rights, and his obligations."[68] The recurrent Sunday ritual with its inherited liturgy is valuable to the individual as a means of doing something specific to abide by law, to have a haven in a time of great change and insecurity. It is no longer missionary insistence that causes these forms to persist. Rather, the inherited customs and laws give the Church a definite position on issues, a firm stance where the thing to do and the thing not to do are clearly outlined for the new believer as he hesitantly makes his way into the new aeon. This meaning of law is in the service of serenity so that one need not be unsure. As the insecurity of the Christian community decreases, this value of law will also decrease. Granted then, that many of these customs are neither

[68]H. Boer, *Legalism and Moralism,* The Reformed Journal, Dec., 1961, p. 12.

particularly relevant or indigenous, they are not without value for Church growth at this point in time.

At the present time the factor of legalism is especially in evidence, and operates specifically in the area of Church discipline. Dr. Boer writes,

> Discipline tends to become an enforcing of laws upon transgressors rather than an instrument of love and grace to correct and restore the wayward. The exercise of external authority rather than the appeal to internal commitment largely characterizes church discipline.[69]

This tendency exhibits itself in a variety of ways in the Tiv Church. A common example is that of admission to the Lord's table. In the NKST, which practises close Communion, the elders meet before the celebration to scrutinize the membership cards of those who wish to partake. Those barred from the table on the basis of this scrutiny are almost exclusively those whose payments of the quota are in arrears. The attendance at Lord's Supper as well as all quota payments are carefully entered on the cards which are carried by all Church members. The unfortunate implication is that the entrance to heaven depends upon a satisfactory card, and this in turn depends upon being up to date with the budget. The "exercise of external authority" then obscures the investigation of "internal commitment."

The attraction of legalism may also be seen in the stipulation of certain time limits for discipline. The length of time to be set depends upon the seriousness of the transgression, but in the case of adultery the period is to be not less than one year.[70] It is safe to say that adultery and non-payment of quota account for 98% of the disciplinary action of the NKST. Here the departure from the old aeon and continued growth may well gain for the Church less dependence on legalism and a greater openness to change. The encouragement of indigenous music and instruments is now doing much to make the NKST less a replica of the Western church. With the incorporation of native phraseology and customs into her liturgy, the NKST will be able to seek increased growth as she becomes more fully indigenous.

F. COMMUNITY RELATIONS — THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

As the Church grows in size and influence the necessity of making its witness understandable to the larger Tiv community is inescapable.

---

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[70] For example, Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov. 23-26, 1965,
"At times it occurs that a Christian is courting a woman, and though they are not yet married, the woman becomes pregnant with the (carnal) knowledge of the man who is courting her. Synod states that if a Christian acts in this way, he commits adultery. Therefore, he is to be disciplined for one year according to the rules of the NKST for the adultery he committed" (my translation).

Where at one time the displeasure of the Tiv could be vented at the Mission when the stance of the Christians proved distasteful to various groups within Tivland, today the Church herself must provide a rationale to the Tiv for her actions. These actions are characterized by the dual identity of the believers: they are both Tiv and Christians and stand in both worlds at once.

1. RESENTMENT OF CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION

From the very beginning the individual Christians had to face the rancor of the tribe as a whole. It was the believers who set themselves apart from much of tribal life and thereby endangered the entire community in the eyes of the Tiv. It was the believers who were sure to bring on mystical malice by their disregard of the fetish and their denial of *tsav*. Every calamity could be laid at their door, as the unseen forces wreaked vengeance on the group. Sickness, crop failure, and abortion were part of the dismal harvest reaped because of those wretched Christians, in the mind of the Tiv community.

This conviction is not dead in Tivland among the very old. Among many of the elders, however, the disaffection has changed its form. The rootlessness of the young and the evils of the current hour are now ascribed to the Christian influence. The Christians have "spoiled the *tar*," have torn up the fabric of society. While the white man has been the carrier of this cancer, it is the Christians who followed him who must bear the immediate blame for the turbulent state of Tivland today in the view of those tribal elders.

While these criticisms are brought today particularly against those who are the educated and agressive new generation, the main body of believers live in the bush, and by their unheralded influence for good are the most effective counter to the criticism. The unbelievers find it harder to embrace these Christians in such criticism; the compounds of the Christians are often cleaner than those of their neighbors and their walk more commendable. In the recent period of bribery and corruption, it was precisely the Christians who objected to the injustice and often refused to play along with it. The restraint of Christian Tiv during the Ibo purge also gained quiet respect for many of them (as well as open taunts and ridicule). It is apparent, moreover, that not only the Christians are intent on change and technical advance today; the very elders who castigate the Christians also clamor for more schools. Whatever the drawbacks and difficulties of modernity, the overwhelming majority of Tiv want it and are pleased that Church and Mission provide certain means to help attain that goal. To the thoughtful tribal elders who are not so sure that this is the path of choice, the Christians reply that whatever precious values there may have been in the old society, it is relentlessly being swept

away, and cannot be preserved. Most Tiv understand this, and the Tiv community in general looks at the Christians first with consternation because of their seemingly foolish sacrifices for Christ's sake, and secondly with some respect as the harbingers of the future.

2. Polygamy

The displeasure that still exists in some of the tribal elders finds a specific focus in the position of the Church on polygamy. The Church has stedfastly refused to baptize polygamists or even to allow them to enter catechism, though believing wives are granted the sacraments and full membership. The reluctance of polygynous husbands to send away all of their wives except the first is quite understandable. They view with dismay the breakup of their families and have no desire to consign their wives to lifelong humiliation as cast-offs. The prospect that these women will be tempted to promiscuity and prostitution is a very real one. The Yaounde Conference in the Cameroon in 1966 asked the African churches to reconsider their stand, and this request was transmitted to the TEKAS fellowship of churches of northern Nigeria. The TEKAS minute states:

> Concerning those who have more than one wife before they repent the Yaounde Conference advised that this matter be carefully reconsidered before saying that it is quite impossible to accept them in the Church.[71]

This request found no sympathy in the official gatherings of the NKST. Church leaders maintained that should the Church go in this direction, the effect on the spiritual life of the Tiv would be harmful rather than helpful, for the young would postpone conversion and catechism until they had multiple wives, and only then finally apply for admission to the Church. In the cases where polygynous husbands profess conversion and are yet unwilling to send away their wives, they are generally welcomed into the fellowship of the Christian even though denied membership and the sacraments. They are, in the words of a Tiv pastor, "Christians outside the Church." This unflinching stand of the Church on the question of multiple wives continues to be objectionable to many of the elders and to growing numbers of younger Tiv as well. They ask how it is possible that Christ accepts them while his body does not.

3. Church Discipline

The outright prohibition of beer drinking and dancing by the NKST is also having the unusual effect of joining in common opinion

[71]Minutes of TEKAS, Numan, Nigeria, Jan. 4-8, 1967.

the non-confessing elders and the rising generation of influential Tiv young men. Though Tiv dancing does not include physical contact, the movements are often erotic and the dance is often accompanied by drinking and ends in promiscuity. The Tiv Church has taken the position that both are worldly and tied to the matrix of the former pagan way of life. Some older Christians resisted the introduction of indigenous musical instruments into the worship service for the same reason. The Tiv Church singing society (*Mbaatsamev*) also carefully instructed its members to refrain from undulating motions while singing. The staggering problem of adultery and discipline for adultery makes the Church unwilling to bend from its explicit stand in spite of obvious widespread flaunting of its position by some of its members. An additional point here is that the average Church member is tempted to feel that a double standard of discipline operates within the NKST, with the Church closing its eyes to violations when the offenders are influential. Those outside the Church are confused by the inconsistency, which should serve as a stimulant to thorough discipline or else to some liberalization of the written position.

4. MUSLIM INFLUENCES

In the post-independence years the Christian community was subjected to increasing Muslim harassment and the future of the relationship with Islam appeared ominous. The northern part of Tivland borders on a significantly Muslim area under control of the Muslim chief of Lafia. Bush Bible schools in this area were closed down by his decree. One Bible school teacher related a demand that all Sunday offerings be divided with the local chief as the price of his permission to hold services. When this was refused, worship services were forbidden. When the courageous teacher nevertheless continued preaching, he was thrown into prison, and an appeal was sent out for assistance from the missionary. The author arrived in time to find that the errant chief had been ousted that day because of tax fraud, and the teacher released. The local Christians said that God had taken matters into his own hands, and the previous harassment dampened their ardor not at all.

In another instance a Muslim meeting place was erected on the very plot occupied by the worship center of the Christians. Several Tiv in this area had begun to see the political advantages of performing *salla,* and Islam was beginning to secure a foothold in Tivland. The Tiv historically had rejected Islam together with all its overtones of political domination by the Hausa, but the wall was beginning to crack. With the assassination of the Northern premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, in January of 1966, and the abolition of political parties by the military government, this incipient Muslim movement

was halted. Politics, religion, personal advancement, and a new conception of tribal destiny had been interwoven by Islam in a way that was beginning to attract the Tiv. The NKST stance was discreet throughout, for any provocation would have meant greater Muslim attention and show of power.

The relation of the NKST to the Islam-In-Africa Project has therefore been rather distant. I-A-P speakers have come to Tivland, but no intensive participation in the project has been allowed. The Tiv Church leaders feel that the course of wisdom is to keep Muslim attention away from the Tiv to avoid a Muslim counter-reaction to the work of the I-A-P in Tivland. Tiv are not now Muslim, it is held, therefore the issue should remain quiescent.

