SOME ASPECTS OF THE MISSION POLICY AND PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA IN OVAMBOLAND: 1924-1960

by

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PREFACE

This thesis is a study that was originally inspired by the question, "What does it mean to be a Christian in rural Africa today?" While the Church needs to ask this question everywhere in the world, from experience the writer believes it is especially germane to the non-Western cultures of Africa and Asia. That experience is drawn from eight years' work among the Kwanyama tribe of Ovambos in the Ovamboland Anglican Mission. Hence, this study is confined to one rural African tribe as it came under 46 years' influence of one Christian denomination.

I wish to acknowledge with appreciation the Ovambo Christians who have assisted me in providing information and patiently answering many probing questions. In particular, I wish to thank Messrs E. D. Nandjebo, D. K. Nandi, S. Shikangalah, and Reverend P. T. Kalangula, who cooperated as field workers and informants. Professor W. D. Hammond-Tooke (formerly of Rhodes University) gave valuable advice, support and encouragement in the early stages. And special gratitude is given to Reverend Professor Calvin W. Cook of the Faculty of Divinity at Rhodes University, who has assisted this thesis to completion with unending patience, kindness and stimulating insights. His suggestions were a steady source of help.

INTRODUCTION

In the earliest missionary expansion of the Church, St Paul maintained one principle which was crucial to the full and creative expression of the young churches: he established each new church on the principle of local autonomy. In the last century this principle lay behind Henry Venn's policy for the development of young churches which stressed the need for self-administration, self-financing and self-propagation as essential requirements for complete autonomy.[1] The Church in Africa has suffered widely from a lack of local autonomy and self-determination along the lines Venn laid down. Ecclesiastically and theologically (as well as financially) it has maintained umbilical ties with, for example, London, Lambeth, Geneva and Berlin. As a result the growth of the Church in Southern Africa has been stultified by numerous parent-child relationships which have frequently produced a dependent, receiving-church attitude. The financial, theological, jurisdictional, political and personnel ties with societies and churches overseas have created local dependencies; and while some of these dependencies have been or are now being severed, other fundamental ties remain. Within the realm of theology and worship, for instance, little creative independence can yet be seen in Africa. McGavran believes this particular problem exists not only in Africa but on a global basis:

> "To the great loss of the two billion who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ, ecumenical mission to Afericasia[2] has ... been captured

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1. Henry Venn (1796-1873), was General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841-1872, and formulated the Society's policy during this time, based on his "Three-Self Theory".
2. Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

> by the theologians of 'Mission to Eurica', and made to march obediently at their chariot wheel." [3]

During the past 100 years, the records of the Lambeth Anglican Conferences have reflected a dearth of creative insight into the role of Mission. [4] As far back as the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, the principle was set out in Resolution VIII that"... in order to bind the Churches of our Colonial Empire and the Missionary Churches beyond them in closest union with the Mother-Church, it is necessary that they receive and maintain without alteration the standards of Faith and Doctrine as now in use in that Church". [5] Were the words "without alteration" meant to imply that missionary methods of teaching and evangelism had to be the same as those of the "Mother-Church"? Whether or not this was the implication, very soon the general <u>principles</u> expressed in the Resolution of 1867 came to include <u>methods</u> of evangelism, structures and teaching in the African mission field.

The Lambeth Conference of 1888 made no resolutions concerning missionary work as such. At the following Conference, in 1897, the Archbishop's Encyclical dealt with the subject of Mission in few words: "Lastly, we come to the subject of Foreign Missions, the work that at the present time stands in the first rank of all the tasks we have to fulfil...". [6] However this Conference did pass a resolution which was sufficiently vague to allow local adaptation and interpretation.

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3. I.R.M., Vol. 57 (1968): "Church Growth and Strategy", pp. 340ff.
4. Although the Lambeth Conferences have no legislative powers, this body reflects Anglican Church policy and practice throughout the world.
5. <u>The Six Lambeth Conferences: 1867-1920</u>; London: SPCK, 1920.
6. <u>ibid</u>.

Resolution 19 stated:

> "It is important that, so far as possible, the Church should be adapted to local circumstances, and the people brought to feel in all ways that no burdens in the way of foreign customs are laid upon them, and nothing is required of them but what is of the essence of the Faith, and belongs to the due order of the Catholic Church." [7]

However, local adaptation in the spirit of this Resolution has been rare. In Southern Africa British influence generally has exerted greater pressure <u>against</u> adaptation, while the indigenous customs of the black African have been looked upon as "foreign customs". As a result, local customs have found little expression within the Anglican Church in Africa. Thus in many instances so far from the intention of Resolution 19 being achieved, the opposite has resulted. English plainsong and hymnody were introduced and maintained as though they were "of the essence of the Faith"; church architecture, liturgy, diocesan and parochial structures, traditional forms of the Ministry, and other practices of the Western Church no less. External traditions such as these, when transplanted into Africa were not regarded as "foreign customs", but quickly became part of the "due order of the Catholic Church". While it was natural in the beginning to make use of foreign liturgical practices in a non-Christian culture which had none, no significant effort was subsequently made to employ elements of the local culture in the life and worship of the Church in Africa.

In his Encyclical Letter to the Conference of 1920, Archbishop Randall Davidson outlined some clear principles for missionary work.

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7. <u>ibid</u>.

He criticised past efforts by suggesting that missionaries "have been content to make disciples out of all nations; they have not remembered that their Master in fact commanded them to make all the nations His disciples. In other words they have not taken due account of the value of nationality". The intense concern for nationalism and self-determination accompanying World War I was reflected in the thinking about Mission at Lambeth:

> "The aim of missions is not only to make Christians, but to make Christian nations. The principle has consequences, both negative and positive, which are daily becoming clearer. No community of Christians has a right to attempt to produce a replica of itself in a foreign country which it evangelizes. Neither forms of worship, nor methods of thought, nor social institutions belonging to one race ought to be imposed on another. Nor will evangelism or pastorate for longer than necessary be retained in foreign hands." [8]

There the pronouncements on Mission stood for nearly forty years.

By the Conference of 1958 in the aftermath of yet another global war, a committee report on "Missionary Appeal and Strategy" made the following statement:

> "It is the duty of the Church to be faithful to the theological principles upon which its work of evangelism is based. It is its duty also, to note that the conditions under which its work is attempted are *not* chosen by the Church, *but are given by circumstances of time and place*." [9]

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8. *ibid*.
9. *ibid*., italics mine.

Accordingly, the committee reiterated the attitude of the 1920 Conference and stated that missionaries and societies "go as representatives, not of any particular country, but of the Church. They will learn from the heritage of the land to which they go and share that of the land from which they come ...". [10]

In 1968 the main statement on Mission appeared in Resolution 11: "It is the conviction of the Conference that, in their obedience to Christ's mission and command ...the Christian Churches must endeavour such positive relationship to the different religions of men as will call Christians not only to study other faiths in their own seriousness, but also to study unbelief in its real quality". [11] Here there is the important suggestion that serious consideration needs to be given to beliefs, both Christian and non-Christian. One does not know, however, if serious study of "unbelief in its real quality" is meant to involve a fundamental re-assessing of traditional belief in terms of the basic New Testament kerygma. The Resolution, while excellent in principle, tends to be unclear in its implications and demands. While calling for a restatement of the Faith, the Resolution is silent about the underlying assertions requiring restatement:

> "... the Church must organise itself for its mission in the contemporary world (by) re-stating Christian theological and metaphysical assertions for men living in a secular society and conditioned by its outlook, and working out with them an informal and positive response to

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10. ibid. These principles were embodied in Resolution 59 of the same Conference.

11. Lambeth Conference Report; London: SPCK, 1968.

the novel moral ethical problems of the age."[12]

In this statement it is clear that the traditional concern of presenting Christianity to those of other religious backgrounds has taken second place to modern concerns for "secular society". But for evangelism in rural African society, such a statement speaks largely of issues which are irrelevant. For example, it is often widely assumed that Christianity, as presented to the African, has touched him on a sufficiently deep level of personal meaning for the Christian way of life to be an integral part of his approach to life. But unless this assumption can be justified by more evidence than statistics of growth and membership, or a tiny minority of Africans presently in creative roles of Christian leadership, no amount of restating the Faith "for men living in a secular society" is going to deepen or make clear the relevance of Christianity to an animist's world-view. In rural Africa the problem is much more serious than even the latest Lambeth Resolution has fully recognized, and something more fundamental than restatements for "secular society" are needed. Even the wording of the Lambeth statement is alien to the African Weltanschauung, which would not make any fundamental distinction between the sacred and the secular. Thus while appropriate to many areas of the world today, modern statements and policies of Mission, for much of Africa at least, may be directed at questions that are not being asked. Yet on the other hand, some of the fundamental cultural difficulties of relating Christian theology to Africa have not been adequately studied or resolved.

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12. ibid., Section sub-titled "Development for Mission".

In assessing the history of Anglican missionary work, Webster[13] suggests three attitudes which consistently have frustrated missionary work and expansion. First, the historic relationship between Church and State has seriously handicapped, and at times prevented, the Church of England from exercising an independent role as a free critic of society. The Church of England has enjoyed this privileged position, but at the price of political subservience to the state, which might be called a Constantinian compromise. This association of English Church and State has produced a colonial Anglican "super culture", imported into foreign missionary areas as much by the Church as by colonial governments. "The mood of being settled, secure and established does not cohabit well with a sense of universal mission ... (thus) Anglicanism has never found transplantation or adaptation particularly easy".[14] On the contrary, however, there has been transplantation, but little meaningful adaptation to foreign cultures. One could argue that this limitation has been the price of Empire. The English language, for example, was a token badge of civilization wherever the British Empire extended, and was invariably recognized as the official first language of colonial areas. Accordingly, Anglican missionaries have rarely been remembered for their linguistic abilities in foreign lands. The Anglican Mission in Ovamboland historically has had a paucity of experts in the local language, whereas the neighbouring Finnish Mission has been recognized for linguistic achievements in the local dialects. The lack of interest in or demand for Finnish among the Ovambo made

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13. D. Webster, Local Church and World Mission; London: SCM, 1962, pp. 31ff.

14. ibid.

it essential that Finnish missionaries learn the local dialects as a basic tool for communication.

Other forms as well of transplantation without adaptation have been a characteristic weakness of Anglican missions in general.[15] With few exceptions, missionaries in Ovamboland have made no attempts to adapt Anglican traditions to the culture, possibly due to a lack of imagination, pressure of work, undue pride in their own culture, or the unconscious assumption of a superior attitude towards the local people. Still others have lacked any desire to establish contact with the people.

Secondly, Anglican missionary work historically has lacked overall strategy and planning, and rarely has had the guidance and enthusiasm of ecclesiastical leadership at the top.[16] Small groups of dedicated clergy and laymen took the initiative in creating voluntary missionary societies in England, such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1699), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1701), and the Church Missionary Society (1799). Whereas these societies, and others like them, have been responsible for monumental achievements in foreign missionary expansion over the past 250 years, they have often represented party

15. Both the English and Kwanyama versions of "God Save the King" appear in the Kwanyama Anglican Hymnal, numbers 224 and 226, which until Republic Day in 1960 was sung religiously each morning at school assembly.

16. Webster narrows the accusation down perhaps too much: "It cannot be said that Anglican missions were launched with arch-episcopal enthusiasm". op. cit., p. 32. On the other hand, a certain distrust of enthusiasm within Anglican tradition is well founded, when viewed in light of the numerous revivalist movements which historically have grown out of and separated from the Anglican Church.

interests in the Church of England, and have divided rather than united the evangelical thrust of the Church, both at home and abroad. The same lack of overall planning has wasted time and money through multiplying of missionary societies and organizations, with each society functioning either independently or in conflict with another. Sundkler has observed even more serious disadvantages to occur in the mission field:

> "Each denomination and missionary organization from overseas brought its characteristic denominational one-sidedness, its own particular kind of Christianity. Generally speaking, the Church was by these organizations presented as a preaching and teaching institution only, whereas the ... devotional heritage of the Church Universal was not transmitted to the young African in the same degree." [17]

Thirdly, perhaps the most fundamental weakness of Mission in Anglicanism has been the lack of a theology of mission in its own doctrinal textbooks, "and even in the classic discussions on the

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17. B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa; Second Ed., London: O.U.P., 1961, p. 296. It is interesting to note that the American Episcopal Church took steps in 1835 to avoid duplicating efforts between numerous private missionary societies, by forming a general Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church. Manross has called the forming of this Missionary Society "the most important single event in the history of the Episcopal Church in the early 19th Century". (Wm. Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church; New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1950, pp. 256ff.) In principle, this Society (which remains to the present) was formed to extend missionary responsibility to every member of the Church, and it was specifically provided that every member of the Episcopal Church should be a member. However, it is significant that for many years the rate of increase in financial support for the Society did not show an appreciable increase over the years prior to the formation of a general Missionary Society.

Church by leading Anglican divines".[18] By comparison with other Christian bodies, "... if you were a Lutheran or a Roman Catholic or a Baptist your initiation into this branch of Christian doctrine, both in lectures and in reading, would be much more thorough".[19] Anglican priorities and energies have been otherwise: "We have been so occupied in arguing the apostolic succession that we have scarcely bothered, at the theological level, about the apostolic mission (but) a succession, however valid, without a mission is a poor thing to boast about".[20] Greater importance has been assigned to concerns of static order in safeguarding and enshrining catholicity and orthodoxy, in which mission has played a subordinate role. This was evident as far back as 1897 in an excerpt of the committee report on Foreign Missions which read: "... We would urge upon all who are engaged upon this (missionary) work the paramount importance of building up the Body of Christ, never losing sight of the great principles of Church order and constitution ...".[21] But these pre-occupations have meant neglecting the dynamic principles upon which catholicity at some point must depend. These are mission and evangelism.

The history of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa suggests three other serious criticisms of missionary work:

1. The association which the Church of England has enjoyed over the centuries with colonial or imperial powers has often produced a concomittant attitude of superiority among

18. Webster, op. cit., p. 33
19. ibid.
20. ibid.
21. The Six Lambeth Conferences: 1867-1920, pp. 225-6.

English missionaries in meeting and dealing with primitive cultures. Moreover, with the tendency to regard themselves as culturally superior, English missionaries usually have been educationally superior to those among whom they have gone to serve, and this has frequently given rise to a condescending attitude (perhaps unconsciously) towards ignorant illiterates of a foreign land.[22] Wherever this has occurred, it has confused the servant role which is the form of Christ's mission to the world. The early Church was launched on its mission with a power that knew neither wealth nor status.[23]

2. There has been a tendency to regard Anglican missionary jurisdictions as "administrative appendages" of established dioceses, rather than allowing them to stand on their own as autonomous units. While conservatism and a degree of ambiguity in Anglican canon law historically have provided useful safeguards, such things have not enhanced or encouraged missionary expansion. Thus the Acts of Synods and governing legislation resound with terminology which at times appears vague and anomalous: "missionary district",

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22. One of the most influential English clergy in the history of the Ovamboland Mission is still remembered of many by one of his favourite quips: "Cambridge does not make mistakes". Other English missionaries have been mischievously nicknamed "in England" by pupils in the schools.

23. Cf. Acts 3. 6: "Silver and gold have I none, but in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk"; see also I Cor. 1. 18ff.

"missionary diocese", "missionary bishop", "jurisdiction" and "oversight".[24] In addition, these anomalous missionary units have always lacked the sound financial footing enjoyed by older, better established areas. The financing of new missionary programmes has been a burden to older established dioceses and provinces; and as each struggling diocese has become established and grown wealthy, the tendency has not been to share resources and wealth with other young missionary areas, but to give "token" support, often regarded more as a nuisance than a responsibility. This attitude has existed even within one diocese, in which the need for missionary expansion into the country districts has been unsympathetically received by those in the towns and cities. For example, in the early years, the Bishop of Damaraland was unable to provide even minimal support for Ovamboland because of other financial demands, even though Ovamboland provided his main source of appeal for donations; later, as greater financial and personnel demands of the Ovamboland Mission were met by the diocese, clergy and laity in the more developed areas of the diocese frequently expressed an unsympathetic attitude toward these "missionary" needs.

3. The Tractarian Movement in a sense was the foster father of the Church of the Province, and tractarian influences

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24. The Church of the Province of South Africa moved to abolish the term "missionary diocese" in 1965, because it created a false dichotomy and was theologically untenable.

have remained a conspicuous part of the life of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. Stress upon the importance of the clergy as the essence of the Church for instance has led to clericalism; likewise, certain concepts of the Church, the laity and the Ministry have been conservative, and at times narrow. Concern for "faith and order" has been characteristic of the older dioceses, while any excess enthusiasm for establishing new missionary frontiers has been quietly tolerated but not characteristic of the life and strategy of the Church of the Province. Possibly because of these things, there has been no specific plan, programme or institution for training missionaries in South Africa, and today in an age of specialization no programme for training the missionary as a specialist exists.[25]

The Ovamboland Mission and the Diocese of Damaraland were the progeny of the Cape Town Diocese, which had inherited many of the difficulties that beset its first bishop, Robert Gray. Certain of the problems that confronted Gray in the last century have been perpetuated into this century, and accordingly have influenced missionary work within the Church of the Province. Four main difficulties frustrated Robert Gray, and after him have continued

25. It was not until the early 1960's that the C.P.S.A. established the rudiments of a missionary society, through which the cause of mission may be presented to members, and money raised and personnel recruited.

to influence missionary policies and expansion. In particular, for Gray these issues involved:

1. Lack of financial support;
2. No clear definition of jurisdiction and authority;
3. The problem of a foreign controlling authority which was not sufficiently familiar or concerned with the local situation;
4. The relation between bishop, clergy and laity in the local church, which produced problems of internal authority.

A brief survey of these historic issues provides some helpful insights into understanding later trends in missionary policy and development.

1. Having accepted appointment as Bishop of the Cape of Good Hope, Gray discovered he had no financial backing of his work by the Church of England. In a letter written at the time of his consecration Gray wrote of the impossible task of going as a Colonial Missionary Bishop without the barest provision having been made for the support of his work:

> " ... I was much disappointed with all I heard in London. I have no prospects held out to me of assistance from any quarter. The Society (SPG) has not a shilling ... no prospect of anything from the Colonial Office or from the Colony."[26]

26. C. Gray, The Life of Robert Gray, Vol. I; London: Rivingtons, 1876, p. 121. The fact that Gray had been an ardent worker for the S.P.G. in the Diocese of Durham prior to his appointment apparently counted for little when he applied for support from the Society. Gray did write, however, just before his departure from England in 1847, that the Society had assured him of £175, "if they have it to give". ibid., p. 125.

Gray was expected to find his own finances for outfit and voyage, which were estimated at £1000, and was informed his income would be £750, to be paid from England by the Colonial Bishops' Fund. In near despair, he wrote: "I feel that I am not in the position in which a Missionary Bishop of the Church ought to be - dependent altogether upon what I can raise for myself. I had no notion of the utterly helpless condition in which I should be, till my consent was given".[27] Gray thus had to refuse applications from "ten or twelve clergymen" to accompany him to the Cape, as he felt he could not engage more than one because of a lack of sufficient resources. There appears to have been considerable embarrassment among senior bishops at the lack of organized support provided for missionary bishops. When Gray appealed to the Bishop of London for assistance, he recorded the visit in few words: "He received me in a most frigid way for ten minutes, and seemed evidently to consider the whole subject a bore, and gave me no encouragement to go to him for anything again".[28]

2. Robert Gray discovered the further frustration of not having any clear delineation of his own episcopal authority and jurisdiction as a colonial bishop. This appears to have been the common plight of every missionary bishop sent out to a colonial episcopate. "The whole _status_ of the

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27. _ibid._

28. _ibid._, p. 121

Bishop", wrote Gray in 1847, "as to power, discipline, etc. is most painful and disappointing".[29] No one, not even the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London, was able to provide satisfactory or decisive answers concerning his status. In a personal letter to his sister he concluded:

> "Altogether I feel we (colonial missionary bishops) are placed in a most cruel position: we have all our higher feelings of duty and devotion appealed to, and then the Church and State leave us to shift for ourselves."[30]

3. When Gray arrived in South Africa, the ambiguity of his situation led to the related problem of the relationship between his authority as bishop and the overriding authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had no knowledge or experience of the Church in South Africa. The issue which highlighted and eventually culminated this particular problem was whether a bishop appointed to serve in South Africa had to be appointed by Royal Mandate and consecrated in England, or whether Gray, as Metropolitan of the Church in South Africa, could consecrate his own appointments. But it took over twenty years before this issue was clarified, when the Church of the Province of South Africa became an autonomous body independent of outside authority.[31]

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29. *ibid.*
30. *ibid.*
31. Provincial Synod of January, 1870, drew up the famous Third Proviso, which excluded the English Privy Council as a court of appeal, and cut the Church in South Africa off from the ecclesiastical and civil courts of England.

4. As a result of Robert Gray's tractarian background and leaning, he met with a determined resistance among the laity of his own new diocese, who were adamantly opposed to any alterations or adjustments in the local church. Clergy and laity alike feared that Gray wanted to break away from the Church of England and start a new church on his own, of which they wanted no part. Gray, on the other hand, wrote of the opposing element: "They would have the Church of England as by law established and transplanted holus bolus, and they would have their liberties protected by the Civil Law".[32] This particular situation reflected two difficulties: the reluctance of the colonial church to depart from any part of the Anglican tradition as it was practiced in England; and the function and role of a bishop in a missionary area such as the Cape.

That Gray met with frustration and resistance in England as well as in the Cape was not entirely by accident. Neither the role nor the function of a missionary bishop was clearly understood or agreed upon. Moreover, in the Church of England there was no common agreement that the actual presence of a bishop was necessary in establishing a missionary church. The whole concept of the episcopacy in missionary areas was being debated at the time Gray was sent to the Cape. The two major and influential missionary societies took opposing views. The S.P.G. held the tractarian view

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32. A. Brooke, Robert Gray: First Bishop of Cape Town; London: O.U.P., 1947, p. 82. These dissident attitudes carried the seeds of what later led to the establishment of a separate body known as the "Church of England in South Africa".

that a bishop must be sent to a place where missionary work was in its early stages, so that the work could develop and expand around him. This view was based on the concept that a bishop was fundamentally the centre of unity, and therefore essential in establishing any new work. The C.M.S. took the opposing evangelical view that a bishop should be sent out to a missionary area only when it became obvious that the work justified an episcopal appointment.[33] One view expressed the tractarian understanding of the centrality of the episcopate: the other represented the evangelical notion in which the bishop functioned primarily as an administrative head, necessary only when the size and growth of a church justified an ecclesiastical supervisor. The latter view was largely representative of the Cape.

Still another problem was encountered by Gray in South Africa which has remained a characteristic difficulty of the Church of the Province: the handicap of having a diocese too large for effective pastoral oversight. When he arrived in the Cape, he found a "diocese" of 250,000 square miles, "the burden of a completely unendowed Church".[34] However, any alteration of the situation required an appeal to England. Thus, after three years and a lengthy visit to England, Gray succeeded in receiving permission to divide South Africa into three dioceses.[35]

While the partition of the Cape into three dioceses alleviated

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33. cf. Brooke, op. cit., pp. 77ff.

34. ibid., p. 62.

35. These were Cape Town, Grahamstown and Natal. In the course of his two-year visit to England, Gray also managed to beg sufficient funds to maintain the work in Africa for a further five years. cf. ibid., p. 64.

the immediate situation, it was by no means a lasting solution to the problem, for the newly created dioceses in turn became units too great for effective oversight by one man. The precedent of having vast diocesan areas with pastoral and administrative responsibilities too great for one bishop has largely remained in the Church of the Province to the present.

Webster has observed that Anglican missions have never been launched with arch-episcopal enthusiasm, and this was pathetically true in Robert Gray's move to Africa. A strong desire was expressed among members of the Colonial Bishoprics' Committee that representation be made to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, entreating them to bring the whole subject of the Colonial church directly before the Church of England. It was suggested this might best be done by means of a special prayer to be used throughout the Kingdom. However, those appealed to "saw so many difficulties attending on this course" that the suggestion had to be abandoned.[36] As an alternative, it was agreed that individual bishops could be allowed to issue a Pastoral Letter "enjoining their Clergy to bring the subject before their respective flocks as a subject of prayer, even where it might not be expedient to ask alms ...".[37] Pastoral Letters were issued in many dioceses, but for a variety of reasons other bishops refused even to do this.

The problems Robert Gray faced 100 years ago were but a prelude to later difficulties to be experienced in the missionary work of the Church of the Province. Usually these were relatable to

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36. ibid., p. 122.
37. ibid.

earlier attitudes and difficulties. One can also observe some of the tendencies, often the failings, which have characterized the history of Anglican missionary enterprise throughout the world. Thus Stephen Neill has appropriately concluded:

> "If the Church of England had not developed a capacity unmatched in any other Christian communion in the world, for tolerating the intolerable, it would have been brought to an end long ago." [38]

The Anglican Mission in Ovamboland is a product of that zeal which has frequently inspired individuals to dedicated missionary service. It was not born out of widespread conviction among Christians in South Africa to evangelize the heathen; nor as a result of missionary strategy or planning; nor because of the attitudes of church leaders; nor out of any promise of financial support. Like so many earlier efforts, this missionary undertaking began in spite of a lack of these things and because of the stubborn determination of two men. Yet, in every sense the Ovamboland Mission was a child of the Church of the Province, which in turn was the awkward adolescent of the Church of England. Each carried the features of the other: strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, and withal the common heritage of being thoroughly English.

It is therefore not surprising for one to find in the history of the Ovamboland Mission many of the tendencies that have characterized

38. S. Neill, Anglicanism; Baltimore: Penguin, 1958, p. 254.

Anglican missionary work elsewhere. These tendencies may be classified into two categories: (1) The area of theological influence, which includes the actual teachings of the missionaries in Ovamboland, as well as liturgy and worship; and (2) the area of "political" influence, which includes the organization and administration of the mission church. The latter involves a wide range of influences, such as ecclesiastical structures and authority, cultural elements introduced into the society, racial attitudes, and assumptions made by the missionaries. These are most evident in the historical resumé of the Mission, the chapter which follows.

What effects have these theological and organizational influences had upon the young church in Ovamboland, and upon individual Christians? White Christians might answer in words such as these:

> "... The Church in Africa is being built on solid ground. It has given sufficient proofs that it is rooted in the people, and it has grown to become one of the powers destined to reshape African life."[39]

African Christians, on the other hand, are beginning to express a totally different opinion about Christian influence in Africa: "The Christian Church has remained an alien institution in Africa ... to a large extent due to the absence of conscious and creative theological work by both Western and African leaders ...".[40] Still other African Christians, rightly or wrongly, express growing frustration and resentment, some of which may be justifiable:

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39. D. Westermann, Africa and Christianity; London: O.U.P., 1937, p. vii.

40. K. Busia, quoted by B. Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa; London: S.C.M., 1960, p. 281.

> "... Because the authority of Western culture and Western institutions outstripped ours where the expression of faith was concerned, it succeeded in converting African Christians into a people without soul or visage, a pale shadow of the dominating pride of the Christian West. At the very heart and centre of the Church in Africa, we have in fact witnessed the mutilation of the African Personality, and the trampling of human dignity in Africa." [41]

While one must therefore be aware of the divergent answers being given to the question of what effect Christianity has had in Africa, any meaningful answer will depend not so much on emotional reactions as upon the results of patient survey and study of individual Christians. On a limited scale, the present study has attempted to do this from a theological approach. But much more information is urgently needed from the related fields of sociology, anthropology and psychology before conclusive statements can be made. In the present thesis a first step has been taken, which has indicated the need for a much more extensive study in depth on this subject.

To live for a few months at the basic parish level in an African village can be very disturbing to one's theology and doctrine of the Church, for the Church is very hard to see in such a situation. If, for instance, one were to ask the question of what distinguishes the Christian from his non-Christian neighbour, one would receive the obvious answers: "They have Christian names; they go to church with some regularity; they pay their church dues once a year; they have only one wife; they don't attend the traditional tribal festivities and

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41. A. Diop, Report of First International Congress of Africanists (Accra, 1962): London: O.U.P., 1964, pp. 50-51.

sacrifices; they are married in church and have their children baptized; they pray to the living God", and so on. But a closer acquaintance would reveal that these replies are largely theoretical. It is therefore to this subject that this study turns in an attempt to elucidate popular understanding of what constitutes a Christian in an animistic society.

Chapter One presents an historical resumé of the Ovamboland Mission, with special emphasis upon missionary policy and practice during the formative years. An understanding of Kwanyama society, culture and thought is then necessary before attempting to understand how the teachings of the mission church related to the old society and traditional world-view. Chapter Two provides the descriptive data of some major aspects of the culture prior to Christian influence. Chapter Three presents a comparative description of seven fundamental differences between the new religion and tribal tradition. This Chapter involves a description of the life and teachings of the mission church in relation to the beliefs and practices of the society. A critical analysis of certain points of conflict which arise out of these comparisons is presented in Chapter Four. Evidence for this analysis is based on personal interviews with individuals and informants, and on the results of a survey-questionnaire that was conducted in Ovamboland. While the number of respondents to the survey is less than desired for this study, nevertheless the findings do indicate possibly significant trends and attitudes, and in some cases conclusive statements seem justifiable. Chapter Five presents a summary and conclusion to the study, based on the thesis as a whole. Certain suggestions as to possible courses of action are made on the basis of the present information, and the experience of the Church elsewhere in Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

POLICY IN THE MAKING

(An Historical Resumé: 1924 - 1960)

White Rhenish missionaries first entered Ovamboland in 1856 on a visit under the auspices of the German Lutheran Church. These missionaries, Hahn and Rath, went as far as Ondangua where they attempted to visit the Ondonga chief, Nangoro, but met with an unfriendly welcome. As they were leaving the Chief's kraal they were attacked, but managed to beat off their attackers and escaped uninjured. The effect of their visit was damaging for any subsequent immediate contact with the Ondonga tribe, for in the melee of the attack Chief Nangoro died, and his death was attributed to the visit of the white men; although Nangoro was not personally involved in the skirmish, it was believed he died of a stroke brought on by the sudden excitement. It was nearly twenty years before the next white men were seen in Ovamboland, when the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran missionaries entered the country to establish a mission.

The Anglican Church, represented by the Diocese of Cape Town, applied to the German Administration of South West Africa in 1883 to establish work in Ovamboland. Permission was refused, and further official overtures were not made again until 1917, when the administration of the territory was awarded to the Union of South Africa

under a League of Nations Mandate.[1]

In 1917 when the Germans had scarcely surrendered to the South African forces and before the Mandate was settled, the Union of South Africa sent an expedition to Ovamboland to announce the new rulers of the territory. In the same year the authority of Colonel Manning, the active Native Commissioner in northern Ovamboland, was challenged by Mandume, Chief of the Kwanyama tribe.[2] Mandume and his people had been warned repeatedly of cattle violations between Ovamboland and Angola, but the young Chief, then in his early twenties, allegedly violated and challenged the Commissioner's authority to interfere in the internal affairs of the tribe. As a result, Manning ordered South African forces into Ovamboland to quell Mandume. In the initial military encounter Mandume and his men had set an ambush which proved disastrous for both sides. Chief Mandume was killed, along with twelve South African soldiers. The expedition of 1917 was to have two major consequences. First, since Mandume had no successor as Paramount Chief of the Kwanyama tribe, the South African Native Commissioner in effect became the Chief and final authority, and thereafter the Kwanyama tribe was to be ruled by eight Government-appointed headmen.[3] The second

1. Under Article 22 in the Covenant of the League of Nations, General Smuts succeeded in having S. W. A. classified as a "C" type mandated territory. Such territories were supposed to be areas with sparse population, small size, remote from centres of civilization, and geographically contiguous with the mandatory territory. (See R. First, South West Africa; Baltimore: Penguin, 1963, pp. 94-97)
2. The new orthography and spelling of Kwanyama names is used throughout this thesis, except for quotations in which the tribal name is spelled "Kuanjama".
3. The Kwanyama tribe is matrilineal in structure, which meant that Mandume's successor had to be the eldest male-child of his eldest sister, Dilokelua. But due to some chronic illness Dilokelua never gave birth to a son, and hence no natural successor to the throne was ever provided.

consequence of the expedition involved an Anglican clergyman, Nelson Wellesley Fogarty, who was acting Chaplain to the Forces in the punitive expedition of 1917. Fogarty saw more than the battle with Mandume and his warriors: he saw a land with virtually no Christian influence, and thus determined to make the spiritual needs of the Kwanyama tribe known upon his return to Cape Town.

As a result of Fogarty's enthusiasm to begin missionary work in South West Africa he was appointed by Archbishop Carter as the first Missionary Bishop of Damaraland. On February 24, 1924, in Cape Town, Fogarty was consecrated bishop, with the Reverend George W. R. Tobias acting as his Chaplain. Tobias, then a 42-year old priest in the Cape Town Diocese, offered to go to Ovamboland to establish missionary work among the people; and on July 11th of the same year Tobias left Cape Town, commended by Archbishop Carter to Bishop Fogarty for missionary work in Ovamboland.

Tobias arrived in Ovamboland in August of 1924. The Government had already decided the Anglican Church should limit its work to the largest northern tribe, the Kwanyama, while the Finnish Lutheran missionaries were permitted to continue their work in the adjacent tribal areas, notably the Ondonga.[4] However, one Finnish mission in the Kwanyama area was allowed to remain at Engela; this mission station, formerly under the Rhenish Mission, was sold to the Finnish Mission when the Germans left Ovamboland around 1910.

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4. The Finnish Lutheran Mission was established in 1870. To avoid possible friction and misunderstanding, the Government ensured that only one denomination would be allowed in each tribal area. In time this policy was relaxed, but the general principle was to continue until 1968.

Located just six miles from the new Anglican headquarters, Engela was to become a constant source of conflict and tension in the early history of the Anglican Mission.

The earliest letters of Tobias give a vivid picture of life during the first days of the Mission, and indicate the determination with which he met the practical problems for which his former life had given little training. "For the first few months, life was devoted to the basic need of establishing a settlement in which white people could live: building houses, sinking wells, coping with transport problems, and the daily need of food and care for himself - alone and camped beneath a tree for many months, in the district known as Odibo ...".[5]

It is now impossible to say with certainty what the Kwanyama people expected of the new Mission. They already had some experience of white missionaries from the German and Finnish Missions. On the one hand were the Germans who were associated with former harsh rule under German South West Africa;[6] and on the other were the Finnish missionaries who were representatives of strict puritanical and evangelical Lutheranism which forbade drink, drums, tobacco and numerous tribal traditions. The attitude of the headmen expressed a hope that the English missionaries might be different and more to their liking; following a meeting with the headmen, Hahn,

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5. M. Syfret, unpublished ms.

6. The "Blue Book", produced in Windhoek in 1918, was intended to convince the world how unsuitable the Germans were to govern African people. First concludes: "The German record in S. W. A. was indefensible - it was one of insatiable plunder". And when Britain and South Africa put on display the results of Germany's colonial policy, "it was not because they wanted to champion the African cause, but because they wanted to discredit the German one". (First, op. cit., pp. 92-3).

the Native Commissioner, reported they "want an English mission and no other".[7]

In the beginning there was no cooperation between the three churches in Ovamboland in establishing missionary work, and in fact relations were often hostile. On August 9, 1924, Tobias wrote:

> "The Finns and Romans[8] are likely to do all they can to get in among the natives by means of schools run by utterly illiterate natives. The Finns may not open up more stations, but since they heard we were coming they have started 50 native posts. I think the Government will stop them and the headmen are opposed to ignorant natives setting up as teachers in their areas. The Government and the natives expect us to occupy the whole Ovakuanjama territory."[9]

In the same letter he refers to one Finnish missionary in the Kwanyama area who set about "baptizing wholesale", and baptized 3000 in his first year; later due to Government protest he was forced to change his practices. Resentment against other churches was so strong among Finnish missionaries that it was reported steps were taken to prevent the Anglican Church from establishing any work in the country. Tobias' diary, dated Saturday, 16th August, 1924, records a conversation with the Native Commissioner, who reported: "The Finns held a grand

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7. Tobias, letter dated August 5, 1924.
8. The Roman Catholic Church having arrived in Ovamboland just five days before the Anglicans, was assigned a tribal area to the west of the Kwanyama tribe.
9. Tobias' "Letters".

council the day before yesterday and were appealing to the International Board of Missions against our intrusion and representing it as the Act of the Government who they said were anxious to oust them with English missionaries".

Tobias found the Kwanyama an independent and proud people who had never been ruled by outsiders and were masters in their own country. Although this attitude was responsible for Mandume's fatal encounter with the white man, there was no evidence that the people accepted an attitude of defeat, even though the Government, through the white Native Commissioner, possessed final authority in the land. The earlier German Administration had taken no interest in Ovamboland and had allowed no white men to enter the country except missionaries. South Africa followed a similar policy in the administration of the area,[10] however there was a significant difference: whereas the Germans had no system of Native Commissioners, the new Administration took a firm hand in instituting a policy of native administration in Ovamboland. Technically the Commissioner ruled the country through the headmen; but since he held the self-appointed role of "Chief" over the tribe, this introduced an element of outside authority over the people which was often calculated to degrade and subdue the Kwanyama people. Tobias observed of the two Commissioners: "Hahn and Eades are very much on a pedestal and keep aloof and speak through an interpreter - they are very anxious for me to speak just as they do".[11]

From the beginning, Tobias was faced with a frustrating alliance between his bishop and Commissioner Hahn, who was Fogarty's

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10. Cf. Tobias, "Diary": Monday, 25 August, 1924.
11. ibid.

son-in-law. Even before any evangelism or missionary work was attempted, Tobias felt he could not expect his bishop's full blessing or approval of his approach to the people. In his diary he wrote:

> "The Bishop came to me before he left and said that Hahn wanted me to change my attitude to the natives. 'Speak to them' he said, 'like a Sergeant Major, give orders and never hold conversation and do not be friendly'. Hahn also said to me 'Always speak with authority as to a child who is rather in disgrace'. Hahn is on excellent footing with the people ... but his attitude is 'I have spoken - there the matter ends." [12]

At first Tobias was prepared to take advice in his ignorance, and tried to maintain an authoritative mien and a distant attitude, for which he received a gentle rebuke from the principal headman, Hamukoto. "The one way in which you can make soft the hearts of the heathen", he told him, "is by being one with them, eating with them and showing sympathy".[13] Thereafter George Tobias was generally well-received among the people, and never missed an opportunity to tell the people of the religion he had come to teach. But he was equally ready to show his interest in them and their way of life by accepting, as far as possible, their customs and sharing their interests. Immediately after settling at Odibo he made efforts to learn the language, basic etiquette and customs of his neighbours.

Tobias' earliest plans for the Mission included a school. He believed this would draw the people to him for religious instruction,

12. Tobias, "Diary" : Monday, August 25, 1925.
13. <u>ibid</u>.

and it would be necessary for them to be able to read, "for if they were to learn the tenets of Christianity they must be able to read the Bible".[14] Some of his local labourers had been to Lutheran schools, and others who had been to the mines on labour contract had picked up a smattering of education. Before he left Windhoek for Ovamboland, in July, 1924, Tobias interviewed the Director of Education and received the assurance that the Government would give help for establishing a school. "The Director of Education told us that he would let us have school material, tools, and would pay salaries". But by November of the same year the Bishop wrote to Tobias: "The Government have decided not to give anything, either money or material for education, general or industrial or agricultural in Ovamboland".[15]

The value of education was already recognized by many Ovambos. This awareness had developed primarily through three main influences: (1) contact with more educated Africans on labour contract in the South; (2) the impact which the Finnish Lutheran missionaries had made, educationally, in the country; and (3) the superior position of the white man whose education, it was assumed, had given him both status and power. Within six months, Tobias set about with plans for opening a school and hostel at Odibo:

> "I want to get about 20 lads, three or four from each Omukunda (village, district). I shall offer to each a shirt and shorts, shelter and food, three or four hours schooling a day and manual and agricultural instruction and shall expect them to help a bit with the work of the place ... I propose having the boys here seven months

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14. M. Syfret, unpub. ms.
15. Tobias, "Diary" : November 7, 1924.

> in the year. Before long I shall visit the various headmen and ask them to put the offer to their people."[16]

By the end of the same year twenty boys were boarding at Odibo.

The educational work of the Mission combined teaching the elements of Christianity, the "3 R's", and manual skills for both boys and girls. The Reverend G. H. Bridges, Tobias' first assistant, wrote of the educational work in 1927:

> "The School is doing well ... many of our scholars are getting a good knowledge of Scripture, Catechism and English, (as well as) industrial instruction in measuring, carpentry, gardening, handling cattle, etc., while the girls learn sewing, washing, and ironing. It is wonderful too how quickly they learn to read and write."[17]

The first qualified teacher, Miss Helen Newham, arrived from England in mid-1929, sent under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S. P. G.). It is probable that the earlier work of German and Finnish missionaries had established some precedents and made it easier to introduce a school and a woman teacher, for no reactions were recorded to having Miss Newham in the authoritative role of teacher. In the old society, for a woman to occupy <u>any</u> position of authority was unthinkable.[18]

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16. "Diary" : January 6, 1925.
17. "Mission Report", 1927.
18. For a discussion of the liberating and disintegrating effect the presence professional women have had as missionaries, see M. A. C. Warren's book, <u>Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History</u>; London: S. C. M., 1965, pp. 93ff.

> "Miss Newham's coming has made a big difference to the School ... our neighbours are beginning to trust us and to realise that we do not want to steal their children, or to alienate them from their homes. A few heathen have actually themselves brought their children to stay with us as boarders. At first nearly all were runaways ..."[19]

The School became a valuable tool for evangelism in preparing and sending out trained Christians, and also a means of attracting the obstinate and the suspicious to learn about Christianity. Frequently in a new district the headman and his principal men were opposed to any change in their pagan ways and as their influence was generally strong, out of fear many people thus avoided the Mission altogether. Others who came into direct contact with the missionaries at Odibo submitted, outwardly at least, to their new teaching. Tobias was prepared to accept pupils irrespective of motive, and to influence them as he was able:

> "Most of the workmen attended afternoon school (after work) not from any desire for Christian Education, but simply as a matter of policy thinking it wise to fall in with the wishes of their employer. However, when the buildings were finished and work ceased, ten or eleven of them had become interested, and are now regular members of the school and attenders at services."[20]

Prior to the opening of the Mission in 1924, there were no medical services available within the Kwanyama area, although courageous medical work was being done by Finnish missionaries in

19. "Quarterly Paper" : No. 3, October, 1929.
20. Tobias, "Report of St Mary's Mission", 1928.

other areas, but on a totally inadequate scale. Within a month after his arrival Tobias was called upon to help the sick and the diseased. The Government had no plan to develop hospitals or clinics, but were willing to cooperate by offering small financial subsidy and contributions of medicines. The earliest entry in Tobias' journal calling for medical attention is dated Friday, October 3, 1924:

> "There is much sickness around. Influenza and stomach troubles and I am constantly interrupted to dispense drugs. The Government[21] gave us a wonderful supply of drugs but no ointment for sores. I have no bottles and mix cough medicine in jam tins. Shall be thankful when we are able to fix a dispensary and I have no longer to burrow in boxes every time I have to get out what I want. We shall need many rooms. I want a dental work room, a dispensary and a storeroom . . . ."

Severe illness and epidemics were frequent in the country, which evidently were often quite beyond the powers of the herbalist and the witch-doctor. Nine cases of plague were reported in one area, of which eight died,[22] and malaria and other fevers were a constant cause of suffering.

Plans for the Mission to build an in-patient clinic were encouraged by the Government which was increasingly concerned with the spread of tuberculosis and venereal disease among the northern tribes: either disease prevented men from labour recruitment in the farms and mines.

21. The District Medical Officer in Tsumeb, a white mining town 200 miles south of Odibo.

22. Q.P: No. 18, July, 1933.

The only treatment for tuberculosis then was long-term hospitalisation which mainly reduced the risk of infecting others. The Government offered to subsidize a hospital to the extent of 9d per day per patient, which was regarded by the Mission as "not really sufficient" even under the primitive conditions of Odibo. In addition to the financial difficulty of establishing a hospital, there was a serious problem of providing qualified staff. In 1927 Dr Philip joined the Mission under the auspices of the S. P. G. in England, and development of hospital buildings was started.

The medical work of the Mission seemed a natural concern from the start, for human suffering alone demanded some type of medical programme by the Church. Irrespective of the traditional role which the witch-doctor played in maintaining the health and stability of the community, the white man's services had certain appeal. His service was free, his equipment however primitive was a constant source of fascination, and almost any ailment might be brought to him once the patient had consulted his own witch-doctor. Tobias was busy with patients at all hours: " ... Seven patients turned up - five dressings between service and dinner time - immediately dinner was over a man arrived with bad toothache ... ".[23] By the end of the first year Tobias had integrated the medical work into the overall programme of evangelism, and regarded it as a valuable tool for reaching the people:

> "The Medical work is most important, both as a means of alleviating suffering and also because it brings the natives into friendly contact with the Mission. Most of those who have joined the Hearers' Class have been won directly or indirectly by the medical work."[24]

23. Tobias, Letter: September 13, 1924.
24. Tobias, "Report of St Mary's Mission", 1927, p. 2.

It is difficult to say why the Kwanyama headmen initially tolerated the presence of a new missionary. As noted earlier, there were some possible explanations to account for the original invitation to the English missionaries. However, if the headmen were impressed with the message of Christianity, one could have expected more of them to be converted by the earlier influence of the Finnish missionaries at Engela. But this was not the case. As the Council of Kwanyama headmen initially invited the Anglican Church to settle in their country, it was entirely on the basis of invitation and agreement of the local sub-headman that the Mission was later able to expand at all. Thirteen years later, in 1937, this continued to be the local policy determining expansion: "It is true that in all cases we have been invited by the headman to start work in his district, but very often his motive has been material gain. He hopes to get work for his people on buildings, or wants wells dug".[25] It is thus probable that any outward friendliness and cooperation shown Tobias in the beginning was based largely on the hope of material gain and development. This ambivalence on the part of the headmen eventually led to numerous conflicts between Christianity and their heathen way-of-life: "When once the school is opened, (the headman) begins to fear that those of his people who become Christians will belong less to him than before".[26]

The influence of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran missionaries, and before them the Rhenish Lutherans, had caused a degree of wariness and suspicion amongst the headmen, and only one (Nicodemus) was in fact a baptized Christian. The general ban on traditional customs imposed by both churches did not endear Christianity to many. Yet

25. Q. P.: No. 33, October, 1937.

26. ibid.

many people seemed to realise (perhaps only hopefully) that a strict puritan approach to tribal customs was not the only way to become a Christian. One of Tobias' early visits revealed this curious attitude, although we are told no more than the barest of details. Following a diplomatic visit to a headman (Haufiku Kasheta) he wrote:

> "... He received me very coldly and wanted to know why I should come to see him. I told him I had come to enquire after his health as he had been sick ... He wanted to know whether we were catholic or evangelistic. I am continually asked that question. I told him we were both which amazed him. He said perhaps we would allow a man to be a Christian and yet have many wives. I disabused his mind of that idea. Eventually he led us into his kraal and when we were set down he began to try to pull my leg a bit ... ."[27]

Tobias' answer may have sounded sufficiently equivocal to Haufiku, for a friendly relationship between them soon developed; there is, however, no mention of his conversion to Christianity.

On the subject of polygamous marriage Tobias was bound by the decision of the Lambeth Conference of 1888 which regarded polygamy as a sin. Other tribal traditions were possible: drinking of native beer, out-lawed by the Finnish missionaries, was accepted by Anglicans as a normal social convention; traditional tribal dress was acceptable; and the use of drums and dancing was neither condemned nor yet in the early days positively encouraged.

Social pressure in the early years was a strong force against

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27. Tobias, "Diary" : Sunday, 24 August 1924.

becoming a Christian, yet as early as 1927 one missionary expressed optimism:

> "The people are some of the best natives we have in Africa, and splendid material for spiritual work. They are by nature honest, open-hearted, well-mannered and possessing a keen sense of humour. We find them most orderly and respectful, and in church very reverent. Also they are showing evident appreciation of Religion and Education and what is more ... distinct signs of grace in their lives."[28]

But Tobias was probably more realistic in appraising the early effect of Christianity upon the people: "... heathen public opinion is powerful and heathen customs very strong, and there is no mass movement in favour of Christianity or education".[29] Especially among heads of families with large establishments and several wives, people preferred to attend preachings and services and "to play at Christianity" and hesitated joining classes for serious preparation.[30]

The educational and medical functions of the Mission were not allowed to usurp the fundamental work of evangelism, for Tobias and his assistant regarded the latter to be of primary importance: "We cannot sit still in one place and teach such people as find their way to us. We have to go out and bring the Gospel message to them. At a number of places every week we gather the heathen together and preach to them".[31] Tobias found the method of gathering people into local kraals for preaching services to be one of the most effective

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28. G. Bridges, "Report of St Mary's Mission", April, 1927.
29. Q.P.: No. 2, June, 1929.
30. cf. ibid.
31. ibid.

means of reaching both Christian and non-Christian, and continued this technique for the fifteen years he was in Ovamboland.[32]

Almost from the first month, George Tobias made a determined effort to learn the oshiKwanyama language. "I spend all my mornings now from 7: 30 till 1 o'clock at study of Kuanjama and have begun translating 'Die weg van seligheid', a catechism put out in April by the S. S. M., Modderpoort, into Kuanjama".[33] Within four years Tobias and Bridges together had translated the Prayer Book, a Hymnal consisting of 130 hymns, the Provincial Catechism and a short instruction in the Faith for catechists and teachers. In addition, a Life of Raymond Lull was translated by Bridges and was published in 1928.[34]

By 1929, after five years of work, the Odibo congregation averaged 80 to 100 worshippers on a Sunday morning, which included 34 confirmed adults. The Mission site, originally one man's garden, had become a settlement over a quarter of a mile long with Church, School, Boys' and Girls' Hostels, a Dispensary, Operating Theatre and Hospital wards, a Mission house and three buildings for staff quarters.[35] Permanent buildings were regarded an important indication that the missionaries intended to remain in the country:

> "In a strongly heathen district ... the people hold back for a long time until they are convinced that the white man has come to stay. They are afraid of being left alone without

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32. cf. Q. P.: No. 13, April, 1932.
33. Extract from Tobias' letter to his parents, 14th December, 1924.
34. See Tobias, "Report of St Mary's Mission", 1928.
35. See *ibid*.

> his support. The building of a substantial house last year at Holy Cross[36] and of the large Church this year have convinced them that it is safe to join us."[37]

The introduction of white Native Commissioners in 1917 had the effect of creating a measure of dependence upon white authority, particularly in matters of local injustice which could be referred to him for final judgement. The people believed the white missionary also possessed extraordinary powers and wisdom, and this too produced a degree of dependence. In addition, the capacity of the Mission to distribute clothing, food and education, as well as free medical services, produced further dependencies. We shall see in the later history of the Mission how power and policies were to produce dependencies, frequently of an undesirable sort.

Considerable development and expansion occurred between 1930 and 1940. While the basic approach in evangelism changed little, the earlier plan of training school pupils as teachers and preachers began to bear fruit with varying success. The success of one school and the failure of another was recorded in 1932. In the case of the failure, the teacher "got at logger-heads with the whole neighbourhood", while the successful teacher went with a few devices for winning pupils and snaring them into his school: he introduced his work by demonstrating a bar of soap and some coloured

36. The first outstation to be built, 12 miles east of Odibo.
37. Q.P.: No. 12, January 1932.

pictures. These fascinations engendered such interest among the children that they stayed to hear his teaching, and at the end of the lesson each pupil received a sweet, which ensured their return the next day.

However, in the second decade moral and spiritual lapses began to occur in the Mission. While one cannot suppose there was a high degree of sinless conduct among the first converts, nevertheless prior to 1934 there were no overt or deliberate lapses into heathenism and sin. But by 1934 any initial expectations that the new Christian way of life might provide a panacea for all material-spiritual ills had proved illusory for many. In another area the question of polygamy came up again as the circumstances of the first Christians were altered by death or physical hardship in the kraal or garden. Still others by this time may have discovered that as a Christian it was possible to indulge in licentious, immoral conduct without suffering any immediate jeopardy of life or health, as one might under the power of traditional religion. Christianity had introduced a totally new basis for moral conduct,[38] with the only outward, physical threat of punishment being public discipline and excommunication. But church discipline could not maintain a sufficient deterrent against immorality, and by 1934 many Christians appeared to be no longer very diligent or serious in trying the new way of life.

The Administration had not altered its earlier decision of non-support for mission schools, so all native education was the private concern of the missions. Tobias still felt it was necessary

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38. Vide infra, chap. 3 for a full discussion of this subject.

to develop an educational programme beyond merely teaching the Catechism, Scripture and reading, a programme that would involve a fair degree of manual instruction, be as practical as possible, and equip the people for the tasks and duties of their own daily life.[39] "In the present stage of their development it really is criminal to omit industrial instruction and to give only a book education ... to provide this means money and the right man must be forthcoming".[40] And again, "While our first call is to give the Gospel of our Saviour to the heathen, this does not excuse the omission of useful, practical manual training of our pupils".[41] Whatever schooling was given, Tobias strongly felt that it had to be with the people and their primitive environment and society in mind. "We must not go far in advance of the general standard and needs, and yet we must lead the way to better methods *and must create new needs*[42] and the means of satisfying them".[43] What sort of "new needs" were intended as a result of the

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39. Q. P.: No. 4, January 1930.
40. op. cit.: No. 15, October, 1932.
41. op. cit.: No. 16, January, 1933.
42. (Italics mine). There is little to indicate what sort of "new needs" or new society, if any, Tobias envisioned. Within the social framework of South Africa, it is probable the assumption was generally that what was "west was best", and the implications of this could create a multitude of new needs. In the Administrator's Report of 1926 to the League of Nations it was stated: "It is only by close contact with the European races that in the hearts of these backward people will be bred that 'divine discontent' which makes for progress, and although the efforts of the missionaries ... will surely in time bring about an improvement, the Administration is seriously considering other means of inducing labourers to come out". (quoted in First, *op. cit.*, p. 131)
43. *ibid.*

process of mission education? Through the teaching of hygiene, possibly the need for cleaner ways of living; through the teaching of carpentry and other manual skills, possibly a desire for better ways of building the kraal, as well as a desire for furniture. However, one new need was slowly being created by the demonstration of Western Christianity which could not be readily satisfied, but would arise from a dissatisfaction of anything less than the white man possessed. For as the equality of all men was part of the Gospel message, the discrepancy between the living standards of black and white Christians would become increasingly more obvious.

Among the older generation the educational approach was different. Wherever possible, they were taught to read the Scriptures for themselves to enable them to participate more in worship and evangelism in their own community. Tobias regarded the ignorance of the older people as a hindrance in "becoming effective missionaries to their heathen neighbours".[44] Special classes for adults were arranged which met twice each week with an Ovambo catechist.

The educational work of the Mission became increasingly a time-consuming task for Tobias who, being in charge of the whole Mission, had numerous other concerns as well. The observation which he made after only seven years should have been a prophetic warning for the future to those who would inherit the increasing responsibilities and burdens of these institutions: "It is a very big help to the Priest-in-Charge to be set free from the daily routine of school and so be enabled to undertake other work long neglected, such as visiting out-stations, visiting heathen and Christian kraals and

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44. Cf. Q.P.: No. 13, April, 1932.

preaching in the mornings to patients at the Dispensary, and also doing translation work".[45] With the recurrent shortage of adequate staff to maintain the institutions at the central mission station, a serious diminution of the priest's role as a missionary was to occur over the next twenty years; some causes of this were becoming evident as early as 1931.

Although in the early years progress had been slow, by the eighth year (1932) there was reason to expect rapid growth in the future. One indication of this was the manner in which much evangelism took place; for as people were baptized, although sometimes illiterate, these same people frequently returned to their villages and evangelized their neighbours and relations. Thus by 1932, with 220 baptized members, the evangelizing strength of the Mission was rapidly growing: "Most of our converts are keen missionaries and expansion is inevitable".[46] And, "From now on it looks as though the rate of growth will be much increased ... there should be almost 300 by Easter and it seems likely that the increase from now on will be at least 100 a year and before long much more than that".[47]

Tobias succeeded in finding two young boys with exceptional ability and enthusiasm to learn, and a rare devotion to the Church. Thus young Gabriel and Lazarus became promising candidates for the ministry, and spent their next ten years following and observing Tobias, receiving their training in the process. Although their general education only went up to Standard VII, their practical pastoral

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45. Q. P.: No. 11, October, 1931.
46. ibid.
47. Q. P.: No. 16, January 1933.

training was considered complete. "As preachers they are excellent - they can preach all the sermons of the Priest-in-Charge ... they have a good knowledge of the Scriptures and a good workable foundation of Christian Doctrine based on the Provincial Catechism. They can be trusted to give earnest intelligent systematic instruction to Hearers or Catechumens or Candidates for Confirmation".[48]

By 1933 it was felt that "... A few years should see us with the beginnings of a Native Ministry and that will enable us to expand further and at less expense than at present. We want our fellow-workers to join with us in our hopes and dreams of the future as we picture a strong native church here ... with its native Priests, Deacons, Catechists and Teachers, and perhaps a Native Bishop ... meanwhile we are still laying the foundations".[49] But the laying of those foundations was to become a very slow process which in 46 years would not produce a "Native Bishop".

A brief survey of Christian marriage within the first ten years indicates something of the transforming effect Christianity had upon the old social life.[50]

As noted elsewhere (<u>vide infra</u>, p. 194) the official Anglican attitude towards polygamy had been established in 1888 and Tobias was bound by this decision. However, there is nothing to suggest that

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48. Q.P.: No. 25, July, 1935.
49. <u>ibid.</u>
50. <u>Vide infra</u>, traditional marriage, pp. 129ff.

he or his successors disagreed with the official position which regarded polygamy as sinful and against God's purposes for society. In 1938 the issue of polygamy brought Christian missions into direct conflict with the Government. In a Report by the Union Government to the League of Nations, the local Native Commissioner attacked the churches on the grounds that the Christian ideal of marriage disrupted traditional society and caused discord and economic hardship among the people. In a spirited reply to the allegation Tobias wrote:

> "This picture of the misery of the Christian kraal with its one wife is purely the figment of a mind determined to find all that is good in heathenism and all that is bad in Christianity. I have never known a single instance of a well-to-do heathen man with a big establishment becoming reduced to poverty and a tumble-down, empty kraal through becoming a Christian."[51]

A large polygamous kraal usually remained large when the head decided to practice monogamy, because former relations and retainers continued to be a part of the kraal. But when the remainder of wives had to be sent away Tobias maintained that "neither the woman nor the children lose anything in the way of property when she leaves her husband. The woman frequently marries a neighbour, or if at all advanced in years decides not to marry again, but either has a kraal of her own, or lives in the kraal of a friend and cultivates part of his land".[52] Nevertheless, in the early years one of the more frequent reasons for reluctance in becoming a Christian was the uncompromising demands made on polygamists. Tobias' argument in refuting the

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51. Tobias' letters, August, 1938.
52. ibid.

Native Commissioner's attack was well-founded, for his argument was based upon a debatable point to which Tobias could rightly reply: "There are poor, miserable, tumble-down Christian kraals, as there are similar heathen kraals, but this is due to laziness and lack of providence, not to monogamy. A small establishment is not necessarily a poor one ..."[53] Had polygamy been questioned on theological grounds, Tobias' argument would have been neither adequate nor convincing, and it is probable that the final authority in such case would have been reference to the Lambeth decision of 1888.

Nevertheless, George Tobias was not without sympathetic understanding of the anguish and frustration which usually troubled the polygamist who wanted to become a Christian. One such incident is recorded in 1933:

> "Today I had a long talk with Hamusila, a Hearer (who) for 18 months has been attending school and services and wishes to become a Catechumen, but he is an important householder here with three wives. He can read and write nicely ... and knows the Catechism and Bible stories. One wife, seeing what the outcome is going to be, herself decided to leave him last year. Both the other wives have three or four children and both are now attending school (to become Christians). I tell him that provided he keeps only one wife he may be admitted a Catechumen, and the question of marrying the remaining wife in Church can wait until it is plain whether she is a real believer and becomes a Catechumen herself. (The man) says that if

53. ibid.

> he acts too quickly he may lose both wives, as he may choose the one who is the less loyal to him of the two ... One wife, he says, is a very good worker and manager but has a very sharp tongue; the other is very kindly and fair spoken but is a poor manager. It certainly is a difficult situation, especially as he says he does not want to part with any of the children."[54]

After nine years there was a fairly high rate of success among those practicing monogamous Christian marriage, although admittedly the number of marriages was still relatively small. By 1935, fifty-nine Christian marriages had been celebrated with no lapses or separations.[55] However, the success of these first marriages may have been the result of Tobias' influence and authority, for he spent much time encouraging, persuading and mediating "in healing disputes between married couples and persuading them to keep true to their marriage promises".[56]

In the eleventh year, cracks began to show within the moral fabric of the young Christian community. The head teacher and interpreter at Holy Cross Mission had to be dismissed from his post because of several instances of sexual immorality.[57] However, it is not clear whether such incidents were merely indicative of a moral laxity which had existed among converts from the beginning or whether they indicated recent moral lapses. In this instance, Tobias only

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54. Q.P.: No. 13, October, 1933.
55. See op. cit.: No. 18, July, 1935.
56. ibid.
57. Cf. Q.P.: No. 24, April, 1935.

indicated, "that these exposures have led to a good deal of dissension, and accusations and counter accusations have been made. One young married man who has three times been under discipline for transgressing the Seventh Commandment, has been guilty of several new offences of the same sort and has therefore been completely cut off from the Congregation for a year".[58]

The first recorded moral failures are those which involved attending or taking part in the puberty initiation rites, fornication and adultery, and returns to polygamy. In the latter instance personal hardship or crisis was often the main reason for the lapse: " A blind man named Dula, a Catechumen ... lapsed recently and took a second heathen wife, so that he may have more grain in reserve against famine. He wishes to return and to be received as a penitent at the end of harvest, when he will put away his second wife".[59] Even for the able-bodied, famine generally produced a horrible fear of death, and therefore Dula, probably with no wish to violate the marriage laws of the Church, was acting in a natural and customary manner in laying up grain by means of a second wife.[60] A similar situation was common among the elderly: "The wife of Aaron, an elderly householder, recently died. As work on the lands was beginning, he promptly took a heathen woman and she is living with him. Up to the present he is unwilling to submit to the ruling of the Church".[61] But had this man submitted to the laws of the Church

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58. ibid.
59. Q. P.: No. 23, January, 1935.
60. In traditional Ovambo society, it is the woman's job to hoe, plant, weed and harvest the garden, as well as take a major role in the threshing activities, although in recent years men are taking a more active part in all of these activities.
61. ibid.

and dismissed the woman, he would have become totally dependent upon others outside his own kraal.

Prior to 1937, there is no record of any attempts to emphasize the aspects of traditional culture which could positively have been encouraged and developed by the Church. So much effort seemed required to combat the harmful aspects of the culture that little time or attention was left to emphasize or develop the good and wholesome elements. And the absence of a positive effort to integrate the local culture into the life and worship of the Church from the beginning made it manifestly more difficult to incorporate cultural elements into worship when it was attempted.

In 1936 the first experiment was made in using tribal music and singing in a service of worship. The occasion was the Easter celebrations in which a chanter told the Easter story and the congregation joined in a clapping, rhythmic refrain. But from the many years of Lutheran influence in the area the majority of Anglican Christians had developed an inate aversion to tribal music being used in church: "The trouble is that many of our own Christians do not approve of Kuanjama music in Church ... Christians like to be as different as possible from the heathen. We are however determined not to surrender everything distinctively Kuanjama to heathenism, we want to sanctify and claim as much as possible for Christ".[62] The experiment was considered a success and the congregation "sang

62. Q. P.: No. 28, April, 1936.

as they have never sung foreign music ... the experiment has proved that their own music makes a much greater appeal to them than any other".[63] However nothing seems to have been done to develop worship forms using the local culture, and no explanation is given for this failure.[64] Perhaps in traditional forms of Anglican worship the Mission had unwittingly already surrendered "everything distinctively Kwanyama", for in later years when the subject was again discussed there was no enthusiasm for any departure from the English hymnody and liturgical music which had become an established (if foreign) tradition of worship in Ovamboland.

One influence which vigorously opposed any kind of "cultural syncretism" was the Finnish Lutheran Mission, which suspected most old customs as evil and incompatible with Christianity. Tobias experienced this puritanical influence soon after arriving in Ovamboland but it is not known what steps, if any, he took to counteract it. In 1937 he observed: "The Finns aim at making as big a cleavage as possible between Christians and their heathen neighbours. Hence the national dress and many customs, quite innocuous in themselves, are forbidden as savouring of heathenism.[65] Although

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63. Cawthorne, Q.P.: No. 29, July, 1936.
64. In a study of the Independent Church among the Yoruba, Webster points out that it was not merely that parts of the local culture were discouraged or forbidden by the missionaries, but that other positive elements of the culture were not encouraged as well. A reaction to this negativist attitude of the Anglican Church in Yorubaland provided much of the impetus to the formation of the Independent Church Movement. (See J. B. Webster, The African Churches Among the Yoruba: 1888-1922, O.U.P., 1964, pp. 130-134.
65. Q.P.: No. 17, April, 1933.

many traditional customs, "innocuous in themselves", were forbidden to Finnish Lutheran members on inadequate grounds, this approach to non-Christian religions had been an influential force characteristic of Reformed Church tradtion.[66] Tobias asked the more fundamental question if such customs were sinful: "I would like to be able effectually to forbid the use of red grease to those who wear European clothing, while allowing it to the others; but that does not work. Either I must say the thing is sinful and forbid it to all, or I must allow it to all".[67] He did, in fact, succeed in discouraging the use of stains and grease among the hostel boarders, on the grounds that it made such a deplorable mess when used with European-style clothing. As for the introduction of European clothing, this developed as a necessary alternative for the younger Christian women who were not permitted to wear the national dress unless they had undergone the initiation rites, which they were forbidden to do.

> "Quite apart from the native wish to copy the white man, it is inevitable in the case of our younger women. The older women who passed through the initiation for marriage ceremonies before they were converted to Christianity, are permitted to wear the national dress ... our Christian girls however on reaching womanhood, have to take to European clothes as they are not allowed to wear the costume of an adult Kuanjama woman."[68]

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66. Cf. H. Kraemer's Doctrine of Discontinuity. For a good summary see G. H. Anderson, Theology of the Christian Mission, pp. 182ff.
67. Q. P.: No. 31a, April, 1937.
68. ibid.

As noted in the case of polygamy, Government attitude towards tribal custom generally protected the status quo. However, Tobias maintained this attitude was based solely on expediency: "The administrative theory in Ovamboland is that paganism is essential to tribal law and order".[69] Hence, though Christians were taught to resist tribal practices the Church forbade, the same ceremonies were regarded favourably by the Government. It had become a popular practice, for instance, to entertain visiting Government officials by arranging a heathen ceremony as an occasion of welcome. As the puberty initiation ceremony traditionally took place in the winter this was propitious for Government support, for winter was the time when visitors from the South were most in the country, and many of them were led by curiosity to be present at the rites.[70] In 1938 the first case was recorded of a Christian openly taking part in the initiation rites; thereafter Christians attended with increasing boldness, even though it was an offence punishable by excommunication.

In 1933 an interesting story is recorded which indicates Tobias' approach to heathen objections and obstructions, and the manner in which heathen folk were often forced, by circumstances, to seek a middle road between Christianity and their traditional way of life:

> "After a lot of talk the father said he did not want his daughters to continue at school or to be baptized, as school had spoilt them so that they were no longer respectful or obedient, and they were neglectful of their home duties.

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69. Q.P.: No. 37, October, 1938.
70. ibid.

> Simuni (one of the daughters) said, 'Father, may I speak?' When permission was given she said, "Have we ever disobeyed you in anything since we became Catechumens, except that we have been to Church? But that we promised to do when we became Catechumens, and we must keep our promise'. The father admitted that going to church was their only disobedience. Simuni again asked: 'Have we failed to stamp corn, or to fetch water, or to get firewood?' 'No'. Then one of the women said: 'You are disloyal. You stay in your father's house and you carry his words to your teacher and make trouble for him'. Namupala, her daughter, said: 'Do we only now begin to learn good manners? Were we not taught by you to respect our elders? When my father forbade me to go to school was it not my duty to tell my teacher that I was not coming? Ought I to have left him there waiting for me and not give him any word?' ... I (Tobias) told him that once people had been taught and believed in Christ they could not be stopped by any power of man, and warned him that if he ill-treated them or hindered them from attending school or church they would run away to St Mary's and he would lose them altogether. Eventually he angrily assented that it was too late to stop them now, and the two girls are attending school."[71]

However, the father's influence prevailed and it was several years before the girls were baptised. While Simuni and Namupala were determined to let nothing hinder their baptism, one may wonder how many others drifted into the Mission without real conviction. In the

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71. Q. P.: No. 17, April, 1933.

early years individuals repeatedly were torn between two forces, and if the conflict involved a headman or an influential man, it was never easily resolved. Becoming a Christian could often jeopardize a man's status in the community and put him at variance with the ancestral spirits. The case is recorded of a leading sub-headman who had been attending school to become a Christian; but partly because he was not prepared to give up his second wife and partly because he feared public opinion he remained hesitant.[72] However, public opinion was gradually to change as the Christian community grew in number and as the Church became more respected. In time, for many being associated with the Mission became a symbol of status. There were obvious material and educational gains from association with the influential white people. But as opinion grew in favour of the Church there was a corresponding decrease in certain standards: it no longer required as much personal courage and commitment to stand against opposing social pressures and customs of the old society.

In 1935 Tobias wrote of a "new wave of heathenism spreading, superstitious and fatalistic".[73] There is no explanation given for this resurgence, but this was also the period in which moral lapses and public scandals began to appear among Christians in the Mission. It therefore was probably the first period of disillusionment among those who looked to the new Mission as capable of providing a guaranteed solution to all material and social ills. Moreover social conditions were changing and exerting new pressures: "The country is becoming crowded ... young men are unwilling to marry; social unhappiness is encouraging vice, selfishness and materialism... ".[74]

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72. cf. Q. P.: No. 15, January 1933.
73. cf. Q. P.: No. 26, October, 1935.
74. ibid.

"Materialism" as a social phenomenon had probably been growing for years, for young men had been recruited for contract labour long before the Mission was established, and whatever money and purchases that were returned to Ovamboland, however small, had an effect on the subsistence economy. In addition, the Mission, by its presence and teaching, created demands for a "better way of life". Due to a severe drought and famine in the years 1931-32, there was a marked increase in contract labour recruitments and contact with the materialism of the white man. Men who would not otherwise have left their homes and families had little choice between contract labour and starvation.[75] Christian prayers had not averted the disasters of drought and famine, nor were Christians necessarily more blessed and happier than their heathen neighbours. Christianity offered a way of life, an explanation and purpose, a "ground of confidence and will to improvement";[76] but it did not always provide the physical comfort and assurance which traditional religion was believed capable of providing.

Before returning to our historical survey, it is necessary to look briefly at some relationships which had developed during the first 15 years between the Government and the Mission. Whereas in 1924 there had been Government cooperation and support of the new Mission, this support gradually dwindled once the Church became

75. Famine, (ondjala) was remembered with horrible fear, since the early years of the century when it was estimated that in Ovamboland alone some 52,000 people died in one year from starvation.
76. ibid.

an agent for social change in the country; and in some instances resistance to the mission developed. As we have noted, the Government attitude tended to favour maintaining the status quo within the tribal society, for this provided the easiest means of governing the people. The official policy to preserve law and order by indirect rule through chiefs and headmen was understandable; but the missionaries resented the fact that such a policy did nothing to improve the condition of the people at the same time.[77] Consequently with the exception of a small grant to the Finnish Mission for industrial instruction, until 1939 when the Department of Education for South West Africa began subsidizing mission teachers at the rate of 30 shillings per month, the Administration spent nothing on education.[78] Medical services provided by the Administration were regarded by the Mission as totally inadequate, which was "not a matter of policy but of parsimony".[79] It is debatable whether the Administration's attitude was entirely one of parsimony, for in 1934 when the Mission began building permanent hospital wards at their own expense, they were ordered to stop building, "as the authorities did not approve of anything but separate huts for native patients".[80] The official objection to permanent buildings was that small native huts made it much easier to quarantine infectious diseases, and if necessary the hut could be removed and replaced, whereas a permanent building could not. Nevertheless, official reticence in allowing the Mission

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77. cf. Q. P.: No. 25, July, 1935.
78. Even then, support was to be paid only if teachers passed a Departmental examination which qualified them as certified teachers. The examination was about the equivalent of Std. VI. (cf. Q. P.: No. 38, January, 1939)
79 ibid.
80. Q. P.: No. 20, January, 1934.

to build was mainly interpreted as official opposition to development in native areas, and only after repeated representations to the authorities in Windhoek was permission granted for completion of the buildings.[81]

Government officials criticized missions mainly because their work undermined the authority of the headmen.[82] "There may be something to this", Tobias observed, "though we do all we can to instil into our converts the duty of loyalty and obedience to the Government and to the Chiefs and Headmen".[83] It was clear to the missionaries that what in fact undermined the authority of the Headmen far more than anything else was the "Police-Boy Government" which allowed various corruptions under the guise of "indirect rule". These police-boys were "feared and resented by both headmen and people as an upstart bullying class, who have the ear of the white ruler as his interpreters and servants".[84]

Despite such tension between Government officials and missionaries, in 1939 St Mary's School was chosen by the Officer in charge of Native Affairs for the Kwanyama tribe as the school for training his future headmen, interpreters and clerks. "The headmen have been advised to send their sons and nephews to us for education (and) seven grandsons of Uejulu, the famous Chief of the Ovakuanjama

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81. The hospital building to which exception was taken was a humble dwelling consisting of two wards for 4 to 6 patients each, connected by a large 24-foot by 12-foot gauze wired porch, with a room for two native nurses and a small utility room for medicines and utensils. (cf. ibid.)
82. ibid.
83. Q.P.: No. 25, July, 1935.
84. ibid.