The Islamic appeal will, however, undoubtedly continue in the years ahead, though the creation of the Benue-Plateau State will serve to decrease direct Hausa influence over the Tiv. The difficulty will come from those Tiv who see in Christianity an alien, Western-oriented, white religion, complex and demanding. Islam now capitalizes on the view that Christianity is one of the vestiges of imperialism, while Islam with its permission of polygamy and its absence of academics, is amenable to the soul of the African. Maulvi Saifi, an Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary in Nigeria, writes,

> As for the strength of Christianity, your riches, organization, and self-sacrifice are your assets. Your schools, hospitals, and other charitable works have done a lot to attract the people towards Christianity. The Western civilization, which is not really Christian, is in a way helping in the spread of Christianity.[72]

This theme is a common refrain of Muslims in Nigeria in addressing Christians and pointing out their strengths and assets. The liabilities and weaknesses of Christianity are detailed by the orthodox Muslim leader of Lagos, Alhaji Shodeinde, as follows:

> Christianity is fast losing ground among the people. . . . The Church is not consistent and reasonable in its preaching, and the authenticity of its Book has been attacked by its very professors, so its teachings have no real hold on the masses, except for material advantages.
>
> Hence the endless schisms. The claim that it was going to become a universal religion has become an empty vaunting, for it cannot be shown which of its over four hundred varieties is to become a universal creed.[73]

These considerations, which until now had little impact on the Tiv, will become more painfully manifest as time goes on. The Church is, indeed, aware that the present hour is crucial in that this is the time

[72]M. Saifi, in: *Africa Now*, No. 18, July-Sept., 1963, New York, p. 6.
[73]Alhaji Shodeinde, in: *Africa Now*, No. 18, July-Sept., 1963, New York, p. 6.

when the people are "winnable." If the Church is widely enough established when the great masses of Tiv leave their traditional religious customs, then the Muslim harvest will be greatly lessened, for Islam is particularly attractive to the former pagan precisely at the point when he is in the process of leaving his fetishes. The old axiom is therefore true: the best way to convert the Muslim is to reach him before he becomes one.

5. ROMAN CATHOLIC INFLUENCES

At the same time, the NKST faces the problem of Roman Catholic competition for the allegiance of the Tiv. The relationship of the DRCM and the RCM was unremittingly hostile, due in part to the Catholic practise of "raiding" Protestant schools and offering a haven to those in discipline or disfavor in the Protestant camp. The Catholic "bazaar," highly popular in Tivland, provoked intense reaction among the Protestants who saw associated with it outright gambling, prostitution, and an exaltation of materialism.

This hostility has now begun to decline. The SUM has less intensely bitter memories of the history of the competition, and the effects of Vatican II are distinctly felt in the new attitude of the RCM. A high point in the *rapprochement* was the decision of the Bishop of Makurdi to purchase several thousand Tiv Bibles from the SUM for sale to Catholics. Formerly, Catholics found carrying literature published by the SUM (or DRCM) were liable to punishment and the literature was confiscated and burned. The new attitude of the missions toward one another has caused some consternation among NKST adherents who now are unable to discern whether Catholics should be regarded as friends or foes. When, for example, NKST leaders learned of the purchase of the Tiv *Bibilo* by the Catholics, the reaction was not one of unalloyed joy. For one thing, the Bible is traditionally the open book of the Protestants; it is "ours" and certainly not "theirs." Now, after many painstaking years of "our" work in translation and publishing, "they" will use the same tool, the last gift of the departing DRCM, to convert Tiv to "their" faith.

The consternation goes deeper. With the mellowing of relationships between the missions and the new ecumenical approach of the Catholics, various areas of irritation are being discovered and rectified. The use of the vernacular in worship, and the open Bible for all Tiv, are examples. NKST leaders, while thankful for the new light seen by the Catholics, are also disturbed by the consequent blurring of the distinctiveness of the NKST. Certain of the best talking points of the evangelists in their approach over against the Catholics are now denied them. The demand thus placed upon the evangelists is that of a more positive witness. The decline of polemics will be a blessing

to the NKST as the attention of the Tiv is focused more centrally on Christ alone.

6. Nationalism

While the Church now shares with the Mission in both the respect and resentment of the wider community, there are specific areas in which the problems bear particularly on the Mission. One of the most delicate of these is the increasingly critical attitude of Nigerians toward "Europeans," and in the case of the Christian Reformed missionaries, toward America. The long range problem to be considered here is the measure in which the possibility exists that an organized American mission may become a liability rather than an asset to the Church. The extent of this problem may be observed in an incident that occured during the Civil War in 1967. The American government refused to allow the federal government of Nigeria to purchase warplanes and materiel from the United States lest she be charged with the escalation of the war. The planes were then purchased from willing Communist countries, and the wrath of the Nigerian newspapers against America was coupled with a suspicion that Americans generally were sympathetic to "Christian" Biafra.

In addition to the possibility of growing anti-Americanism there is tied a resentment by some of the constant exhibition of the wealth of the Westerner. It should be quickly noted that the Tiv does not begrudge the missionary his fine home and car. He is welcome to them as long as the Tiv is enabled to identify himself or his people with the affluence exhibited. In other words, the Tiv wants to be a recipient from this affluence at some point, yet precisely in the act of receiving there lies the danger of the demonstration of his inferior economic position. J. Merle Davis, in his study of the psychology of self-support, describes the situation as one of a psychic resentment in the recipient at the point of receiving aid from his benefactor.[74] The wider dimensions of this problem have been stated by Max Warren in terms of three forces at work below the surface in Africa. These are: 1) Revulsion against the white man: he has brought as much disruption and pain as progress; 2) The urge for psychic security: the African has been atomized and secularized and his spirit thrown into the dark night of a cultural void; and 3) The urge for self-affirmation: the African needs to feel that he is not a servile recipient or slavish imitator.[75] Today these forces have more room for expression than ever before, and the challenge to the Mission is to do her works 1) openly, yet 2) without ostentation. To do them

[74] J. M. Davis, *The Economic and Social Environment of the Younger Churches*, London, 1939, pp. 37-54.

[75] M. Warren, *Challenge and Response*, London, 1960, pp. 21-35.

Church and the Mission

Church and Mission aims

the Mission's

especially the

more and th

They easily

stand that also to be the Mission's chief purpose in Tivland. This is not to say that such is the case, but only that *in the eyes of the community* such is the case. Furthermore, the Tiv nowadays are so used to these Mission enterprises that they are rather matter-of-factly accepted. Formerly, for example, the medical work of the Mission was a striking method of arousing interest; it engendered many questions as to the motivation behind it. Today that "surprise-value" has declined. J. Gilhuis writes in this connection:

> As far as the medical ministry is concerned, it must be said that because of external circumstances its evangelistic activity is far less favored than was the case in former years. . . . The medical arm of mission in the present situation is no longer striking and *thereby* provocative of reflection.[76]

The unique place of the medical work in the eyes of the nationals is hence being modified. Its meaning may be easily misunderstood. Some Tiv, for example, consider the hospitals and dispensaries as the Mission's source of income which enable it to carry on all its other activities. Very few Tiv understand that the Mission puts money *into* the hospitals, and many think that the hospitals are there to make money. Missionaries and Church leaders both do what they can to correct this impression, but it dies hard. The problem is to point out, as H. Kraemer has said, that the medical ministry is not only for the relief of a physical need, but its end is the contraint of Christ's love *so that the national perceives that message.* Kraemer finds it necessary to state that position in the face of those who maintain that the acts of the Christian doctor *are* Christianity in action and therefore sufficient as an attack on the chaotic and demonic forces at work in the world. Kraemer finds this position quite inadequate, since the patient cannot *perceive* that Christ's love is behind the action.[77] Of course, open proselytization may be viewed as a dishonest means to use an emergency situation when a patient is defenseless. Nevertheless, Kraemer maintains that some form of evangelistic communication in this context is an absolute necessity, and he finds in the fellowship of Christian workers and in their genuine compassion the prime avenue for this witness. Then the Christian word will also flow naturally.

However defensible this view may be, and superior to its alternatives, to the missionary on the field the task is not so easily defined. The ceaseless flood of patients clamoring for speedy attention, the desperate shortage of personnel, the enervating climate, combine to make a constant attitude of sweetness and light impossible. Simply

---

[76]J. Gilhuis, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191, (my translation).
[77]H. Kraemer, *From Missionfield to Independent Church*, London, 1958, p. 142.

to get through the day with a minimum of crises is often a major accomplishment. In *this* context, how can the compassion of Christ be effectively communicated? *This* is the problem, the immediate, personal, and existential problem plaguing medical missions more than any other. Dorothea Lehmann gives explicit statement to the issue in these words:

> If a concern for efficiency in the face of heavy demands makes the ministering white Christians impatient and bad-tempered, he [the patient] may leave the clinic and the hospital free from ulcers, but with new and painful wounds which are much more difficult to heal.[78]

It is to this kind of issue that missionaries give their attention as they face the swiftly growing demands made on Christian institutions. The fascination with expansion does not quickly wane, for it suggests that bigger is better, that the more lives are touched the more successful is the program. It is this deeply ingrained trend that contributes to the distortion of Mission aims in the eyes of the community. The goal of more effective communication, and not only of the quantity of service possible, will increasingly be the touchstone of the ministry of the Mission as it meets the larger Tiv community.

G. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS — SEARCHING FOR SOUL-BROTHERS

The early missionaries in northern Nigeria worked with the untrammeled premise that the Church is one and undivided. This majestic vision found an expression at the Miango Conference in 1926 which already then drafted a trial constitution for a church yet to be born, which would embrace all the peoples there represented.[79] Not until 1938 were the first evangelists ordained to the ministry, and in the ceremony they were ordained simply into the ministry of the *Ekklesiya cikin Sudan*, the Church in the Sudan. As late as 1946, when five more men were licensed to preach, it was in the name of the *Ekklesiya cikin Sudan* that they were ordained.[80] The organic unity of this rising Church, however, was not to endure. W. Harr writes,

> There were missionaries so convinced of the rightness of their own confessional denominational base that they were restless unless it show in the life of the church. Some missionaries advocated a movement

[78] D. Lehmann, in: *International Review of Missions*, April, 1959, p. 243.
[79] W. Harr, *Frontiers of the Christian World Mission*, New York, 1961, p. 108.
[80] J. Maxwell, *Half A Century of Grace*, London, n.d., p. 269.

away from the Church in the Sudan to what has finally come to be the Association of Churches of Christ in the Sudan.[81]

It was felt by these missionaries that a single Christian Church growing out of the efforts of the evangelical missions would pose overwhelming obstacles to theological purity. They wished their unique heritage passed on to the churches just being born, even at the expense of reproducing in Africa the schisms of the West. Thus the dream of organic unity could not be achieved. Nevertheless, the Church did not completely disintegrate. In 1955 at Randa the Fellowship of Churches of Christ in the Sudan, the *Tarrayyar Ekklesiyoyin Kristi A Sudan* (TEKAS), was formed with six member bodies.[82] In 1959 the NKST joined TEKAS as its seventh member. Though organizational union proved to be an impossibility, the TEKAS stood as a precious pillar of inspiration for its members. At its yearly meetings in January, the enthusiasm and companionship across strained ethnic lines was a thrilling experience for each one present. Surrounded by Islam and traditional religions, they drew strength from one another as they shared their common problems.

This urge toward ecumenical communion accompanied a rising tide of nationalism. The most diverse ethnic groups found themselves united in the common struggle for independence. *E pluribus unum* was the motto for an astonishing federalism which for a time obscured the underlying deep-seated animosities which had been temporarily laid aside.

That day of the popularity of unbridled federalism in Africa has now passed and violent reactions against the monolithic power structures have appeared in almost every country. Animosities that had been shelved in the common struggle now have the opportunity to become more open, and the monolith cracks under the demands of long-latent sectionalisms.

A similar development is apparent in the ecumenical life of the Tiv Church. Separatist viewpoints that once lay dormant or even unthought now receive recognition from a tribe aware of its distinctiveness and unique heritage. The Tiv linguistic identity, for example, asserts itself in the TEKAS, where the Tiv represent the only major non-Hausa-speaking group. Though the Tiv still feel the TEKAS fellowship to be precious, its value is less central than was once the case.

A shift in the development of ecumenical ties is thus in evidence. Dr. R. Pierce Beaver points out that with the development of a greater confessional awareness in Africa after World War II, young

[81]W. Harr, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
[82]Grimley and Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

churches increasingly seek contact with other groups maintaining creedal positions similar to their own.[83] The emphasis thus is no longer solely in terms of closer ties with those who are geographically proximate, but more and more with those who share a like confessional basis. The visit of two Tiv delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, meeting in the United States in 1963, did much to open up the vista of membership with like-minded Christians around the world. It appeared as an exciting way to be part of a world-wide movement, transcending the purely regional fellowship of the TEKAS with all its problems. The idea was reinforced by attendance at the meetings of the same Synod in 1968, this time in the Netherlands. The awareness of being Reformed thus grows together with the awareness of being Tiv.

Cooperation with distant Reformed bodies is very inviting, in spite of the handicaps of language and distance. Indeed, some of the charm of the relationship is precisely because the issues are less painful. Fellowship with those nearby is more difficult in some respects than with those who are far away. For example, the principle of comity is now being challenged in the cities of the TEKAS area, as the churches proliferate and follow their adherents to cities within the area served by another TEKAS member. This regional issue is not likely to come up at the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Moreover, the churches may justify following their adherents to the cities on confessional grounds. The rise of tribal churches in the cities is thus now justified on both linguistic and confessional grounds.

The desire of the Tiv Church for a separate Reformed Seminary apart from the Theological College of Northern Nigeria which is owned by the churches of TEKAS is an instance of the complexity of these relationships today. The fear of damaging the TEKAS fellowship is one reason for the opposition of the missionaries to the Tiv request. If the Tiv diminish their support of the Theological College, other churches will likely follow suit with demands for denominational seminaries of their own. The future of the Theological College would then stand in jeopardy.

Nonetheless, missions will have to come to terms with the fact of ethnic consciousness much more than has been the case. Missions have seen the divisiveness, jealousies, and hostilities of tribalism, and found them demonic. Yet these are the brutal and unrefined edges of deep loyalties and heartfelt motivations for the group which nourished the individual and to which he owes his heritage. These loyalties now struggle for expression and *they* are not demonic. Only

[83] R. P. Beaver, *Ecumenical Beginnings in Protestant World Mission*, New York, 1962, p. 281.

out of this necessary evolution will the tribes mature toward brotherhood. The attempt to shortcut past this phase of tribal evolution is unrealistic and, in fact, doomed to failure.

The problem of tribalism is not likely to be solved by missionary advice. Missionaries wish to spare the national churches the agonies and mistakes of the Western Church, yet it seems impossible to experience history vicariously. No amount of good advice will equal the maturity to be gained from the Church's own experience. Across Africa the surge of federalism is being questioned and the latent separatism becomes overt. This history cannot be denied to the African nor lived through by proxy. Through wrestling with her own dissatisfaction at horizons narrowed by tribalism, but still bearing her ethnic identity and confessional bequest, the Tiv Church will find her way at last to live in greater fellowship with her neighbors.

H. THE HOME BASE — GROWING TO MATURITY

The problematics of partnership ultimately involve far more than the relationships of Church and Mission. A changed manner of facing reality is also the result of partnership. There are new problems and opportunities with respect to one another, the community, the wider fellowship of churches, and government. A changed perspective also results in the relationships between Mission and Home Board.

The problems of rule by Home Board are considerable, even in the era before the planting of the Church on the field. One difficulty has to do with the problem of ruling at a distance. Home Boards are required to supervise Mission decisions and expenditures, while few of the Board members have been on the field or know the context of many of the problems found there. This awareness gap is not decreased when the daughter church comes into existence. Then the necessity for the cautious formulation of decisions is heightened, for those decisions must be communicated to her as a separate autonomous body. However, the number of missionaries has greatly increased by that time, and the flood of reports from not only one field, but from fields in various lands, swells to almost undigestible proportions. The missionaries, because of their day-to-day contact with the problems on the field, tend to assume that the administration in the homeland is fully cognizant of situations which to them seem obvious. Their reports and requests at times take too much for granted, and omit steps of reasoning and background information which Board members need in order and to make knowledgeable decisions.

An example of the problems met on this level is that of the former Board attitude toward the wives of missionaries. The traditional

position is that woman's place is in the home and she should so serve also in Nigeria as an example of Christian homemaking. As a matter of fact, however, nearly every missionary wife finds herself vitally engaged in some phase of the Mission's work, as teacher, nurse, bookkeeper, or dormitory houseparent. The Mission could scarcely cope with its mandate and face its multiple emergencies without this background labor force. Yet the missionary wife has no voice or recognition because of the philosophical reluctance to agree to the fact that she does assume these duties and is, in fact, herself a missionary. In 1968 the missionaries asked that missionary wives be permitted to file a separate income tax return based on 40% of the joint salary received together with their husbands, since both are responsibly employed by the Mission.[84] The ancient semantic roadblock to calling the wife what she actually is, viz. a missionary, was overcome by the Board's affirmative response to the request.

The Nigeria Mission of the Christian Reformed Church is complicated by the fact of its nurturing two autonomous and greatly different denominations. The EKAS Benue Church in the eastern part of the field is composed of various tribes, the NKST of one. The EKAS Benue is smaller, less swiftly growing or aggressive, and possesses an outlook on issues quite different from the NKST. The Tiv Church is more determined, self-confident and sometimes lacking in finesse. These subtle differences are vital to an understanding of the relationships which grow between Church and Mission, and it is differences such as these that are difficult to communicate to a Home Board meeting once a year in a distant land. Missionaries on furlough and the Executive Secretary of the Board cannot completely close this gap.

Furthermore, the policy of the Mission is tempered by the exigencies of the Nigerian situation. The Mission tends to seek for practical solutions, for concrete action, for pragmatic results. It sees the Church surrounded not so much by the objectional doctrines of the Lutherans or Baptists over against which great stress must be laid on specific Calvinist teaching, but rather surrounded by a militant Islam and a massive paganism. Here the preaching of a fundamental loyalty to the crucified and risen Christ is of paramount importance. Missionaries understandably have less time or inclination for dogmatic infighting and polemics than is found at home where these concerns assume larger proportions and provide daily problems. This sophistication may someday be present; as yet it is not. Furthermore, while in the homeland the variant strands of the faith are represented everywhere and stand in confrontation in every community, in Africa this is not the case because of the practise

[84]Minutes of Nigeria General Conference, June 8, 1968.

of comity. Thus the Mission's concern tends to be on the expedient, and the Home Board's on the principial. Out of their ongoing dialogue must come a mutual adjustment.

This divergence of outlook points up the difficulties that hound relationships between Mission and Home Board. There can arise in the homeland the suspicion that missionaries are less than enthusiastic in carrying forward the precious heritage of the Home Church and propagating its understanding of God's Word. This view found some expression in the Christian Reformed Church when the Mission opposed the establishment of a specifically Reformed Seminary for the Tiv Church, and instead encouraged increased participation in the union seminary in the interests of preserving this intertribal contact for Christian maturation.

Here it must be said that the Home Board stood shoulder to shoulder with the Mission. This rapport stands at the conclusion of a long history of change within the Board and within the denomination at large. The idea that mission service was especially suited for those who were unsuccessful in Church work at home was a view that died hard. In former years a candidate who failed to receive a call from a congregation might well in the end find himself called to missions. Today this frame of mind finds no sympathy in the Church, and missionaries find their opinions given respectful consideration by the Home Board. At Board sessions and Committee meetings increased use of consultation with furloughing missionaries would greatly further this rapport.

The increased appreciation of the Board for the realities faced by the Mission also suggests its improved position as spokesman to the CRC Synod regarding Mission and Nigerian Church problems. This in recent years has sometimes placed it in a delicate relationship with the Synod which is concerned to safeguard the confessional heritage of the Christian Reformed Church. This was true in the matter of support for the union seminary in Nigeria. Here the Board allied itself with the missionaries and found itself in the unique position of sharing in the disapproval poured upon the Mission by those who felt the Mission to be betraying the Reformed faith in Nigeria.

The relation of Home Board and Mission has been greatly influenced by the new entity: the national Church. The young Church soon learns that the Mission can be bypassed if satisfaction is not obtained, and appeal be made directly to the Home Board. If no satisfaction of the Church's requests arrives via this route, then the Church is able to bypass even the Board and appeal directly to the Synod. Thus the Home Board is now put in the increasingly delicate position of liason between national Church and home Church. These new roles underscore the necessity of mutual understanding between

Mission and Home Board to close the awareness gap where it still exists.

The administration of Mission has changed since the days of the trekkers. The overwhelming problems of hardship, privation, disease, and massive opposition are gone now, replaced by a new congeries of events and problems for which there is no charted course. The Church has come to birth and much of the original vision has been thrown to her. The Mission grows older now — its internal relationships are less familial, more professional. Its technical skills are greater, its skill at language and communion with the people often less. It flies over the field instead of walking through them, and this is, in a way, progress. The problematics of partnership permit no sentimentality, but only the following of the dream, the vision to exalt the Christ at the burning edge of the Christian faith. This is the hard realism of Mission, changed to meet this hour, and even now readying herself for her new role tomorrow.

We now turn, therefore, to a brief glance at the contours of the future.