(circa 1890) have come into residence in our boys' hostel".[85] Reasons for this decision were fairly obvious: St Mary's was the only school in the country where Africans could learn English, and a knowledge of English was a valuable asset in any interpreter or government clerk.[86]

The Government policy of maintaining order by indirect rule on occasion resulted in disorder and corruption at the local level. In the Holy Cross area in 1934, for instance, twenty Christian families were driven off their lands and their cattle and wells seized by the headman. The headman responsible had been appointed by the Native Commissioner, even though five years earlier the same ruler had been removed for misrule.[87] With only three exceptions, the entire Christian population were forced to leave their lands as they were regarded by the heathen headman as "a special object of spite".[88] In a neighbouring area (Omakelo), the same action was threatened, but appeal to the Native Commissioner managed to avoid the eviction of the remaining two Christian families. All other adherents of the Mission had fled the area by that time. Tobias concluded of the system of government at the time: "The people are suffering the worst abuses of mal-administration and perverted justice, and their steadfastness and patience in severe testing is a great witness to their faith".[89] However, in the feudal society of Ovamboland

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85. Q. P.: No. 39, April, 1939.
86. St Mary's maintains this distinction to the present day, although the desirability has altered considerably in the meantime.
87. cf. Q. P.: No. 20, January, 1934.
88. ibid.
89. ibid.

"steadfastness and patience" had only intangible rewards, for a man could not remain on his land against the feudal overlord's wishes. The headman's authority was virtually absolute if he wished to reduce a man to poverty, and Christians were often the victims of such authority, with little or no power for material redress.

In these early years there was thus abundant evidence that the Administration was not prepared to deal with the revolutionary consequences of its own policy of indirect rule in the native reserves. Whereas traditional tribal rule was conducive to justice by the chief and his councillors, after the dissolution of the monarchy in 1917 a system was created which was often conducive to tyranny. Under former rule final authority was held within the tribe, to which a ruler was in some sense responsible, whereas under "indirect rule", final authority was held by a white Commissioner outside of the tribe. And while the Native Commissioner probably was prepared to deal with injustices when brought to his attention, he was fairly insulated from local wrangles, and many grievances went unchecked because people were often not aware they had a right of appeal to the Commissioner. In any case, the authorities always preferred that difficulties be settled at the local level whenever possible. This system of government also upset the equilibrium inherent in earlier tribal government, because of an ignorant assumption: "As applied in the northern territories of South West Africa, indirect rule assumes, despite all the evidence contained in most studies of these tribal societies, that the Chiefs were ... autocrats".[90] Working therefore on the theory that the tribe was unaccustomed to any form of democratic consultation, "white government has enhanced the powers

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90. First, op. cit., p. 126.

of the Chief at the expense of those very tribal institutions and customs which served as a check on his power".[91]

The first ten years at St Mary's, Odibo, had witnessed a steady growth in the life and influence of the Mission. The neighbourhood around the Mission had become well populated and predominantly Christian. A dependent relationship between the surrounding neighbourhood and the Mission was developing and young men were "continually clearing new land and making new homes ... to settle down as near the Mission as they conveniently can".[92] Prior to 1934, expansion into new areas, particularly in the east, was inhibited mainly by lack of water; and since Odibo had the blessing of several good wells this accounted for some of its own rapid development. Availability of medical facilities was another important reason for settlement around the Mission. Nevertheless, it was obvious that the Church was not keeping pace with the development that was taking place in new areas. People had sought new soil and good grazing as much as forty miles to the east, while Mission schools extended a bare seven.[93] This was largely due to the lack of qualified teachers and staff, Tobias described as his greatest problem.

Financing and developing the Mission had been almost entirely the responsibility of the priest-in-charge, with little support or

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91. ibid., For a description of traditional tribal government, see Chapter 2.
92. Q.P.: No. 22, July, 1934.
93. cf. Q.P.: No. 23, October, 1934.

or assistance possible from the bishop who was 500 miles away in Windhoek. From 1924 there was increasingly a tendency for the bishop to leave the entire direction of the Mission to the priest-in-charge, whose authority and responsibility, except for sacramental jurisdiction, was virtually that of a bishop. The Bishop of Damaraland made an annual visit to Ovamboland during which time (about two weeks) he was conducted rather hastily to those congregations requiring confirmation. Although the bishop only appeared in Ovamboland once a year for pastoral ministrations, he functioned as an administrative head of the Mission in Windhoek, making representations to the Government on behalf of the Mission.[94]

By 1934 it was felt that the Church was

> "rooted in the hearts of the people; the majority of householders for a mile around are Christians, and the Mission is the big factor in their life - spiritual, intellectual and social. We are accepted and known now throughout the land, and when a new station is started there is not the same reluctance on the part of the people to commit themselves. Today there are 150 communicants at St Mary's ... 28 at St Cuthbert's and 84 at Holy Cross. There are eleven schools. There is the Medical work with a yearly attendance of over 12,000 at St Mary's alone ... above all, there are young men within measurable distance of ordination."[95]

But growth and increase in members brought other problems: as the congregations grew it was no longer possible to keep a close personal or pastoral contact with members, and frequently the

94. cf. Q.P.: No. 33, October, 1937.
95. Q.P.: No. 23, January, 1935.

standard of Christian living and example diminished.[96] Moreover, the number of illiterate Christians increased as the older generation, parents of earlier youthful converts, showed interest in Christianity in increasing numbers. Tobias believed that as children were baptized and became part of the Mission, their influence gradually carried into the home and persuaded their parents to accept Christianity. As they were usually difficult to teach and slow to learn, an adult school was started which taught the older people how to read the Scriptures and the Catechism. Little else, however, was attempted in this school.[97]

The first major step towards making the Church indigenous was the ordination of Lazarus Haihambo and Gabriel Namueja to the Diaconate in 1936. Tobias believed this historic event marked the end of the "pioneer stage" when the Mission had become firmly rooted and established among the people. The new deacons were men of high character and modest bearing and had won the respect of the people. "They have been well tested and we feel confident that these men ... will set a worthy example to those who shall follow in their steps".[98]

At the end of the first ten years Tobias summarized the objectives of the Mission in these words:

> "Our aim has been to build up two or three strong centres and then train up the Native workers who will go further afield and open

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96. cf. Q.P.: No. 22, July, 1934.
97. ibid.
98. Q.P.: No. 30, October, 1936.

> up new evangelistic centres. There is now not a great deal of scope for evangelistic work in the immediate neighbourhood of St Mary's and Holy Cross, and if we are to grow we must open up new centres."[99]

Financially the Mission was impoverished from the beginning. Before leaving Cape Town, Tobias had succeeded in stimulating interest within the Cape Town Diocese, primarily among parishes and individuals; in this way a small Committe was formed which guaranteed the Ovamboland Mission £400 annually. The Diocese of George, through the enthusiasm of Bishop Sidwell, agreed to try to send £100 annually. Thus £500 annually was all Tobias could reasonably expect to receive. Fogarty, as Bishop of Damaraland, had jurisdiction and responsibility over the whole of South West Africa, a territory 1,000 miles from one end to the other. With this enormous geographical area, he laboured under a severe lack of funds and was unable to provide the Ovamboland Mission any financial assistance beyond the purchase of a few wagons, a team of donkeys, and a few incidentals. By the end of the first year Tobias recorded a perennial complaint of Anglican missionaries: "The Bishop warns me that the Diocese will not be able to help us in any way. We are not short of money just now, but as the Bishop makes Ovamboland and his responsibility for the heathen in Ovamboland one of his great grounds of appeal in England, it does not seem quite a square deal ... neither the Province nor S.P.G. nor the Diocese will

99. <u>ibid.</u>

contribute, and I am left to depend on Cape Town (the Committee) and George entirely ...". [100]

During the first ten years the original assurance of £500 annual support gradually increased to £1000, mainly through private donations, a small grant from the S. P. G. in London, and meagre local donations. However, in 1934 the bishop advised Tobias that the annual financial support for the work in Ovamboland would have to be reduced from£1000 to £900. Of this amount, £614 was to pay stipends and maintenance of white staff, [101] £12 for a native orderly, £60 for native teachers, and the remaining £214 had to provide for equipment, repairs and maintenance of churches and buildings. [102]

Local support for the Church was entirely on a basis of annual church dues. "We have no collections in Church (as) most of the people have no money ... each unmarried Christian has to pay two shillings a year Church dues, and each married man and woman three shillings". [103] While church dues amounted to a very small personal donation, Tobias believed that in reality it was "quite a lot". [104] Those who were unable to pay anything were encouraged to donate their labour in the repair and maintenance of church buildings. While in principle this was a good alternative for inspiring service and support of the church, the idea never became very popular, probably through lack of adequate administration and supervision. Moreover, in time people began demanding

100. Tobias, "Diary": November 7, 1924
101. Eight white members of staff, each received £75 per year.
102. cf. Q. P.: No. 23, October, 1934.
103. Q. P.: No. 19, October, 1933.
104. ibid.

"pay" for work done for the church, in the same way as the regular Mission labourers received pay for their manual labour.

During the next five years (1936-41) several significant changes in attitudes and policies were to occur. Some of these changes were the natural result of growth and planning, while others were retrograde. In the school an attitude of sophistication had developed among the young boys and men. Whereas in the earlier days the boarders were mainly older boys and young men who took their studies seriously, by 1938 the hostels had a majority of smaller boys who were regarded as not very satisfactory.[105] Much of the problem was adduced to a lack of discipline and training in kraal life and work; also it had become easier and less strenuous for young men to go on contract labour, and the experience and excitement of life in the south was a popular attraction to young boys. "As soon as they begin to arrive at years of discretion, off they hie to the South, and do not profit much from their schooling, except that they learn to read and write and are prepared for Holy Baptism and Confirmation".[106]

Due to increasing numbers and the inability of many catechetical teachers, preparation for baptism and confirmation became less thorough than it had been originally; often the preparation was inadequate. In an effort to halt the deteriorating standards, it became Mission policy in 1937 that no young people

105. cf. Q. P.: No. 37, October, 1938.
106. ibid.

would be baptized who were unable to read. "We are aiming at having no Christians in future who cannot read the Scriptures".[107] Exceptions were made for old people who could not learn to read, even after attending the adult-school.[108]

Among many who had already received training in the Mission school there was now little sense of loyalty or service to the Mission. It was understandable for young boys who knew a bit of English to seek jobs that would pay them well, either on contract labour or in local government service, for Mission wages could rarely compete with those of outside employment. For a young man to remain in the Mission and train for a position in the Church seemed a painfully slow and unrewarding process: for instance, twelve years' service and training had produced only two ordained ministers, although hundreds had been through the mission schools. Thus it happened that at a time when the white missionaries were preparing for a major step forward in the life of the Church, the trend among the more capable young men in the schools was to leave the Mission and find work elsewhere.

> "For years I have been concentrating on the boys and young men, preparing them to be our clergy and teachers; and now, just as some of them are arriving at the stage when they could be used to extend and strengthen the work, off they go! The Dispensary and Hospital have similarly suffered: a smart lad has been trained for three years and has become very useful both as a dresser and interpreter, and now he has gone."[109]

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107. Q. P.: No. 33, Cawthorne, October, 1937.
108. cf. ibid.
109. Q. P.: No. 32, July, 1937.

At the same time there was a decrease in the number of men in the central congregation at Odibo which had been burgeoning only a few years earlier, and extensive plans for a new and larger church had to be abandoned.

Numerous elementary "bush" schools had developed over the years, often through the efforts of ignorant but enthusiastic Christians. They were usually little more than catechetical stations lacking organization and supervision, and no general Mission policy existed for their development.[110] In 1938 the elementary bush schools were re-assessed as important field units in the educational work of the Mission. The Reverend William Cawthorne[111] maintained that these schools derived their greatest value from being "built on the people's own power of self-government and self-education ... they are self-supporting apart from the small salary of the teacher, and allow extension to the limit of the priests' abilities to give the leadership ... and the supervision which is necessary ...".[112] He envisioned a system in which the scattered elementary schools could supply pupils for the larger central schools by means of some form of entrance examination. Cawthorne argued that the advantages of this system would be in establishing an "educational ladder", and ensuring that children in the sub-standards of the bush schools did not evade the discipline and training of home life during their early years. Moreover the out-station bush schools could provide one of the

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110. Despite these usual handicaps, an impressive job of evangelism has always characterized the bush schools. Enthusiasm and dedication, rather than efficient administration, usually has accounted for this.
111. One of Tobias' colleagues and the priest-in-charge of Holy Cross Mission.
112. Q.P.: No. 41, October, 1939.

strongest evangelistic influences in the country. However as the development of the bush school system evolved, two serious weaknesses resulted: (1) Either the local school was left to function entirely on its own and according to the abilities and initiative of the teacher or catechist in charge; or (2) the clergy became involved in an increasingly large circuit of school inspection and teaching, which could readily take precedence over pastoral and spiritual ministrations of the congregation. Both situations in fact developed, with the latter situation resulting in the majority of cases. Within five years it became the practice for both African priests to spend the majority of each day teaching school, with the white clergy teaching and inspecting the schools on a similar scale.[113]

George Tobias left Ovamboland in April, 1939, to become the third Bishop of Damaraland. His assistant, the Reverend William E. Cawthorne with his wife, left the following year after twelve years in Ovamboland. Thus the year 1940 became a crucial time in the life of the Ovamboland Mission, when so much depended upon the attitudes and understanding of the next white leaders. What in former days may have seemed like reluctance to recognize and use native leadership in the Mission was about to become part of a narrow policy of control in the years to follow.

In 1940 the Reverends Fenwick Hall and J. W. Adams succeeded Cawthorne and Tobias at Holy Cross and St Mary's, respectively. Hall's initial assessment of the situation placed primary importance upon building up the institutional aspect of the Mission's work:

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113. In January, 1944, it was recorded: "Father Lazarus teaches daily in the schools, assisted by a Kuanjama layman named Augustine and some pupil teachers".

"As I see it, the work has passed out of the pioneer stage, and needs consolidation now".[114] "Consolidation" for Hall meant increasing the white staff, further developing the central mission's institutions, and increasing outside financial resources. Without these things he regarded the building up of the Mission as "almost a superhuman task"; whereas with them "there is no reason why this Mission as a whole should not become really flourishing".[115] Hall's concept of what the Mission's primary purpose should be was far from clear, and a serious break in the continuity of policy and leadership in former years threatened the work at this time. "Mission work", he wrote, "means a good deal more than merely preaching the Word under convenient trees ... we must be able to hold the people and keep them from sliding back into heathenish vices and customs".[116] Hall proposed doing the latter mainly through teaching the children "something slightly better than what they have been used to in the kraals, teaching them something of hygiene and better living conditions, to equip them with some knowledge that they can carry into their own homes when they return".[117] He maintained that education should play a greater part in the work of the Mission than it had in the past: "We ought to be paying more attention to this department ... our school buildings and equipment are deplorable, and we must make bigger efforts to set them right".[118] There is the suggestion in Hall's attitude that what the Mission should offer

114. Q.P.: No. 44, July 1940.
115. ibid.
116. ibid.
117. ibid.
118. ibid.

was a kind of moral rectitude which would upgrade the life of the individual and the community. There is also the suggestion that secular education is an essential part of transforming the inner life of the individual leading him to true Christian conversion. However, Hall's ideas and plans were never developed, for he resigned for reasons of ill health, after one year in Ovamboland.

Neither Hall nor Adams knew enough of the local language to enable them to visit the people without an interpreter. Before his departure, Hall wrote: "One man cannot do everything that is required, particularly when he has not even a native worker or two to render assistance, which is competent assistance".[119] He saw his principal role to be "teaching in the school and helping the out-station teachers in their work, for the latter have had no training at all".[120] Just prior to his departure Hall wrote despairingly of the teachers: "... it has proved impossible so far to find material in this district to train, even if one had the time to do it rightly".[121]

Adams also placed great importance on the presence of white staff. At the time of Hall's departure he wrote: " ... the ten little nigger boys are further reduced and total but three; this cannot go on and is already making its mark. Amongst a backward people everything depends on the European staff".[122] Adams and his wife left Ovamboland only eight months after Hall.[123] At this

119. Q.P.: No. 49, February, 1941.
120. ibid.
121. Q.P.: No. 50, July, 1941.
122. Q.P.: No. 48, January, 1941.
123. April, 1942.

time, African leadership was soon to be given its first full opportunity in the mission church.

The lack of continuity of policy in the leadership of the Mission is a matter of the greatest importance in the history of the work in Ovamboland. Since continuity was in fact embodied in Tobias and Cawthorne, their departure was a blow to the young mission church; yet their departure from Ovamboland provided the opportunity for significant growth of African leadership. As bishop in Windhoek, Tobias continued to exercise considerable authority over the work in Ovamboland, but his authority was limited in most instances to advice and suggestion. The day-to-day approach to the work and the people had to be entrusted to Hall and Adams. As bishop he could never legislate on matters concerning pastoral approach, and even advice was difficult to give from 500 miles away. The bishop's position was also frustrated by the extreme difficulty experienced in finding white staff willing to go to Ovamboland. Thus policy in Ovamboland continued to be left largely in the hands of the priest-in-charge.

Following the departure of Hall and Adams in 1942, for the first time Ovambo priests were put in charge of the two largest congregations in the Mission (St Mary's, Odibo and Holy Cross, Onamunama), with pastoral responsibility for the surrounding outstations. Over the next two years the pastoral work of the Mission grew under these men, and after visiting them Bishop Tobias wrote: "At Holy Cross, where for more than 15 months Fr. Lazarus Haihambo has been in charge, things have improved vastly. There are signs that some of the lapsed are wanting to return ... he is doing a great work

and has the respect of all, Christian and heathen alike".[124] Another report by a lay missionary in Ovamboland stated:

> "They have not only maintained but have also made substantial progress in the spiritual life of the Mission. They have spared no effort to bring back the erring and to strengthen the faithful ... they are respected and loved by their own people as well as by ourselves."[125]

However, among the buildings at Holy Cross, one house was being maintained during this time, "a house for a white priest - at present untenanted".[126]

July 6, 1943, marked the beginning of a new white hegemony in the Ovamboland Mission with the arrival of the Reverend George Dymond, who became the next priest-in-charge. Dymond was of the Cuddesdon tradition by training, but an extreme High Churchman by background and sentiment; the latter characteristic was to leave a lasting impression on liturgical practice in Ovamboland. A man of 50 at the time, with great personal drive and determination, Dymond saw his role as Head of the Mission in authoritarian terms. Dymond assumed pastoral oversight for St Mary's congregation and Gabriel, the Ovambo priest, became an assistant once more. Holy Cross, the other major centre, remained under African leadership for a time, where Dymond observed, the priest and his helpers were doing

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124. Q. P.: No. 55, January, 1943.
125. Q. P.: No. 56, MacDonald, February, 1943.
126. Q. P.: No. 59, January, 1944.

"excellent work".[127] Yet despite the good and responsible work being done by Lazarus at Holy Cross, Dymond, like his predecessors, was anxious to fill the white man's residence: "There is a plain need for a second European priest to be resident here (Holy Cross); not that anything is amiss - far from it. But to have him among them would be a great encouragement to the people, even if he only kept _in the background_".[128] Six months later the Reverend B. H. C. Turvey was appointed priest-in-charge of the Holy Cross Mission District, which included the surrounding schools and out-stations. In announcing the appointment, Dymond wrote:

> "He will live near the church and school, where Fr. Lazarus Haihambo has his home. The European priest's house there - empty since 1941 - has had a kitchen and bathroom added to it this year for Fr. Turvey's convenience."[129]

Despite the fact of another white priest's appointment over an entire area, Dymond believed that most of the African teachers in the Mission were better able to speak to the condition of the heathen and Christians on a pastoral level than any but the most experienced whites.[130] He considered his own role to be general supervisor of _all_ the work of the Mission in Ovamboland, with the specific responsibility of inspecting every Mission school once each month. The latter burden had been imposed by Government regulation in

127. cf. Q. P.: No. 64, April, 1945.
128. _ibid._, italics mine.
129. Q. P.: No. 66, October, 1945.
130. cf. Q. P.: No. 58, October, 1943.

1943, which required that any teachers being paid by the Department of Education be adequately and regularly supervised.[131] The basic school curriculum had changed little from previous years: a "thorough grounding" in Christian Doctrine based upon the Provincial Catechism, Old Testament history, the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, reading, writing and arithmetic,[132] with history, geography and hygiene for the senior pupils.

The hospital recorded a record year in 1944 with a total of 31,934 out-patient visits, an increase of over 10,000 from the previous year. Government subsidy remained at 9d per patient per day which was hopelessly inadequate, and most of the necessary funds had to come from private donors and friends.[133] Sister Frances M. Canner, the nurse in charge in 1944 wrote: "... the work has multiplied by 2½ in 4 years; so have expenses ... so please go on helping".[134] A certain amount of evangelism continued to take place in the hospital and the clergy visited regularly for prayers. Dymond made a practice of conducting services three times each week for those attending the out-patient department, which consisted of a reading with a sermon, a hymn and prayers. While Dymond had no time for the witch-doctor, and regarded him as a "rogue" who only helped to perpetuate "silly and dangerous superstitions", nevertheless he stressed the importance of white missionaries understanding more of traditional superstitions and ideas about illness.[135]

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131. Teachers who had passed Standard VI were now paid £1.15 per month by the Department; others received 7/6 or 10 shillings per month from the Mission, depending on their education. (cf. Q.P.: No. 58, October, 1943).
132. cf. ibid.
133. cf. Q.P.: No. 64, April, 1945.
134. Q.P.: No. 60, April, 1944.
135. cf. Q.P.: No. 59, January, 1944.

On August 6, 1946, almost precisely 22 years after the start of the Mission, the third Ovambo, Theofelus H. Hamutumbangela, was ordained to the Ministry. Ten years had elapsed since the ordination of the first two men. Hamutumbangela had received most of his theological training at St Bede's Theological College in Umtata, after completing Std VII at St Mary's. One year after his ordination he was put in charge of a rapidly growing out-station (Onekuaja);[136] at the same time Gabriel was again put in charge of pastoral affairs at St Mary's, "until the return of Fr. Dymond from his furlough". Turvey was next to leave Ovamboland, having spent less than two years in the field. In anticipation of his departure he wrote: "The Revd. Lazarus Haihambo will revert to his former role of priest-in-charge of Holy Cross Mission and out stations ...".[137] Although it was said a white priest in the area made "a considerable difference to the satisfactory administration of its church and schools",[138] no one was found to succeed Turvey, and Haihambo was to remain as priest-in-charge for the next 20 years.

In 1946 another significant development occurred in the educational programme of the Mission. A number of Standard VI pupils were examined by the Organiser of Native Education[139] and were qualified as Government-paid teachers. This produced an increase of three times the qualified native teaching staff of previous years[140] for the fourteen schools in the Mission. In addition to the

136. cf. Q. P.: No. 73, July, 1947.
137. Q. P.: No. 73, July, 1947.
138. ibid.
139. Mr D. R. Rootman.
140. cf. Q. P.: No. 68, April, 1946.

advantage of having Government-paid salaries which saved Mission funds, it meant that for the first time the clergy, both African and white, could be released from their teaching to give full attention to the pastoral work of visiting and evangelizing, and all the spiritual ministrations curtailed by the demands of the educational programme. However, this liberation had important effects on all the clergy in Ovamboland. For Dymond, release from the burden of the schools implied a kind of "retiring upward"[141] in which his role as priest-in-charge, (which was already that of general Mission superintendent)became in practice the administrative role of a bishop. He defined his new role as "Director" and no longer as "priest-in-charge"; the latter became the title reserved for Ovambo priests in charge of particular local districts.[142] And although Gabriel was therefore technically the "priest-in-charge" of St Mary's one does not read of him being in complete authority ("in charge") of St Mary's, where Dymond lived; instead, it was Dymond who assumed pastoral oversight and final authority within that major congregation. At Holy Cross, Lazarus was more properly "priest-in-charge" where he was without a white priest. In theory, however, Dymond did not wish to describe himself as priest-in-charge of any congregation, for he maintained that in every congregation he had "long ago delegated the immediate pastoral oversight to Ovambo priests ..."[143]

During the next ten years, the role of "Director" advanced

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141. cf. J. V. Taylor, Process of Growth in an African Church: I. M. C. Research Pamphlet No. 6, 1958.
142. cf. Q. P.: No. 85, October, 1952.
143. ibid.

so far within the new hierarchy of authority that it involved hardly any significant pastoral contact:

> "I know little of what is happening in other important outstations of St Mary's ... my time is fully occupied here with teaching and supervising the school, lecturing theology to our deacon ... stacks of office work, correspondence and finances (and as) builder and carpenter."[144]

For the African clergy who were liberated from the demands of teaching school, a problem was created which time only aggravated. For virtually the entire first ten years of their ministries, Gabriel and Lazarus had each served as teacher-cum-priest, spending most of each day in the school; the pastoral experience they had gained under Tobias prior to ordination had been largely subordinated in the process. While teaching, they were in a role of authority over the teachers within their areas, and had learned to delegate numerous teaching responsibilities to others. This was understandably part of their job as overseers of the schools. But habits and attitudes were thus created which severely handicapped their later ministries.

For example, the role of overseer for the African clergy had not involved much travelling within the parish except on the routine inspection of out-lying bush schools. Moreover, teaching was a specific job: each teacher had his daily duties and routine and did not require a great deal of supervision. The parochial ministry was the antithesis: it demanded constant travel by foot, it involved teaching

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144. Q. P.: No. 93, 1957. No mention is made of the outstations of other major congregations, for these were even more remote from the Director's contact than his own local centre of St Mary's, Odibo.

work that could not be wisely delegated to others, and it was sufficiently unstructured in its daily routine to require constant re-adjustment and personal discipline to make it work effectively. Thus it was later observed that in one parish the priest-in-charge rarely visited his congregations or probed into new areas;[145] people were instructed to come to him if they had any problems or needs to discuss. The transformation from a servant role to one of consultant was thus complete. In preparing baptismal and confirmation candidates, teaching penitents, and evangelizing new areas, the clergy resorted habitually to delegating these responsibilities almost entirely to catechists and evangelists who were frequently ill-trained and incompetent for such responsibility. It became the normal practice for catechists to prepare all candidates for baptism, confirmation, and in some cases marriage.[146] Like his white colleagues, the African priest assumed the practice of stationing himself at mission headquarters, presiding over a large parish, and performing the necessary sacraments and visitations in the surrounding areas with diminishing frequency. The number of Christians had increased so greatly that it was impossible for the priest-in-charge to maintain much pastoral contact with all of his people, for congregational growth had taken place in inverse proportion to the number of trained clergy and catechists. Delegating responsibility was inevitable and indeed could have provided the priest with an effective means of fulfilling the essential functions of his own ministry. But the essential

145. From personal conversation with the Church Council of Holy Cross, 1968.

146. It is still exceptional for a priest to know the names of many of his own baptismal or confirmation candidates.

functions which included teaching, counselling, evangelizing and pastoral visiting were also frequently delegated to others. Hence, as the white clergy retired upward to a higher position of prestige and authority, remote from rank-and-file church members, so they provided the pattern for the Ovambo clergy to do likewise.

> "Thus, withdrawal upwards becomes translated into African terms to mean advancement to a higher position; however unrelated to a pastoral ministry, it is to be sought as a symbol of achievement and 'success'. And since no missionary any longer went so low down the scale as to visit lonely outstation village churges or to teach illiterate herd-boys the elements of the faith, so too no African clergy with an eye to the future would concern himself overmuch with these menial tasks; he would leave them to the catechist, while he got on with administrative tasks ... or just simply 'presided' over a large parish from his rectory ... ."[147]

While Dymond was reluctant to entrust the African with any major leadership, paradoxically, it was in the time of his leadership (1943-53) that a severe shortage of white missionaries developed. In 1948 the white staff consisted of one priest (Dymond), one woman teacher, one practical worker, and two nurses, whereas the extent of the work was greater than ever: five main mission stations, ten outposts, fourteen schools, extending over an area 40 miles by 100 miles. An analysis at the time concluded: "... by the inevitable process of natural growth, we have expanded our work out of all proportion to our resources, both human and financial.[148] Dymond

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147. J. V. Taylor, Growth of the Church in Buganda, London: SCM, 1958, p. 89.
148. Q. P.: No. 75, July, 1948.

believed the solution was "not to expand but to consolidate... for very many years to come".[149] Presumably evangelism and expansion would only have caused more problems to hinder the principle of "consolidation", although the need for expansion and evangelism was still great. In a tribe numbering over 50,000 at the time, the regular worshipping members of the Mission totalled 2,519 in 1949; and in the same year a total of 251 people were baptised (77 children, 174 adults), 146 confirmed, and an average of 1,000 received Holy Communion each month.[150] What solutions Dymond's policy provided for spreading the Gospel into new areas and evangelizing the heathen are not made clear, but he was not prepared to have the Mission extended under the circumstances: "I am constantly being pressed by Africans, both heathen and Christian, to undertake responsibility for new schools, now here, now there ... but I am convinced ... what we need is not to expand".[151]

Dymond's dilemma was that the white priests he considered indispensable were not forthcoming. The Ministry would have to be recruited from the Africans; but from the African point of view, incentives for aspiring to the Ministry were few: poor pay;[152] duties and responsibilities were not clearly delineated; authority for extending work into new areas was limited; living and working conditions were far below those of white clergy and missionaries;[153] and even the authority

149. ibid.
150. cf. Q.P.:No. 77, April, 1949.
151. Q.P.: No. 75, July, 1948.
152. African priests were receiving about £5 per month, far below the rate of Government clerks and contract labourers.
153. Clergy received no special allowances to enable them to depart from the life of the kraal in any significant way, even if they wanted to do so; they usually were required to provide their own transport (bicycle) if they had any.

of a priest within his own parish was subject to a white supervisor. Thus in 1949 out of five men who were candidates for Holy Orders, with one exception, "it has become clear that any vocation to the Priesthood which they may have had will not now mature".[154] No reasons are given for this failure. Two years later there was a similar occurrence with two students who were sent to train at St Bede's Theological College. Although both had been successful teachers in the Mission, within one year it was reported that both men had broken down, one morally, the other mentally.[155] Dymond concluded that few Ovambos could stand up to contact with Africans outside of Ovamboland, and that any training for the Ministry would have to be done within the country "for very many years to come".[156]

George Dymond exerted a powerful influence liturgically within the Mission, and Benediction, birettas and the Angelus were scrupulously observed. High Church liturgical practices were readily accepted and followed by the African clergy, and remained a prominent characteristic of worship for the next 15 years.[157]

Dymond was regarded as a scholar and showed an academic

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154. Q.P.: No. 77, April, 1949.
155. cf. Q.P.: No. 85, October, 1952.
156. ibid.
157. Bishop Vincent's correspondence with Dymond in 1952 concerning the revision of the Kwanyama Prayer Book contains one interesting argument: Dymond wished to include the service of Benediction in the new book but Vincent forbade it as not being "of the Anglican tradition". After a few rejoinders Dymond reluctantly agreed to leave it out of the revised Kwanyama Prayer Book. However, he was not deterred entirely, and managed to slip it into the revised Hymn book at the last minute. Although no longer used, it may still be found in the Kwanyama Hymnal on pages 159-161.

interest in Kwanyama culture and religion.[158] Yet he apparently saw no way in which elements of the old religion could be tolerated or woven into Christianity,[159] and his approach in evangelizing the heathen tended to be dogmatic and mechanical, as illustrated by the following excerpt on the occasion of a four-week visit to Omboloka, a heathen area 90 miles east of Odibo:

> "... The teachers and I gave lessons daily in reading, writing and arithmetic; in the Catechism and in the meaning of St Luke's Gospel and the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. We spent an hour each day teaching hymn-singing. Nineteen hymns are now well known and well sung at Omboloka; they cover the whole of the Church's Year and consequently the whole of the Church's Faith as it is expressed in the Apostles' Creed. We also taught Morning and Evening Prayers, including forms of Grace before and after meals, with the Angelus, which is now rung daily on the church bell. It is pleasant to hear there now no longer only the beating of drums and the wild songs of the heathen, but also the bell, ringing out its traditional Christian music, and the voices

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158. See his essays on this subject in "Quarterly Paper", October, 1945, January, 1946, and April, 1946; also in Edwin Smith, African Ideas of God, chapter 4.

159. "Ancestor-worship" he believed "is directly responsible for that abuse of tribalism which causes the members of one tribe to eye the members of another tribe with mistrust and even dislike" (Essay, October, 1945); and the mediatorial role which the tribal ancestors traditionally filled between man and God had become so perverted, according to Dymond, that it prevented true worship of God. "The Bantu tribal ancestors have ceased to be mediators in any true sense, and have become ends in themselves ... they are worshipped; Kalunga is not." (ibid).

> of our first disciples singing the ancient hymns of Western Christendom in the school and church and kraals."[160]

During Dymond's ten years in Ovamboland there was a nine-fold increase (from 70 to 625) among Hearers preparing for baptism, the number of baptisms increased by six times (from 105 to 653), and confirmation candidates increased seven-fold (from 61 to 414); within the schools, the number of scholars trebled from 518 to 1,588. Yet it appears that the policy during this time was little more than a holding action which succeeded in maintaining the status quo, with few exceptions. The basis of policy and action was white leadership, without which it was felt the Mission could not expand or be trusted to root itself properly amongst the people. Dymond reflected an attitude of despair in his last year, still unable to see how the Mission could survive on any other basis. Despite the increase in the number of African Christians, many of whom were eager to extend the Gospel, "the white staff needed to deal with these increased numbers, to build accommodation for them in schools and in churches, to train catechists and teachers and to help them in their work has not increased ...".[161] Hence Dymond maintained:

> "... if the spiritual-educational work of this Mission is not to crumble and decay, we must have (a) One white priest to be trained to succeed me here as Director of this Mission; (b) One white certificated teacher to be School Principal; (c) One white motor-mechanic; (d) One white builder."[162]

160. Q.P.: No. 68, April, 1946.
161. Q.P.: No. 84, April, 1952.
162. ibid.

In his last written letter before retiring from Ovamboland a pathetic plea was made in which he reiterated the staff needs of April, 1952, ending with the statement: "It is more than an alert we are sounding; it is an alarm. If we don't get more men and more money in this Mission within the next few months, there is bound to be a major disaster".[163]

In the interim period before the next Director (most of 1953) a dramatic increase is recorded in the statistics of the Church. While the number of African clergy remained at three and the number of churches at eight,[164] the figures for church membership leapt from the 2,519 recorded in 1949 as "regular worshipping members" to a total of 6,440 in 1953; similarly, between 1951 and 1953, the number of baptism nearly doubled, from 653 to 1,151 (356 men, 542 women, 253 children). There was a similar increase in the number of confirmations over the same period, rising from 414 in 1951 to 709 in 1953. As no new areas apart from Omboloka were opened,[165] it is probable that the sudden increase in numbers was due to a drop in standards required for the various sacraments. Two factors may support this explanation: (1) Since there was a predominance of adults among those baptized during these years, if educational standards and the reading requirement of 1937 had been enforced, one could expect the children to comprise a majority of those baptized, for they were better able to learn the required lessons. (2) Had the increase in numbers been the direct result of

163. ibid.
164. These being Odibo, Onamunama, Onamutai, Onekuaja, Osandi, Ohainengena, Epinga and Omboloka.
165. Omboloka consisted mainly of the Omashaka tribe, and has always had a small population.

any renewed evangelistic efforts, one could reasonably expect a uniform increase in all church statistics for the period, including those having their marriages solemnized. Even though the sacrament of marriage did not require any educational requirements such as the other sacraments did, there was almost a negligible increase in the number of Christian marriages - not what one would expect had there been any intensive evangelism among the people.[166]

The Reverend S. N. Gurney arrived in early 1954 as Dymond's successor. He received his theological training from the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham, England, and in his own ministry he exemplified a basic S. S. M. principle of diligent manual labour and practical usefulness in his ministry. Gurney possessed manual skills in carpentry, brick-laying and building and was eager to put them to good use in the Mission. Buildings had fallen into a dilapidated state, white staff accommodations were badly needed, a new central church was needed at Odibo where the congregation had grown too large for the original building, more outstation churches were needed, and there was a demand for more and better classroom buildings everywhere. It is thus not surprising that the new Director spent a great portion of his time doing manual labour. And while this provided one necessary example in the "dignity of labour",[167] it meant that other important functions and spiritual ministrations had to go untended.