7 CONTOURS OF THE FUTURE

Our pilgrimage with the Tiv has brought us to the present hour. The *Nongo u Kristu ken Sudan hen Tiv,* the Tiv Church of Christ, stands restless and eager, poverty-stricken but confident. We must now finally attempt to discern the problems and opportunities which lie ahead in a brief exploration of the shape of the Church tomorrow. As Church and Mission meet the new age, what modifications of structure and thrust become imperative? We shall attempt in these final pages to catch something of God's eschatological purpose with this Church as his Kingdom comes.

This task becomes especially pertinent for missionaries in a time when the servant role of the Church is being more fully emphasized and missionaries become the servants of the servants of God. Leadership in the growing Church passes out of their hands. This means, however, that while the Church relates more fully to her own society, her horizons may be limited by the uniqueness and all-consuming interest of her own experience. She may be less able to relate her experience to that of the world-wide Church and learn from it. She knows less of the crucial problems facing the Church universal, and in this period may find it difficult to care as much about them. At the same time, her autonomy now also tempts her to manifest herself in a lordly role as the home of the new spiritual elite. Here missionaries have a new challenge to broaden the vistas of an essentially tribal Church. The perspectives of that task may be seen as a series of widening circles.

First of all, missionaries are called on to keep alive before the eyes of the Church a passion for evangelism, while thousands flock to her services and seem to make that passion superfluous. The emergence of many paid workers and the rise of secularism threaten that passion and deflect the Church's energies out of servanthood into lordship. The broadening of vistas also entails showing to the Church her responsibilities in the ecumenical structures of the Church, in Tivland itself, in the TEKAS fellowship, and beyond. This is a delicate business in a time of tribal awareness, but certainly a part

of the missionary's role. Beyond that, missionaries can aid in imparting a vision of the Church's task in nation-building, and finally of her place within the fullness of God's cosmic Kingdom. More and more these become the challenges facing missionaries preparing to work in the age ahead. There is an urgency about them.

The awareness of the urgency of Mission which must be imparted to the growing Church stems from hard reality. On the one hand, multitudes formerly unhearing and resistant are now willing soil for Christian witness everywhere in Tivland and other strategic areas of Africa in this Spirit prepared time. On the other hand, cynicism and disaffection toward the Church and its Western mold grow among many of the new leaders who kept respectful silence before. These lines of opposition, coupled with an aggressive Islam, challenge the Church to gird for Mission. At the same time, the world's population leaps ahead and people now multiply faster than the Church can reach them. It is estimated that the number of people in the world will double in the latter half of this century, while the percentage of that population which declares itself to be Christian faces a rapid decline. In 1950, Christians comprised 34% of the world's people; yet if present trends continue, at the dawn of the next century this figure will have decreased to 20%.[1] These facts the Tiv Church cannot be allowed to ignore even while her own membership mounts.

It would be foolish to disregard the fact that for the Tiv Church, too, there looms the danger of irrelevant ministers, esoteric language, pompous officialdom, and uninspiring liturgy. She, too, must seek for structures to support her growth and maturity in the age ahead. She must ready herself to meet the city, to embrace the new elite, to recapture the dignity of tilling the soil. And she must do it swiftly, for the time of the changing of allegiance is at hand as never before. A decade ago, Dr. D. McGavran wrote concerning Africa:

> A vast exodus from animism is going on which will hand over scores of millions to other faiths — or no faith — in the next thirty years. Not since the animistic tribes of northern Europe marched out of their old faiths into Christianity has there been anything like it — and this is a much larger exodus taking place in a much shorter time. Between 60 and 80 million people are going somewhere before the year 2000.[2]

These figures, quite surprising at the time, now appear to be conservative. Meanwhile the Western Church appears to be in decline, especially in her appeal and growth rate, so that the growing dynamic of the African Church stands out in ever bolder relief.

[1] J. Verkuyl, *Daar en Nu*, Kampen, 1967, p. 78.
[2] D. McGavran, *How Churches Grow*, New York, 1959, p. 6.

This double-edged shift suggests the possible passage of the mainstream of Christianity out of the Western world into the churches now gathering strength on the frontiers.[3]

Dr. McGavran passionately urges the Church to direct its attention more fully to those areas where the Spirit has shown great possibilities for the growth of the Church and where the populations are "winnable." Rather than remove workers as these churches take hold, Dr. McGavran suggests that workers from unresponsive fields be transferred to areas where the Spirit has prepared the soil and men are turning eagerly to Christ. McGavran is not suggesting that missionaries continue to do what the indigenous church should be doing, but rather pleads that the sending church see these areas as continuing opportunities which the new church cannot face alone, precisely because of such rapid growth. Though McGavran's analysis may not take adequately into account the challenge of areas where a church has great needs because of opposition or decline, yet his plea applies to the situation in Tivland today. Here a study of the growth pattern will indicate something of what the Spirit has accomplished, and of plans which must be made in order to carry on his Mission in the years ahead. This analysis will point to ways in which the Mission now working with the Tiv Church may find modification necessary in time to come as it accepts its servant role. We group the materials for the discussion under the following heads:

A. The Shape of the Church Tomorrow
B. The Mission in Stage Three
C. Back to the Church

A. THE SHAPE OF THE CHURCH TOMORROW

1. Analysis of the Growth of the NKST

The growth pattern of the Tiv Church is not uniformly consistent, nor are the statistics always trustworthy. Nonetheless, the communicant membership of the Church has generally doubled every four years since its organization in 1957 with 1800 professing members. This fairly steady rate of growth rests also upon the caution with which applicants are admitted by the elders and upon the lengthy pre-baptismal period of instruction and probation. If these two factors were to be changed, and it is not likely that they will be, the growth in membership would rise even more swiftly, and the less arduous road to baptism would in turn encourage others who now find the three or four year wait a formidable obstacle.

Even with these limiting factors in the picture, the number of baptized members had risen by 1969 to over 14,000. On the basis

[3]Cf. S. Neill, *The Unfinished Task*, London, 1957, pp. 26-32.

of the rate of growth cited above, the NKST should certainly plan for a membership of over 30,000 by 1974, and for a growth in the number of congregations from 35 to 80. The number of pastors should, therefore, also be more than doubled within this exceedingly short time. A new vernacular pastors' training class opened in 1969 to aid in meeting this emergency. The continuing crisis in leadership training will be discussed later in this chapter.

As the distance to the congregational center decreases through the establishment of many new congregations, the number of members in each congregation may be expected to increase. This number has averaged from 300 to 400 members per congregation, but with the proliferation of new churches the number may well rise to 500. This fact is of importance as an attempt is made to project church growth even for one decade. As the impetus to establish new congregations is retarded through easier accessibility, the urge to grow swiftly through multiple baptisms may also be diminished. These cautions should not detract from the continuing enthusiasm of the Tiv for the Gospel, but they may well lead to an eventual leveling off of the growth rate. This will be seen most clearly in the stabilizing of the attendance level in the future, but it will probably be apparent also in the change in the rate of membership growth. Bearing in mind these considerations, the Church should plan by 1979 for a membership of from 70,000 to 80,000 and from 140 to 160 congregations.

At first blush, such expectations may seem staggering. They suggest the possibility of membership growth in one decade of from near 15,000 to a level of 75,000, and in the number of congregations of from 35 to 150. Yet in view of the matchless blessing of the Spirit in the past decade, it would be a smallness of faith to proceed with a goal less than that outlined above.

The attendance at worship in NKST-sponsored worship centers has also risen at a remarkable rate, and has given rise to the phenomenon of the attender-member gap which was discussed in the preceding chapter. It is in the recording of the number of attenders that the greatest statistical discrepancies become evident, and make the anticipation of future trends hazardous. A pattern does, however, emerge when the ratio of members to attenders is carefully analyzed.

During the years from the beginning of 1956 to the beginning of 1960, attendance rose from 21,485 to 35,790. In the same four-year period, membership rose from 1,688 to 2,872. The ratio of one member to thirteen attenders is here established, a ratio which remained fairly constant each year. The next four-year period, however, saw the attendance increase at a much greater rate, from 35,790 at the beginning of 1960 to 100,000 estimated at the beginning of 1964. The membership rose less swiftly during this period, from 2,872 to 5,879. Thus the ratio of members to attenders diminished with this

burgeoning attendance, until in 1964 it stood at one to seventeen. This was a time of great turmoil in Tivland, and people more and more felt the need of security, also the spiritual security offered by the Gospel, and they attended worship services in far greater numbers than ever before. Those who sought church membership at that time entered the seekers and catechism classes, so that the fruits of the increase of attendance, seen in terms of actual increase in membership, could not be charted until three or four years later.

This amazing rate of increase in attendance could not be sustained, and the ratio of members to attenders began to climb. By 1968 it had again risen to one in thirteen, and every indication was that the attender-member gap was gradually being closed. Furthermore, during the preceding decade the Gospel was brought to many compounds for the first time, so that today there are no longer an equal number of places where the Gospel has not been heard and people roused to Church attendance. The ratio of members to attenders will likely continue to climb gradually so as to reach one to seven or one to six by 1974. Thus by that time the Tiv Church may be expected to minister to 220,000 to 260,000 attenders at her services.

2. Gearing for a Multiplicity of Churches

It would be hazardous as well as unnecessary to make statistical conjectures beyond this point. The winds of change in Africa may swiftly throw up new forces of retardation, for example, a breakdown of comity, or the rise of some dissident sect. It is nevertheless necessary now to gear the effort of Church and Mission to conserve this growth in as far as possible. In this connection the casual relationship of the attenders to the Church is one of the greatest challenges to be faced. More specifically, the problem is one of encouraging the attenders to seek entry into the seekers' classes.

Here the attitude of the leadership of the NKST has always been one of great caution and careful scrutiny of those who would seek membership in the Church. The years of catechism are regarded as a period of probation and this attitude is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. The establishment of many new seekers' classes would, however, be a significant aid to Church growth and yet allow the idea of probation and scrutiny to be continued by the elders and established leadership. Several of the missionaries and pastors have been promoting this approach through the preparation of the students at the Benue Bible Institute for such a task. The older evangelists and elders, however, see their own positions of leadership put in jeopardy by the increased recognition given to these younger and better trained men. It is nevertheless these enthusiastic Bible-class and literacy teachers who provide the key to the solution of this problem. As their

voices become increasingly heard in the Church, she will hopefully show more openness toward those who are now content to be merely attenders. These Bible Institute graduates are now found in every corner of Tivland, eager to open new seekers' classes. Many structures for leadership training are now developing in Tivland, yet the Bible Institute appears to offer the prime avenue for continued effective evangelism by the Tiv Church.

Even though the attender-member gap may thus be significantly reduced in the next decade, yet the prospect of over 200,000 people at worship services points to the continuing crisis in the area of leadership. The supply of pastors for the NKST depends upon three institutions: a pre-seminary school, the vernacular pastors' class, and the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. By 1974, the vernacular class may supply 20 pastors, and the theological college from 30 to 35. Hence in addition to the 30 men currently in the ministry, some 50 new trainees may be expected to become pastors by 1974, for a new total of 80. This picture may be complicated by the agitation for a separate seminary, the death of certain of the present pastors, or the inability of the theological college to accept such a large number of men from the NKST.

In the development of structures for leadership training we must consider both the expansion of the theological college and the provision of a separate seminary for the NKST. With regard to the first, a long debate was concluded in 1968 when the Christian Reformed Church finally approved the full participation of its Mission in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. A reticence to involve the Reformed faith and its students in this arena of dialogue was overcome. Hopefully the CRC will now also be fully committed to the expansion of the TCNN with its aim of the provision of facilities for 120 students. Here the vision of preparing for a multiplicity of churches takes on new stature.

At the same time it is essential to give full cognizance to the merits of a seminary for Tivland itself. The history of this debate was detailed in the preceding chapter and it was there suggested that the NKST request cannot forever be denied. It is simply not realistic to suppose that a sizeable tribal Church, eager to preserve its ethnic and confessional identity, will endlessly agree to continue without its own facilities for pastor training. Undoubtedly facets of materialism and the desire for tribal glory are involved and these partly describe the Mission's refusal to approve the request. The words of the Chairman of the Tiv Synod must, however, also be given their due: "It is true that we Christians are one people. Yet we live not in one village, but in many compounds. The way to strengthen our fellowship is not through retarding the advance of each compound. Only as

each compound advances can we fully advance together."[4] James Hopewell, director of the Theological Education Fund, offers the following comment on the more than one thousand Protestant Theological and Bible schools of Africa, Asia, and Latin America:

> We normally cite these figures to indicate the tragedy of a divided and sectarian Church, and we think it the will of God that they be consolidated. But I am not so sure about this as I once was. I am impressed that these schools are omnipresent, that it is difficult to travel more than an hour in any direction without someone pointing out this institute or that school which serves the ministry of a particular denomination.[5]

Here the advantage of a school close to the people is recognized, an advantage often forgotten in the distress over tribalism and division. If we could but agree to a proper decentralization today, concludes Hopewell,

> . . . we might find ourselves with a ready-made dispersion of centres which potentially could serve ministers of all ages in their communities. God has permitted stranger things to happen.[6]

During the long struggle for full participation of the Mission of the CRC in the union seminary in Nigeria, the argument was often put forward that the autonomy of the young Church must be fully recognized. For the older Church to pressure the younger into a specific mode of theological education against her express wishes was labeled paternalism. That argument, however, cuts both ways. Now that the Tiv Church *does* desire its own seminary as well, the Mission and Home Board do not define their opposition to it as paternalism, and in fact indicate that their insight into the needs of the Church is superior. Perhaps it is. The point is, however, that the African Church will write her own history, and must chart her own painful and ultimately rewarding course through separation and communion. She will hear the warnings of the West and digest the reports of schism and its dangers and then write her own chronicle. She cannot live that history any other way. Someday she may sense that her separate seminary is inadequate and move toward a complete identification with a union seminary. But that will be her own decision, made from the crucible of her own experience.

There now exists an emergency vernacular pastors' training class in Tivland as a temporary measure. This class may well be the seed from which a seminary can grow. It is not necessary to plant a full-

---

[4]Rev. J. E. I. Sai, personal interview, Aug. 22, 1968.
[5]J. Hopewell, *Mission and Seminary Structure*, Int. Review of Missions, April, 1967, p. 163.
[6]*Loc. cit.*

blown seminary which may be viewed as an affront to other churches or as a reward for Tiv tribalism. Rather, a way of natural growth is already at hand. Out of this class a seminary can evolve for the Tiv Church, while her ties to the TCNN are preserved as the means for the training of qualified candidates. Both schools will have vital roles to play as the NKST gears for a multiplicity of churches. Certainly TCNN provides an avenue of training which must not be lost: its values of intertribal contact and greater proficiency combine to make its development crucial. Hopefully the Tiv Church will sense these needs and send a definite percentage of candidates there each year. TCNN's status will itself be a magnet for the most competent students, and give them exposure to the needs of the cities and to the wider challenges the Tiv Church must face in the nation as a whole.

Is this an overemphasis on pastor training? Indeed not. Already at Tambaram in 1938, the International Missionary Council was requested to survey the situation in Africa with regard to the training of pastors.[7] Three surveys were a result of this mandate. The second of these, published in 1954, concluded

> . . . that not less than one-fourth of missionary personnel and efforts should be wholeheartedly directed to the training of ministers and lay workers of the churches . . . with whatever severe readjustments that change would require.[8]

This analysis is especially pertinent for a swiftly growing Church such as the NKST where planning for great growth demands continued optimism and faith. Can such readjustments of staffing be introduced so explicitly into the Mission structure as it now stands? Certainly the service institutions would find themselves in dire straits if personnel were removed or reassigned. The only possibility would appear to be the additional recruitment of many new missionaries for the theological training or Bible-school ministry. However, such a course would be advisable for Tivland only if indigenous leadership for this work were not now forthcoming. At present it appears that such men, competent to teach, can be found among the Tiv themselves in the near future. The problem then to be faced is the payment of their salaries. This brings us face to face with the matter of the future financial position of the NKST, and of the ability of the synod to engage in ministries involving the payment of salaries beyond the confines of the local congregation.

The idea of a synodical quota has always been difficult for the Tiv to accept wholeheartedly. It was customary to take care of urgent local needs first, and these often consumed all the available funds.

---

[7] C. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, vol. iv., London, 1958, p. 301.
[8] *Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa*, Part II, London, 1954, p. 94.

Some congregations flaunted the synodical directives in this regard with impunity, until their debts became colossal. In 1966 the Synod rebuked these offending congregations, and after multiple warnings finally barred them from taking part in the synodical gathering. This surprising show of sternness shocked several members, but the majority were immensely pleased with this display of indignation, and saw that the synod had truly become a force to be reckoned with. All the offenders promptly mended their ways and in 1967 every congregation was declared eligible to participate in the synodical meeting. This object lesson indicates that when sufficient pressure is exerted, local leaders are able to meet the denominational quotas.

This encouraging sign is complemented by another, viz. the much greater number of members and catechumens to call upon for such funds in the future. An example will indicate how this hope is justified. In 1968, the Synod operated with approximately $8,000 in general funds.[9] By 1974, however, we may estimate a membership of 35,000, an adult pre-baptismal catechumenate of 16,000, and a seekers' class membership of at least 13,000. Full members could well be expected to contribute four shillings per year to the denominational budget (about a penny per week), catechumens three shillings, and seekers two shillings. Even at this modest rate, the Synod could obtain over $25,000 for its work. Missionaries are sanguine about such matters in most instances, but such a figure does lie well within the realm of possibility. There is no reason to proceed on the assumption that the NKST cannot raise such an amount and thereby undertake a significant part of the cost of the leadership training in its area.

There is hence good ground for the belief that the position of the Tiv Church will improve with regard to indigeneity in the realm of financial support. The greatest challenge will be one of imagination, of seeing the opportunities by which she may be thrust ahead toward greater growth and influence in the lives of the Tiv. The temptation will be toward the use of these funds in acquiring ever-greater numbers of paid local workers and thereby stultifying the spontaneous growth of the Church.

Thus the Tiv Church exemplifies how a young Church, by preserving enthusiasm and developing structures to promote expansion, can enlist her membership for greater growth. The analysis of her patterns of growth thus far indicates that the NKST can, through the Spirit's propulsion, expect a multiplicity of churches in the decades ahead. As the influence of the Western Church declines, the NKST

[9]Though the budget was set unrealistically at $14,750. Minutes of NKST Synod, Nov., 1967. This included $3640 for the purchase of a synodical car, for which each member was levied a proportionate share.

can assume a meaningful role in the life of the Church universal. Here some emerging areas of special concern become discernible.

3. GROWING AREAS OF CHALLENGE

In the previous chapter one of the problems shared by Church and Mission was described as maintaining a sense of urgency. As we look at the challenges facing the Church tomorrow, that problem of *stagnation* must be mentioned. If new horizons are not constantly put before the Church as she settles into an easier growth, her spontaneity is chilled. As Bishop Neill remarks,

> Tradition tends to kill spontaneity. The intense conviction of those who had to fight for their faith can very soon change into the placid conformity of those who have never known anything else, and who accept as a badge of respectability that form of religious observance in which they have been brought up.[10]

This illness does not yet characterize the Tiv Church in general, but one senses the specter of the disease looming ahead. The rural-urban and peasant-sophisticate gaps detailed earlier form part of the issue, as they call for flexibility and change. Indeed, the Tiv Church now stands at one of the great turning points in its pilgrimage. Its resistance to change questions its ability to turn back the decline of enthusiasm. Here then is the first major area of challenge, right at home. There is, however, good reason to hope that this challenge can be met. The Bible-school teachers are the front line of this hope with regard to the rural-peasant side of the problem. Furthermore, a new wave of pastors is emerging who can relate to the new elite and involve them more fully in the Church's life than is true today. The question remains whether they will gain a voice in the Establishment before too great an alienation sets in.

The danger of *schism and the growth of sects* is closely connected with this problem of stagnation. The continuing breakup of society aids the growth of the Church in various ways, but it also provides the soil for schism in the disaffected. The Church is yet a "great cause" for the young and the idealists who have a dream for the future. But the day of their silent respect is now passing, and when they become urbanized and "emancipated," their separation from the rural Church Establishment becomes the more vivid. R. Dickinson's study of this migration illustrates the problem: 86% of the Africans are rural, the highest percentage in the world. But today from 1 to 1.4 million Africans a year leave the farm and settle in the cities, where their rootlessness is magnified.[11] Their need for involvement, for a "great

[10] S. Neill, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
[11] R. Dickinson, *Line and Plummet*, Geneva, 1968, p. 26.

cause," is intense, yet today they of all Africans are the truly lonely people. As Colin Turnbull has so poignantly shown, it is this loneliness which is often masked by snobbishness and isolation.[12] Here the lines of communication between bush and city can easily be severed and Church disintegration results. This threat of schism can be met only as the attitude of suspicion in the rural churches is changed and the dialogue of bush and city takes place in the age ahead.