166. The number of marriages solemnized by the clergy shows no significant increase at all between 1951 and 1953, rising only 14%, from 67 to 78.

167. In 1947, Dymond enunciated his educational theory which emphasized a threefold programme: educating the African in spirit, body and mind. The latter included technical training, "which means that Europeans must take the spade, the iron, the needle into their own hands, and by their own example teach Africans 'the dignity of labour' ", although he acknowledged that he was completely unable to examplify the third aspect himself. (cf. Q. P.: No. 71, January, 1947).

It is understandable that for the first year in the mission-field, one tends to be more impressed with the physical needs than with deeper spiritual needs, for the latter become apparent only as one learns to know the people and the life of the country. However, by Gurney's third year in Ovamboland he continued to see his role primarily in terms of the physical maintenance of the Mission, and a typical day often involved the hammer and saw more than evangelizing and visiting people:

> "I am glad to report that we have accomplished some of the things which we planned and wrote about in the last issue: we have piped water into two mission houses ... the bathroom has been equipped with a geyser and shower, the residential section of the mission has been fenced ... work has started on the new hospital buildings ... ."[168]

It is fair to say, however, that Gurney was severely handicapped by the continued shortage of white staff in every department of the Mission, and this probably involved him in maintenance work and building more than he would have chosen.

As much by force of circumstances as by policy Gurney chose to leave all pastoral work to the African clergy. His slight knowledge of the language prevented any significant pastoral contact with the people, and in any case he felt the Ovambo clergy were better able to relate to their own people. As in the previous decade, once again there was a willingness to trust the Ovambo clergy to minister pastorally to large congregations and areas, and yet a persistent refusal to trust them with "higher" levels of administrative authority.

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168. Q. P.: No. 92, 1956.

Gurney, as the Director and Archdeacon of Ovamboland, was responsible only to the bishop; and as the bishop continued the practice of one annual visit to Ovamboland, the Archdeacon became in practice the final authority for the church in Ovamboland. In actual fact, however, the nature of this authority was almost entirely administrative and supervisory rather than spiritual.

Life for the three Ovambo priests became increasingly isolated and frustrating. A generation or so earlier, being on the side of "progress" gave a certain assurance and relevance and a degree of prestige to the daily tasks of the pastor, who represented and interpreted the new religion and civilization to his people; but after thirty years, such elements of "progress" had become largely commonplace. Within the Ministry, whatever proven pastoral wisdom and ability a priest had was restricted largely to a lonely outstation ministry with little or no opportunity for contact or conversation with other clergy or missionaries. When problems arose he had to deal with them alone as best he could. Webster cites this common problem in most primitive ministries:

> "The pastor's isolation and lack of fellowship and opportunities for retreat or conference or refreshment can cause him to grow very stale."[169]

And, like Ovamboland,

> " ... his pastorate may be 50 miles long and 50 miles broad, and in it he may have between 20 and 70 churches to care for. Every day of his life he is having to make difficult and delicate decisions about Christian moral problems

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169. Douglas Webster, Local Church and World Mission, London: SCM, 1958, p. 44.

> which would only come the way of an English priest perhaps once or twice a year ... ."[170]

Moreover, there was neither the incentive nor the time for the priest to maintain private study or reading; his congregations were largely illiterate people who regarded his position with esteem and respect and a child-like trust in his advice. The white missionaries or the Archdeacon visited him rarely, usually to give directions, make requests or leave the meagre monthly wage. After years of devoted hard work neither his salary nor his authority had increased significantly, while meaningful contact and sharing with white missionaries had diminished. In short, he was dependent upon the white Mission for buildings, equipment, materials, money and leadership; and because he was not the steward of such things, he had no part in determining overall Mission policy or planning for its development.

After his third year, Gurney seemed to show a growing perception of the institutional problems of the Mission: "There seems to me to be no hope and no future for St Mary's Mission and all its works among the Ovakuanjama *if the present 'set up' continues unaltered*".[171] Cumbersome institutions had become costly liabilities which had to be maintained if they were to function. Churches, schools, hospitals and clinics depended upon outside financial support which involved constant correspondence; to provide the higher standards of living required for the white staff took money and time; and congregations had become wholly dependent upon

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170. ibid.
171. Q.P.: No. 93, 1957; italics mine.

buildings at the main centres and at the outstations.[171] In a sense one can ask how much of the problem was due to the refusal to involve African leadership at the highest levels in determining the policy and direction of the Mission; for as long as white staff and leadership were regarded as essential to the life and continuation of the work, the Mission remained essentially foreign. Whether in the Ministry, in the school or in the hospital, the African could only progress to a minor position of leadership. All supervisory positions were regarded as the work of whites because the Ovambo people were considered insufficiently ready to assume positions of major responsibility.

Men were accepted as candidates for the Ministry although not for other positions. One promising teacher, Lukas Ndakalako, was accepted for training, but after the earlier failure of theological students sent to Umtata it was decided that Gurney should tutor Ndakalako in his studies for ordination. For two years Ndakalako continued teaching school and received private tuition in spare moments and holidays, and was ordained in 1959. This brought the total number of Ovambo ministers to four, after 35 years of work in Ovamboland. The number of established churches had grown to twelve, with numerous surrounding congregations, and the church membership was in excess of 10,000. Virtually all pastoral work, with the exception of sacramental priestly ministrations, had to be carried on by untrained and sometimes illiterate catechists and evangelists. Thus while the institutional work of the Mission had become a severe burden

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171. Shelters were generally erected by the initiative of local labour as temporary structures, and often remained the only "building" for years; but the greater symbol of success and establishment was always a permanent structure built with bricks.

concentrated in one place, the ministerial and spiritual work of the Church had grown hopelessly out of hand, and there was no way to minister effectively to the increasing numbers with the ordained ministers available.

Gurney had perceived only a part of the problem, but had found no solution. Like his predecessors he could not see a way out of the dilemma without providing more white staff and more outside financial resources. At the time of his resignation in 1959 [172] he wrote:

> "The alarm is sounding in earnest. If it is not heeded, then 35 years' devoted work by missionaries of South Africa and England will slowly succumb to the furtive undermining of heathen custom and termite infestation. It is obvious to all of us here that without the help of White missionaries the work of preaching the Gospel ... educating the youth ... nursing the sick, *as we know it now* would cease. Our churches, school buildings and dwelling houses would become ant-heaps within five year if the continued attention they now receive was stopped. This then is the position to date: Staff - NO prospect of anyone coming; NO money to pay them if they do; NO place for them to live if they come; NO transport reliable enough for them to do the work." [173]

And without a substantial increase in white staff, it was felt there was "no promise for the future development of this Mission". [174]

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172. With three young children approaching school-going age, he resigned to enable them to live closer to educational facilities.
173. Gurney, "Maramba Report", 1959, (italics mine).
174. *ibid.*

In 1962 the situation began to develop on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the history of the Mission. This was largely the result of a new source of financial support made possible by the appointment of an American, Robert H. Mize, as Bishop of Damaraland.[175] Through Mize's efforts great interest in the Ovamboland Mission was stimulated in America, and huge sums of money were sent to the Mission over the next eight years. The annual budget increased six-fold, to an average of R60,000. Virtually every aspect of the institutional Mission was revived and developed and new programmes were created. It was the long-awaited physical rebirth of the Mission for which men had pleaded for two decades. A small seminary for the training of clergy was established and staffed, and within four years four older men were ordained to the Ministry; five others were ordained five years later; large modern hostel accommodations were provided at the central mission school; a manual training centre was built and a programme developed; living facilities for whites and Africans were built at numerous stations; transportation was improved and provided on an unprecedented scale; medical staff and hospital services were vastly improved; and the publishing of numerous items in the vernacular was undertaken within the next eight years. Physically and numerically the Church seemed to be growing at a rapid pace.[176] New life had come at last to the old and failing system which was so near a total collapse less than five years before.

175. Consecrated in Cape Town, November, 1960.
176. Baptisms averaged 2500-3000 annually; confirmations averaged 1000. Eighteen new churches were built and the Mission established work in three new tribal areas.

Yet what was to be the effect of this dramatic physical transformation in the inner life of the Church in Ovamboland? Was the regeneration of the old institutional-centred system with white leadership really to provide a new and more effective mission to the Ovambo people? These are some of the questions to which we must later turn in attempting to analyse the impact of Christianity on the life of the average Kwanyama.

CHAPTER TWO

SOME ASPECTS OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF THE KWANYAMA

In any attempt to discuss the impact which Christianity has had on a particular tribal society, it is necessary to describe the major cultural characteristics of the society as it existed before Christian missionary influence. In this description we shall attempt to introduce those traditional religious, moral and sociological attitudes which became the seedbed for Christianity in the society. In a later chapter we shall examine to what extent the pre-Christian culture has continued to influence the individual in his acceptance of Christianity. Hence the intention of this chapter is not to provide a detailed anthropological description of Kwanyama culture, but to present a brief description of certain attitudes, beliefs and practices which are an essential part of the traditional world-view, and are at the same time focal points for assessing the impact of Christianity on tribal culture as a whole. Consideration will be given to the following aspects of the culture in particular; how the individual looks at life in the context of his world-view; the traditional concepts of the High God; the understanding and practice of puberty initiation and marriage; the concept of authority and the practice of leadership; and traditional ideas concerning moral conduct, illness and death. While a certain amount of descriptive material will thus be necessary to elucidate these concepts, the aim of this chapter is not to present extensive anthropological data, but to concentrate as much as possible upon the meaning and understanding of specific concepts and practices

of the Kwanyama tribe.

One of the distinctive features by which we might attempt to describe the early pagan society of the Kwanyama was the absence of dichotomies that are axiomatic in Western culture. For the Kwanyama, as for many African tribes elsewhere, life and all of its activities was essentially a whole. He made no fundamental distinction therefore between the individual and the clan community, between realms of sacred and secular activities and objects, between religion and the rest of his life, between the living and the departed, between what a man is and what he does. Life in all its complexity was interwoven in such a way that essential distinctions and categories were rare. Let us look briefly at some of the implications of this integrated world-view.

The individual's world-view was determined by his own understanding of life. In his life, as in the lives of all men, he recognized and defined his existence in terms of a dynamic. This dynamic was more than mere ontological existence; it was a kind of force-of-life without which man would have no life in him. According to informants, supreme happiness in life is found in possessing the greatest possible life-force, while misfortune is defined as, and has the inevitable consequence of, diminishing man's vital life-force. It is important to recognize, however, that this force is not merely an attribute of human existence, but that it is believed to be the very essence of life. It has been suggested[1] that this constant concern

1. cf. P. Tempels, Bantu Philosophy; Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959, pp. 35ff. Also, K. A. Dickson and P. Ellingworth, Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs; London: Lutterworth, 1969, pp. 440ff.

for life-force among Africans in general is often reflected in casual greetings and conversation. Thus, however ambiguous and indirect the African way of speaking may seem to the European listener, one African writer maintains that indirect speech "is the African way of keeping for the next man his dignity, (so that) as a host you never ask a man whether you can do something for him; you are expected to do all you can".[2]

The recognition of man's force-of-life is implicit in many common oshiKwanyama[3] expressions which reveal a fundamental preoccupation of all tribal life. For instance, one will find the common greeting "wa pama", which means literally "are you solid, strong today?" (oku-pama = 'to make firm, strong'). Similarly, an idiomatic expression which confounds European understanding is the greeting "ou po mu li", which means literally "are you there?". The implied meaning of this expression is the question "are you the same today as you were yesterday - unchanged?" ("Have you not lost any 'life-force' ?"). In speaking of hunger, thirst or fatigue, one normally speaks of "dying" from his condition (nda fia enhota, nda fia ondjala; verb oku-fi = to die). Likewise, one speaks of an illness "killing" him, as in "ohai fi oshidu" : "I am dying of fever".

It is important to understand that such expressions as these are not merely figurative colloquialisms or metaphorical descriptions of

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2. Dickson, op. cit., "The Theological Estimate of Man", pp. 440ff.
3. The proper linguistic forms are as follows: The tribe and land are known as Oukwanyama, the people are ovaKwanyama (pl.), the language is oshiKwanyama. However, in our references to the people and the tribe the prefixes will not be used in the interest of simplicity and clarity.

a man's situation, but that they refer implicitly to a fundamental fact of his existence. One is "dying", to some extent, when he loses some of his strength. Power or life-force is diminished and drained out of the individual when he is hungry, tired, ill or afflicted in any way by misfortune.[4] Tempels, in observing this phenomenon among tribes in Central Africa, has suggested the term "vital force" to indicate this fundamental concept of life.[5] "Vital force" denotes the essence of life and is not a qualitative attribute but an ontological quantity. Sickness, spirit-magic, enmity, or any disruptive activity or experience deplete a man's "force", and thus harm his life. The Kwanyama is totally incapable of sustained work of any kind if he feels anything threatening his well-being; in such a condition his sole concern is to restore peace and security, and thereby to regain his former life-force, for without this he can have no well-being. "This craving for power is the driving force in the life of African religion. It has its origin, not in logical reflexion, but in a feeling of incapacity and in an obstinate desire to overcome it; it is a search for help and comfort, a means of maintaining and strengthening life in the midst of a thousand dangers, and a way of conquering fear ... man is weak, and what he needs is increased strength ... the absorbing question for him is how to acquire some of this power so that it may serve for his own salvation or that of the group for which he is responsible".[6] Everything that is done in life, every social contact, every activity, and above all

4. Kwanyama children are taught physical endurance from an early age, and a grown man will never admit fatigue. Possibly this is an unconscious attempt to retain an image of strength and life-force, which is fitting for any man.
5. French = "Force-vitale" and "vivre fort". For an excellent summary of his work, see Tempels, op. cit., p. 30ff. Also, International Review of Missions, Vol. 52 (1963) pp.316ff. "Christianity and Bantu Philosophy".
6. D. Westermann, Africa and Christianity: London: O.U.P., 1937, p. 84.

the sacred ceremonial of the tribe, has a potentially profound effect for good or ill upon the life-force of the individual and his society.

It is necessary to understand this aspect of the Kwanyama Weltenschauung before attempting a description of traditional Kwanyama religion. However, to appreciate fully a world-view so fundamentally alien to Western thought, we need to make a considerable adjustment in our traditional understanding of life. Whereas the Western mind may conceive of "being" apart from function and activity, the Kwanyama cannot. In oshiKwanyama, the irregular verb " to be " (oku-li) always implies action and participation, not simply being. A person is known by what he does; his action, as a measure of his life-force, justifies and validates his entire existence. Thus, the verb "to be" cannot be conceptualized into a static notion of being. Moreover, with the nominative case, the verb "to be" is not used, for existence is implied and defined by the pronoun.[7] It is interesting to note, however, that the verb form "li" (to be) is required for adverbial descriptions, such as "I am well" (ndi li nawa), for these are descriptions of state rather than of action, and are static rather than dynamic. From similar observations elsewhere in African thought Tempels has concluded: "We (Westerns) can conceive the transcendental notion of 'being' by separating it from its attribute 'force', but the Bantu cannot. 'Force' in his thought is a necessary element in 'being' and is thus inseparable... we hold a static conception of being, they a dynamic ... force is the nature of being, force is being". [8]

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7. As in "ame omukongo", which might incorrectly be read as "I hunter", in fact means "I am a hunter". It is not possible to make this statement by employing the verb form "to be".
8. Tempels, op. cit., p. 35.

In the pre-Christian society of Ovamboland, Kwanyama religion embraced all of life. The sole concern of religion was with regaining, maintaining or increasing strength and vital-force; apart from this overriding concern, religion had no meaning. Informants maintain that the old religion arose out of man's continual struggle for self-preservation and the desire to maintain life-force. In this sense, traditional Kwanyama religion was thoroughly anthropocentric rather than theocentric. Moreover, religion found its justification not in the individual's personal relationship to God, but in community with the living and the departed members of the clan. There was no reason for the individual to interiorize his religion or to assess religious activity on a personal basis. Furthermore, religion was entirely materialistic in the sense that man looked for relevance and meaning from his religion in the observable effects which any rite or ceremony might have upon his earthly existence. Thus there was no demarcation in life between the sacred and the secular: the spiritual realm completely co-habited the physical world wherein everything had a potential religious value and significance. A metaphysical interpretation of life would have been totally alien to traditional Ovambo thought and world-view. Whereas Christian sacramentalism in practice presupposes a subtle, often undefined, distinction between the holy and the profane, for the African "religion" is one with life, a life which absorbs the whole man, which is identified with him, with his thoughts and actions. "The religious element ... is a single body with individual, family, social and political life ... mingled with the festivals, the days of mourning, with work and all the various incidents of life ... thus religion is not merely a religious system with a creed, a moral code and a liturgy:

rather it is an institution in which one has one's whole life".[9]

"The African's instinct for God", says Willoughby, "is the deepest thing in his soul". So among the Kwanyama, the belief in the existence of God is never questioned. It is accepted by all without reservation that he exists and that his power undergirds all of life. Kalunga, Namongo and Pamba are the names used interchangeably to designate the High God who is believed to be the source and ultimate power behind all of life.[10] Although the existence and omnipotence of Kalunga were never doubted, he was thought to be almost entirely transcendent by his own choice; Kalunga was not interested in the daily affairs and struggles of men and hence he chose to remain aloof from the world. The direct involvement of Kalunga in human life was believed to be extremely rare, and therefore he generally was regarded as unknowable by man. Christian informants today have remarked, "We may call upon hin in a very serious crisis, but people don't really understand him". It is understandable with such a wholly transcendent concept of God that people did not appeal to him for help in the routine troubles of daily life. Kalunga was invoked only in severe crises such as destructive acts of nature, serious epidemics and plagues, and strife within the community extreme enough to endanger the safety and wellbeing of the community. Otherwise, Kalunga was believed not to be interested or to involve himself in man's everyday life.[11]

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9. C. G. Baëta, Christianity in Tropical Africa (International African Institute); London: O. U. P., 1968, p. 295.
10. Kalunga is the most widely used today among Christians and non-Christians. Pamba is used infrequently, and Namongo rarely heard today.
11. Loeb has found, however, that there is no clear understanding of Kalunga's involvement even in these instances. "Native informants now maintain that it was the ghosts of the dead king rather than Kalunga who had power to start and stop the rain". E. M. Loeb, In Feudal Africa (Indiana Univ., International Journal of American Linguistics, Part II, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1962) p. 123. More recent research in connection with the present study have confirmed these findings.

In the routine of daily life no organized prayers or religious ceremonies were directed to Kalunga. As long as the life of the society went well and prospered, people believed that Kalunga was pleased with the general behaviour of the community. In this happy state there was no need for prayers to Kalunga.[12] Whatever tribal prayers were uttered on solemn occasions did not reflect a spontaneous expression of religious emotion, but constituted more a ritual act or ceremony performed by appointed individuals for a specific family or tribal occasion.

Although the common concerns of this world were believed to be peripheral and remote to Kalunga, the High God who dwelt far off in the upper world, nevertheless he was regarded as a personal being, as the source of all power and authority, and as an equitable judge of a man's conduct when all other judgements failed. Smith has suggested the following seven criteria of a High God:[13] (1) personality and a personal name; (2) possessing life and consciousness; (3) a being, yet distinct from man; (4) creator and builder of all or most things; (5) the supreme power and authority behind all of life; (6) to be reverenced, though not regularly; and (7) having some ethical relationship with mankind as the final judge of man's conduct. Traditional proverbs about Kalunga suggest a fair degree of correspondence between Kwanyama thought and most of Smith's criteria. The Kwanyama says, for instance, "Kalunga naye omunhu" ("God is also a human being") to account for his personality and relatedness to

12. cf. J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938) pp. 237ff.
13. cf. E. W. Smith, African Ideas of God; London, Edinburgh House, 1950, pp. 21-2.

mankind; yet an important qualitative difference is recognized between man and Kalunga, often implied in the proverb "Kalunga onyoko" ("God is not your mother"). As Creator he is acknowledged as supreme over all creation as characterized by the proverb: "The sun is God's eye; it reveals him", and the old pagan habitually took his place in the kraal entrance each morning to greet Kalunga in the sun.[14] Because Kalunga was ultimately responsible for human life, he was believed to know what man's earthly needs were. However, these were generally provided by means of the ancestral spirits.[15] Possibly related to this understanding of Kalunga is the popular regard the Kwanyama has for those in positions of high authority. Such a one is expected to know fully the needs of his subjects without having to be told even once; he fails as a leader if he does not know and provide what is needed at the right moment.[16] Finally, Kalunga's mercy was appealed to as a last resort against any unjust earthly judgement. Thus when all else failed, the condemned man might utter, "Ovanhu ova Kalunga: munhambala okwe va pewa", meaning, "People belong to God: the King has only received them to rule responsibly". This implies that in some undefined way God will be the final judge and arbiter in all matters of injustice. The king's authority, however great and temporally absolute, was never the ultimate authority in the

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14. Every Kwanyama kraal parlour (olupale) still has its sacred fire facing east, towards the rising sun and the abode of the good spirits.
15. cf. "Whatever comes, accept it with both hands: it comes from Pamba", and "God doesn't take back what he has spared for you" - "Kalunga eshi e ku pakela, iheshi li po".
16. The concept of authority will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

hierarchy of power. Kalunga was always supreme, and the lowliest individual had recourse to him in his moment of judgement.

In a description of traditional Kwanyama religion, while one may not hope to find much homogeneity with other parts of Africa, there are some distinct similarities to be noted among the tribes of sub-Saharan Africa. Meyer Fortes has observed, for instance, that "modern research on conceptions of the Supreme Deity, ancestor worship and witchcraft have clearly shown the indivisibility of Africa South of the Sahara".[17] Certainly the pursuit of health, security, harmony and safety are concerns which are fundamental to mankind as a whole. Hence life's common experiences alone, even among the hardship of much sub-Saharan African culture, cannot account for the socio-religious concurrence of which Professor Fortes writes. It is what the Kwanyama, or any other African, does to overcome his burdens in achieving the necessities of life that basically constitutes his religion. Thus, in attempting to identify any African philosophy of life or religious world-view, Evans-Pritchard maintains "The dominant motif is usually to what a people attribute dangers and sickness and other misfortunes, and what steps they take to avoid or eliminate them".[18] Stated in another way, we might say the supreme test of a man's religion can be seen in those moments of life's greatest crises, "when, stirred to the depths of his being, when he is racked with pain, when his crops fail".[19] How did the pagan

17. M. Fortes, Tropical African Studies (Conference of International African Institute); Ibadan, 1964, p. 44.
18. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Nuer Religion; London: O. U. P., 1956, p. 315.
19. R. H. Lowie, An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology; London: Harrap, 1934, p. 302.

Kwanyama react to these things? An examination of this question may provide the best description of traditional religion and world-view in practice. It must be remembered, however, that any description of functional "religion" will have a certain degree of superficiality about it, for religion never existed in the old society as a descriptive aspect of life, or as an articulated, clearly-defined system of beliefs. "Religion" simply constituted the whole of life and man's approach to the world around him. It is significant to note that traditional oshiKwanyama had no word for "religion" as such, for religion did not need specific definition.

There are primarily four main crisis-events in life which provide the framework and basic structure for the Kwanyama approach to life. These events are birth, puberty initiation, marriage, and death. In due course we will examine each of these events to see how the pagan understood and dealt with them. But first it is necessary to characterize the individual within his social context, for apart from this context neither the individual nor his experience of crisis had meaning.

Fundamental to every approach to life, individually and collectively, was the concept that the individual found his existence, his identity and purpose, only in community with his clan or tribal kinsmen. Among the Kwanyama, the familial unit still remains today as the basic social denominator which gives meaning to birth, marriage and death for the individual. This does not, however, obviate a strong degree of unity and loyalty to tribal heritage as well, as between

members of different clans.[20] Nevertheless, one's first loyalty to the clan is clearly seen, for instance, at the time of birth, marriage or death, which are the major crisis moments in life. A Kwanyama is always a clansman first and a tribesman second.

The implications of this essential social-interdependence upon the individual are profound and varied. As we shall see it provides the basis for his moral conduct; it determines how he will raise his family; how he understands and deals with illness and death; and it is the sole fashioner of his religious observances. In the latter regard as we have noted earlier, a personal "interiorized" religion would be meaningless, for only within the specific fellowship of the clan does the individual find meaning and existence. Even today informants generally agree that at the very base of human existence there is no dichotomy possible between an individual and his distinctive social group. Tempels has made a similar observation on a broader scale: "Just as Bantu ontology is opposed to the European concept of individuated things existing in themselves, isolated from others, so Bantu psychology cannot conceive of man as an individual, as a force existing by itself and apart from its ontological relationships with other living beings".[21] However, it is important for us to note that for the Kwanyama it is <u>not</u> merely "other living beings" upon which this inter-dependence rests. In traditional society the fellowship community was a very restricted one which involved <u>only</u> one's clan-family, and such a closed community

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20. The terms "<u>omwameme</u>" meaning "of my mother" and "<u>omwatate</u>", "of my father", are used indiscriminately within the tribe to designate any male or female Kwanyama tribesman. Their use as intimate terms "reassures a feeling of oneness", as one informant explained.
21. Tempels, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 68.

remained closed through life and death. From birth to death and beyond, where each clan was believed to have its own "clan-heaven", the social group remained fixed.

For the Kwanyama, the collective nature of society extends far deeper than mere outward forms of social intercourse, such as mutual sharing in activity or living together. It derives from the belief that only within community is real existence possible. One Christian informant thus maintains that of all things "good social relations are essential for life".[22] The human body might provide a suitable analogy in understanding this concept of the individual in community, for only as a unit can any member of the body hope to survive. Moreover, only in conjunction and community with other parts of the body does any individual member or organ truly have value or meaning. Outsiders are frequently impressed by the degree of spontaneous sharing of food and other possessions among the Kwanyama, as among other African tribes. However, in themselves such outward acts of brotherhood might represent little more than a form of outward fellowship in most societies, and indicate nothing more than social geniality and goodwill. Hence, it is not primarily these outward forms of sociality or the lack of such expression which give a clue to our understanding. The refusal of a clansman to be sociable or to share with others, for instance, does not destroy the inter-relatedness and interdependence which he shares with other members of the community. Anti-social conduct of this sort indeed might weaken his social relationships through selfish ill-will or a

22. Mulago uses the term "l'Union Vitale", vital participation, to describe this essential relationship in the African world-view. See Mulago, "Vital Participation" in Dickson & Ellingworth, op. cit., pp. 137ff.

general lack of harmony, but never entirely destroy them. Bad conduct, other than sorcery, was punishable usually by harsh measures, but this did not involve separation from the community. Complete separation and ostracism from the community follows when one actively engages in sorcery and witchcraft that results in the harm or death of a kinsman. In such an event, the ostracism that follows is not only existential but ontological, for it separates the individual from his hereditary origins; thus the ostracised member ceases to belong to the family, on either side of the grave. It is the worst fate to befall any member of the tribe, for it involves extinction from the community.

A good illustration of the essentially ontological nature of interdependence may be seen in the social attitude towards illegitimate children among the Kwanyama. There is a general acceptance of children born out of wedlock without any social stigma or moral condemnation, for such children are regarded as the progeny of the clan. In former days, if a child was born out of wedlock to a married woman, it was never held to be "illegitimate", for it was fathered by the clan. Hence, traditional oshiKwanyama had no word for a bastard-child as meaning "one born out of wedlock"; this was never a moral issue and did not present a social problem.[23] On the other hand, the truly illegitimate baby was one born to a girl before her proper initiation into the full life of the clan or tribe. And to be "illegitimate" meant that its life could never be

23. The word used in modern oshiKwanyama to designate such a child is a transliteration of the English: "ombasitela".

truly complete, for it lacked an essential relationship with the tribe. Such a child was therefore "tribally illegitimate", and had to be put to death.

Carothers and others have concluded that this vital social interdependence has produced marked psychological characteristics within certain African tribes.[24] Using this hypothesis one may find one explanation for a phenomenon widely observed among Kwanyama pupils of all ages. With a few exceptions found at the levels of higher education, it has been observed among pupils that competition in the classroom fails to serve as an incentive or motivator for distinction in studies. Whereas the competitive spirit among any group of individuals depends upon a degree of self-assertion and personal striving against fellow members of the group, competition for individual distinction is totally antithetical to the mental attitude of the Kwanyama. Congruent with their social origins, pupils do not appear eager to distinguish themselves by means of competition, which might result in some being recognized as different or better than others.[25] In studying the psychological conditioning of this type of society, we may with some reservations note Carothers' conclusions: "Mentally the potential tendency to simplify and synthesize is frustrated early and late, and such organization as exists in African life is social, never cerebral.[26] The individual is integrated in his society, not

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24. J. C. Carothers, The African Mind in Health and Disease (W. H. O. Monograph No. 17); Geneva: W. H. O., 1953, p. 103.
25. Admittedly this attitude among scholars is breaking down with increasing education, but may still be observed throughout most lower grades.
26. This appears to be an over-simplification, and we may imagine the writer is suggesting that the individual is always socially conditioned and directed, and never "inner-directed" by his own independent "cerebral" faculties.

in himself (and) attempts to redress this in later life can be only partially successful (for) the cerebral facilitations that should have occurred in childhood ... cannot now be swiftly made".[27]

The socially orientated existence and interdependence common to many African people has been described by an African in this way:

> "The faith of my fathers, borne out in the life they lived, declares the universal truth which is forgotten so often by post-Reformation Christianity with its emphasis on individual salvation, that man only realizes his manhood in community. Man is man only through other people."[28]

And Willoughby has observed the same social characteristic among other Bantu people:

> "Every phase of an individual's activity is controlled by a common sense of obligation to 'law and custom' ... Indeed 'individual' is hardly the right word, for what we term an individual is regarded by the Bantu as a kind of political zooid, or unit of the tribal organism, whose functions must be subordinated to the normative idea of tribal life, and whose potentiality is only fully attained in the matrix of that life."[29]

Whereas Christianity teaches that man's frailty is the cause of social evil, and that the corrective for such evil lies within the individual, traditional Kwanyama understanding maintains that social evil is the cause of man's frailty. Man's weakness and failings are primarily the result and not the cause of disturbances external to himself. Traditional views hold that man is fully able to do socially

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27. ibid. (italics mine).
28. G. Setiloane, "God of My Fathers" from Outlook, Vol. 100, No. 1193 (1970); Cape Town: Outlook Publications, pp. 157ff.
29. W. C. Willoughby, Soul of the Bantu; London: S. C. M., 1928, p. 385.

what is expected of him; to displease, violate or abuse the society will bring about varying degrees of suffering and disaster not only upon the individual, but upon the community as a whole. Immoral conduct is defined roughly in three ways, but always relating to the society: transgression of the divine laws of the king, offending the ancestors, or violating social customs and taboos (oshidila). Thus, in pre-Christian society moral conduct was regulated not by religious principles but by social forces; for the individual it was prescribed in relation to his society and not in relation to Kalunga. Accordingly, "sin" was measured not so much as a violation of Kalunga's sovereign laws as any wilful disruption of the society or the family-unit in which one lived. The individual was not considered responsible to Kalunga for "sin" (oulunde, etimba, enjono), but to the tribal elders and ancestors, for wrong conduct was detrimental to their wellbeing not to Kalunga. The clan always felt obliged to please the ancestors, whereas Kalunga rarely required propitiation and did not make his wishes known. "Sin" in this sense neither hurt nor offended Kalunga, nor had anything to do with him.[30]

Whatever was not considered to be disruptive to the community, an offence to the ancestors, or a violation of the king's laws, was considered permissible conduct. Moral conduct was, for this reason, never reflected upon inwardly by the individual. One informant recalled

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30. Within popular understanding of sin today there appears to be a legalistic tendency inherited from earlier pagan concepts of morality. One says, for instance, "onda tauluka oshipango" in referring to the Ten Commandments, meaning literally "I have overreached, overstepped the law". Elsewhere, the morally neutral word "mistake" (epuko) is frequently used in speaking of one's sins or errors. (See M. Brandel-Syrier, Black Woman in Search of God (London: Lutterworth, 1962) p. 145, for parallels).
Similarly, according to Willoughby, the Bantu words for sin suggest offences against law and custom, breaks in the harmony of communal life, objectionable elements introduced by the individual, and acts to be "corrected". (cf. Willoughby, op. cit., p. 389).

that the individual was implicitly forbidden by the society to interpret or decide matters of conduct on his own. One was always guided by a kind of social conscience which defined the moral code and the limits of permissible conduct.[31] Carothers has summarized this traditional basis of ethical behaviour in the following way: "Certainly there is little link in Africa between ethics and religion; morality is simply a question of the application or contravention of the traditionally correct rules of social behaviour. Enforcement of morality depends on public opinion and the fact that everyone knows everyone else in the group; and the aim of justice is not so much punishment as compensation for or exclusion from, the community - by death or banishment".[32]

Among the Kwanyama today, one frequently finds the attitude that a truly clever person is one who can profit by deception without being discovered. Evans-Pritchard offers some explanation of this phenomenon from his study of the Nuer people of East Africa.[33] Thus, he maintains that sin among the Nuer lies not so much in the act itself as in a breach of some tribal interdiction prohibiting it; like the Nuer, the Kwanyama would call any such interdiction a taboo. These interdictions are assumed, apparently without question, as being divinely ordered: "Nuer can give no reasons for the acts being bad other than that God punishes them".[34] Thus, the Nuer do not reason

31. Among Western peoples, the principle is otherwise: " An adhesion of rules of right and wrong social behaviour to the supernatural is a distinctive feature of the Mediterranean-European heritage". cf. An Outline of Anthropology (Cambridge, 1947.
32. Carothers, op. cit., p. 57.
33. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 189ff.
34. ibid.

that incest is bad in itself and therefore God punishes it, but rather that because God causes misfortune of some sort to follow upon such an act, therefore it must be a bad act. A similar logic can be found within Kwanyama thought.

The fundamental nature of the social principle of life involves the individual in two dimensions of life. One dimension we have discussed in the relationship of the individual towards the living members of the clan; the other dimension involves the individual in a vital relationship with the departed ancestral spirits which are believed to be present among the living. Hence, for every individual "vital union" or "vital participation" represents an essential link of life and is the life-giving principle which "unites vertically and horizontally the living and the departed ...".[35] "The good and moral man in Bantu society is the one who honours the ancestors by living as they have lived ... the Bantu demand moral behaviour within the family and tribe rather than moral behaviour in general. And this is in complete harmony with their ancestor worship, for the common ancestor must of necessity resent any action by one of his descendants likely to harm another descendant, and incidentally to upset the social order within the group".[36]

The Kwanyama understanding of death is contingent upon two concepts. First, by application of the principle of vital participation between every member of the clan, there is no essential dichotomy between the living and the departed. Second, for the Kwanyama, the soul (omwenyo, pl. = omienyo) of a man is understood as a part of his

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35. Dickson, op. cit., p. 138.
36. W. M. Eiselen and I. Shapera, The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1937, p. 270.

heritage received at birth, like his body and his mind. Spirit (omhepo, pl. = emhepo), on the other hand, is believed to be extrinsic to the individual; it is not created at birth, but received into the new-born and thus invasive of man's life. Thus, the Kwanyama speaks of the "soul" of the living, but the "spirit" of the dead, because spirit is extrinsic and pre-existent at birth and does not die. In Western thought, however, spirit and soul are frequently used as synonomous terms.[37] Consequently, when the Anglican Calendar was translated into oshiKwanyama, the festival known as "All Souls' Day" was transliterated quite uncritically from the English Name: translators have used the oshiKwanyama word for "soul", which is a meaningless term in reference to the departed. Although the mistranslation is still in use, informants agree that this feast is understood by all to mean a remembrance of the departed spirits, and that the name of the feast, as translated, is seriously in error.[38] Moreover, when Western minds differentiate in man the soul and the body (as in the Eucharistic prayer in which we pray God accepts "ourselves, our souls and bodies ..."), we are generally at a loss to explain where "the man" has gone when these two components have been separated as at death. In comparison with African thought, Tempels has observed: "The Bantu do not normally express themselves in this manner, unless

37. There are certain New Testament parallels as well. In particular, see Mark 2:8; 8:12; Luke 1:80; John 11:33; 13:21; Acts 17:16.

38. This is but one example of many in which native assistants dutifully, but erringly, translated English terminology directly into oshiKwanyama. For the European it says one thing, while for the African it says another.

under European influence; they distinguish in man body, shadow and breath. . . (and). . . what lives on after death is not called by a term indicating part of a man".[39] The ancestral spirits are believed to live a full existence; hence death comes as no terrifying finale to a man's life. For the ordinary person, "Life is not destroyed by death. . . there is no break between life and death, but continuity between the two. This life is therefore neither purely bodily nor purely spiritual, but a life of the 'whole man' ... the entire being in its totality".[40] Just as the individual exists and finds his identity on earth within the context of the clan, so this continuity remains in the next world in which each member is assured a place within the clan-heaven, provided no act has been committed which would involve exclusion and separation from the clan.