The changing relationship of the Tiv Church to *the broader TEKAS fellowship* illustrates a further area of challenge. The churches of the North were kept from organic union in the days of their inception largely through the reluctance of missions and home boards. That early division was perhaps prophetic. In those early days few really understood how deeply the ethnic animosities were seated and how they would come to expression in later years. Christians hoped then that life in a single denomination would submerge those animosities. Yet many denominations emerged instead of only one, and now each is called upon to mature through a period of unique tribalism to attain the full stature of the sons of God, aware of both the riches and the pitfalls of the bonds of blood. This stage of history cannot be bypassed and its lessons can serve to give the Tiv Church both a sense of confidence and a perception finally of her need and responsibility beyond the tribal boundaries. The cultural and confessional differences which had long lain dormant are today being perceived and that understanding is, in a painful way, progress. Each church, with its particular ethnic and confessional heritage, brings to TEKAS its own resources and needs and so TEKAS gathers strength. The retrenchment can be only temporary.

On the ecumenical horizon there can also be sensed the challenge of a new relationship to *Roman Catholics*. The fellowship of the NKST and the Roman Catholic Church has thus far been almost nil. A bitter history of rivalry and convert-stealing has precluded any rapprochement. Yet many hopeful signs appear; among these is the Catholic decision to sell the *Bibilo* translated by the Protestants and used by the NKST. Literature published by the SUM is no longer burned by Catholic catechists, and some acceptance of one another as fellow Christians has at least begun. The Protestant missionaries have also responded to the spirit of Vatican II to ease the spectacle of two foreign groups grappling in a strange land while both claim to call men to the same Christ. In the amelioration of this intolerable shame, the Mission can still be of tremendous value. Mutual attendance at each other's functions, such as opening ceremonies, ground-breaking, etc., indicate conspicuously the attempt to remove

[12]C. Turnbull, *The Lonely African*, New York, 1963.

the old hostility. Yet the Mission must be concerned not to alienate herself from the Church in this work of easing tensions between two indigenous groups.

A difficult area of challenge now rising is that of the relation to *Islam*. With the overflow of party politics in Nigeria in 1965, the Muslim advance into Tivland was curtailed, and many Tiv who had performed *salla* discarded the practise. The NKST has consistently avoided any rippling of the waters with regard to Islam, with the idea that quiesence would be less likely to arouse Muslim attention or aggressiveness. Yet this attitude cannot persist forever as the Church becomes a potent force among the peoples of the northern states. The two faiths live side by side and must seek ways to exist without killing and violence. Soon the Tiv Church must assist in the dialogue with the Muslim communities, and the Islam-In-Africa Project offers the way of involvement in such a meeting. As the Tiv learn more and more of their environment this fact will surely become apparent. J. S. Trimingham, concluding his study *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa,* writes, "Any approach to Islam must be primarily through the Churches of the land."[13] This statement stands at the end of a volume critical of the missionary activity which greatly narrowed the religious world of the West African by atomizing and secularizing his society. The Western missionary cannot, therefore, be the agent to carry Christianity to the West African Muslim. Though the Tiv might wish to leave this activity in the Mission's hands, yet in Trimingham's words:

> Only the African has the necessary endowment for this situation: his lively sense of the spiritual world which has worn so thin in the West, his realization of the power of the Spirit to harmonize chaotic and disruptive forces, his innate apprehension that only in community can the individual find salvation, his musical and rhythmic talent and expression of spiritual truths in song and dance: all combine to emphasize this. But in addition to his natural gifts he needs a Christianity fully integrated in African life.[14]

Thus, though the NKST wishes to stay out of the spotlight in this regard, yet she together with the other TEKAS churches are presented by the Muslim communities with a challenge which they cannot shunt aside in the years ahead.

In this meeting the Church finds an opportunity to think in the broader dimensions of her calling. Beyond this lie the challenges known today as *"nation-building."* The idea of NKST participation in influencing the macro-structures of Nigerian society cannot be

[13] J. Trimingham, *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa,* London, 1955, p. 43.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 52.

termed merely visionary. True, the immense challenges at home and the pervasive poverty are part of the total picture. But the issues will not wait for the conversion of all the Tiv or the rise in the standard of living. The beginning of this work is, nevertheless, in the local church as pastors begin to speak of what it means to be a Christian in and for the world. NKST pastors have not been preaching on these themes to any great extent. This sometimes discourages missionaries, yet it was from the missionary that the pastor learned his new religious outlook. From the missionary he learned of the necessity for individual conversion, and accepted the tendency to sectionalize life into compartments. The old integration of life was broken and the reintegration has not yet been accomplished. Thus doctrines can still be taught more as intellectual propositions in which to find assurance than as stimulants to a new way of conduct. Meanwhile new professions and jobs appear for which there is yet no Christian style of life or code of ethics. It is at this basic level that nation-building must begin. In the two years of catechism prior to baptism in the NKST these problems must find a more significant place as the meaning of citizenship in the nation and in God's Kingdom is explored. Prof. Matthews, a Bantu statesman, has said that it is precisely in the area of nation-building that the African Christian communities have been weakest.[15] The need to produce literature on these issues must receive increasing attention as new Christians seek out a life style to bring to bear on the forces molding the new Nigeria.

It is true that the Christian influence on national development has been considerable, yet this influence has come largely by way of individual Nigerian Christians or by mission institutions. The Church has the opportunity now to be effective also through her own institutions and synods and to speak to crying social needs and to call for righteousness in business and government. Beyond this there is the fact that business and government provide technical assistance and progress, but it falls to the Church to seek out the interpersonal and spiritual values and problems that result from this restructuring of society. It is on the spiritual plane that the deepest struggle is being waged in this social upheaval, and yet here the Church has only begun to speak positively.

Obviously we stand in the opening phases of this adventure for the Church. Yet we cannot construe God's calling into existence of the Tiv Church as a calling without meaning for the needs of the world. He brought the Tiv Church to birth at a specific time and place, and put her into a context of turmoil and searching to function there as salt and leaven. We are called upon to think therefore, also in

[15]Cited by I. Enklaar, *Onze blijvende opdracht*, Kampen, 1968, p. 78.

Kingdom terms so that the Church may not be in the new age a "mausoleum of religion." In this urge to find her place in God's purpose she must participate in the life of the world both as a destroyer of false gods and as a servant of the Most High. This means that she so understands her servant form that her concern becomes more than self-preservation and aggrandizement. Here she calls men to faith in Christ, gathers them in and sends them out. This is her mission, that people may be led to salvation and that the community at all its levels may see her as living for others. In spending herself for the world she finds her place in God's eschatological plan.

B. THE MISSION IN STAGE THREE

With the rise of the autonomous Church a new phase of missionary activity is at hand. The period of the missionary pioneer has passed and the end of the second stage is imminent, the stage of missionary tutelage and leadership. The stage of ecumenical relationships of sister churches must now be established. In this phase the Tiv Church is not, of course, restricted to a relationship solely with the Christian Reformed Church. She is free to receive assistance from any church which desires to offer it, and this possibility of multi-lateral relationship offers to her new avenues for aid, as well as inevitable confusion and misunderstanding. Missionaries may fervently hope that such a day will not dawn, when the Church plays one mission against another, yet the possibility can spur the Mission to align herself as fully as possible with the goals of the Church. Certainly then the impending change and development of the Church implies corresponding change for the Mission in the future.

In a sense the very distinction between Church and Mission becomes, in this third stage, heavily altered. The Tiv Church herself is Mission, and Mission partakes of her essence. The Western Mission which is now present in Tivland exists to assist the Tiv Church in her own Mission. This does not mean that the assisting organization loses its existence, but its interaction is far more intimate. We shall still term this organization, therefore, "the Mission" in these pages, but this is with the realization that the Church herself must be seen more and more as Mission.

1. THE MISSION AND CHURCH GROWTH

Our study of the pattern of Tiv Church growth has indicated that she stands today on the brink of an expansion unprecedented in her history. To achieve that growth she must preserve the Spirit-given spontaneity and enthusiasm which marked the first decade of her existence. If the Mission deflects that energy, then she must seek

for avenues of change so as not to stand in the way of the Spirit's design. There is some evidence that the Mission is now in need of that change.

In some respects the missionary finds it more difficult to be exemplary today than once was the case. His life style is more luxurious and affluent. As a specialist he is more restricted. The man in the bush can hardly hope to emulate him. Some missionaries no longer trek or get into outlying worship centers, and many are unable to converse in the vernacular. The impression is spread abroad that the interest of the Mission in evangelism has in fact been replaced by something else. Joseph Wold uses these strong words to describe the situation in Liberia:

> Where there is a fifty-thousand dollar hospital with a staff of fifty and a thirty-thousand dollar school with a staff of ten in the same town as a two-thousand dollar church with a staff of one, it is easy for village people to get a "wrong" idea of what the missionary thinks is really important . . .
>
> The generation that founded the mission to preach the Gospel dies out, and a new generation grows up, trained to work at some specialty and to raise money to keep the mission going. This subtle change of goals is deadly to the growth of the Church.[16]

Wold's remarks indicate how the change in the nature of the Mission itself assists in the stultification of evangelistic fervor in national Christians. To some extent the situation may be unavoidable, as professionalism increases. But there is a tremendous amount that could be done by missionaries in every department, which would do much to remove the impression that evangelism and Church-growth are rather minor aspects of the Mission's goal.

The most basic change necessary in this regard is integration of the missionary into the life of the Church. The fellowship gap described in the previous chapter was shown to be attributable to the loss of language competency and to the rise of the specialization of duties. It rests also upon a reluctance to join in full participation in the ministry of the NKST, and upon the fact that missionaries are usually swamped with work in their own specialty and simply cannot find the time for more direct evangelism. Yet this activity should certainly consume some portion of the time and energy of every missionary. This activity must take the form of a sincere attempt to indicate that reaching men's souls for Christ is a continuing and fundamental interest of the Mission. Otherwise we can hardly expect it to be a burning interest of the Church.

On the way to this involvement there are some prior necessities. One of these is certainly membership in the NKST. The Mission in

[16] J. Wold, *God's Impatience in Liberia*, Grand Rapids, 1968, pp. 166-167.

stage three cannot tolerate that which was indefensible already in stage two. The CRC Home Board presently approves a dual membership, which suggests that the missionary is a half-member in two churches at the same time. Such a "solution" arises when the issue is not really confronted, and fence-straddling is the way to accommodate all parties. But nothing is really solved by it. There are no "associate" members in Christ's body, no full believers who are half members. A Christian should be a full member of the Church where he lives and fellowships, where he receives the sacraments year after year. Says Stephen Neill, "For good or ill he is a member and a servant of that Church and no other, with all the duties and responsibilities that such membership entails."[17] Certainly missionaries who go to Tivland should transfer their membership papers to the Church where they are, just as they should when they move about in their homeland. Why should the younger Church have a status which appears inferior? Full membership in the Church is a basic necessity.

The reluctance to become full members of the local Church sometimes stems from wariness about money. Missionaries often feel that the local Church might be hindered rather than helped if the missionaries' tithe were given locally. Competition for missionary membership might arise and jealousy ensue. Many missionaries also feel they should contribute generously to their American churches even while in Nigeria. Others see Church funds mismanaged or stolen, and are therefore reluctant to contribute heavily. Thus the feeling sometimes grows among Tiv Christians that missionary giving is inadequate, and that financial stewardship is apparently not an absolute necessity. Yet every missionary would like his giving to serve as a stimulus to local Christians. Thus there is frustration on both sides.

In a study of missionary giving in the Congo, John Crawford outlines four aspects of this frustration in comments pertinent for Tivland: (a) The local Christians have little awareness of what missionaries really do give; (b) The local Church should not become dependent on missionary giving; (c) The local Christians feel that the missionaries give little in proportion to their great resources, and (d) Missionaries are concerned about mishandling of funds by local churchmen.[18] Yet Crawford is convinced that to attain better fellowship with the Church, more giving at the local level is important and would stimulate rather than hinder giving by local Christians. Among his suggestions, the following stand out: (a) Missionaries, and all other members, should ask for a regular report of congregational finances. This report may not in itself be a great stimulus, but

[17] S. Neill, *Creative Tension*, London, 1959, p. 92.
[18] J. Crawford, *Missionaries' Giving Through the Local Church*, Int. Review of Missions, April, 1967, pp. 228-229.

it would help to check the leakage of funds. (b) Missionaries should discuss their giving with their pastor. If the pastor understands that the missionaries are, in fact, tithing, he can do much toward changing the attitude of the elders and deacons. (c) In the light of the stupendous needs of the Christian witness in Africa, missionaries should give by far the major proportion of their gifts there and not in America. Gifts to the sending churches should be reduced to token amounts. (d) Missionaries may well channel their major giving to non-recurring needs and special projects.[19] With regard to this suggestion, the NKST has established a special central account for evangelism in new areas, as a receptacle for contributions from missionaries and nationals. Yet the use of the account remains vague and contributions slow in coming, though here at least is a specific way to ease the frustration. The use of Crawford's suggestions should help to change the image of the Mission in the eyes of the Tiv.

These matters of membership and giving, it was suggested, are prior necessities. In themselves they cannot demonstrate that the concern of the Mission for Church growth is not dying; that demonstration becomes finally the task of the individual missionary in his own situation. It is true that the Mission can be more serious about language learning, but the specialist and indeed each missionary can involve himself in community life only by voluntary effort. In the words of Bishop Neill,

> Technical qualifications alone are not sufficient justification for the presence of the missionary in a younger Church. . . . He must be, to use the old phrase, a soul-winner. With impressive unanimity, the younger Churches are beginning to voice this opinion. A missionary is an expensive creature. Whatever his technical abilities, he is not worth his pay unless the very heart and center of all his work is to bring men and women to the point of personal surrender to Jesus Christ.[20]

That personal example is paramount. In leadership training institutions there is also an opportunity to fan the enthusiasm for Church growth and personal evangelism. The creeping petrification of devotion can be analyzed and the vision of the unreached thousands kept alive. The marshaling of all Christians for witness can be shown as the antidote to the comfort of relying on paid workers. The encouragement of indigenous forms of worship, music, and liturgy can be given in ways that are less and less possible in the congregations as such or in synodical gatherings where the missionary's voice is less influential.

While the Mission in stage three must make a concerted effort to

---

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

[20] S. Neill, *The Unfinished Task*, London, 1957, p. 141.

present herself as vitally rather than peripherally interested in personal evangelism, she is also engaged in the proclamation of the cosmic nature of God's purpose. That, too, is Church growth, growth in understanding and outreach. The conviction mounts today that the Church's mission is more than survival and the snatching of coals from the fire. Her Mission is total and global, and what her laymen do in the world is Mission, fully as much as what her clergy do. Some missiologists would dispute this view and deny that all the Church's work partakes of Mission. Dr. D. McGavran, for example, writes, "In the Protestant wing of the Church, too, an increasing number are turning from the comfortable doctrine that everything the Church ought to do outside her four walls is mission."[21] That doctrine is, however, anything but comfortable. It is an agonizing doctrine demanding a restructuring of the thinking which makes ghettoism a possibility. The vision of the laity as comprising rather than as merely supporting the Church invites Christians everywhere to see the mission of the Church in its total perspective. That is also the mandate for the Mission in stage three. John Fleming writes

> The mission of the Church cannot be limited to narrowly conceived "missionary projects" centering around the church's own life, or a repetition of mere "churchly" existence extended to other parts of the community or world.[22]

This awareness brings missions closer to the understanding of the African churches with their desire for participation in projects of many types to serve as leaven in their societies. This challenge to the Mission means not merely the producing of skilled Christian students, but also indicating that the Church's ministry extends beyond what they do at the site of the Church building. It means demonstrating the dignity of the soil and the bush Church and community in God's purpose for the Tiv. In pastor training institutions, the area of ethics becomes of increasing importance in the curriculum. Prof. J. Verkuyl pleads for much more emphasis on this field in seminaries in developing lands, where the usual ethical problematics of the West lose pertinence. Sexual ethics, for example, must investigate the bride-price system, endogamy, and polygamy. Political ethics should deal with the relation of tribe and nation, nationalism, and bribery. Social ethics should consider the African family ties, the labor unions, and gambling.[23] Here there is room for the Christian world-view to be brought to bear on Africa's particular problems. The Western teacher

[21]D. McGavran, *Church Growth Strategy Continued*, Int. Review of Missions, July, 1968, p. 337.
[22]Fleming and Wright, *Structures for a Missionary Congregation*, Singapore, 1964, p. 8.
[23]J. Verkuyl, in: *Christustrediking in de Wereld*, Kampen, 1965, pp. 210-222.

will probably not be able to supply many of the answers, but only Biblical guidelines to equip the pastors and Church leaders to fashion answers themselves. It is, nevertheless, a vital aspect of Church growth.

The demonstration of the wholeness of the Christian life is made difficult for a mission when her work is compartmentalized. The problem arises of showing the purpose of the various institutions in the whole of the Christian effort. Some Tiv, for example, completely misunderstand the purpose of the Missions' hospital work, and suppose that it is the means for the Mission to earn money and make a profit. It is again in the leadership training centers that the meaning of the ministry of compassion must be taught. Max Warren points out that actually "holy," "heal," and "whole" all share the same old English root.[24] They are a unity. The Church, the school, the farm, and the hospital are all engaged in healing. This view of wholeness can be best demonstrated where all these centers exist together, i.e. in the local context. The Mission must now ask whether the compartmentalization of activities into large and clearly separated centers adequately assists the Tiv in seeing the unity of life in God's plan. If missionaries see the danger and make efforts to overcome it in every institution and task, then they can assist in showing in their specialization the cosmic nature of God's purpose.

2. The Shape of the Mission Tomorrow

We have already indicated some patterns of missionary life which may be modified to support the Church in her ministry. These changes depend on individual initiative to a large degree. But the Mission as organization must also rethink its structure in stage three, as it becomes more Church-supportive and finds its ministry less specifically evangelistic. It becomes important, therefore, that we draw some conclusions regarding institutionalism and its role in missions tomorrow.

a. First of all, a basic conclusion from both the Christian understanding of God's salvation and the African situation is that as wide a ministry as possible is demanded.

b. The institutional approach, however, easily tends to become exaggerated. There is a Western "cultural overhang" which delights in complexity, organization, and the idea that bigger is better. The institutions become foci of power, more and more separate in aims and perspective.

c. This altered perspective is strengthened by the fact that educational and medical facilities often receive government support, while evangelistic institutions must be paid for entirely by the Church or

[24]M. Warren, *The Christian Imperative*, New York, 1955, p. 64.

Mission. The Mission should, therefore, be determined that these institutions do not lag behind the others in facilities or staff. However, it is sometimes held, in the interests of indigeneity, that *such* institutions should be built and financed by the Church, while the Mission will build hospitals and schools. Rather, it ought to be recognized that to provide the best possible place for the training of pastors and lay leaders will put the Church on her indigenous feet more quickly than can any other institution the Mission may build. The total effort is then also placed in better perspective in the mind of the national.

d. Institutions should be planted to aid the Church's maturation. If they hinder her advance toward autonomy and place huge burdens of administration and finance upon her they may actually retard her growth. J. S. Murray writes concerning the Church in India,

> Its dependence on the help of its partners for the carrying on of this large and varied programme is undermining its own ability to do its own distinctive and inescapable task. That spirit of dependence is carried over from the management of institutions such as schools and hospitals into the inner domestic life of the Church.[25]

This judgment is equally pertinent for Africa and represents the tendency of Western missions to plant complex institutions in Africa which retard their mobility and place the assumption of responsibility by the national Church at a distance more remote than ever. This means in the case of hospitals, for example, that the possibilities of a ministry on the local level be fully utilized. Writes U Kyaw Than of the East Asia Christian Conference:

> In many areas, the more effective Christian witness will be achieved through mobile and simpler types of medical work rather than by starting or continuing existing large institutions.[26]

Prominent medical missionaries everywhere join in support of this view of medical missions in stage three. Dr. M. Scheel, Director of the German Institute for Medical Missions, for example, pleads for a localized effort on the congregational level, and concludes that "large institutions are not an essential part of what we have to give,"[27] and hence "some of the large institutions could be abandoned without detriment."[28] That severe judgment is echoed by E. Wilder, Sec-

---

[25]J. Murray, *If Mission Help Is Cut Off: What Should the Church Do?* Int. Review of Missions, Oct., 1958, p. 421.