The ancestors continue to possess life-force, but are believed to have passed after death to a different stage of life. "The dead constitute the invisible part of the family, clan or tribe, and this invisible part is the most important".[41] Those who possessed earthly status of nobility and power are believed to advance to a realm in which they are endowed with greater power and influence over earthly life. By exercising their power it is thought they are capable of ordering or disrupting events among the living. Traditionally the ancestors were recognized as present among the living, and they desired to be kept informed of clan life. Like elder members of the family, they wished to be consulted and appeased periodically. As noted above, the degree of power a departed member held among the ancestral

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39. Tempels, op. cit., p. 37.
40. Dickson, op. cit., pp. 138-9.
41. ibid.

spirits (ovakwamungu) was dependent upon his former position on earth. Thus, a chief or the founder of a clan or a family head was believed to be not among the common dead, but was thought to be so near Pamba in the ascending scale of power as to be a spiritualized being. Below Pamba, this group of ancestors were considered the first strengtheners of life, and in a sense they were the personification of Kalunga.[42] Informants have reported that in calling for rain the names of chiefs and big men were always called out first, by order; the invocation might then go on to address Pamba or Kalunga directly.[43]

Traditional Kwanyama cosmology was based on a belief in three worlds. At death the departed spirits could go to one of two worlds, depending not upon the goodness of their earthly life, but upon their former position and status on earth. Sckär gives the following description:

> "The first is above us and it is pleasant to live there, for droughts and hunger are unknown. It rains quite frequently and sowing and harvesting are unceasing. It is there that Kalunga, the highest deity, dwells. The nobles of the land gather round him. A man of the people has little prospect of reaching this upper world. The second world is that on which we live... the worst world is the third world, which is under the earth... The departed souls of the common people dwell there. They live in poverty, suffer hunger,

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42. cf. Tempels, pp. 101ff.
43. Among the living there was always one instance in which the personification of Kalunga existed: in the case of the divine king. "Like the Pharoah of Egypt... he was believed to be the incarnation of the High God, and the Kwanyama did in fact call their king Kalunga". Loeb, op. cit., p. 41.

> and even have to eat flies. For the world below is only a shadow of our own. Because of their great need the souls of the dead return to the living world to demand sacrifices."[44]

Whenever it was felt that the ancestral spirits were felt to be offended by misconduct or negligence among the living, propitiation was required. This usually involved offering some kind of sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. The maintenance of harmonious ancestral clan unity was always the prerequisite to every good clan relationship, and any rite or sacrifice offered to the ancestors was intended to keep alive and enhance their favour towards relatives on earth. Thus, when serving beer (omalodu) it is still customary for the server to spill some beer on the ground "to feed the spirits of the ancestors in the under-world". Although it is likely that this is now done without conscious understanding, today the custom is explained as "good manners", and a child of sound up-bringing would always be careful to observe this practice. Similarly, in eating the daily porridge (oshifima), generally one does not gather up every bit after the meal: it is customary to let some porridge fall upon the ground both while cooking and before and after a meal, in deference to the ovakwamungu who may be hungry and wish to share in the meal. More formal recognition and appeasement of the ovakwamungu is made by means of a propitiatory ceremony, which involves the sacrifice of an ox. In traditional ceremonies, at the time of the sacrifice prayers and invocations were offered for good crops, fertility, good fortune, or for deliverance from disease, disaster or strife of any kind.[45] Such rites and sacrifices

44. Loeb, op. cit., quoting S. Sckär, p. 209.
45. cf. H. Sawyerr, "Christianity and African Culture" in Creative Evangelism; London: Lutterworth, 1968, pp. 19ff.

were performed to gain approbation of the ancestors, and thus to re-establish clan unity and rejuvenate the vital-force and life of the community. The ancestor-cult has been defined as providing "an all-pervading communal bond with an easily available, readily understandable and generally dependable access to the ancestors for guidance and support in the daily affairs of clan life".[46]

Man's conduct in an animistic society is determined by tribal restraints and taboos and everything, whether animate or inanimate, has a moral explanation. Marett has stated the implications of this rather strongly: "The savage is a savage just because he is too ready to cope with physical necessities merely by means of moral control or suasion. So much is he already in spirit if not in effect, the lord of creation that he can imagine no part of creation that is purely unmoral and mechanical in its mode of operation".[47] Hence, a major breach in relationships with the living members of the clan community was ultimately no less serious in its consequences than incurring the wrath of the ovakwamungu. Illness, anxiety, disaster or misfortune all were believed to be the result of some disruption in social relations. The disruption might involve an evil spirit directed against another person, a spell or curse, or simply general ill-will and hostility towards one's neighbours. Even today the Kwanyama believe that personal calamities, including illness, cannot be reduced to a scientific, physio-biological explanation, for the source and cause of every illness and mishap is a spiritual reality which is external to himself and which invades man's life from outside. One can, however, create one's own misfortune or anxiety in the case of a bad conscience;

46. T. C. Young, African Ways and Wisdom; London: U.S.C.L., 1937, p. 24.
47. R. R. Marett, "Ethics" in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by James Hastings, Vol. V; Edinburgh: Clark, 1912, pp. 426ff.

but here too, by a curious kind of transference, the <u>object</u> of a man's ill-will is often regarded as the primary active cause of inner disharmony in the person himself. Among the Kwanyama one can frequently hear expressions which seek to explain why a person feels or acts as he does. For instance, it is common for one to say "something was working on me" to explain a rash temper or a bad mood. Certainly in inter-personal relationships individuals generally are far more inclined to think in terms of <u>re</u>-action to other people, even when it is clear who has taken the initiative and is responsible in a given situation.

The effect of a bad conscience or ill-will towards one's neighbour, regardless of how it originally developed, produces strife in two directions: inwardly, it disturbs the individual's spirit and consequently his health; and outwardly it disturbs and breaks the harmony of the community. The resulting imbalance is believed to produce not only a psychological state of tension within the individual but a dangerous physical condition of disharmony within the society. Informants report that mere quarrels and estrangement are enough to cause general aches and pains within the individual. Pneumonia (<u>oshitwa</u>, <u>oshitoma</u>) is commonly believed to be caused by quarrelling and anger; headaches are also often attributed to this.[48] When turned against other people, it is believed that anger, however involuntary, exercises a negative and wicked influence. "A man so excited lives in an abnormal condition, in a state contrary to nature (and it) ... is enough to exercise a

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48. The records of every hospital in Ovamboland bear testimony to the frequency of psycho-somatic ailments, in which there are no observable symptoms of sickness or disease. The most frequent complaints seem to include general pain and ache in the legs, arms and back.

harmful influence upon those human beings who come into vital relationships with him".[49]

Loeb has found that among the Kwanyama "it is true that the people believed that mere 'evil thinking' directed against a victim could inflict sickness and death. In fact, the excessive politeness of the Kwanyama, together with their characteristic avoidance of needless enmities, was and still is preventive medicine intended to obviate any cause for hostile thoughts in others".[50] It appears that Willoughby's observations of the Bantu of Southern Africa are particularly relevant to traditional Kwanyama culture: "It follows, therefore, that wrongdoing, whether trivial or enormous, legal, ceremonial, or ethical, is always sin,[51] because it is an offence against divinities who are thought to be the dispensers of fertility, victory, and all the blessings of tribal life, and vindicators of the rules of conduct...".[52]

The most serious transgression against society was the practice of the powers of evil by means of sorcery or witchcraft. Sorcery involved the wilful undermining of life itself, for it meant disrupting and

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49. Tempels, op. cit., pp. 83ff.
50. Loeb, op. cit., p. 72. Field cites certain tribes in West Africa which begin their annual sacred festival with a day of peace-making, on which day people seek out their friends and neighbours to confess their misdeeds and secret resentments, for it is believed to be otherwise futile to ask the gods for health and prosperity if resentment and rancour is burdening the community. See M. J. Field, Search for Security (An ethno-psychiatric study of Rural Ghana) (London: Faber and Faber, 1960) p. 113. cf. also Christ's teaching on forgiveness, and the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, Mt. 18.
51. "Sin" here we understand to mean "transgression against principles of morality". Cf. Oxford Dictionary. In the old Kwanyama society such principles could not strictly be taken as divinely ordered.
52. Willoughby, op. cit., pp. 386ff.

destroying the security of the community by employing harmful spirits. Such spirits might be directed against another individual or the community as a whole, but in either case the harmful effects were believed to be shared by all. The practice of witchcraft is still condemned as thoroughly anti-social and evil. To engage in sorcery involves a wilful and destructive turning against society, which thus implies deliberate self-ostracism from the society and from one's hereditary origins. Not death, but ostracism from the clan, as we have noted, is the worst fate to befall any tribal member, for this assigns a kind of total anonymity to the individual. Socially an ostracised person becomes, in a sense, "sub-human", for he has lost his social origins and intercourse with those around him. Kwanyama tribal law always required the complete destruction of anyone caught practicing sorcery or witchcraft. Mere "evil thinking" came under the same condemnation if it resulted in the death of another person, but this was always difficult to prove. Loeb reports from his survey of the Kwanyama that even the relations of one accused of witchcraft were considered by the king to be culpable, although it was possible on occasion for them to make peace with the king and thus be spared punishment.[53] For the accused, the sentence of violent death was automatic. "Under King Muesipandeka (circa 1861-1881)...

53. One might make certain comparisons between the tribal ostracism and destruction of a sorcerer and the story of Achan in ancient Israel, whose entire family suffered ostracism and destruction for violating the sacred ban of the tribe. The magnitude of Achan's sin against the tribe, and the ensuing punishment, compares closely with the Kwanyama taboo associated with sorcery. See Joshua Chapter 7.

a report to the king that a certain man was a sorcerer... brought the offender to court, where he was slain by the official executioner, a man named Kamuxulifua. The accused was speared or shot and his body was thrown into the bush to be eaten by wild animals. His relatives were not allowed to mourn ...".[54] But death, as we have noted, was not regarded as the end of an individual, hence execution alone normally would not destroy the guilty or excommunicate him from a place in the clan-heaven. Therefore it was believed the surest way of preventing life after death was not to bury the corpse but to allow it to be mangled, consumed by wild animals, or to rot. In this way, the indwelling spirit of the guilty party suffered the same injuries and mutilation and was thus rendered harmless.[55] Another means employed on occasion was to burn the corpse. Besides witches and sorcerers, other undesirable spirits regarded as dangerous included the bodies of tribally illegitimate children, persons regarded as criminals, those who had drowned, those who had starved to death in famines, and suicides. The rationale by which these people were deemed unfit to exist as spirits seems to have involved the idea that they had lost, by an unnatural means, all life-force, and thus they would only be able to exist as incomplete spirits. In this incomplete form they would forever seek to regain their wholeness by harmful means, by taking life-force from others. However, in the case of suicides, an exception was always made with regard to the spirit of dead kings. Towards the end of his reign, the king was expected to commit suicide as a ritual handing-on of his

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54. Loeb, op. cit., p. 72.
55. cf. ibid., p. 260.

divine power. In the next world, however, kings and nobles always inhabited the highest ancestral realm in the upper world.

In instances of personal or social grievance, illness or misfortune, the Kwanyana was never inclined to posit a question seeking to discover "what" caused the trouble. Trouble of any sort stemmed from other beings, and hence the Kwanyama would seek to know "who" was responsible for his personal misfortune. The role and function of the witchdoctor was to assist in finding the answer to this question. The witchdoctor was believed to be endowed with a divine power by which he was able to seek out the cause or source of illness or misfortune, and to prescribe remedy for re-establishing order, good relations and the restoration of health. In a study of modern-day Ashanti, it was discovered that although the shrine therapists recognize their limitations and frequently send their patients to the hospital, "they stand firmly on the theory that the primary vulnerability of the patient... is of supernatural origin, and until redemptive ritual has been performed, the hospital efforts are futile".[56] Similar tendencies and attitudes can be found among the Kwanyama today, in which the source of illness or misfortune is located primarily outside the individual.

In traditional Kwanyama society, the witchdoctor was regarded as a safety-doctor, for it was by his arts alone that one could counteract the evil powers of sorcery and witchcraft. His talents and power were believed to be of divine origin and were always directed towards restoring the well-being and security of the individual and the community. Lienhardt, in comparing the work of the diviner with the modern-day

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56. Field, op. cit., p. 117.

psycho-analyst has commented: "The diviner is expected to discover a reason for the action of the power, in some human sin of omission or commission, and to recommend a course of action. This reason may be something the patient has half-forgotten - one among many things which are, as we should say, 'on his conscience', and which begin to become significant for him when he thinks himself in danger".[57] Only in extreme cases of distress, such as severe drought or plague, was the help of Kalunga sought directly; more often the witchdoctor was consulted, for he had insight and power in most situations and therefore this was believed to be sufficient.

Within the old society, only the two professions of blacksmithing and medicine existed; thus, the witchdoctor always held a position of esteem and honour. The two criteria required to establish a profession were a specific initiation and possession by the spirits of earlier practitioners.[58] Members of both professions were regarded as sacred and thus were protected by the king. A doctor at the highest level of his profession[59] was regarded as the supreme and final authority on all matters of native religion, medicine and ceremony.

Although the individual received his existence and life-force through membership in the clan, birth into the clan alone was not sufficient for full and complete membership: ritual initiation was required for true tribal inheritance. It is important for our understanding of tribal membership to note that it was impossible for one fully to belong, to be a member of the closed kinship group, without

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57. G. Lienhardt, Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka; London: O.U.P., 1961, p. 152.
58. See Loeb, op. cit., p. 122.
59. Loeb describes four levels of qualification, cf. pp. 123ff.

both prerequisites of birth and initiation. Whereas birth made one "genetically" a member of the clan, initiation was necessary for true "ontological" membership. By means of initiation one became truly "omunhu", man and truly a member of the tribe. In our discussion here we are only concerned with the efundula initiation ceremony for girls, as this is the only rite still in use today.[60]

The efundula initiation ceremony has always been performed as a tribal rite, irrespective of clan associations, for by means of this rite girls advance to adult status within the tribe. The ceremony, through its symbolism and teaching, is a dramatic representation of death and rebirth into the tribe. In preparing for initiation, the initiate undergoes intense education under the tutelage and guidance of chosen elders. The importance of the efundula ceremony for the old society was immense, for upon this ceremony "more than upon anything else in Kwanyama culture, tribal life depended".[61]

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60. It is not clear why male circumcision has fallen into disuse among the Kwanyama, and information about any part of the rite is exceedingly hard to obtain today. Loeb records that until the death of King Haimbili, (circa 1859), the circumcision rite took place regularly "about every fourth year" in the sacred grove of the Kwanyama tribe. It may be performed only outside the country, never within. Hence, informants have suggested that with the partition of the tribe by the establishing of the Angola-S. W. A. border, by which the sacred grove (evale) fell on the Portuguese side and thus not always readily accessable, the rite fell into disuse. The efundula, on the other hand, may be performed within the country, in any big man's kraal. Because the tribe is matrilinear, and the woman is the bearer of the children, the question might be raised if this has accounted in any way for the continuation of the efundula ceremony. Informants were, however, unable to confirm this.
61. ibid., p. 243.

As the continuation of the clan or tribe depends upon the fertility of its womenfolk, so it is believed individual fertility depends upon observance of the proper initiation rite at the time of puberty. For society as a whole, the welfare of the king and the entire state depended on the proper observance of the efundula. Should a girl give birth to a child before being properly initiated in the efundula, it was considered to be an evil omen which foretold the death of the monarch.[62] Such a child would not be allowed to live, for it would be born without complete "motherhood" into the tribe, by a girl who is not fully a clan member. Such pre-marital mothers were called "ehengu", "still a whispered word in Kwanyama polite society", according to Loeb.[63] For girls, the efundula marked the occasion for which they prepared since early childhood, the goal and climax of all their girlhood years. For the husband-to-be, the efundula initiation gave him the assurance that the wife of his choice had two very essential attributes: physical endurance and sexual virtue.

It is important to note that the efundula ceremony has never had any connection with the cult of the ancestors.[64] Its function has been with the perpetuation of the tribe, and with the prevention of "tribally" illegitimate children. Indirectly, it also served as a means of enforcing chastity among the youth, although doubtless the final deterrent was the fear of death to those engaging in sexual relations before they were properly initiated. According to informants, sexual licentiousness and immorality were rare in former days when the

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62. cf. ibid.
63. ibid., p. 76.
64. ibid., p. 244

efundula initiation was the universal rule for all girls.

In recent years, the initiation ceremony has been conducted once a year and consists of a four-day rite. The initiates, all being of the age of menstruation, are made to dance for four days and nights with periodic rests. The purpose of the physical ordeal is not only to test their physical endurance - a necessity for any wife who will be expected to do the hard physical labour of keeping the garden - but to demonstrate by various magical means that none of the initiates is pregnant. On the second day of the ritual each girl is given a cup of native beer, to which has been added several pinches of dried powdered semen; the purpose of this is "to ensure her fertility and to make childbirth easy for her, and also to give her endurance in the dancing".[65] In addition, the girls are made to crawl under the leader (omupitifi) of the efundula ceremony (known as "epitifo" = to make go out), and the act of passing between his legs symbolises that the girls die and are born, or come to life again as "boys". They remain in this transition form of rebirth until the fourth day of the ceremony, at which time each girl is required to make a solemn attestation that she is not pregnant by stepping over a forked stick set upright in the ground. It is universally believed that any pregnant girl performing this ritual will die.

Closely associated with the efundula was the practice of "bundling", which was observed regularly until the time of Mandume's death in 1917. This was performed for two or three months prior to the actual efundula ceremony, and involved the initiates in a group

65. ibid., p. 246.

exercise. Under the supervision of adults they carried out, in imitative play, the usual daily occupations and activities of married adults. Thus the practice of bundling involved a boy and a girl sleeping together, but it was forbidden for them to have sexual relations during such time. This aspect of bundling became, in fact, a supreme test of the girl's virtue, for if she became pregnant during the bundling period it would be discovered during the efundula ceremony when she would fail to pass the required tests.[66] Presumably the custom of bundling was not regarded as an essential preliminary for the actual efundula initiation, for the latter has continued in existence every year without it since 1917.

The efundula ceremony thus was the respected and necessary manner of preparing for marriage in the traditional society. Often the initiation itself was combined with a group marriage ceremony which took place on the fourth and last day.

The custom of "oijondo" (lobola) during the courtship period prior to marriage has remained a traditional practice among the Kwanyama. This requires the man to give the parents of his fiancee presents consisting of an agreed number of hoes (usually 6) to be given to the mother, and at least one ox to the father. Nothing is given to the girl's family prior to the final arrangements for the wedding ceremony, but reasonable guarantee is made verbally that the bridegroom can meet the demands of oijondo. Also during the courtship period the bridegroom is commonly expected to give the bride certain gifts of clothing and ornaments, although this is

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66. For a detailed description of bundling, see Loeb, 242-3.

not strictly a part of the demands of oijondo. If for any reason the engagement is broken, the girl is expected to replace or return all these gifts to the boy. Once married, the gifts from oijondo become the property of the wife's family; they remain a part of the permanent wealth of the wife's clan unless the wife deserts her husband or bears him no children, in which case she is expected to return everything to the man. When the husband sends his wife away or breaks the marriage of his own accord, no return of gifts is expected. However, a new law now states that a wife who has remained with her husband for as long as three years need return nothing in the event of divorce, even if she has borne him no children.[67]

Among the Kwanyama, the practice of lobola served as an earnest guarantee of a boy's intention to marry a girl, and as an economic compensation to the girl's father for removing his daughter from the kraal. In former days, lobola was never associated with the "buying" of a bride. Only within the present century has it wrongly become known as the "bride price", which is a perversion of the original intention. Certainly the introduction of money, and the changes in native economy which resulted, have exerted a strong influence upon the custom of lobola. Thus as practiced among the Kwanyama today lobola may frequently demand payment of money as well as goods to be given to the bride's family. Informants report that the financial outlay for the average wedding is not less than R140 to R160, and often more. However, the social origins of lobola extend from the two clans involved in the marriage contract, and far from being an humiliating "purchase" of a wife, in former days the practice tended to serve as perhaps the only stabilizing influence in African marriage, and generally contributed

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67. cf. ibid., p. 258.

to the respect in which the bride was held by the husband and his group.[68]

Marriage has always been the expected norm for every Kwanyama. A decision not to marry is still considered to be contrary to tradition and detrimental to the general welfare of society. Therefore, in this sense marriage implies a social obligation of extending and propagating the life and strength of the family unit. Moreover, as the principal workers in kraal and garden, women are regarded as an economic necessity. In the old society girls were considered marriageable after initiation, generally between 25 and 30 years of age. For the man, the average age for marriage was between the ages of 28 and 35. Recently however both averages have dropped. It is now between 18 and 25 for girls, and between 24 and 27 for boys.

Polygyny was the usual practice of pagan Kwanyama society. Describing the society, Brincker writes:

> "Usually a man of some importance has eight to ten wives; poorer men have two to three. Uejulu (the king) had twelve wives. The social and household economy of the Ambo demands that a man have several women. It is not always in a lustful spirit that he puts aside an old and weakened woman, gives her a small kraal of her own, and takes a younger woman in her place. The older woman can no longer perform her part in the field or the household tasks, and therefore her husband must have a younger worker!"[69]

Wives traditionally were treated largely as property, an "investment" with little else binding man and wife together. Tobias

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68. cf. Carothers, op. cit., pp. 48-9.
69. Loeb, op. cit., quoting P. Brincker, p. 53.

observed that in customary marriage there was little to keep husband and wife together, and Loeb has expressed similar conclusions.[70] While it was socially acceptable for a married man to have sexual relations outside the marriage, similar conduct was forbidden married women. Once a woman passed through the efundula ceremony and became fully a woman and a member of the tribe, adultery was regarded essentially as a matter of theft against the husband, and was dealt with according to his judgement. However, "there could be no question of an ordinary kraal owner's killing his adulterous wife and her lover... the only punishment a husband could inflict on his wife was to beat her, not so severely as to endanger her life; he could also demand that the guilty man pay damages".[71]

Although to the present day exogamy has remained the strict rule for two people entering marriage, it is important to note that within customary marriage the ties have always been stronger towards clan than towards spouse. This tendency has generally remained true among Christian marriages today as well. Among members of the family-clan there remains always an invincible blood relationship, while between a husband and wife (of differing clans) each lives merely in verbal agreement or contract, generally based on motives of economy and the propagation of the clan. "A husband does not usually keep a wife who wants to leave him, for he is afraid that if she remains in his kraal she will have children borne out of wedlock who, according to tribal belief, will endanger his life".[72]

70. Loeb, op. cit., 137.
71. ibid., p. 76.
72. ibid., p. 257.

Kwanyama society, although based on a patriarchal structure of authority, has traditionally maintained a matrilinear form of inheritance. Within this matrilinear system children born to an initiated woman belong to her clan and designate themselves according to the mother's clan-name. The natural line of inheritance is established in such a matrilineal society not on a filial father-son basis but on a maternal uncle-nephew pattern, in which the eldest son in the family inherits from the eldest brother of his mother's clan. It is likely that because of this strict matrilineal pattern, together with exogamous marriage, there is as yet no community of property within Christian marriages except in rare instances. Thus, a man and his wife generally observe strict separation of granaries, possessions and parts within the kraal itself. Loeb's description of pre-Christian society remains substantially true of the present: "At the end of the honeymoon, her husband gives her her own section (epata) of the kraal ... (and) ... she has also a garden of her own. From her husband she receives likewise most of her ornaments, such as beads, copper anklets and arm rings; but he remains the owner of these ornaments, and even of whatever clothing he may give her".[73]

In all cases of separation and divorce, except among the nobility of former days, the wife had the right to take all her children with her. Loeb concludes of Kwanyama men: "They are resigned to have their wives leave them, as is illustrated in the proverb: 'The wife of Kalunga also ran away' ".[74]

73. ibid.
74. ibid.

Notwithstanding the matrilineal structure of every clan, Kwanyama society has always observed patrilocal residence. It has been suggested[75] that this combination of matrilineal and patrilocal characteristics has accounted for the absence of localized clans within the country. For instance, although each clan group may be described as maintaining a strict genetic or ontological integrity, one cannot observe any particular social integrity existing on a geographical basis, in which one clan might be seen to correspond with one village or area. The closed society of each clan is hereditary rather than communal. However, as we have observed elsewhere, the communal intermingling of clans within a village never obliterates the primary loyalty of the individual to his clan, which comprises a tightly-knit group in matters of inheritance, birth, marriage and death.

Tonjes has summarized the general laws of inheritance among the Kwanyama as follows:

> "Only clan mates can inherit. The wife and children get nothing; the inheritance falls to a man's mother and to his sisters, brothers, uncles, and nephews on his mother's side. Everything that a wife has received from her husband during his lifetime, such as clothing, decorations, and tools must be returned to his clan mates upon his death. If some possessions are missing, substitutions must be made. If a husband has slaughtered an ox for his wife during an illness she has had, she must return an ox to his clan mates. Wealthy men, however, often sell their cattle to their wives for small sums, with the knowledge of their clan relatives. In this way women are able to obtain some wealth.

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75. ibid., p. 90.

> Children have the first right of inheritance from their mother, and after her children come her relatives, her mother, grandmother, and siblings. Whenever a rich man dies, a portion of his property goes to the king."[76]

Thus far we have discussed the integral nature of the kinship clan and the position of the individual within it. We have also examined briefly some of the social institutions and customs which were regarded as essential to the on-going life of the group. It remains for us to consider briefly the role of leadership within the family of the kraal and within the tribe as a whole. The establishment and maintenance of authority in each case will guide our discussion.

Authority and leadership were generally established on two principles: status and rank. In the case of kings and monarchs, one might be born into a status of power and authority; in other cases among the common people, one grew into a position of esteem and authority by virtue of age and rank within the family. In every case, however, the nobility, who could claim authority by birthright, held the highest authority and power within the society. It was from this group that kings and monarchs were chosen. Two clans in particular were regarded as royal clans from which tribal leaders were selected. These were Clan 1, known as the Ovakwanali, or Mourning Clan, which dates from the time of the first mythical king, Kavangeko; and Clan 2, the Ovakwanongobe, or Cattle Clan, which served as the original royal clan until it was conquered by the Ovakwanali. Various other clans served these two royal clans in subordinate roles.[77]

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76. H. Tönjes, Ovamboland; Berlin, 1911, p. 149.
77. Such as Clan 3, the Ovakwaneidi, which planted and raised the tribal sacred grain; Clan 4, the Ovakwamalanga, which kept the sacred fire, water and sheep under its supervision; Clan 8, the Ovakwanalamba, known as the chief rain-makers; and Clan 9, the Ovakwanambuba, which served as the bearers of the king's sacred insignia during migrations.

The Kwanyama King was regarded as the personification of Kalunga on earth, and was hedged about by a divinity of his own. He was chosen according to the matrilineal principle from the king's sister's family, and therefore he was never regarded as a secular ruler chosen from among the people or directly answerable to them. His role was fundamentally a spiritual one in that the entire life and vitality of the tribe rested upon his sovereignty. When a new king was enthroned, he was required ritually to issue his orders (eveta) for the ruling of the tribe. "Just as the king was divine, so these orders, or laws, were also divine... and not liable to change. They were traditional, not newly created by each successor to the throne".[78] This notion is expressed in the proverb: "While the laws of the king are not new, they are always as good as new". Meyer Fortes has pointed out how, in African society, such sacred persons, places, ceremonies and religious symbols give a unifying cohesion to the society. "These sacred symbols endow the social system with mystical values which evoke acceptance of the social order that goes far beyond the obedience exacted by the secular sanction of force".[79] Nevertheless, it is a generally accepted fact that all the Kwanyama kings were tyrannical and ruled by terror of one form or another to keep their nobles in check. The "secular sanction force" seems to have served a vital function in the maintenance of the king's laws in Oukwanyama, for all the kings are remembered by tales of violence and cruelty of one form or another.[80]

78. Loeb, op. cit., p. 45.
79. M. Fortes, African Political Systems; London, O.U.P., 1941, pp. 16ff.
80. The "punishment raid", known as the oshitondokela, was one such means used by every king to instill terror and obedience among his people. The king could order such a raid upon any kraal owner who had given offence or shown disobedience to his laws. The "punishment" consisted of the murder of the man and his relations, including women and children if they were found, burning of his kraal, and the seizure of the man's crops.

Apart from the element of fear, obedience to the king and his laws was established on a universal belief in the king's divinity, and on respect for established custom. While it was believed that tribal taboos (oidila) were established and enforced by the dead, the custom of obedience to proper authority "had and still has a strong foundation in the belief that there is a right way of doing things".[81] The identification of right with Kwanyama tribal custom is still indicated today by the expression "shoukwanyama" or "oshiKwanyama", meaning "of the Kwanyama people", and therefore good, fitting and right.[82] However, like the exclusiveness of the closed clan-group, this was a restrictive form of reference, for it meant that what was not of the Kwanyama people was therefore suspected, and often thought to be intrinsically undesirable. One early exception to this attitude towards outsiders is recorded with regard to white people. Brincker, writing at the turn of the century, pointed out that the Kwanyama had a high respect for the ways of the white people, whom their prophets described as "people who travel on the right path" (nomondjila).[83] However, informants today have been unable to verify this statement.

The king was expected to protect his subjects spiritually and materially within the feudal kingdom. In return they were required to obey and protect the king and to give him a certain proportion of

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81. Loeb, op. cit., p. 44.
82. Upon the birth of a second son to a white missionary family in Ovamboland, the eldest member of the village ruled that the child was to be named "shoukwanyama". However, when asked to explain what the name meant, he found it very difficult. "Shoukwanyama" means "that which is customary", something which is so much a part of the tribal tradition that one does not seek to define its meaning.
83. Brincker, op. cit., p. 28.

the gains from their gardens, from booty taken in wars, and game from hunting and fishing. However it is important to note that the relationship between the king and his subjects was seldom a mutual one; whereas a subject was never exempt from producing the required tribute and often much more if the king demanded it, a king or monarch could not be held accountable to his people for unjust or harsh treatment.

The king's authority was always sovereign over individuals. Justice was established and payment levied according to judgement decreed by the king. If a man was unfairly sentenced by the king, his fate was sealed; he had recourse to the mercy and judgement of Kalunga, but that did not save him from the king's punishment that often was death. No king was ever ousted by the common people. His conduct, however hated or resented, could not be questioned by the common man, who depended upon the king for everything he had. Intrigues against the king did, however, occur within the royal family, and on occasion within the king's own court. These might be motivated by jealousy among the nobility or resentment against the king. In at least one recorded instance, such intrigues actually involved a plot to kill the king and enthrone an heir to the throne. Informants say this occurred in the extremely cruel reign of Heita, who was remembered for abusing his people. In this instance, the people organized themselves behind the next heir to the throne, and under his leadership Heita was overthrown and killed.

Whilst we have noted that the king had sovereign authority and power over individuals within the tribe, his authority over social

matters of state or group decisions affecting the tribe as a whole was not absolute. This fact is crucial to one's understanding of traditional tribal authority and the exercise of power. Socially the king had the power and responsibility to enact or re-establish tribal laws at the time of his enthronement (vide supra, p. 134). These laws, however, were almost always traditional and not new; in cases where new tribal laws were promulgated by a new king, this was always done after consultation and agreement with the king's councillors. Thus, law-making that affected society and the tribe as a whole was never solely an affair of the king. Nor was the king regarded as sole ruler of the tribe in such things as tribal alliances, concessions, building of mission-stations, making war and concluding peace treaties. In all such instances "he was advised by the old people and above all by the _omalenga_ and the _eehamba_ (members of the royal family) and was subject to the judgement and will of his mother; under no circumstances could he proceed without their approval ..."[84] For a king to violate this principle in his exercise of authority was to transgress a taboo.[85]

Historically it is of interest to note that Mandume, the last king of the Kwanyama, was the first king to try consciously to alter the laws of the country. Loeb has suggested that it was probably the result of white influence in Ovamboland that Mandume, like the Zulu King, Chaka, announced "reforms" in the laws of the country. The

84. _ibid._
85. It was in matters such as this that Mandume failed to comply with tradition. Within a few years of his enthronement he forsook the advice of his own councillors and made unilateral decisions affecting the whole tribe, without the advice or support of his elders. It is suggested that it was the violation of this principle that accounted, in part, for his final downfall.

reforms instituted by Mandume appear to have been acceptable to his nobles and councillors, and aroused no general opposition. In every instance these new laws reflected a more just and equitable kind of law than had previously obtained in the country. Thus, Mandume's demise and the termination of the sacred Kwanyama kingship has never been attributed to the institutuion of new reform laws. King Mandume's death is believed to have been because he violated other tribal taboos: he engaged in elephant and eland hunting, thus running the danger of shedding his blood and losing some of his sacred power; and, what was more serious, he went personally into wars after he had been crowned, instead of leaving the conduct of war to a war leader.

No Kwanyama king was allowed to take his last breath unmolested, for it was believed this would weaken his successor by the loss of the dying man's soul.[86] Thus, "if the heir caused a dying king to be killed, he then possessed the king's soul and became, like his predecessors, the incarnation of Kalunga ... if on the other hand a king was allowed to die an entirely natural death, his soul did not enter into his successor. Thus it was customary for a faithful attendant, at the last moment, to smother a dying king with a piece of lambskin".[87]

Among the common people who possessed no noble status, authority depended entirely upon rank of seniority within the family. Hence age, while in no way conferring a status of divinity, placed the

86. Muesipandeka appears to be the only exception to this rule, who died in 1881 from an infected knee.
87. Loeb, op. cit., p. 28.

eldest member of the clan at the head of an ascending order of power among the living. It was believed that in this position he mediated a kind of divine power which was never questioned or challenged by younger members of the family. Power and authority between God, man and the ancestors, was conveyed in a pyramidal-like fashion: Kalunga, as the supreme giver of life-force and power, was always regarded as the ultimate source of power; his authority rested at the apex of the pyramid. Kalunga's authority was then mediated through the ancestral upper-world, represented as the middle level of the pyramid, down to the living members of the tribe upon earth. It is at the earthly level where the eldest living member receives, in direct succession from the ancestors, a part of Kalunga's power and life-force. Respect for the aged is therefore much more than merely good behaviour; it is acknowledging, with a kind of awesome reverence, a powerful "link" with the old ancestors and the younger members of the tribe. Informants have explained the attitude of younger members towards the eldest of the family thus: "They see and know things which others do not". "The eldest of a group or of a clan is, for Bantu, by divine law the sustaining link of life, binding ancestors and their descendants... (and) ... it is he who 'reinforces' the life of his people...".[88]

The power or "force" which man thus receives in a line of succession continues, in greatly reduced or diminished form, to inspire all lesser forms of life - both the animate and inanimate forms of nature. All lower forms of life are believed to exist to serve man's

88. Tempels, op. cit., p. 42.

purposes. Man is the supreme force among created beings and able to increase his life-force whereas nature is not. He may increase his life-force by amassing wealth and possessions, by producing a large family, or by achieving a harmonious relationship within his community. Any or all of these things will give him greater "force-vitale", the essence of life; this occurs however not as a quantitative increase but as a qualitative increase which alters and strengthens the essence and character of his life. The creation which surrounds man exists as one means to increase his potential. In this sense the traditional Kwanyama understanding of the creation is not unlike that of the ancient Hebrews, as reflected in the Genesis story of creation[89] "The Bantu sees in man the living force, the force or the being that possesses life that is true, full and lofty... he dominates plants, animals and minerals. These lower beings exist, by divine decree, only for the assistance of the higher created being, man".[90]

A recognition of the wisdom and authority of the family elders is acknowledged in numerous proverbs still widely used: "The elder is a big hat which protects you from being blown away" (Omukulunhu embale lakula la kelela omhepo), which recognizes the power and security provided the family by the elders. "The elder doesn't get lost: he always knows what to do" (Omukulunhu iha kana moshipaxu, okweli ota kwata) reflects the wisdom and intuition of the elder.[91]

89. cf. Genesis, Chap. 1. 27ff.
90. Tempels, op. cit., p. 64.
91. Other common proverbs include the following: "All that satisfies was divided by the elder", "Those who have grown up with their parents will always be able to distinguish bad from good"; The elder is not a fool, but perhaps just ugly"; "Adulthood is not just a name".

Whereas for the Kwanyama, as with other Bantu people, the life and welfare of the individual is dependent upon due recognition and observance of one's place within the community, so any violation of the rights of another member of the clan or tribe can diminish life and bring harm to the person who transgresses the due order of authority. Dickson has concluded that "the prime evil, the greatest injustice is to disregard someone's vital rank".[92] This could occur not only by failing to pay proper respect to the elders in daily matters of routine etiquette, but if a junior member of the clan or tribe should make a decision on his own, such as dispensing of clan property, without consulting the elders.[93]

Traditionally the head of the kraal was not only ruler over his own kraal but served as its priest in making daily sacrifices; his role as local priest might also be exercised at certain important annual festivals. "As the kingdom of Kwanyama Land was the macrocosm to the natives, so the kraal was and still is the microcosm. Every kraal owner is accordingly 'king in his own castle' ...".[94] Those who disobeyed his orders were generally beaten or given hard labour. However, whereas the king's authority was, in a sense, universal and absolute, the kraal head's authority was only local. None of those living within the kraal ultimately were bound to remain with him if he violated his position by harsh or repressive measures.