[26]U Kyaw Than, *Witnesses Together*, Kuala Lumpur, 1959, pp. 125-126.

[27]M. Scheel, *Missionary Work and Healing*, Int. Review of Missions, July, 1964, p. 270.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 271.

retary of the Christian Medical Association of India, who cites a report adopted by that organization stating that:

> Rather than contemplate the opening of large new hospitals, the Church should consider the improvement or limited expansion of existing units or accepting the challenges of new types of work.[29]

Wilder then suggests the following as an effective solution:

> The rural health centers provide one of the most constructive approaches to the problem of disease. . . . Arrangements should be made for a doctor from the hospital to visit the centres regularly, preferably at weekly intervals.[30]

This approach has much to be said in its favor. Medical dispensaries at the local level, visited regularly by a doctor and staffed by nationals, reach people in the context of their own lives and in their own communities. The fact of Christian compassion is thus demonstrated in a dozen places, places where Christians of the area are right at hand. The strangeness of the encounter is minimized, the wholeness of the Christian life is better demonstrated, and it will be much easier to transfer such dispensaries to the local community.

e. Avenues of social concern which are not bound to institutions should be increasingly explored. Missions have pressed their diaconal programs into institutional molds, while other possibilities remain unutilized. We are, for example, concerned with poverty and squalor and wish to show our involvement as Christians in these problems. Agricultural work offers an excellent avenue for this demonstration. Yet in the words of I. Moomaw, the Secretary of Agricultural Missions, Inc.,

> We are still supporting too many demonstration farms and rural "centres," which are largely sterile so far as their effectiveness in helping the people to solve their own problems is concerned. Extension services with trained workers moving among the churches and village communities with the means and spirit of self-help must be greatly multiplied.[31]

Here the farms of selected Christians in each congregation are the fields for this ministry, for teaching erosion control, crop rotation, and methods of cultivation. Yet no institution need arise. Similarly, public health programs offer challenges toward facing the real causes of poor health in a country such as Nigeria. At community gatherings

---

[29]E. Wilder, *The Pattern of Christian Medical Work in Changing India.* Int. Review of Missions, April, 1959, p. 192.

[30]*Ibid.*, p. 193.

[31]I. Moomaw, *Our Christian Mission to Rural People,* Int. Review of Missions, July, 1960, p. 279.

supervised by Mission doctors, the dangers of impure water, improper sanitation, and untreated sores may be vividly explained. Classes held at the local level touch large sectors of the public, but no additional institutional involvement need follow.

Certainly the indications are that more flexible modes of institutional services are necessary also to facilitate the transfer of control. That control may pass into the hands of the government, the Church, or boards of governors representing the Christian community. The first possibility, nationalization of Christian institutions, has already begun as control of primary schools passed to the government in 1967. The Tiv Synod as such controls no educational or medical institutions, but it does exert considerable influence over the Tiv Central School Board which deals with the education affairs of the NKST adherents. The secondary schools and teachers' college are administered by boards of governors, though as yet the Mission is the actual proprietor of these institutions. It is likely that the government may soon demand increased Nigerian membership on these boards, so that finally they are totally Nigerian in makeup. As yet, however, the transfer to the Tiv Christian community is not on the horizon. Government takeover may be accomplished before it ever happens.

On the medical scene, however, community control of dispensaries and maternity centers provides an excellent avenue for local control of this ministry. The turnover of all dispensaries to local dispensary committees should soon be effected, with the Mission providing the supplies and technical supervision as long as this is desired in order to meet government standards. At one time government control of the Mission hospitals appeared imminent, but that possibility has receded for the present, and Mission doctors will likely be needed for many years. Hopes of obtaining national doctors as replacements for Mission staff appear dim, as government pressure is exerted upon these candidates to enter government hospitals where they are also desperately needed. As yet no feasible means of transfer of authority for the hospitals has been discovered. Nevertheless, the establishment of a medical board parallel to the Tiv Central School Board would appear to be a real necessity. There must be a body which can serve as a means of training the Tiv in understanding the mechanics of the institution, even though the transfer of supervision may not take place for many years.

The Benue Bible Institute, on the other hand, does offer to the Church an avenue of increased administrative responsibility. The complete transfer of this operation into NKST hands will be a major step in the preparation of the Church for self-propagation even without the presence of an expatriate mission. The synod is also being asked to increasingly assume payment of the salaries of the Tiv staff members. This delicate stage in Church-Mission relationships will be

successful only if the Church is convinced that the Mission's concern for the NKST remains unabated; otherwise it will be difficult for the Church to see any advantage in a step which appears designed only to put a greater burden on an impecunious Church existing alongside a wealthy Mission.

The Mission in stage three is now inviting the Church to look at the growing urban challenges. Here joint action for mission together with other churches and missions must receive consideration. For example, the provision of Christian hostels at national universities is a significant way of maintaining Christian influence as education becomes more secularized and passes out of the hands of the Church.

Finally, the shape of the Mission tomorrow may well be defined more and more by those Christians who go to Nigeria to work in non-mission institutions and businesses. Here the laity cannot be thought of as adjuncts to the ordained ministry, but become the front line of the mission thrust. In the words of J. Scherer:

> The laity have a serving ministry in their own right. . . . In and through them the mission of the church continues in the world. They have indispensable ministries to perform in the church, but more particularly in the world. As Christians living in the secular world and earning their livelihood there, they are called to live and work in such a way that their fellowmen take notice of them and begin to ask questions. . . . Christian service possesses broad ramifications that are scarcely touched by the traditional policy of concentrating on missionary institutions.[32]

Unencumbered by ecclesiastical and mission organization and removed from the suspicion which automatically attaches to the foreign mission, these missionaries (for such they are) work in the world in which God acts and builds his Kingdom, and overthrows the forces of darkness. There they either participate in that overthrow or becloud it. The professional missionary is naturally *expected* to have high moral standards and exemplary piety. Indeed, he is considered by many Tiv to live on a spiritual plane quite unattainable by other mortals. The example he brings, however, has little surprise-value. Outside the mission organization, surrounded in many cases by non-Christians, his witness will stand out more boldly. Home churches and mission boards should consider these laymen a tremendously vital aspect of Mission in the future. In the words of the Report of the World Consultation on Laymen Abroad:

> It is increasingly recognized that Christian laymen who leave their own country to take up temporary residence abroad should receive help from their churches, so that they may effectively participate in

[32]J. Scherer, *Missionary, Go Home!*, Englewood Cliffs, 1964, p. 186.

> the world-wide responsibility of the Church. It is the concern of this report to call attention to the importance of providing preparation for these laymen before they depart and assistance while they are abroad. The report has in mind businessmen, technicians, government officials, and students.[33]

Here finally lies the vanguard of Mission for tomorrow, Mission beyond missions.

C. BACK TO THE CHURCH

For Tivland the ultimate patterns of Mission in the future do not lie in the shape of the expatriate mission now serving the Tiv Church. They lie rather in the full acceptance of the Church's understanding of her own nature as God's servant. It is this acceptance which makes the Church responsible and thrusts her into the world which God loves and purposes to redeem. It is this acceptance which must hold our attention in these final paragraphs.

In this book we have attempted to indicate how radical and agonizing were the changes brought to Tivland by the coming of the Christian faith. The Church that arose was both a destroying and a transforming force, which called men out of the old aeon into the new. Slowly her call grew strong, not least because she offered a fixed anchor in a sea of change. Now the overriding challenge for the Church is that of being changed herself, to do that which seems to many Tiv the one great thing she must not do. Her Gospel is eternal, to be sure, and her Lord the One whose faithfulness never changes. But she is called to change from refuge into permeating yeast, to catch a radically new vision in a Church so attractive because of its immutability.

Here it seems that nothing short of a miracle of God can bring this acceptance, can bring servanthood to lordship. Yet God is bringing this very change to pass. The Church increases in its readiness to speak to government and to reach into the cities. The ancient resiliency of the Tiv which led them out from the *atôatiev*, the bush tribes, is again today shaping a greater openness to the future. By her greater willingness today to use indigenous forms of music and liturgy, the Tiv Church better interprets her purpose to the Tiv yet outside, even while she seeks to incorporate into her life her own tribal heritage. From this position of greater internal integrity and confidence, she must face the challenge of humble willingness to work in concert with the other members of the TEKAS fellowship. With that humility she becomes the Church-for-others in her tribal homeland and beyond.

---

[33] *Laymen Abroad,* Int. Review of Missions, Oct., 1967, pp. 447-448.

We dare to envision this Church. We see in her the new creation already discernible, pointing to the full redemption of the universe. This dream is as pretentious now as a half-century ago, and the Church still appears laughable, still ringed with poverty and failure. Her message is no less offensive than ever, and her call seems as absurd as at the day of her birth. But she already possesses the grandeur of men with vision and hope. Some years ago, at the conclusion of a service far into the bush, the elders asked if anyone wished to say that he had found the Savior. One after another, people stood to tell of conversion and a new life. Sometimes the stories were pathetic, full of strange personal histories, and some in the audience laughed aloud. At last an elder arose and said, "Is it well for you to laugh? Do you not understand that this is a battleground, where people are breaking free from the stranglehold of Satan? Do you not sense Christ and Satan meeting here, do you not hear the shouts of angels and see the powers of the universe at war? These are not droll stories for your amusement; this is a meeting of the universe."

Here is vision which makes life more than mundane, which gives purpose to the toil of the Tiv. More and more the Christians are called now to show the way. By God's grace, the Church tomorrow will do just that. It will be a Church where the dignity of the farmer is acknowledged, where the dialogue of bush and city is conducted with mutual esteem. The bride-price among these Christians is a realistic one because they have made it so at personal sacrifice. Discipline is both admonition and encouragement to holiness, and not a mechanical punishment. This is the dream. This is the Church which seeks to live as did her Lord who gave himself for the life of others.

The dream still seems pretentious and absurd. The drums of death of which Akiga wrote still beat. But now there is also a *shalom* in Tivland, a peace that passes understanding. In the tokens of the Kingdom given to and through God's new creation, there is the promise of great harvest ahead. Already the first fruits of his mission have been gathered and they now plant the new seed. This is the seed of life, the new life in Christ which stills the drums of death and in their place brings hope.

INDEX OF NAMES