We must now consider briefly the traditional means of

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92. Dickson, op. cit., p. 147.
93. Tempels, op. cit., p. 93.
94. Loeb, op. cit., p. 134.

maintaining peace and harmony within the tribe and clan. As we have seen, the observance of laws, customs and taboos of the kingdom was one essential way of doing this. The other was by means of ritual acts and sacrifices performed at appointed times or according to unwelcome contingencies. Unfortunately the only sources of written information available give no interpretation of the meaning of these rites and sacrifices, and we can do little more than present an introductory description, together with whatever interpretative comment our informants have been able to provide.

Sacrifices to the ancestors, and on rare occasions to Kalunga himself, generally were performed irregularly in response to specific crises and needs of the community. Such offerings were always regarded as propitiatory in nature, and were intended to appease or humour the recipients. In addition to these irregular observances, however, there were also specific ceremonies and rituals which were performed according to fixed times of the year; the aim of these observances was to ensure the safety, well-being and prosperity of society. The motive behind this type of annual ceremony seems to have been the hope of "storing up" favour among the ancestral spirits, so that they would deal kindly with the living members of the clan throughout the coming year. Such annual observances occurred at two levels: within the kraal in which the head of the kraal acted as the priest; and tribally in which the ceremony was performed by appointed nobles and on rare occasions by the king himself.

Within the kraal it was the owner's responsibility, together with his wife, twice each day to invoke the favour of the ancestral

spirits by facing the rising and setting sun and making certain utterances for the peace and prosperity of the kraal. The spirits which dealt with the rising sun were considered to be propitious and able to bring new life, while those associated with the west and the setting sun were believed to be dangerous, and could drag down the souls of the sick to the underworld.[95] In cases of sickness or in instances requiring ritual purification, the kraal head was not competent to act as priest, and was required to summon a medicine man (ondudu, onganga) to perform the necessary ceremonies.

Festivals and ceremonies which took place on a tribal-wide basis were generally initiated by the leaders of the tribe, and then were observed locally in individual kraals or villages. Some of these festivals appear to have been little more than a joyous occasion commemorating an annual event. The Harvest Ceremonies however involved sacred invocations and observances which were propitious to the welfare and continuance of the whole society. These ceremonies depended upon the king's participation at some point. The sacred festivities of the Harvest Ceremonies were held in three parts: the king's oshipepa and two oshipe feasts which followed after threshing was completed. In the king's oshipepa, which was essentially a festival meal presided over by a priest from the royal clan, the king threw one ball of porridge to the east and one to the west, praying: "Ancestral spirits of the east, spirits of the west, we are eating our oshipe of the king".[96]

The oshipe shomalodu, one of the two remaining feasts, appears

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95. ibid.
96. ibid., p. 218.

to have been a kind of fellowship meal which lasted four days. It is difficult to know precisely what impact this feast had upon the tribe and the individual, but it appears to have been universally practiced and attendance by every member of the kraal was required. The first day of the feast was for the kraal owners, during which the head of the kraal ate a ceremonial meal and paid homage and sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, first to the good spirits of the east, and then to the harmful spirits of the west. He did this by throwing a ball of porridge dipped in beans to the east with the invocation: "spirits of the east, take this: now let us eat our grain (in peace)". Then, with a second ball of porridge and beans, he threw to the west with the invocation: "Madness of the west, go down with the sun!". Then followed a common fellowship meal. The second day was set aside for the wives, during which there was no sacrifice. The third day was for the cattle. In the course of this day's ritual, a sacrifice of beer was poured out over the graves of the ancestors, with the invocation: "Receive this malt from our beer so that everything will go well". The fourth and final day was for general merrymaking, without a sacrifice. However, on this day the kraal head gave a general blessing of health and prosperity to his sons and daughters and all of the kraal. Ceremonially, this took place with the invocation: "May we have much grain, many cattle, and many births", as the kraal head stroked the faces of his sons and daughters with ash.

The celebration of this oshipe feast was essentially one of joyful thanksgiving, according to our informants. Symbolically, it expressed the inter-dependence of life in three directions: dependence

upon the ancestors, upon each other, and upon nature. It is interesting to note that the ancestors were the first to be recognized in this ritual, and their place in the life of the kraal was acknowledged, and their needs were propitiated before any others. Secondly, the inter-dependence of the family was expressed in the fellowship meal which followed immediately after the ancestral offering. This was a symbolic meal which made use of the customary millet porridge as the main food. The kraal head presided over this meal as a priest. Lastly, man's dependence upon nature, upon the garden and the cattle was acknowledged. This was expressed in the nature of the feast and in the particular invocations which followed. As the name implies, the Harvest Ceremony was an in-gathering celebration which could be performed only after all the crops had been harvested, threshed and stored, and before any of the new grain had been eaten. Moreover, the invocations used during the four-day celebration were for the prosperity of the next year's harvest and cattle. Tempels has summarized the fundamental relationship of inter-dependence between tribal man and nature as follows: "The living 'muntu' is in a relation of being to being with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendants. He is in a similar ontological relation with his patrimony, his land, with all that it contains or produces, with all that grows on it. All acquisitions bring an increase of vital force ... (while) ... everything which breaks into this patrimony, causes it to deteriorate, or destroys it ... constitutes a diminution of the 'muntu' ...".[97]

We have little information available concerning the periodic

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97. ibid., p. 66.

sacrifices offered in cases of extreme illness or plague. The motive and the intention were the same in every case. By offering a sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, usually consisting of one or more oxen together with beer and meal, their favour and assistance was sought to throw off the harmful spirit causing illness. If the ancestors were angry for some reason, the sacrifice would appease them, regain their good will and restore the health of the one for whom sacrifice was offered. It is significant to note that in invoking the ancestral spirits the most frequent kinds of invocation of which we have record are for power, strength, and prosperity. This suggests that the ovakwamungu are believed to have an abundant supply of these things, and hence the living are in a relationship with them much as a little child would depend upon its father for physical aid and sustenance. Normally a sacrifice was offered in order that the living might receive strength. Yet only when the ancestors were believed to be angry or disturbed was there any concern to give them anything. In good times the thought of giving the ancestral spirits homage was generally no more than a perfunctory obligation and often regarded as a nuisance. Thus it was not uncommon for one to try to deceive the ancestors by presenting water for beer, or goat meat for that of an ox.

When a sacrifice of food and drink was offered to the ancestral spirits, the Kwanyama did not believe that the food was physically consumed or appropriated, and thus disappeared in some mysterious fashion. Rather, it was believed that the invisible essence or spirit of the food sacrificed and offered was received and taken by the

ovakwamungu. Thereafter, the remains of the sacrifice could be eaten by those who had participated in the ceremony, much as the priests of ancient Israel consumed the remains of animal sacrifices to Jehovah.[98] Often the sacrifice of an ox was not performed until the sick person was near the point of death. This was considered to be the greatest and final resort to save the person from death. If the victim died after such a sacrifice, the efficacy of the sacrifice itself was never questioned; rather, it was believed that the sacrifice was either unacceptable or was not sufficiently large to gain the necessary strength and help from the ancestral spirits.

It is important for us to note that sacrifices were never regarded as a private or a personal affair, even in the case of the extreme illness of an individual. Kwanyama informants agree substantially with Shropshire's conclusion in this regard: "...in the case of a sacrifice for an individual, the individual for whom the sacrifice may be offered is associated with it, yet it is never an individual affair but always a family affair of living and departed, and the flesh of the sacrifice is always shared with the whole family. No individual offers on his own behalf, nor does a group offer to a single ancestor without inviting the rest of the family living and dead".[99]

We have dealt in this chapter with some of the fundamental social structures of the Kwanyama tribe and with the Weltenschauung of the individual in traditional society. Certain aspects of the old society have changed under the forces and influences of "civilization" as presented by the white man; other changes have occurred in what

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98. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 158, for similar ideas among the Nuer.

99. D. W. Shropshire, The Church and Primitive Peoples; London: S.P.C.K., 1938, p. 343.

might be called a natural process of evolution; still others have followed from the advent of the Christian missionary in Ovamboland. It is the latter aspect of socio-religious change we must investigate in the next part of our analysis, as we attempt to show what was required, both implicitly and explicitly, in turning from the old religion to the new, as presented by Anglican missionaries.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM ANIMISM TO CHRISTIANITY

> "It is wonderful to notice how easily the idea of the God of Christianity is accepted by the Bantu. They have almost no difficulty in believing that this is the real God to be worshipped. Livingstone long ago remarked this, and the truth of it has been confirmed... by most of those who have endeavoured to win over these tribes to Christianity. It seems as if one were telling them an old story, with which they had been quite familiar but had now half forgotten." [1]

While Junod's assessment of the missionary situation in Africa has commanded both a wide hearing and a popular response, at the same time the limited truth of this statement may have created in the minds of many a misleading assessment of the genuine effectiveness of missionary work in Africa. Similar optimism was expressed by Dymond twenty years later, in writing about the mission to the Kwanyama Ovambo tribe:

> "Fundamental Christian truths, such as that of God the Creator and the Preserver of all mankind, are accepted by the pagans without question. So too are such precepts as 'Honour they father and they mother' and 'Ask and ye shall receive'. The Bantu tribal system inculcates reverence for one's elders and deference to their wishes; and prayers

1. H. Junod, The Life of a South African Tribe, Vol. 2; London: Macmillan, 1927, p. 449.

of petition and intercession are an inalienable part
of Bantu religion."[2]

Yet in certain instances these similarities may have prevented the fundamental changes required for genuine conversion. Moreover, other changes may have been required by the missionaries that have prevented any profound assimilation of or conversion to the new religion.

Whereas the traditional concept of the High God, Kalunga, might lend itself readily to Christian teaching about God, the implications of the new teaching for man and society are mildly revolutionary when placed in juxtaposition with the animism of the old Kwanyama society. Hence, the enthusiasm with which "most of these who have endeavoured to win over these tribes to Christianity" have discovered "how easily the idea of the God of Christianity is accepted by the Bantu" may only have confused the issue. Whatever similarity of beliefs existed between Christianity and Kwanyama tribal religion about the Supreme Being cannot be said to exist elsewhere. Similarity exists neither in the realms of religion and worship nor in matters of morality or concepts of causality.

With the coming of the missionaries, what new teachings invaded the old way of life, and what implications did they have for the individual and his society? In this chapter we will try to deal with this question by examining the teachings of the early Anglican missionaries in Ovamboland. It is not the intention at this point to attempt a critical evaluation or assessment of their effectiveness,

2. G. W. Dymond, African Ideas of God, ed., by E. W. Smith; London: Edinburgh House, 1950, p. 153.

but to present uncritically some of the major teachings, together with a comparative description of the changes required of the convert. It will be necessary, wherever possible, to examine what was taught and how it was presented to the individual coming from the old society.

Inevitably such an investigation must centre around the question: "What fundamental changes in the existing religious system and world-view were involved with the introduction of Christianity? A fairly thorough analysis of this question reveals seven fundamental differences involved in a comparison of the former animistic society with the teachings of the missionaries. The seven comparisons with which we are here concerned are:

1. (a) Christianity required moving from a closed religious system to a universal open one.
   (b) It introduced into the society a radically new concept of the individual.
2. Christianity introduced a revealed religion into a culture which was based upon natural religion.
3. Christian teaching brought a redemptionist religion into a society whose religion was essentially magico-religious.
4. A totally new basis for morality was inherent in the new Christian teachings.
5. Christianity involved moving from an anthropocentric system to a theocentric system of religion.
6. Christianity required a change from an essentially informal approach to worship to a formal approach.

7. The Christian religion introduced a specific sacramentalist form of religion into an animistic society, whose religious approach was essentially "pan-sacramentalistic".

1.

We have seen how the Kwanyama individual lived at the centre of two closed societies. On the one hand there was the tribe, and on the other there was the clan: the one group enclosed the other. The place of the individual within the exclusive society of his own clan was fundamental to his existence, identity and well-being. The wider social context of the tribe held the various clan members together as Kwanyama tribesmen, but it could never take precedence over clan loyalties and unity. The individual neither thought or existed apart from, or outside of, the heritage and society of the clan. A stranger was regarded as anyone who did not belong to the tribal group, anyone who was not "omuKwanyama", and strangers were generally regarded with suspicion and mistrust.

Into this tightly-knit and exclusive social structure Christianity came with a revolutionary concept of the universal brotherhood of man, which offered a community open to all mankind. It was a universal community under the fatherhood of God not the ancestors; as Christ's redeemed people it was knit together into a brotherhood, a fellowship of all mankind, which was supposed to transcend every social or individual loyalty and inheritance. The new religion

taught that Jesus Christ redeemed all mankind,[3] and that as a follower of Christ and a member of his family, man's duty is to love his neighbour as himself and to do to all men only as he would want others to do to him.[4]

To the Kwanyama who was conditioned to look for the evidence and the physical realities of his beliefs, the fact of this universal brotherhood in Christ, as it was taught by the missionary, was theoretical and completely non-demonstrable from his own experience. Moreover, this brotherhood was hardly apparent within the new Christian mission, which consisted only of a few white people and a mere handful of inquisitive but cautious native pupils. Therefore for the first converts, such a radically new concept of society as Christianity offered could only be accepted in addition to the traditional framework of religion; for that framework provided security in this life and an assured place in the next world, the "clan-heaven". The new teaching could not quickly or readily take the place of the old concept of society that offered so much. Teachings about universal brotherhood and fellowship could be appropriated as an intellectual fact or learning in the early stages, but not as an existential truth, for the surrounding experiences of the old life as well as tribal heritage and world-view contradicted this teaching.

Those who showed any willingness to accept the new teachings were joined together as followers of the Mission, first as Hearers,

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3. Catechism, p. 15:61.
4. Catechism, p. 29:138; also Mark 12. 31.

then as Catechumens, and finally as baptized members of the new society. Conflict and enormous demands accompanied the first step: "The first promise made by a person in Holy Baptism is that he will renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil".[5] While the new teaching presented a universal fellowship open to all men as redeemed equals in Jesus Christ,[6] this did not mean that all mankind automatically were members, for the baptized community was seen in a fundamental distinction from the unbaptized. Thus Anglican theology of baptism states: "Baptism signifies ... new birth unto righteousness through incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church is the fellowship of the redeemed ... in distinction from 'the world' ".[7] Moreover, in addition to the temporal delineations between the baptized and the unbaptised the new community claimed a certain eternal definition: "The Church ... is not the company only of those who at any given time confess His Name on earth; it includes the Church beyond the grave".[8] Together, all Christians become members of the Communion of Saints, "which is the union of all members of Christ, living and departed, in His Church".[9] It is understandable that the Catechism and other basic theological writings should express the fundamental distinctions between the Church and the world, and between the baptized and the unbaptized. But it is not clear why the definition should stop there: nothing is explicitly said or taught regarding the place of the unbaptized ancestors, despite the wealth of references to be found, for instance,

5. Catechism, p. 43:213.
6. Catechism, p. 15:61.
7. Doctrine in the Church of England; London: S. P. C. K., 1938, p. 136; italics mine.
8. op. cit., p. 137.
9. Catechism, p. 24:111.

in the Epistle to the Romans.[10] Instead, the catechetical teaching on baptism implies a strict separation from and renunciation of the unbaptized members of the clan, whether living or departed: "By renouncing the world" (which is described as one of the "chief enemies" of the first baptismal promise), "I mean that I refuse to follow those people and things which lead me away from God".[11] Informants agree that in the catechetical classes the unbaptized ancestors were commonly regarded as partof "the world, the flesh and the devil" Christians were called upon to renounce. Specifically this involved putting away the old practices of invocation and all forms of communication with the ancestors. Ostensibly the new demands were met; but one old Christian reported that many "became Christians like Nicodemus". Secretly, perhaps by night, many continued practicing the old ways of religion and ancestor worship. Moreover, among those who recall the early teachings it is fairly agreed that no hope was held out for the ancestors who were unbaptized; the first teaching on baptism, which apparently is still popularly understood and taught, is that all who are baptized will be saved, but all who died before baptism will never be saved. Understandably, therefore, in this context infant baptism remains the strict rule among practicing Christians. With the exception of one informant, all regarded the baptism of infants as necessary and right to protect the child from dying in a state of sin and thus going to eternal damnation.[12]

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10. In particular, Romans 9.14-18, 25-26, 30 and 11.15-16 are rich with meaning and relevance to this situation.
11. Catechism, p. 12:49.
12. See Appendix for statements on this subject taken from informants.

In renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil, there were certain outward marks of distinction which reinforced the concept of separation from the surrounding heathen community and neighbours. Such distinctions as were made gave force to the biblical exhortation: "Come ye out from among them and be separate". Indeed the presence of the Christian mission station in the country stood as a separation from the old ways of the heathen community surrounding it. It was inhabited by strangers, "foreigners", who obviously had a completely new way of life together with their own internal system of social organization and government. In terms of the Chief's jurisdiction the Mission was extra-territorial; it paid no customary tribute to the feudal rulers of the land, and it was under an independent form of authority and discipline apart from the tribe. Young people from neighbouring heathen kraals were encouraged to leave the kraal and live at the Mission when they were baptized.[13] The Mission burial ground was partitioned to prevent the burial of Christians alongside the unbaptized, and an adjacent plot was established as a heathen burial-ground. Christians were taught that the unbaptized might not be buried in ground consecrated for Christian burial, because this would profane the blessing and was not proper to the new society. Thus, from the earliest days the Mission at Odibo represented a colony distinctly different from the rest of the tribe. It was also a community which found its identity and role more in terms of <u>distinctions from</u> the unbaptized society

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13. Informants say, however, that this practice did not continue after about 15 years; by that time, the numbers had increased to such an extent that the Mission could not accommodate the newly baptized.

which surrounded it rather than in any possible similarities with the people. The conflict this was to produce in the culture was inevitable:

> "If the missionary ... gathers his converts, as he is strongly tempted to do, in a village under his own surveillance, where they will be removed largely from the contamination of paganism, where they will look to him and not to their chiefs as their leader and guide in all things, and where they adopt European clothes ... the tribal system is inevitably shaken to its foundations ... ."[14]

As the Mission community was distinctly different from its social environment, so too for the individual there was a quantitative, visible change which occurred when he became a Christian. Christians began building their kraals in a square pattern (possibly emulating the missionaries' rectangular houses) rather than in the traditional round pattern, and the entrance of the kraal was changed by abolishing the old ounu structure which was associated with heathen beliefs.[15] Christians began discarding items of traditional dress and adopting western styles of clothing; the use of red ochre for skin colour and decoration was discouraged and gradually disappeared as the "ovakriste" learned to wash with soap; drums were put away entirely as they were associated with former heathen rites and ceremonies; Christians began wearing crosses around the neck, and frequently erected them in the kraal; baptized men put away

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14. Edwin Smith, The Golden Stool; London: Holborn, 1926, p. 256.
15. The ounu was a raised lattice-like platform over the entrance to the kraal which people believed protected the kraal from evil spirits.

their many wives and retained only one, and their general behaviour changed visibly: "there was no more attending feasts and sacrifices, no more loose speaking".[16] Dancing was not strictly forbidden for Christians provided the festival or celebration took place in a Christian kraal; the implication of this regulation was that a dance in a heathen krral would have sinful associations and practices.[17]

One of the most distinctive features of a Christian was his new name which was invariably taken from biblical nomenclature. In the earliest years these names were given, not chosen, at the time of baptism, for catechumens usually had little knowledge of the Bible. All tribal names became associated with the heathen past, and because they were often regarded as a cause for shame among the new Christians, they were not used after baptism.[18]

Dropping tribal names has resulted in a loss of surnames generally among many Christians in Ovamboland today. Thus, for example, Johannes, son of Paulus Haufiku, became known only as Johannes Paulus; Haufiku as a heathen name given at birth until recent years was regarded as an unsuitable Christian name. The present generation, however, seem quite free in selecting tribal names for baptism. Among the earliest converts, it is reported that biblical names were followed as much through fear

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16. Informant.
17. One informant related an incident in which the boys in the Christian Mission school attended a dance in a nearby headman's kraal (Katamba). The following day all who attended were expelled from the school.
18. One informant told how the young boys in the Mission school used to laugh and make jokes about a boy's heathen name if it was still used. Thus the social pressure in the school was sufficient to disuade the use of tribal names.

as shame, fear of following old heathen practices and traditions. Candidates for baptism were taught that they were entering a new family, and therefore they must not retain the ways and associations of the old family.

The second promise at baptism states that a Christian must believe all the articles of the Christian Faith.[19] In presenting these "articles of belief" to catechumens, the pattern was essentially that of preach-teach-baptize, in which baptism came at the end of a long and meticulous period of instruction, and when the priest deemed the individual ready for baptism. "It is our policy", wrote Tobias in 1929, "to give our people a long period of instruction in the Faith, training in Worship, and probation of their conduct before their Baptism ... and to present them for Confirmation and admit them to Holy Communion as soon after as possible".[20] The period of instruction generally involved a minimum of two years prior to baptism, with another year or more required before confirmation. During this time the Catechumen was expected to learn Section I and II of the Catechism, which consisted of 229 questions and answers about the Christian Faith. In addition to this formal instruction a Catechumen was required to prepare for Holy Baptism "by praying morning and evening, by attending class regularly, and by being present at the services of the Church".[21]

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19. Cat., p. 43:214.
20. "Quarterly Paper": No. 3, October, 1929.
21. Cat., p. 10:38.

His chief duty in prayer was "especially to pray to God for repentance and faith".[22] In recent years the length of time required in preparation for baptism has been reduced considerably. However, since the same basic catechetical material is taught, the reduction in the period of preparation has been explained in two ways: (1) Those preparing for baptism today probably have been exposed to schooling elsewhere and therefore have a fair degree of rudimentary skills in learning; and (2) Informants say the standard of instruction in the congregations has dropped, because competent and dedicated teachers are frequently lacking.

But what of the qualitative changes required at baptism? To answer this question involves some measure of the inner attitudes and motivations of individuals, and these are always difficult to identify; a later chapter will attempt to do this in certain major areas. However, at this point some general observations may be made in relation to the third baptismal promise. This promise states that the Christian will keep God's Holy Will and Commandments and walk in the same all the days of his life.[23] With specific regard to implementing this promise, the baptismal instruction provided in the Catechism (pp. 41-44) gives no guidance on what specific attitudes and activities must change in renouncing the old life. In the preliminary instruction, for instance, there is a consistent emphasis upon the new ontological situation created at baptism;[24] but nothing of any specific

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22. op. cit., p. 10:39.
23. op. cit., p. 43:215.
24. e. g. "new birth, "new life", "Risen with Christ".

nature is offered to prepare the Catechumen for a new existential situation within his environment. It is perhaps inevitable that the Catechism must deal in universal terms, and that the specific interpretation and adaptation of "God's Holy Will and Commandments" be left to each local situation. Interestingly, however, interpretation and adaptation of catechetical instruction was usually strongly discouraged and not permitted of Catechists, possibly on the grounds that as semi-trained teachers they were not sufficiently competent to interpret or adapt Christian teaching to the culture.[25] Thus in attempting to keep the third baptismal promise the new Christian could turn only to the priest for any meaningful application to his own life. How was a Christian expected to act, as he continued to live within and be surrounded by the old society? And how much truly meaningful interpretation did he receive to help him do this? We will deal with the implications of these questions later in this chapter, in discussing the changes in moral conduct required of new Christians.

Catechumens were taught that it was not necessary to forsake all the customs of their own people, but only those which were against the will of God.[26] Converts were accepted into the Church only as they turned away from the old devisive and exclusive practices and beliefs of the tribe, and as they rooted their social, moral and religious relationships in a totally new foundation. As the individual was exhorted to turn from many customs of the old society and to separate from the heathen as much as possible, he became a member

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25. This was suggested by informants P. & E.
26. Cat., p. 11:42.

of a new community, the community of the "ovakriste" ("people of Christ"). Rivalries and hostilities between the old culture and the new developed (vide supra: Chap. I). In the new society which was physically and spiritually set apart from the old, members were taught that "the sin of schism is to separate from the worship and fellowship of the Holy Catholic Church which is the family of God".[27] Thus a wedge was being driven deep and irreversibly between the two cultures, in which loyalty to the new community was to take precedence over all other loyalties, tribal or familial. Duty required in the new Christian community "to be firm in its faith, to love the brethren, and loyally to help its ministers in all good works".[28] The "brethren" referred to those of the new Christian community. The Catechism did not offer any guidance as to how one was expected to relate to those outside the Church who were not yet of "the brethren". According to informants, the old hereditary ties with the ancestors had to be cut. Thus as the Christian community separated itself from the unbaptized, it forced a temporal and spiritual distinction upon the tribe.

The teachings of the Mission became an explicit challenge to the old closed society of the clan and the tribe. The clansman was expected to expand his social relationships to include those outside both clan and tribe; but he was to include them within the context of a new, and by emphasis, a somewhat exclusive society, that of the "ovakriste". In effect the ancestors and the unbaptised were closed out. Beyond this life the barriers are maintained in the

27. op. cit., p. 28:131.
28. op. cit., p. 30:143.

"Church Expectant", which is composed of all the faithful departed. Prayers offered by the Church for the "faithful departed" include those who have died as baptized members of the Church, and it is the Christian's "duty towards the faithful departed ... to pray for them".[29] The revered patriarchs and forefathers of the tribe, like all unbaptized ancestors, were thus in a most unfortunate position, for they could not be counted in the ranks of the faithful departed. By definition they had no place within the new community, and in any case within Western Christendom it is not normally a concern to speculate about the unbaptized dead. Accordingly the convert was taught that "a Christian may not take any part in heathen and unchristian ways of speaking with the departed (for) such dealings are sinful and very dangerous".[30] Thirty years later, one Catechist was recorded as saying: " I never heard this teaching really explained, but I taught the Catechism myself for years". The ancestral cult, in any form, had to be abandoned unconditionally, and apparently it was not a subject open to much explanation or debate.

One inevitable consequence of teaching the universal brotherhood of man was a radically new concept of the individual. As we have noted elsewhere, individual life was valued and protected in the old society and a degree of dignity was afforded each member of the tribe. But the value of the individual was determined entirely in terms of the society; apart from society, the individual had no intrinsic worth of his own. Kalunga was acknowledged as the Creator and Giver of life and, in a sense, human life was recognised as sacred.

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29. op. cit., p. 24:112.
30. op. cit., p. 25:114.

But the worth of a man was always measured in terms of his rank and status within society. Those outside the tribe were therefore of much less value as human beings and, if taken as prisoners in war, could be mistreated, tortured and enslaved with impunity.[31]

In this context, again Christian teaching was revolutionary: it introduced the notion that every individual was precious in God's sight, that human life was intrinsically sacred, and that as brothers in Christ all men are equal. This meant that whatever social distinctions such as clan, tribe, rank or status, that originally determined a man's worth, were intolerable as primary distinctions if all men were equal. In Christ, social distinctions can only be allowed as distinctive characteristics subject to Christ, whose life is open to all and "whose service is perfect freedom". The slave no less than the noble was welcome within the new Mission community. With new dignity he took his place beside other men in the new society. Tobias wrote of the effect this had on people of low estate:

> "One thing that has greatly helped (our work) is the realization that people of no account who have joined the Church have become personages. Men and women, who were formerly of the slave class[32] and latterly had become hangers on at the kraals of others, on becoming Christians have developed a new power of initiative and self-respect ... have married and set up their own

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31. Even here, however, it is interesting to note that a member of the tribe was never free to kill a foreigner without expecting retribution and revenge dealt upon him by the dead man's family and relations.
32. The Kwanyama tribe, in its earlier warring days, was noted for its strength and skill in subduing neighbouring tribes in battle. It was from such military victories that a slave-class was created, using captives as slaves among the Kwanyama people.

establishments, and by their industry and personality have become quite important people in the community."[33]

We have seen (vide supra, p.133)that within the old tribal society authority rested on the two principles of rank and status. However, the reduction of tribal rank and status within the new Christian community had profound consequences for the old concepts of leadership and authority. Christian authority was based on qualities which any Christian could attain.[34] Leadership in the Church is based essentially on inward spiritual devotion and love for Christ and an outward desire to be of service to His Church. Moreover, authority in the Church is not dependent on heredity, and a minister or a catechist need not come from a clan of distinction. The principle of selecting tribal leaders from ruling clans had already been threatened somewhat in 1918 when the South African Government established the system of headmen as successors to Mandume. However, as it happened, the first headmen to be appointed were recommended by the tribe, had come from ruling clans, and were sufficiently senior in rank to justify their positions.

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33. Q. P.: No. 3, October, 1929. Some interesting examples of this are related in Tobias' records. One of them includes an old woman who came to join the Hearer's Class: "She said she had noticed that our Christian women had peace and were well, and she wanted this peace and happiness also". (ibid.)

34. Not quite everyone, however. While this statement enunciates a principle, in practice women have never been eligible to full leadership in the Church. In the Mission, however, the limited role of a woman as a teacher or nurse was very revolutionary to a society in which no position of authority or status was allowed to women. The fact that it took 39 years to encourage girls to reach Std. VI in school may indicate the innate attitudes of society towards the female sex.

In later years this was not always the case, and leaders were sometimes appointed with little popular support.

Whether as missionary or government official, the presence of the white man in the country challenged the old form of authority. Due to the influence of a Kwanyama prophet, Nakulenga, who was supposed to have lived during the reign of King Haimbili (1811-1859), the coming of the white man was expected and feared before the arrival of the first white explorers in 1866. Nakulenga prophesied that white men would one day enter Ovamboland, and that certain evils would result, including the destruction of the sovereign rule of the king. Nakulenga met his end at the hand of the king who, infuriated by the prophecies of doom, ordered him to be put to death. The prophecies, still remembered by the old people, are alleged to have included the following information:

> "The children of Pamba (ovana va Pamba) are coming... I don't know where they are coming from, but I see where they are going. They are passing through the Ondonga (a tribe to the south of the Kwanyama) and are heading for Oukwanyama. He who is now serving the king is as if he is serving a bat (implying the king's helplessness in the face of this situation). The king will become like a skunk which has lost its stripes (he will lose all dignity and power). I cannot see any headman's kraal surrounding the king ... "[35]

The last prophecy was held to indicate that all the king's noblemen would flee or be destroyed, and that his power would be stripped from

35. From informants P. & E.

him. Informants today say that the missionaries were recognized as the "ovana va Pamba" as much as the South African Government, for the former opposed the use of the king's power on many occasions.

Often the challenge to the old tribal authority was overt, as when Tobias came into open conflict with headmen and heathen elders. This usually occurred in one of two ways. First, when heathen tried to impose tribal traditions and observances upon new converts, such as the efundula initiation rites; or second, in instances of local misrule, tyranny or abuse of villagers who were followers of the Mission. In the former instance the authority of the elders had never been challenged, while in the latter there had been occasions when the white Government Commissioners had found it necessary to oppose the unjust rule of a headman. Who was this missionary who assumed authority and leadership not only over his converts, but presumed to challenge the age-old authority of the tribe? Many felt it was the fulfilling of an old prophecy: the Chief's authority was being challenged and diminished by the white invader, and slowly but surely the "skunk was losing his stripes". It is not possible to determine the extent to which the missionary's authority rested on his colour, his relationship with the white Government of South Africa, now the final authority in the country, or the ancient prophecies of the tribe itself.

Tobias departed drastically from the established customs of leadership when he selected two young boys to be his assistants-in-training for the Ministry. Gabriel and Lazarus, the first to be ordained as priests, were mere lads only a few years beyond the

cattle-post days of boyhood (15 years and 16 years, respectively). For ten years they were closer than any other tribesman to the white missionary, and served as his assistants and advisers. Thus, in their mid-twenties, barely of marriageable age at the time, they were ordained to the Ministry. As priests they were invested with considerable authority over the Christians in their jurisdiction: they could baptize, discipline, excommunicate, marry and bury their people. In short, in the new Christian community these young African priests could do what only a senior medicine-man could do in the old. Moreover, in the event of friction, disagreement or any challenge to their authority, they had the authority of the Church and the white missionaries behind them. Within the congregation, they were given the position of chief honour and respect, and frequently when visiting their people were treated like the monarchs of the old society.

While the authority of the traditional king and that of the Christian priest was considered to some extent to be of divine origin, their spheres of operation differed greatly. Whereas enthronement conferred divinity upon the king and made him a sacred being with absolute authority, ordination only invested the priest with spiritual authority and jurisdiction over the members of his congregation. However, although his was primarily a spiritual authority, in practice it was manifested as a temporal power similar to that of a headman or a secular ruler. The priest thus gave advice, and more often explicit orders, on how people were to manage their kraals, run their families, live their lives, what they must do and not do - in short, how to order their secular lives. Ordination was similar to

the old system of authority in that it assigned an authority to the minister ex officio and independently of his moral character or conduct. If a king showed no mercy or justice or violated the taboos of the tribe, he was regarded as a bad king; nevertheless as king he was honoured and obeyed. Similarly, a morally weak priest might still maintain his position as leader of the congregation, while forfeiting the respect of his people.

In one very important aspect the Christian minister had an authority exceeding even the sovereignty of the traditional king. Whereas the king was ritually bound (by taboo) to consult his elders and councillors before making any decision affecting society as a whole, the priest was never bound in any comparable way to listen to his people before making a decision affecting the congregation. And whereas the king was not the sole ruler of the tribe in social matters, the parish priest, to all intents and purposes, was sole ruler of his own congregation.[36] The African priest was responsible to the bishop or the Mission Director, from whom he received his salary, not to the local congregation. The latter had no formal means of representation or voice in the running of the church, and therefore the only course open for congregational dissent was suppression and silence.

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36. The Parish council is the canonically appointed representative body of the congregation which enables the congregation to speak and decide on parochial matters. Such councils were only established in Ovamboland in 1965.

2.

The second fundamental impact produced by Christianity was that as a supernatural religion based upon revelation it entered a culture which knew only the natural religion of an animistic society. In this latter state, as we have noted elsewhere, one never reasoned about the will of Kalunga; he was acknowledged as a transcendent Supreme Being, Judge and Creator, but he was thought to be totally uninvolved in man's life. People never asked questions about the will of Kalunga, least of all within their animist religion which did not involve him at any point. Kalunga was "revealed" in the sun,[37] and it was believed that divine power was transmitted and mediated through the divine king of the tribe. Other than this, Kalunga was virtually unknown, unknowable, and uninvolved in man's struggles. One must therefore regard statements about the similarity of pagan African concepts of God and Christian concepts with a degree of caution if not scepticism.[38] The Kwanyama never hesitated in recognizing the existence of Kalunga, but did not believe he was immanent or actively involved in the world as an Incarnate Lord. In sharp contrast to these age-old beliefs, those who came into contact with the Mission were taught that God made man to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him here on earth, and to be with Him forever in heaven.[39] Moreover, Christians believed that man could know God "by learning about Him, and worshipping Him".[40] In personal terms this means

37. "The sun is Kalunga's eye: it reveals him" is an ancient proverb.
38. cf. H. Junod, op. cit. : vide supra, p. 149.
39. Cat., p. 1:2.
40. op. cit., p. 5:15.

"... that I should give myself to Him, praise Him, serve Him, and love Him".[41] For reasons that are not entirely clear, in introducing people to the Christian Faith the Catechism makes no immediate reference to Jesus Christ. Actual teaching on the Person of Christ does not occur until one becomes a Catechumen. Thus the instruction for Hearers is essentially Old Testamental in nature, and the revelation of God in Christ, through whom man seeks supremely to know God, is absent in these first teachings.

From the beginning the Hearer learned about the immanence of God the Father,[42] that the God of the missionaries is one who is knowable, that He cares what man does,[43] and that He wills man to live according to His purposes for the world.

One of the most radical elements in the new teaching was the righteousness and mercy of God; that God is perfectly good, God is Love, and He loves man with an everlasting love.[44] Traditionally Kalunga was always regarded as fearsome and unpredictable.[45] Like the Lord Jehovah of the ancient Hebrews, Kalunga used affliction and dreaded acts of nature to show his anger and displeasure; in this context the concept of his righteousness was wholly foreign. Even today among the Kwanyama love (ohole) is commonly understood as

41. ibid., p. 5:16.
42. "God is everywhere" (Cat., p. 1:5).
43. "God sees and knows all things, even our secret thoughts" (op. cit., p. 2:7).
44. cf. op. cit., p. 4:10, 11.
45. Reflected in the proverb: "God changes at times" (Kalunga okuna omapita).

that quality of concern which produces security, well-being and abundance of life-force; love is an experience one enjoys when life is at its best. Since it was universally believed that Kalunga did not normally provide man with these things, in no sense therefore was there a love-relationship with Kalunga, and he was never regarded or thought of in terms of ohole.

One could not truly know much about Kalunga, for not much was known; what was known had become part of the legend and lore of the tribe, and had been handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation. The new religion taught men that it was possible to learn about God and to know Him by reading the Holy Bible, "The Church's Book in which is written what God has revealed about Himself to men".[46] In addition to Holy Writ, God's revelation was taught and interpreted by the Church: "We know what God has revealed by the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church" which authority "Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the Church ...".[47]

Two aspects of the Christian teaching about God particularly subverted traditional concepts. First, that Kalunga was in fact accessible by prayer through Christ, and that He was loving and concerned with His children; second, that Kalunga was accessible to individuals, that He heard the prayers of each one whether he was praying individually or as part of a group.

The Catechism taught that Jesus Christ, as the fulfilment of God's revelation to man, became incarnate to perform three things:

46. op. cit., p. 13:56.
47. ibid.; also Mt. 28. 19.

(1) to reveal to man the true nature of God; (2) to reveal to man the true nature of man; and (3) to save man from his sins, and unite him with God.[48] The concept of fatherhood of God and the sonship of Christ had some natural precedents within tribal understanding. There was a traditional belief that Kalunga had a son, although even less was known about Him than about Kalunga. But both concepts of fatherhood and sonship were understood in terms of authority, which at the level of divinity involved both rank and status. Because every son is inferior to his father in age (and therefore in authority) he is regarded as less powerful than the father. As this was true of Kalunga's son, it was natural to think of Jesus Christ in the same way. Moreover, as a son always waits upon his father in a subordinate role of authority, so too it was understood of Jesus Christ. The fact that Jesus never married placed Him in a further subordinate role to the Father. Thus, among early Christians, and reportedly still common today, Jesus Christ is believed to be not fully God, not as divine or omnipotent as God the Father. While He is believed to be nearer to God than He is to man, nevertheless according to informants "most Ovambos call upon Kalunga in big trouble and not Jesus".[49]

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48. cf. p. 16:69.
49. Similar ideas may be prevalent among other African tribes. For instance, the story is told of a Zulu priest, himself the father of a priest, in a severe crisis addressing God with these words: "God, my son is also out preaching the Gospel, but in these extreme times I must speak directly to you, father to father".

3.

A third point of impact arises from the nature of the new religion. Christianity, as a religion of redemption, confronted a society whose religion was essentially magico-religious. The fundamental religious changes required can be compared with those required of Judaism under the impact of Christianity. The new way demanded a transformation that involved moving from a religion of law and fear to a religion of grace and hope. In spirit the old religion was essentially based on laws or precepts, and reinforced by taboos (*oidila*); this in turn inspired a real and effective fear among the people. Ritual observances and sacrifices were required in order to placate the ancestors, to overcome any evil spirits at work in one's life, and to reinforce or reinvigorate individual "vital force". The old religion operated on a principle of direct causation in which man sought to appease the spirits, and on very rare occasions this could also include Kalunga. Religious obligations were observed because it was wise and propitious to do so; indeed, it was foolhardy to avoid such observances for this would anger and incur the wrath of the spirit-world. Informants agree that such religious beliefs and practices were basically motivated by fear: fear of violating the spirits and taboos of the society, fear of losing favour among the ancestral spirits, and fear of becoming victim to the powers of witchcraft and evil.

Hope on the other hand, as a remote and somewhat fanciful incentive, was not entirely unknown within the old society. For instance, it was within the realm of possibility and thus of hope that

one might go to the first world when he died, where he would be free from want and anxiety. Generally speaking, however, hope was far too uncertain within the old religion to be of much use, for religion was basically a "religion of works" and not of hope or faith. Thus, for almost all the things for which a man might "hope" there were observances which he believed would be likely to achieve them: health, security, good crops and seasonable weather were within the control of ancestral powers. Therefore he was moved to do something to gain favour with the spirits, and thus in effect "make" the weather and the crops a success.

Today it is commonly agreed that the first Christians experienced a liberating element of hope in their religion. The picture of heaven, as the expected reward for Christian hope, exceeded the joys of the traditional first world and offered a quality of life far richer than anything imaginable on earth. Moreover, the Christian hope for these things could be shared by anyone; the promise of heaven was thus more compelling than the images of a clan-heaven in which the common folk could expect only a Sheol-like existence. However it seems fairly certain that fear continued to play a significant role in the new religion, much in the same way as it had in the old. While many of the old fears were abandoned, such as fear of taboos, fear of an everlasting future in the miserable third world, fear of certain powers of witchcraft, new fears developed within the new religion to become strong forces for producing a strict outward adherence among early converts. The greatest of these was the fear of Hell, which seems to have been the driving force in bringing many to baptism. "African teachers and clergy preached a picture

of a gory hell, a place of everlasting fire, where people ate one another, where there was unending thirst, hunger and misery".[50] Such teachings may have become popular among the clergy and catechists because they provided an effective means of persuading the heathen to be baptized, and thus be saved from Hell's "everlasting fire". Other fears included the fear of shame and punishment that accompanied public discipline, and the fear of violating the strict moral code of the Christian community. Both of these will be discussed later.

Within the old animistic religion, salvation from all the things that caused fear was clearly not possible. Indeed, the successful and prosperous man was one who had managed to prevail against the potentially harmful forces and spirits that surrounded him; but no one could expect to be delivered from these powers, for they were an integral part of life. Thus, for a religion of salvation to become truly effective required a radical change in the world-view of the individual. The pagan Kwanyama saw himself as the object of evil forces and powers external to himself,that could at any moment be unleashed upon him. While he believed that misfortune and illness did not originate within him, it was nevertheless possible that he could react to someone or something so as to intensify his own suffering. From all of these things every man longed in vain to be delivered, but without a fundamental change in his understanding of God, man and the creation, salvation was not possible.

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50. From informants P. &E. Although such images of Hell were not taught by Tobias or his successors, it is probable that evangelists and preachers were influenced by the existence of pamphlets and literature from neighbouring missions, either Lutheran or Roman Catholic. Regardless of their source, it is significant that the African clergy and evangelists continued to propagate in their preaching and teaching imagery that conjured up in the minds of most people a more fearsome image than that of traditional beliefs about the third world.

In traditional Kwanyama thought there existed what might be called a "primitive concept of grace" by which the quality of man's life could be strengthened. For instance, as discussed elsewhere, man realised he had within himself a unique potential, a life-force that could be increased to grow stronger and richer, or diminished to the point of death, through illness or misfortune. This life-force or primitive "grace" was not simply an attribute, but the most meaningful quality of life capable of changing life itself. To increase this attribute was the goal of all religion and life. Whereas Western thought would not credit that such things as growth, education, and social position could change man's fundamental nature, the Kwanyama did. By increasing his vital force, such things as these radically changed man's nature. Thus, "when a Bantu says 'I am becoming stronger', he is thinking of something quite different from what we mean when we say our powers are increasing ... (he means) his nature has been made stronger, increased, made greater".[51] Perhaps one can compare this primitive notion of life-force with St Paul's concept of divine grace: where Paul speaks of God's grace increasing the "stature" of a man, thereby making him more fully man, the African might speak of increasing his life-force to achieve the same effect, of realizing his fullest potential.

However, when we consider Christian soteriology, any similarity between Paul's concept of grace and that of life-force

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51. Tempels, op. cit., p. 38.

disappears. The former inescapably requires of the individual personal penitence and the recognition of his own personal failure and inadquacy to live life wholly and productively as God has intended; the latter looks to other sources for strength. In an animistic society, neither penitence nor self-oblation is required to improve man's spiritual condition. Christian salvation from sin, weakness and inadequacy presupposes man's self-awareness of such things in his own life that frustrate and reduce his potential effectiveness, his life-force. It also requires the recognition that man's frailty is due not to causes external to himself but within him. Thus in the Christian view the well-being, security and prosperity of society will be accomplished primarily by significant changes within the individual. While this concept is fundamental to any Christian understanding of salvation, to customary Kwanyama thought it was a totally new and unique way of thinking. Instead of being required to look to his hereditary social origins for moral and religious conduct, the individual looked within himself and his own conscience and to God and His will for man. But to do this required another basic change in traditional morality to which we must turn next.

4.

Possibly one of the most striking features of Christianity in the context of the old animistic society was that it established a totally new basis for morality and made new demands upon the individual. Formerly the individual was directed in his conduct by a kind of social conscience, and any determinant role for individual

conscience was not possible. Personal choice and dissent in social and religious conduct has no place in the society; indeed, originality in such matters was regarded as a form of misconduct. Morality was established and maintained on the basis of social laws, traditions and taboos. The extent to which the taboos were divinely ordained,[52] is debatable, but they nevertheless stood as religious injunctions within the religious structure of the society; and as forbidden acts, their violation wouldleadto disaster of one sort or another. Other acts were forbidden by social custom and law (e.g. the king's eveta) in order to protect and maintain the welfare of society. Strictly speaking, religion and morality were inter-related in the old society, but the criteria for determining moral conduct did not include reference to the will of Kalunga nor the conscience of man. Morality was mediated through the society of man and the ancestors. Thus, the criteria for determining morality were vastly different from those of Christianity.

How did the basic Christian exhortation for a new moral life appear to the old Kwanyama society? "Repent and be saved" might have evoked the question: "What am I to repent of?" or "What wrong have I done?", for according to the traditional standards of conduct it was quite possible for a good manto live a blameless life.[53] In studying the impact of Christianity upon traditional morality in Kenya, Macpherson has concluded: "We are calling him to account under a foreign law towards which he feels no responsibility".[54]

52. It is commonly believed that taboos were established by the ancestral spirits, and not by divine intervention.
53. cf. Romans 3.19-20, 7.7-11.
54. Macpherson, The Presbyterian Church in Kenya; Nairobi, 1970, p.65. Similarly, among the Kwanyama sin is frequently understood in an impersonal way; the way to avoid sinning is thus to show legalistically how you have observed the numerous "Thou shalt nots".

As noted elsewhere (vide supra, chap. 2), there were two general areas of moral offence within the old system: those committed against the ancestral spirits, and criminal acts against the society such as murder, theft, and witchcraft. Since man was not morally responsible to Kalunga, the thought of sinning against him was meaningless. A good man of the society was one who could live at peace and harmony with his neighbours and the ancestors, in which "goodness" was not defined in metaphysical or supernatural terms.

Christian morality was of a radically new sort. First, the Catechism defined wrong-doing in relationship to Kalunga, not the ancestors: "We call disobedience to God sin", and man's chief responsibility is "to obey God because He is the Creator and Lord of all".[55] No longer could the individual attribute personal failing to external causes, for the root cause of every evil deed is within man himself. The power for good within man's conscience became known as the "child of the heart" (okana komutima); but there was also a bad "child of the heart", that warring element within man's conscience tempting him to do wrong. Man became primarily responsible: he had to conduct himself according to his own conscience and could no longer excuse himself because of the evil machinations of other people or things around him. "We sin because we want to please ourselves rather than to please God".[56]

However, in time the missionaries' teachings unwittingly provided a new symbol to which one could attribute sin and evil. As

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55. Cat., p. 8:31, 32.
56. op. cit., p. 8:34.

Satan and his minions were presented as the personification of evil, they became known as powerful non-ancestral spirits who could entice men away from God and into all manner of sin and evil.[57] However, the power of Satan and his angels was ultimately subject to God, just as the power of the sorcerer was subordinate to Kalunga. In a sense therefore, the new teaching about sin and evil was not inconsistent with the traditional world-view, for through the imagery of Satan and Hell it was still possible to exteriorize personal sin and wrongdoing. Although such things originated from within man's heart, they could be symbolized and personified in Satan as an external force. Baptism rescued the Christian from the power of all these things. But if after baptism one fell into grievous sin, for the Christian to say "Satan was working on me" was essentially no different than the pagan saying "something was working on me". Thus, the imagery of Satan and Hell, while providing one effective deterrent against sinful conduct, could not truly create genuine awareness of personal responsibility for sin. Indeed, the weak-spirited might conceivably find herein an excuse for misconduct by blaming it on the devil.

Repentance, on the other hand, arises out of and presupposes a knowledge and awareness of personal guilt in which man acknowledges his failure to fulfil certain obligations of life, whether moral, ethical or spiritual. While there may be corporate repentance for social evils, this must be individually constituted for true penitence to ensue. In this sense, therefore, true repentance is an individual experience, based on

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57. "By renouncing the devil I mean that I refuse to yield to the temptations of Satan and the evil spirits who are the enemies of God". op. cit., p. 12:51.

internal motivation, by which the individual turns from one course of action to another. By comparison, traditional Kwanyama society was attuned to a concept of shame rather than guilt, in which the individual was motivated by a desire to maintain a proper image of respectability within the community. In such a society the norms of behaviour and individual motivation were established and maintained by corporate social pressure, as noted elsewhere. Moreover, the individual did not seek to distinguish himself by any unique kind of behaviour: if he did so publicly the result would be a deep feeling of disapproval and shame. Informants agree that shame (ohoni) is a particularly strong emotive force even today in Kwanyama society, and public shaming is regarded as the height of indignities. A very forceful verb-form ("to die") is generally used to express shame: thus, "onda fia ohoni" means literally "I am dying of shame". Interestingly, this is the same verb form used for any loss of power or vitality, as when one is tired, hungry, sleepy, thirsty, etc. Repentance, on the other hand, is usually expressed by two less forceful verbs: lidilulula and lialuluka, both meaning simply "to turn, return back". In comparing the Kwanyama cultural significance of shame with the Western concept of guilt, the question arises as to how readily one can expect a shame-culture to adapt to and accept a theology which is fundamentally proper to a guilt-culture. Moreover, is it necessary for men to pass through a transition from shame to guilt before they can be fully receptive to grace? Such questions could have serious bearing not only upon missionary techniques, but upon secular education in Africa today. Welbourne poses a related question: "Can the new Africa be built on the basis of a still largely traditional society, or must its members

first pass through the largely inner-directed mode of the West?"[58]

The transition from the old moral standards of the tribe to Christian morality involved another great demand. Whereas in former days violation of the moral code involved shame and physical punishment, the Christian approach in dealing fundamentally with sin could be based on neither of these. Self-acknowledgement of sin, followed by repentance, is the Christian way of dealing with moral transgression: "We receive forgiveness when we believe on Jesus Christ, and make a true repentance".[59] Christians were bidden to "forsake all bad acts and habits, which are called sins",[60] and the Church became the interpreter and often the legislator of what was considered a bad act. An extensive list of 108 "sins" was produced by the missionaries and incorporated into the Kwanyama Prayer Book. The intention of the list was to adapt Christian morality to the primitive local situation, and thus provide a simple guide for conscience and personal conduct. Frequently too, penitents did not know what to say when making a private confession, as one informant explained, and the list assisted in eliminating this particular difficulty. However, in many instances this regulation of morality was nothing more than the promulgation of laws of conduct bearing no resemblance to the fundamental principles of Christian morality.[61]

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58. C. G. Baëta, Christianity in Tropical Africa; London: O. U. P., 1968, p. 192.
59. Cat., p. 26: 118.
60. op. cit., p. 10: 40
61. For instance, among the listing of "sins" appear the following items: I have laughed in church; I have laughed at drunk people; I have not paid my Church Dues; I have not attended School/Church/confirmation class/regularly; I have not said morning and evening prayers regularly; I have eaten in church; I have bought or sold things on Sunday; I have broken the fast before Holy Communion by eating/drinking; I have wasted my employer's time; I have not kept myself clean; I have grumbled about my food/clothing.

Since God's will was mediated and interpreted through the Church, the convert became answerable to the leaders of the Church for his conduct. While tribal morality was insufficient because it bore no reference to God's will and obviated the need for individual conscience, the Mission, as the mediator of Christian morality, provided a corrective for both inadequacies. The Ten Commanments became the basic standard for Christian conduct, and the traditional moral restraints were replaced by a system of Church Discipline. Thus, when a sin was considered by the priest to be sufficiently scandalous and serious, discipline was administered at a formal service in the presence of the whole congregation. If the sinner showed sign of amendment and professed penitence, he was received as a penitent for Church Discipline.[62] In the administration of discipline the person's offence was announced publicly, he was excommunicated for a period of time depending on the nature of the offence, and he was made to sit with the unbaptized ("behind the font") and required to leave the service with the heathen at the appointed time. As the disciplinary system became more established, three months' excommunication was generally prescribed for first offences, six months' for the second offence, nine for the third, and either a year or indefinite separation from communion for offences thereafter.

In theory the system of Church Discipline was intended to help the penitent by teaching him a clearer understanding of the nature of sin in general and his own sins in particular, and to assist him to come to a true degree of repentance. But almost from the beginning, Church Discipline was interpreted and administered as a punitive

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62. cf. Q. P.: No. 24, April, 1935.

procedure. This was inevitable for two reasons: First, the punitive approach was the traditional means of dealing with any offender, and the punishment was often painfully and cruelly administered. Second, because of the manner of administering discipline in the public "Service of Church Discipline",[63] there was an inescapable element of shame and separation from the society. Understandably therefore the fear of Church Discipline became a sufficient deterrent at least against overt immorality and misconduct within the young Mission. Also, because Church Discipline aimed primarily at dealing with those overt sins causing public scandal, other equally serious sins tended to be undisciplined. For instance, fornication and adultery became far more scandalous than drunkenness and fighting and a host of other sins not involving public scandal. Within ten years, however, whatever deterrent value there had been in the beginning was no longer effective in restraining many from open immorality and sin. (vide supra, p. 41.)

As teachers of the new ways of conduct, the clergy also became the judges of those who failed. They alone administered Church Discipline and decided when the penitent was ready for restoration into the congregation. Only one brief exception to this principle is recorded. In the early years of the central congregation at Odibo, a deep concern developed for those who had lapsed morally. A group of young men, inspired by Gabriel and Lazarus (the future priests), took the initiative in forming a committee to deal with moral offences and disciplinary cases.[64] Their procedure was to meet regularly for prayers and discussion, and to deal with abuses by warning and

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63. See Kwanyama Prayer Book, pp. 286-287.
64. We are given no indication as to the nature of the offences with which the committee dealt.

exhortation. Ephraim Andersson cites a similar system in Central Africa whereby disciplinary matters were decided upon, from an early stage, by a representative group of the congregation. Thus while the missionary was the actual leader of the Mission, "the church soon received the right, at least formally, to manage its own affairs", [65] which proved to be a great advantage psychologically for full and rapid development towards self-government. However, it is characteristic of traditional Anglican policy that there is little the laity are permitted to do in the spiritual maintenance of the congregation. As there was therefore no legal or official authority for the local committee, they could advise but could take no action. It is reported that when all other means failed, the group did on occasion resort to making public accusation. [66] Two things explain why this unique local experiment did not continue: first, authority was lacking; and second, particularly among the older members of the community the group was socially unacceptable and unpopular. The records of 1932 report:

> "They have been bold and open in announcing their determination not to remain passive when wrong is being done ... but they are being very narrowly watched by the older men who rather naturally resent their interference."[67]

In turning away from the old system of tribal morality and accepting the new teachings of the Mission, we can summarize the following points:- (a) A change was required from socially acceptable conduct prescribed by the tribe to conduct based on the will of God, in

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65. cf. E. Andersson, Churches at the Grass-Roots; London: Lutterworth, 1968, pp. 55ff.
66. cf. Q. P.: No. 13, April, 1932.
67. ibid.

which inward motives and conscience were major features. (b) For the individual, his own conscience and the Church became the judges of conduct, and no longer the elders and tribal tradition. (c) Moral sanctions shifted from fear in the old society to Church Discipline in the new, although the latter continued to involve fear of shame and public degradation.

The Catechism states: "A Catechumen must forsake all bad acts and habits, which are called sins".[68] However, at the same time it taught: "It is not necessary to forsake all the customs of your own people, but those only which are against the will of God".[69] Which customs were regarded by the Mission as against the will of God? For our purposes they may be grouped into five categories:

1. initiation rites, viz. the efundula
2. all sorcery and witchcraft
3. witch-doctors and their trade
4. polygamy
5. sacrifices and feasts for the ancestors

We now consider how the missionaries understood the morality of these activities (excepting item 5, which will be dealt with in another section), to see in each case what was condemned as a "bad act and habit called sin", and to determine the basis of this judgement.

The efundula ceremony was condemned not on the grounds that the ceremony was related to an exclusive and closed society (which in essence denies the Christian brotherhood of all men), but because it

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68. Cat., p. 10:40.
69. ibid.

was believed that the ceremony required immoral conduct of the initiates. Three arguments have been advanced in condemning the ceremony. (1) The practice of bundling, although discontinued in 1917, was still believed by missionaries to be associated with the efundula; and while physical contact of any sort during bundling was strictly forbidden in the old society, nevertheless the Mission could point out that it provided the occasion for temptation and fornication. (2) Various devices of magic were employed in the efundula rite which, it was believed, undermined belief in God's power and lordship over the Christian. (3) In those instances when the efundula ceremony was combined with a group marriage ceremony on the fourth day, it involved girls sleeping with men after the custom of tribal marriage, and this was regarded as sinful. The general attitude of missionaries has been to condemn the entire initiation ceremony as a perverse occasion for sexual licence. However, upon closer examination one finds that the first argument is totally in error, for bundling was no longer practiced after 1917; and the third argument is based on an occasional practice which is no longer in use. Thus, Christian objections to the efundula rightly can be raised only with regard to the use of magical devices and practices involved in the ceremony. It has not been sufficiently appreciated by the Church that within the old society one of the principle reasons for bundling and the efundula was to avoid sexual permissiveness and immorality; and the punishment for sexual promiscuity prior to the initiation ceremony was usually death.

Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded by Christian and non-

Christian alike as a "plan for hurting people by means of the unseen powers of darkness".[70] These powers are believed to disrupt the fellowship of any community and aim solely at bringing harm and trouble. Moreover, by means of the various magical devices involved in sorcery, the individual relies upon the powers of evil rather than upon the power of God. For the Christian, therefore, sorcery involves a complete denial of his religion which teaches him to place faith and confidence in Jesus Christ alone.

Historically witchdoctors and medicine men have been wrongly associated with sorcery and witchcraft. The general attitude of white missionaries towards the medicine man and the witchdoctor betrays a superficial understanding and a lack of sympathetic study of African beliefs and institutions. An Anglican missionary from Mashonaland has summarized many popular misconceptions about native medicine men and witchdoctors:

> "By the general public he is conceived of as a nefarious, wicked, villainous, despicable creature, striking terror and dealing death in underhand, secret and mysterious ways, to his numerous, helpless victims ... By our colonial governments in Africa he is treated as an object of suspicion, and is discriminated against as, by the very fact of his profession, one who is tainted with witchcraft and the practice of evil magic."[71]

Some of these attitudes were present among the early missionaries

70. Cat., p. 28:132.
71. D. W. T. Shropshire, The Church and Primitive Peoples; London: S. P. C. K., 1938, p. 400.

in Ovamboland; for instance, in referring to the traditional superstitions for which a witchdoctor would be consulted, Dymond wrote "... these superstitions are more silly than harmful, taken in conjunction with the superstitions which are really dangerous, but taken in morality they indicate how necessary in Ovamboland is the educational influence of our Hospital".[72] According to Dymond, the witchdoctor was nothing more than a rogue who profiteered on his neighbours' ignorant fears to his own advantage, whose training consisted of "a day or two association with another witchdoctor to learn all the medical lore contained in the local heathen pharmacopoeia".[73]

However, the main condemnation of witchdoctors came from the fact that the beliefs and practices that supported their trade were integrally a part of the old belief in spirits, the ancestor cult, and black magic. The fact that the genuine witchdoctor was in business solely for the good purpose of countering evil forces and effects gained him no favour with the missionaries. Moreover, at times the treatment given by the medicine man produced disastrous results often ending in death; and although the tribe would never attribute death to the treatment, the scientifically orientated missionary felt the evidence was conclusive in such cases. Thus, the witchdoctor's trade was regarded as potentially dangerous and of highly dubious motives; his prices were often excessively high.

The Church's condemnation of all forms of native medicine in the

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72. Q. P.: No. 59, January, 1944.
73. ibid. While it is true that "rogues" do exist as witchdoctors who are no better than Dymond's description, it is unfair to generalize and condemn an entire time-honoured profession by their poor example alone.

early days was in time seen to be wrong in certain instances. Hence a later edition of the Catechism made allowance for the herbalist: "Christians may use medicines and herbs for their healing if they are not connected with heathen rites".[74] However, by this time the earlier teachings which condemned all forms of native medicine had taken hold, and the herbalists, like the witchdoctors, were popularly regarded as condemned by the Church, along with other "heathen rites and powers of darkness".[75]

Informants point out that although all reference to native medicine was forbidden Christians in the early days, very few tangible alternatives were available. Hospitals were rare and often far away; Odibo had a small clinic which could dispense pills and medicines on a limited basis; diseases were often epidemic. Serious illnesses and emergencies could not be adequately dealt with without a proper hospital and doctor. Some people today recall that "no positive alternatives were taught other than praying and trusting in God to help you".[76] Informants have suggested that this was one point of deep inner conflict for many early Christians, who resolved their dilemma by going secretly to the ondudu (witchdoctor) by night.

Tolerance and understanding among missionaries and doctors for this group of tribal specialists has been rare for over a century.[77] The

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74. Cat. p. 29:135.
75. The Finnish Lutheran missions continued to condemn all forms of native medicine, and this reinforced the earlier Anglican teachings as well.
76. By informants.
77. "There was something wholly unusual about Livingston's attitude, not only to Africans but to pre-scientific medical wisdom: He was prepared to recognize the tribal doctor as a fellow professional and was rewarded by being so treated himself. He observed medical etiquette in his relations with them and this was reciprocated." F. B. Welbourn, East Africa Rebels; London:SCM, 1961, p. 179.

Church has defined the work of tribal doctors as "heathen magic" and in Ovamboland Christians were taught that it was a sin "to seek help in heathen magic, for it means that he forsakes God and trusts in the power of darkness".[78] According to informants, this became an inflexible policy; it was not open to question, and interpretation was considered unnecessary. For the Kwanyama, however, the statement was neither so clear nor so unquestionable. Generations of tribal traditions and teaching had convinced him that the witchdoctor possessed certain powers given by Kalunga, and for the performance of his office this divine power was essential when a patient consulted a witchdoctor as he was not forsaking God, but was using a divinely-appointed means of dealing with illness and misfortune. One Christian informant therefore maintains: "It does not mean a man forsakes Kalunga when he attends an <u>ondudu</u>, for there are some things which only he can deal with - we do not believe he is turning against Kalunga to make use of this man".

It is perhaps understandable that the security provided by the witchdoctor has remained a strong attraction for many Christians, particularly in moments of personal or communal stress and crisis. In 1936, Tobias wrote: "When all is well our Christians are very scornful of witchcraft and the power of evil spirits; but in cases of protracted sickness or other trouble the weaker sort lose their faith in God's protecting power and sometimes resort to witchcraft and heathen sacrifices".[79] Where the advice and persuasion of the

78. <u>Cat.</u>, p. 29:134.
79. <u>Q. P.</u>: No. 27, January, 1936.

missionary succeeded in preventing recourse to the witchdoctor, there was resentment within the heathen community; but if the sick person died in the Mission hospital there was widespread suspicion and misgiving among Christians and heathen alike.[80] Similarly, it appears that many of the young people in the Mission regarded their affiliation with the new religion as an experiment of whose ultimate powers they were anything but sure:

> "The past winter was exceptionally cold and there were many deaths from influenza and pneumonia; several other girls in the Hostel were sick and a spirit of suspicion and fear took hold, and eventually all ran away to their homes."[81]

This took place some twelve years after the opening of the Mission and in the same year the first two young men were ordained to the Ministry.

Most of the illnesses associated with superstition with which the Mission hospital tried to deal met with failure because the missionaries had no knowledge of the beliefs laying behind the illnesses.[82] Convulsions, for instance, were described as "bird sickness", for it was believed that a certain large bird circling over a kraal caused convulsive fits in the inhabitants. Again, in the event of death within a marriage the surviving member was required to make use of specific herbs designated by the witchdoctor as a ritual purification before

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80. cf. Q. P.: No. 27, January, 1936, which records the death of twins and their mother.
81. ibid.
82. See: Q. P.: No. 59, January, 1944.

remarriage. It was believed that failure to observe this rite would result in the death of the new partner. The practice of this particular superstition was apparently widespread among Christians and heathen alike, of the former "less from any real belief in their efficacy than from motives of 'human respect'", according to Dymond.[83]

Polygamy was condemned at the Lambeth Conference of 1888. The Lambeth Resolution 5a of 1888 stated briefly:

> "That it is the opinion of the Conference that persons living in polygamy be not admitted to baptism, but that they be accepted as candidates, and kept under Christian instruction until such time as they shall be in a position to accept the law of Christ."[84]

Resolution 5b stated further that wives of polygamists may, in certain cases, be admitted to baptism, but it must be left to the local church ruling to decide under what circumstances they may be baptized.

In 1939, fifteen years after the opening of the Anglican Mission in Ovamboland, the International Missionary Council was engaged briefly in discussions on whether monogamy is essential to Christianity, or whether this is merely a factor of European civilization. Without lengthy debate, the opinions of the 1888 Lambeth Conference essentially were reiterated in the findings of the I. M. C.:

> "Monogamy is not a mere factor of civilization; it is vital to the life of the Church and its value has been realized in its own experiences; it was taught by the Lord Himself

83. ibid.
84. Lambeth Conference Report; London: SPCK, 1929, p. 133

> and has Scriptural authority behind it (Ephesians 5:31-33, I Timothy 3:12, 5:9). Both for men and for women polygamy militates against the attainment of the fullness of life which is in Christ ... ."[85]

The distillation of these various statements is found in the Catechism instruction: "A Christian woman may not marry a polygamist because the will of God is that a man should have one wife only".[86] In terms of Resolution 5b of 1888, wives of polygamists were permitted to be baptized, but the local Church ruling in Ovamboland was that before she could be baptized the wife had to leave her husband.

Tobias regarded the traditional ties which bound two people together in marriage as extremely tenuous:

> "It is very hard for our people to rise to the ideals of Christian marriage. The heathen here treat marriage very lightly; there is little to bind them together. No questions of property are involved, as the woman and her children belong to her mother's family; and the man to his mother's family, as far as property is concerned ... on the slightest provocation they separate. As a result of this, when trouble arises in a Christian home the tendency is to separate at once... ."[87]

While polygamy was universally forbidden by Anglican policy, monogamy was defended on two grounds: First, the chief argument was the Marcan text: "He that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery" (10:11); the second, in defining marriage

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85. "The World Mission of the Church": Official statement of the IMC, 1939, pp. 157ff.
86. <u>Cat.</u>, p. 46:228.
87. <u>Q.P.</u>: No. 3, October, 1929.

as a sacrament, the Catechism states: "Holy Matrimony is the Sacrament which sanctifies the union of a Christian man with a Christian woman".[88]

Once the initial enthusiasm of being a Christian had waned, cultural objections began to assail the first Christian marriages. People began asking what tangible benefits a Christian marriage could provide that a customary marriage could not. It was a natural reaction once people discovered that Christian marriages were capable of failing almost as readily as heathen unions. Nine years after the first Christian marriage Tobias wrote:

> "Our Christian women are apt to follow the ways of their (heathen) mothers, and there is nothing at all except affection for her husband and the solemn marriage vows to prevent her leaving. No public opinion, no questions of property or support for herself and her children come to assist the permanence of the marriage. She is in no way dependent on her husband, and her children inherit nothing from the father ... sentiment has little part in the making of a marriage."[89]

St Paul's teaching of the mystical bond of love between man and woman joined together in Christ was virtually a foreign concept to the Kwanyama understanding of marriage. It would appear, therefore, that Christian marriage was distinguished from customary union only in that it was monogamous, in the old society, a disadvantage.

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88. Cat. p. 44:220.
89. Q.P.: No. 24, April, 1935.

As the young Mission attempted to deal constructively with those who fell into sin and those who lapsed into the various moral failures described above, a dilemma was created in which we can see three distinctive features:

(1) From the earliest days of the Church it has been necessary to deal with the "open and notorious evil liver" by means of some form of discipline. Ovamboland was no exception, and some action was needed in the event of public scandal of sin. However, it is not at all clear why public discipline was considered necessary in those instances that were not cause for public scandal.[90] There seems to have been the feeling that in such cases public reparation and penitence was the most fitting form of example for the good of the whole congregation. (2) Related to this was the practical detail that someone had to determine what was an offence requiring public discipline and what was not. Thus an arbitrary judgement invariably given by the priest, became possible, in which certain sins were singled out and dealt with, while other equally serious acts were seemingly overlooked. Drunkenness, for instance, was practically never dealt with by public discipline, and only in rare instances of chronic over-indulgence was recourse had to excommunication;while on the other hand, adultery and fornication became the most common causes for public discipline, and have remained so to the present. Thus a pattern for virtually all future judgements became established, based largely on an arbitrary standard and interpretation of sin. (3) Discipline alone can never be the most effective means of

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90. Such as serious sins committed in private that still required penance and perhaps private discipline.

bringing the sinner to penitence and renewed dedication to a better way of life. This fact was tacitly acknowledged in the application of Church Discipline, wherein a show of penitence was the pre-requisite of receiving formal discipline; however, this also resulted in many instances of penitence merely for expediency and not because of true contrition. Whatever the situation, an inevitable dilemma arose between the extremes of severity and leniency in dealing pastorally with the sinner. After dealing with this problem for fifteen years Tobias wrote:

> "The Native comes to Christianity in a way exactly the opposite to ours. His first interest is purely for worship and only then, through loyalty, do higher moral ideas make any appeal. Discipline pure and simple produces in the Native an artificial frame of mind and all the time there remains a reservation that if circumstances press too keenly he can 'go back to the blanket' and heathen worship. This weakness lies behind all sermons and teaching in Church classes ... too much severity has led to trouble being hidden up, sometimes for years, under the very eyes of the Europeans. Leniency, while it encourages openness and trust, leads only to a lowering of standards amongst people who have lived for generations under a system of rigid custom."[91]

5.

A fifth fundamental change created by the new religion aimed at the very foundation and function of religion itself. Christianity

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91. Q.P.: No. 38, January, 1939.

demanded a shift from anthropocentric religion to theocentric religion. Although traditional religion acknowledged the supreme place of Kalunga in the hierarchy of the creation, in practice it did not find its raison d'etre as in any sense involving Kalunga. Man was the chief concern of customary religion, and worship was performed for man's benefit and not to the glory or service of Kalunga. While on rare occasions Kalunga was propitiated, he was never truly worshipped.[92] It is significant that in the language of the old culture there was no appointed word to define "religion". With the advent of Christianity new words and expressions were required to convey the new concepts of religion, and an expression for "religion" was created which meant literally "the service of remaining with God" (oukalele wokukalela Kalunga). Two things may be noted about the new expression: First, it suggests a continuous activity that does not discriminate between time or place;[93] secondly, the use of "kalela" in this context introduces a totally new concept into man's relationship with Kalunga. Whereas in traditional religion man never maintained relations with Kalunga for other than personal benefit, "kalela" introduces the idea of service to God wherein the motive for worship is simply because God is God. One remains with God "in the interest, benefit and service" of God, and not of man.[94]

92. "Worship" here meaning "To give honour to", or "acknowledging the worth of".
93. The reader will recall that the African world-view does not divide between religion and the rest of life, nor between time or place.
94. cf. H. Tönjes, Kwanyama Grammar and Syntax; Berlin, 1903.

The new expression became an essential part of the language required to express a radically new concept of man's relationship with God.

The transcendent, incomprehensible nature of God in Christian thought found natural acceptance in traditional beliefs about Kalunga; similarly the catechetical teaching that God is everywhere did not conflict with the pre-Christian understanding of Kalunga who, although remote from man, nevertheless was "everywhere" (apeshe apeshe) as the Creator and Force behind all of life. But the implications of the omnipotence of God were radical, for the pagan never believed that Kalunga was omnipresent in society or that he was interested in man's activity.

The Catechism expressed man's new relationship with God in these words: "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him here on earth", and thus to worship Him. A personal response and commitment was required as well: "... I should give myself to Him, praise Him, serve Him, and love Him";[95] and God became both the cause and the object of man's worship in the new relationship. The new worshipful relationship was described by the term "okulinyongamena",[96] which according to informants originally meant "to sit with the face bowed low to the ground, silent with a heavy heart, as if meditating the loss of a loved one". It is interesting, and perhaps highly significant, that Christian worship has not been defined as a spontaneously joyful or happy experience.

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95. Cat., p. 5:16.
96. A reflexive verb derived from an earlier form, okuyongama.

Modern popular images of God still tend to be Old Testamental in nature with images of the awe, judgement, wrath and anger of God prominent.

Although security, health, peace and life-force may be the fruits of Christian worship, these things are not the primary aim or intention of such worship. But in tribal society, these things <u>are</u> the primary concerns of religion and worship; and in adapting to Christianity such concerns must be placed not alongside but after loyalty and worship of God.[97] Hence, both the traditional concept of worship and the aim of religion had to alter drastically. Trust in God's immanence and power had to replace the concept of ancestral control over life. This involved the belief that God's loving care and concern infinitely surpassed the capricious concern of the ancestors. At baptism the step away from man-centred religion required turning away from the heart of many old tribal beliefs, and rejecting the practices in which one had always found security: the ancestor cult, the protective role and function of the social group, the ritual sacrifice, the good spirits, and the powers and charms of the witchdoctor. All these things represented part of "the world" which was renounced at baptism: "By renouncing the world I mean that I refuse to follow those people and things which lead me away from God".[98] Tempels believes the sacrifice required here in accepting Christianity is usually too great and

97. cf. Matt. 6.33.
98. <u>Cat</u>., p. 12:49.

demanding and that what most inhibits the pagan from genuine conversion and from giving up magical rites is the fear of attenuating their vital energy, by ceasing to have recourse to the natural powers hitherto believed to sustain it.[99]

The ancestral cult has been condemned categorically by every established mission in Africa. In Ovamboland whether as participants or observers, Christians were forbidden to attend feasts and sacrifices to the ancestors. Catechumens have been taught that such occasions are intrinsically unchristian: "A Christian may not take any part in heathen and unchristian ways of speaking with the departed. Such dealings are sinful and very dangerous".[100] What aspects of ancestor worship have been regarded as "sinful and very dangerous"? Three points arise from a study of the Kwanyama:

First, by definition ancestor worship was established and maintained on a clan basis in which the exclusive nature of each clan was emphasized; the ancestral cult could only express the particularity of a small group. Traditional ancestor worship therefore depended upon and sustained a divisive attitude towards outsiders, explicitly contrary to the Christian concept of the universal kinship of mankind.

Second, Christian objection to the cult arises from the belief that ancestor worship attributes to the ancestors an omnipotent power and control capable of ordering the course of events among

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99. cf. Tempels, op. cit., p. 32.
100. Cat., p. 25:114.

the living. Ancestor worship "credits created beings with power which in fact they do not possess, and ... it presupposes that these invisible beings have an ability to intervene at will in human life which is outside the divine control".[101] This also is an explicit denial of Christianity, which trusts in the supreme lordship of Christ. Baëta, from an African viewpoint, believes that in practice the ancestors "are involved and honoured as autonomous powers which exercise their will in a free and arbitrary manner, thus usurping - at least in part - the honours due to God".[102]

Third, on rare occasions human sacrifice has been performed to appease ancestral spirits (ovakwamungu). People believed it was within the power of the ancestors to withhold rain, and a particularly severe drought is recorded in the reign of King Uejulu (1883-1903) at which time a young girl was sacrificed at the grave of a dead king.[103] While recorded cases of human sacrifice are extremely rare, the fact that human sacrifice is theoretically possible condemns the ancestral cult for Christians.

A further objection to the ancestral cult is frequently advanced on the grounds that it is contrary to the First Commandment. However, this argument involves the controversy as to whether the cult does in fact involve "worship". This appears to be mainly an academic question of semantics, for irrespective of how the practice is designated the fundamental question should be how the participants engaged in such rites regard them, and what they consider themselves to be doing. Thus, on a psychological basis of enquiry, it would appear that the mental and emotional involvement in the observance

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101. Baëta, op. cit., p. 298.
102. ibid., p. 299.
103. cf. Loeb, op. cit., p. 64.

of the ancestral cult is similar, if not identical, to the worship accorded the High God. Accordingly one could argue that the observance of the cult does violate the First Commandment in intention and deed, if not in actual word.[104]

6.

A sixth fundamental change involved the expression of the new religion: Christianity came with a formal manner of worship and teaching into a culture which had essentially an informal approach to religion. In the traditional sense religion amounted to the attitudes and expressions of a world-view which were often inarticulate and whimsical, as observed elsewhere. Prayers were usually uttered morning and evening by the kraal head in the form of an invocation to the spirits. But sacrifices (excepting the annual commemorative festivals) were offered on an irregular basis as occasion required, and "religion" did not exist as a clearly-defined or formal system. Thus, while animism is highly formal in certain

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104. Among the Ovambo, for instance, address and prayer to the ancestors often displayed remarkably little difference in vocabulary and form to the petitions addressed to Kalunga. Others, however, strongly insist that ancestor worship is nothing more than communion with the departed in which the words "prayer" and "worship" are never used in describing what takes place; the gifts which an elder gives to the ancestors' spirits "are nothing but the tributes symbolizing the gifts which the departed spirits would have received had they been alive". J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya; London: Secker and Warburg, 1938, p. 266. See also, T. C. Young, African Ways and Wisdom; London: USCL, 1937, pp. 45ff.

performances requiring specific invocations, offerings and responses, it does not lend itself to formal structure and organization as a religious system. Traditional religious observances were genuine but spontaneous, purposeful but irregular, profound but often inarticulate.

In this context the Christian missionary was at an immediate and possibly an enormous disadvantage in being unable to present his teachings within the "Weltanschauung" of the tribe. This cultural barrier was perhaps inevitable, but it created handicaps in presenting Christianity, the full effects of which were barely realizable at the time.[105] One of the foreign elements associated with the new religion was the formal "class" in which one was taught the Catechism, the rudiments of Christian worship and portions of Scripture. Classes were instituted for the Hearer, the Catechumen, and for those who wished to be confirmed.[106] In time classes were started for penitents under discipline, and for those wishing to be married. It became a colloquialism to speak of "going to school" as people entered the church for instruction, and "going to the books" as they entered for worship; and every minister was called "teacher" (omuhongi). In his classes the white missionary could only hope to relate his teachings to life in the kraal and in society, but this depended

105. Indeed, one does not yet know to what extent genuine conversion has been impeded or prevented in Africa because of the excessive foreignness which has frequently characterized the presentation of the Gospel.

106. A Hearer was one who was merely inquiring and considering Christianity prior to formal instruction for baptism; while a Catechumen was one who had decided to be baptized and was studying the Faith.

largely on his own detailed knowledge and interest in the culture. Frequently he had insufficient interest in the culture to consider presenting Christianity in a non-Western cultural idiom(vide supra: Chap. 1). But even for the most enthusiastic white missionary his lessons could not arise naturally out of the routine, the anxieties, the hopes and fears of the culture quite in the way the lessons of the old religion did. Equally foreign was the manner in which the new religion was taught - through books and a written system that included new rules for right and wrong behaviour.[107] Moreover, the reading requirement introduced in 1937 made it necessary that anyone preparing for baptism had to prepare largely through the use of books.[108]

It is quite possible that in teaching Christianity, the emphasis upon formal learning, learning to read, to say the correct answers to the Catechism, to recite prayers, hymns and creeds, has had a harmful effect evangelistically speaking. Today, for instance, Christianity tends to be popularly regarded primarily as something one knows rather than something one does. Christian respondents to a questionnaire (vide infra, Chap. 4) frequently replied "I have forgotten the answer", or " I don't know much about that"; in other instances their replies indicate a marked contradiction between what one had learned and "knew" and what one did about it. For many therefore, Christianity tends to be largely a cognitive exercise.

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107. The word for book (embo, omambo) is said to derive from the name of an onion-like plant which had to be peeled away, layer after layer, until the heart of the plant was discovered. Books also required "peeling", page after page, until the heart of the message was laid bare to the reader.

108. cf. Q.P.: No. 32, July, 1937.

The Provincial Catechism, based upon the catechetical principle of simple questions and answers, has always been the main source for teaching and learning about Christianity. And while it conveys an enormous amount of information, it is structured entirely on a question-and-anwer basis. Two catechetical teachers recall how in the early days they were not permitted to interpret the Catechism on their own, and probably for good reasons. However, as noted above, this meant in effect that the teacher could not deal with questions or uncertainties as they arose in the class; and to the present day, candidates for baptism and confirmation are required to know essentially only the answers to questions in the Catechism.[109] Additional material which could explain or expand the Catechism is rarely used, and in any case it would not be required learning in the formal preparation for baptism or confirmation.

Another formality in the new religion occurred with the observance of the Christian Sabbath. Sunday became known as "the day of the books" (efiku lomambo), an expression still in common use.[110] Sunday was the day when everyone went with their books to church for classes, learning, and reading of the Bible, Prayer Book and Hymnal. Until recent years, Sundays were strictly observed, and no business transactions or work were performed on the Sabbath.[111]

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109. Example: Question: "Is there only one God?" Answer: "There is only one God." Usually the pupil has memorized the material in such a way that the original order of the questions is necessary to remember the correct answer.
110. Also "ohatu i komambo", "we are gòing to the books".
111. One of the "sins" listed in the Prayer Book examination for confession includes: "I have bought or sold things on Sunday."

Handling money on the Sabbath was regarded as an improper "worldly concern" for Christians, and if for some reason a Mission worker failed to receive his pay on Saturday he was required to wait until Monday to be paid by the Mission. The Western idea of a separation of life into sacred and secular aspects, shown for example by the division of the week into six days for business and one for worship, was diametrically opposed to traditional thinking which found a religious significance for virtually every event in life. Kenyatta has observed that the foreign practice of Sabbath observance, seen together with the spectacular affluence and power of the Christian newcomers in Africa, cut right across the traditional acceptance of a subsistence economy based on an equitable share of the economy for every member of the family. Thus, he believes the new religious system implicitly presented a new doctrine of material prosperity as one greatly to be desired. [112]

Foreign-styled church buildings produced still another element of formality. Traditional religion did not place any degree of importance on where the act of worship took place, and sacrifices generally were performed as and where they were required. Sacred shrines were never employed in pagan Kwanyama worship, and except for the sacred burial ground of the kings sacred sites for worship did not exist. [113] The Mission, on the other hand, came to depend upon

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112. cf. Kenyatta, op. cit.
113. Accurately speaking, even the sacred burial ground (evale) was not within the country, but was considered to be "extra-territorial". It may still be located in western Angola, just north of the South West Africa-Angola border.

certain buildings and structures to perform its functions. The church-building, for example, required an altar, a cross, candles, a baptismal font, generally a place for the congregation to sit, and the shape of the building had to be such that worship could take place with the minister leading the congregation. The traditional rondavel was totally unsuitable for congregational, sacramental worship, and thus the rectangular building was introduced which had the advantage of serving equally well for schools, hospitals, and living quarters for missionaries. Such buildings were generally very simple, consisting of mudbrick and thatch. A number of new building techniques were required however, such as the use of bricks, trusses, reinforced roofs, doors and windows. These new skills had to be taught.[114]

The church-building quickly became an important symbol of the Christian community, and a structure usually reserved for worship only. Petrus, the first Catechist of the Mission, stood firmly "against using the Church as a School-Chapel".[115] Whilst the spirit of reverence behind this attitude was no doubt commendable, nevertheless one may detect signs of a tendency that was to inhibit the future work of the Mission. For as the various functions of the

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114. Churches of the Finnish Lutheran Mission are still constructed with excessively highpitched thatch roofs, which although they require considerably more grass and timber nevertheless remain today as evidence of how thoroughly people learned their lessons in building. As in Finland steep and elaborate roofs are required to shed the snow, so too in tropical Ovamboland they became the practice.

115. Q.P.: No. 20, January, 1934.

Mission gradually became attached to specific structures and buildings, (in time to become known as "departments"), so too the official ministry of the Church became increasingly more restricted to the church-building. As the Mission grew, permanent buildings tended to validate the work of the Mission in each community, and a village was commonly regarded as respectably Christian only when it had its own church-building. Buildings for other purposes might further enhance the prestige of the community, but the church ("ongeleka") became the chief symbol of respectability.

Ritual in the worship of the Church added another strong element of formality to the new religion. Almost from the beginning various "High Church" practices became important outward signs of membership. For the laity these included making the sign of the cross, saying the Angelus thrice daily, and crosses and crucifixes of varying sizes and ornamentation worn around the neck. For the clergy they included the biretta, often elaborate eucharistic vestments, "High Mass" with incense, bells, and numerous young boys as servers and acolytes, together with an unholy fear of the priest that did not always help him to maintain a servant-like attitude. The Mass was the central ritual service of worship in which the words of the service were regarded as being efficacious on their own; thus, for the priest to "say Mass" was sufficient to consecrate the elements of bread and wine, and thus to perform the most important act of Christian worship. Congregational participation in the service was therefore only peripheral and was not regarded as essential as the priest "saying Mass". Hence, it was possible for one to remain quite

detached from the service of Holy Communion, for beyond receiving the bread and wine involvement was usually at a low level.[116]

Public worship became the ritual occasion par excellence when Christians came together to symbolize their religion. While the Catechism stated that in addition to public worship "it is good for (Christians) to assemble in their own houses for private family prayer",[117] it is understandable that pre-eminence was given to public church worship. But as the Mission grew, a gradual decline occurred in the informal, spontaneous family-type Christian gatherings which had been common in earlier years. Worship became increasingly a formal act in which one participated as frequently, or infrequently, as he attended the church services.[118]

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116. This somewhat objective approach to other services of worship as well is still a prominent characteristic of liturgical worship in Ovamboland today. Thus, the most frequent response to all ritual forms of worship is objective observance of the ritual with considerably less subjective personal involvement.
117. Cat., p. 37:185.
118. Other symbols have added to the formality of Anglicanism in Ovamboland. Jewelry crosses and crucifixes and the bell have played an important role. Indeed, the church "bell", often no more than a piece of iron, while having an obvious functional value has achieved perhaps an even greater symbolic value. One may frequently find congregations where the "bell" is virtually inaudible to the surrounding countryside, but which is rung by the local leader without fail, as much to create an atmosphere of official authority and propriety as to summon people to worship. Even without a church-building, a catechist would rarely be without some kind of bell. Moreover, not everyone was allowed to toll the bell or strike the iron, but only the catechist or priest in charge of the congregation, or someone given authority by him.

In time three quasi-symbols also developed as distinctive signs of the Christian : the church membership-dues card, the briefcase, and spectacles. The membership-dues card officially identified a member of the church and recorded annual payment of church dues.[119] The briefcase and spectacles were identified with the Mission school, and while they were practical requisites for many, for others they became the outward identifying symbols of the "omuhongi" and the missionary.[120]

7.

Finally, the Christian religion introduced a sacramentalist form of religion into an animistic society which was essentially "pan-sacramentalistic". By definition, animism[121] is a form of belief which attributes spirit, "soul", to all material things; the spirit-world may invade and take possession of anything, and in this sense almost anything can become "holy" and sacramentally significant. However, the pagan Kwanyama never attributed divine status to objects or people, other than the divine king. When an object or a place was believed to have spirits indwelling in it, the

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119. In the Prayer Book list of "sins" one item listed: "I have not paid my Church Dues", for which confession was to be made.

120. Africans who wish to have spectacles but who do not require them for corrective purposes may purchase them with clear glass eye-pieces in parts of South West Africa today.

121. cf. anima = soul.

worshipper directed his attention and his reverence essentially to the spirit and not to the external object or place. "It must be emphasized... that the (African) does not bow down to wood and stone; he bows down to the indwelling spirit only and therefore troubles little about the outer husk".[122] (In practice, however, it would be difficult if not impossible to separate the spirit from its object in actual worship.) In this sense therefore, one might say for the animist all creation is potentially divine.

Anglican worship on the other hand depends on a sacramentalist principle presupposing a distinction, however subtle, between the sacred and the secular. In catechetical language: "God conveys grace to us by outward (sacramental) means because we have bodies as well as souls".[123] While God's spirit is present within and around every part of the creation, the sacramental principle provides a means of focusing divine strength and presence in time and place, and a means of assurance that man is in a dynamic relationsip with God. The traditional formulation of this states: "A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given to us by Christ".[124]

Fundamentally the principle underlying the dynamic of Christian sacramentalism is not dissimilar to that of animism. In both it is believed that a spiritual force, divine or demonic, can infuse and sanctify a person or an object and make it holy according to the indwelling spiritual value. Human life is sanctified when the Holy

122. Dickson, op. cit., p. 42
123. Cat., p. 40:200.
124. Cat., p. 40:198.

Spirit is given at baptism; similarly bread and wine are sanctified in the Eucharist to confer "an inward and spiritual grace". Whereas animism tends to be vague and diffuse, sacramentalism tends to be exact and confining. The former would recognize no distinction between the sacred and the profane; the latter depends upon a distinction by which man can know and receive the "means of grace" through sacramental forms of worship.

There are signs that suggest the sacramental teaching of the Mission has tended to be restrictive and narrow; the specific outward forms of the sacraments have received a greater emphasis than the inward spiritual meaning. Have the outward signs of the sacraments generally become more important than the spiritual meaning and appropriation? A brief look at the teaching on the Holy Communion and its practice in the Mission may provide some tentative answers, while the following chapter will deal more fully with this question.

The Catechism defines the sacrament of Holy Communion as "the Body and Blood of Christ ... the outward part of the Sacrament which we can see with our eyes is bread and wine ... the inward part of the Sacrament which we cannot see with our eyes is the Body and Blood of Christ".[125] This definition is based essentially on the

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125. Cat., p. 51:248, 254, 255.

words of our Lord as found, for example, in Mark 14. 22-24. The benefits received in Holy Communion are "... strengthening and refreshing of (our) souls and bodies, and the building up of (our) life in His likeness".[126] However, these benefits are not unconditional and certain conditions are required before receiving communion: the Prayer Book requires confirmation before communion, while the Catechism based on the words of Scripture, warns that "not all who receive the Holy Communion receive the benefits of it, but only those who receive it worthily";[127] and according to informants, in the Mission it became the practice to require private sacramental confession at least once a month. This meant that in all but the few central congregations where a priest was regularly available, communicants made a confession before each communion when the priest made his periodic visit to the outstations. For more frequent occasions the general rule for everyone was: "If my conscience is troubled I ought to go to the priest for Confession and Absolution before receiving Holy Communion".[128]

Holy Communion was instituted by our Lord as the supreme reconciling act of worship: it expresses reconciliation between God

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126. Cat., p. 53:258.
127. Cat., p. 53:259.
128. Cat., p. 54:262.

and man in reaffirming our salvation, and between man and man in repairing and maintaining Christian fellowship. Accordingly, before receiving Holy Communion man is exhorted to examine both relationships, to be sure he truly repents of his sins and desires to lead a new life, to reaffirm belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and to determine whether he is in charity with all men.[129] Not unlike the tribal fellowship meal eaten at the annual oshipe festival (vide supra, p. 145), the Communion meal is intended to be eaten in fellowship with other members of the Christian community. However, in the Mission a practice developed which made Holy Communion as a fellowship meal vastly different from former tribal rites of fellowship. The distinction centred around the practice of Church Discipline as it developed in the Mission. When a person was placed under public discipline, irrespective of the degree of inward contrition and repentance, that individual was barred from taking part in the fellowship meal. Hence, the strength and reconciliation provided by fellowship and communion was denied the sinner just when it was most needed. This seemingly severe practice has been explained in two ways: First, it was believed the individual should undergo a lengthy penance under discipline; and second, it was felt that an additional deprivation was necessary to provide the sinner and the congregation with a stern lesson and reminder. Whereas the first explanation involves a judgement on the sincerity of the sinner's penitence and puts him in an intolerable position in relation to the congregation from which he is separated (and to the priest who becomes his judge), the second is a contradiction

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129. cf. Cat. p. 54:261.

of biblical and catechetical principles which teach that repentance, contrition, belief, and living in charity with all men are the only pre-requisites for receiving Holy Communion. Hence, under this system one's outward actions, however contrite and reconciled to the Christian community, may not admit him to Holy Communion, the fellowship meal intended to demonstrate reconciliation. A parallel development was the apparent tendency to "protect" the sacraments from unworthy recipients; along with the heathen and the lapsed, "unworthy recipients" included those under Church Discipline who, by definition, were penitents and therefore might well have "truly repented of their sins and desired to lead a new life". Taylor, in observing this tendency elsewhere, has remarked:

> "There is a good deal of evidence from other parts of the world that the sacraments of the Gospel, like the Lord who instituted them, far from needing to be protected from contamination, have a power of their own to do things to sinners when all else seems to have failed."[130]

The priest therefore has always been both a dispenser and a guardian of the sacraments. But in the Mission as Christians lapsed into serious sin the role of "guardian" became more accentuated, often with a correspondingly calloused attitude towards recipients of the sacraments. In such instances it appeared that the outward form of the sacraments, such as the "elements" of bread and wine,

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130. J.V. Taylor, Growth of the Church in Buganda; London: SCM, 1958, p. 245.

became more important than inward meanings which could only be demonstrated by attitudes of peace, love, brotherhood and fellowship. And while the various popular practices of reverencing the sacraments were not directly responsible for this development, nevertheless it is possible that such practices reinforced a tendency towards "sacramental idolatry". For example, the sanctus bell announced the moment when everyone was taught to kneel and bow low before the communion sacrament; and the practice of Benediction further heightened the degree of reverence given to the outward material elements of the sacrament. Yet while requiring these forms of sacramental reverence, it was not uncommon to observe an ill-temper in the priest towards those receiving communion, when they are not as adept as they might be in receiving the bread and the wine.[131] While people have been taught to reverence the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, emphasis has been given almost on an inverse proportion to the social and fellowship aspects of Holy Communion; the implications of this will be discussed in the following chapter.

Seven fundamental differences between tribal religion and Christianity have been presented and discussed briefly. Some of these differences produced radical changes in the individual and his behaviour

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131. Information from informants.

as he accepted a new religion and way of life: some of them have produced only ostensible changes in the conduct of people whose hearts and souls still respond most meaningfully to a philosophy and world-view that has remained foreign and unrelated to Christian thought. However, along with what was otherwise a great and self-sacrificing work of love in the Ovamboland Mission has gone ignorant judgement and hasty condemnation of much that is good in the traditional world-view. The fundamental differences which the Mission represented invariably became fundamental requirements for those who wished to become Christians. One must acknowledge, however, that genuine conversions occurred in spite of the cultural pressures presented with the Gospel; people have received new life in Christ, saintly devotion and sacrifice today is evident in many places, and a simple child-like faith and trust in God is inspiringly commonplace. But what of the inner thoughts and beliefs among converted and committed Christians? Has the price to become a Christian in some instances been too great and unreasonable, and, if so, what have the people so far been unwilling to "pay"? These are some of the questions to which we must turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW THE MESSAGE WAS UNDERSTOOD

How was the missionaries' Christian message understood by the people? What changes was it thought to involve for those who accepted it? To answer these major issues, certain questions concerned with specific areas of the mission church's life were posed to a representative group of church members, which included catechists, teachers, nurses and clergy.* Their responses indicate how they and others have understood the Christian message presented by the missionaries, and consequently reflect largely their understanding of Christianity as a whole. Their answers also suggest the need for a wider and more thorough investigation than has been possible in the present study. While one cannot regard the present findings as conclusive, nevertheless they do indicate certain trends and attitudes among ordinary Christians. And however unwelcome such information may be to some, because it could stand as an indictment of the Church's missionary enterprise, it is realistic to suppose that many wrong images of Christianity do exist, possibly on a wider scale than one would imagine, even among leading members of the Church.

This chapter is based on information gathered from three areas of the mission church's life, as provided by interviews and

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* See Appendix for a copy of the survey-questionnaire.

questionnaires:

1. Some popular concepts and understanding of what it means to be a Christian.
2. A discussion of some of the means used in maintaining the Christian community, with special reference to sin, the role of Holy Communion, Christian marriage, and the role of healing in the mission church.
3. The role of leadership and ministry in the life of the mission church.

We have seen how membership in the mission church required a significant break with the heathen associations and practices of the former life, and a rejection of most traditional religious beliefs.[1] The Catechism was unequivocal in condemning ancestor worship and related practices,[2] and strictly forbade attendance at, or participation in, a heathen sacrifice under any circumstances. This was understood by every Christian interviewed (50); however, a number phrased their replies in words such as "the Church teaches that it is a sin to have anything to do with sacrifices". Nevertheless, approximately one-half of those questioned admitted having attended or participated in a sacrifice offered for friends or relations since the time of their own baptism. Moreover, it is significant that people

1. Belief in God (Kalunga) is probably the only traditional religious belief that has not conflicted with the teachings of the mission church.
2. cf. Cat., p. 25:114.

rarely explicitly described Christian baptism in terms of requiring of the individual new beliefs. Most replies reflected basic catechetical teaching and terminology, such as "spiritual re-birth in the Church", "washing from sin", "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven", "receiving a new name", and "admission into the family of God". Only two trained catechists referred to baptism as requiring new beliefs: "belief in Christ" and "belief in Kalunga" - which in the old society everyone did in any case.

The visible separation required between Christianity and heathenism is clearly understood, and in most cases adhered to. Nevertheless, while Christian teachings have been learnt and accepted usually on a simple intellectual level, contradictions have been present within these same teachings. For example, while condemning ancestor worship the Church teaches its members that the Communion of the Saints joins all Christians together irrespective of death. Thus, on the one hand traditional relationships with the dead are forbidden, while on the other they are encouraged: "Are not prayers for one another, intercession and the request for intercession, the most significant manifestations of the mystery of the Communion of Saints in the Church?"[3] Moreover, "if we can ask the intercession of a living brother, why, in the certitude that we

3. H. Sawyerr, Creative Evangelism, p. 136, citing M. Thurian, "Eucharistic Memorial", P. Edwall et al., Ways of Worship, Part 2; London, 1963, p. 18.

have of the life in Christ of those who have left their bodies, may we not ask dead saints to pray for us ...".[4] And while the Church has taught its members to pray for the non-Christian _living_, it limits its prayers to "the faithful departed". Similarly, while forbidding the ancestor cult, converts have been exhorted to uphold the Fifth Commandment which, to the African, means honouring the dead father and mother as well as the living. In traditional society the spirit of the Commandment requires maintaining a good relationship with the departed; if they are of the "faithful departed", such a relationship is possible for the Christian through the Communion of Saints, but if the ancestors or parents are not Christians, evidently no relationship of "honour" is possible.[5]

Although a sharp break between the old and the new has been required at baptism and ostensibly a separation has taken place, in fact among Christians it appears that confusion has remained that has produced a contradiction between actual belief and practice. Sawyerr has suggested an approach which neither condemns nor confuses, but takes a more constructive and enlightening attitude:

> "Christian teaching, based on the Incarnation, might then first of all state that God intends man to be in fellowship with Him[6] and that through this

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4. _ibid._
5. Brandel-Syrier has quoted one African description of this contradiction: "Europeans also believe in their ancestors ... on certain Festival days they get a very important Church minister, even a bishop, and he goes to the City Hall and places a wreath there. Isn't he thinking of his ancestors? But if I slaughter a goat to my ancestors I am excommunicated". M. Brandel-Syrier, _Black Woman in Search of God_; London: Lutterworth, 1962, p. 132.
6. cf. Eph. 2. 16, 18.

> fellowship with God, we are led into a new fellowship with our fellow-men[7]; we can then venerate the ancestors, but not pour libations to them. We may then rightly pray for their souls, if we are prepared to accept that their personalities do not perish with death, expect them to feel a concern for us and make intercession to God for us. This interpretation of the state of the ancestral dead would readily dispose of the belief in reincarnation, because Christian teaching allows for a resurrection life ..." [8]

In traditional catechetical teaching, Christianity ironically has been presented to the Kwanyama as comprising a community less universal than their own traditional society, which included everyone. The statement that "Jesus Christ has redeemed all mankind"[9] has not been an opening statement in presenting the faith. However, if this emphasis was given, it could present the Church as an all-inclusive body with a unique solidarity that transcends by far anything akin to it in pagan society; and it could also provide the means of preserving the solidarity of the tribe, both living and departed. In still another way, much greater use could be made in teaching the implications of the credal statement that Jesus "descended into Hell" (or Hades) in relation to the unbaptised ancestors.[10]

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7. cf. Eph. 3. 6
8. Sawyerr, op. cit., p. 111.
9. Cat., p. 15:61.
10. When the American Episcopal Church was being organized, it was strongly proposed that this phrase be omitted entirely from the Apostles' Creed. (cf. Gray, The Anglican Communion; London, 1958). It is disappointing to note the revised Nicene Creed in the proposed South African Anglican experimental liturgy omits the phrase, while the revised Apostles' Creed maintains only a remnant of it.

Moreover, there is abundant Scriptural evidence which could be used in explaining the relationship which exists between the unbaptised dead and Christ, especially I Cor. 15.20ff. and Peter 3.18ff., of which catechetical teaching has not made use. While Anglican theology has not been unmindful of the fact that "the Church has connections backwards as well as forwards",[11] it is evident that these "connections" have not been sufficiently taught to those who need most to hear.[12]

It may be significant that less than one-half of the Christians interviewed thought that baptism made them members of the Church,[13] whereas everyone replied, in varying terms, that baptism made them Christians. More felt that confirmation assured membership in the Church, in which the important visible sign was being able to take communion. This too reflects the confusion that exists in Anglican doctrine and teaching arising from the greater emphasis placed on confirmation, as against the New Testament teaching on baptism as the greater moment for the Christian. Although Anglican theology states that "the precise relationship between the gifts bestowed in Baptism and the gift bestowed in Confirmation cannot be defined ... (and) a clear-cut answer is impossible",[14] the question arises

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11. Doctrine in the Church of England; London: S.P.C.K., 1952, pp. 100-101.
12. Cf. also Mat. 8.11 and Luke 13.29 for relevant passages.
13. The question asked: "What made you a member of the Church: baptism or confirmation?"
14. op. cit., p. 188.

naturally as to what is the distinguishing sign between them. In tribal society this kind of sign is essential in order to be identified and included in the clan-community. Several informants replied that confirmation made them "proper Christians able to receive the Holy Communion" and they regarded this as the most visible, obvious sign to identify them as Christians. Moreover, there was the tacit implication among those interviewed that being a Christian and being a member of the Church are not the same thing. Whereas everyone interviewed felt that baptism made them Christians, less than half felt that it made them members of the Church. Again, the relationship in Anglican teaching is sufficiently ambivalent to imply that "something more" of the Holy Spirit is received at confirmation than at baptism. Consider, for instance, the following formal statement:

> "... the gifts of the Holy Spirit associated with Confirmation are those with which in Isaiah xi the Messiah is said to be endowed ... the evident implication is that in Confirmation the person, already incorporated into Christ in Baptism, is made a partaker in the gifts proper to the Messianic community ...".[15]

Another implication might readily be that those who are baptised do not receive the "gifts of the Spirit" until confirmation; but

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15. <u>ibid.</u>

this is theologically untenable in explaining baptism.[16]

Among those interviewed, there seemed to be a fairly general agreement that the efficacy of baptism and confirmation is dependent upon the kind of life one lives subsequently;[17] yet at the same time in Ovamboland there is almost universal agreement that infant baptism is essential to ensure against going to Hell at an early age. However, a first-generation catechetical teacher who has been in the Mission for over 35 years believed that confirmation (which presumably would include baptism in this instance) would save a man, irrespective of his moral conduct.

At this point, it may be useful to discuss the manner in which candidates have been prepared for membership in the mission church. The traditional emphasis in Ovamboland of preach-teach-baptize has been noted elsewhere (vide supra, p. 159). What has been the effect

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16. While it seems the problem of the relationship between the two sacraments of baptism and confirmation has been acknowledged in the Church of the Province, it has not been dealt with in such a way as to provide the laity with any concrete answers. In 1944, a statement was made by the Episcopal Synod which reads: "In our opinion it still remains the ideal that Baptism and Confirmation should be one Act, even in the case of infants ... (but) for a variety of reasons Confirmation in the Western Church ... is now normally separated by a period of years from Baptism. We are of the opinion that the divergence of views as to the exact theological or doctrinal relationship between the gift of Baptism and the gift of Confirmation is ultimately due to the fact of this separation. We do not therefore consider it necessary for us to take sides in the controversy which has arisen upon this question". Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa; Cape Town, 1962, p. 141.
17. A majority believed that "good works" of some sort, rather than "having faith", were the necessary criteria here.

of this particular sequence upon the convert? If we compare this method with that of the Early Church, which was largely one of preach-baptize-teach, we may find that in preparing people for baptism the cognitive approach has eclipsed or even supplanted the "one thing needful", which is acceptance with faith and repentance that Jesus is Lord.[18] Webster has shown that in the C. M. S. missions of Nigeria the procedure of baptizing only after extensive preparation produced an inevitable and "stultifying time lag" between the time one first heard the Word preached and actual baptism. He cites the African Independent Church in the same area which deliberately reversed the procedure, so that one was baptized and taught subsequently; many believe that this has produced a marked difference in the commitment and dedication of its members.[19]

Commenting on the more traditional methods of preparation, as far back as 1893 the German missionary Zahn observed: "Preparation for baptism has come to be more important than baptism itself".[20] Is this possibly a realistic statement for the majority of Christians in Ovamboland? The following eye-witness account relates an annual Easter Eve baptism service:

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18. cf. Acts 8. 26ff., I Cor. 1.
19. cf. J. B. Webster, The African Churches Among the Yoruba: 1888-1922; London: O. U. P., 1964, pp. 47 ff.
20. B. Sundkler, The World of Mission; London: Lutterworth, 1965, p. 209.

> "My uncle be baptized this morning. The priest told him he must attend class and learn to read and this take long time, two years I think. Tate (uncle) only read a little, but say now he very tired and don't want school anymore. Many people come for baptism today, maybe even 180. Omuhongi (priest) tell them to come first to office to pay dues (.70) before he baptise them. This take much time too. Now omuhongi is tired and cross and he shouts at people to be quiet. Someone try to call names of baptism people, but very difficult for many not know new Christian names very well. Very funny now when some come to baptism and hold out their hands, by not know too much what to do. Oh! terrible noise, confusion in church ... now omuhongi get very angry with people and say he not go on. People quiet now, but many frightened and forget answers to questions so omuhongi tell them ... this also make him cross. Many ovafikameni (witnesses) come in late, some not come at all so others take their place. Some forget who they witness for and they act dumb. When we finish we have big feast at home and everyone very tired, but very glad school is over. Tomorrow many will return for Church, but some not for they not ready for taking communion ... that needs more classes, more school, and I think some don't care anymore about learning the Church."

Allen concludes of the pathetic results of trying to teach the "fullness of the Faith" prior to baptism: "Before they have learned addition they must study division, before they have mastered division they must face fractions and decimals, and then round again and again, until they cease to make any effort to master the truth".[21]

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21. R. Allen, Missionary Methods; London: Lutterworth, 1968 (First Ed.: 1912), p. 90.

The Church is meant to represent a reconciled and a reconciling fellowship-community in which reconciliation with God and man is best symbolized in the holy communion. Whereas this provides the great unifying element to the community, sin, theologically speaking, is the disruptive and destructive force against community. Therefore, in studying how the Christian community is spiritually maintained in the mission church, one needs to look primarily at how sin and holy communion are understood in relationship to the whole community, and the social implications for each. Secondly, Christian marriage and the role of healing will be reviewed briefly according to the limited information here available.

Sin in its social aspects is variously understood. When asked to name the "three most serious sins" as defined by the church, it is significant that a majority of replies included "adultery and fornication". In one large congregation, according to informants, it was almost entirely for either of these transgressions that church discipline was given, with a few exceptions for those having attended the tribal initiation rites. Thus the emphasis which the church has given, through its disciplinary measures, is generally reflected in this popular understanding of "serious sin".[22]

Although slander and jealousy, and related sinful attitudes, are characteristically disruptive of social harmony, they are not sins which can readily be identified, and therefore they have been overlooked, as it

22. The "most serious sins" in order included: fornication and adultery, stealing, murder, slander, jealousy and drunkenness.

were, in the customary implementation of public discipline. Indeed, informants could not recall a single instance of church discipline having been administered for covert sins such as these. Thus, Sundkler's estimates may be conservative when he writes: "Ninety per cent of all cases dealt with in Protestant Church discipline belong to this (carnal) category; the Ten Commandments have virtually been reduced to the one Commandment forbidding adultery".[23]

More than half the respondents listed drunkenness as the "sin most common among Ovambo people", but few of them regarded it as a serious sin. One informant explained this discrepancy thus: "It is no sin to get drunk: it is a sin to get drunk and break up the community or hurt others". It is equally significant that the great majority of informants felt that outward, overt acts of sin were more serious than the covert "sins of the heart", such as hatred, lust, greed and disbelief. Jealousy/envy was in fact the only attitudinal sin which was mentioned a fair number of times, along with gross moral sins. Thus, whereas the highest number of responses listed fornication and adultery as the most serious sins, only one-tenth (3) of these same people listed lust[24] as well; similarly, among those (18) who felt that murder was one of the most serious sins, only three related it directly to hatred. The lack of correspondence between the condemned outward act and the inner attitudes of the individual could be indicative of a legalistic interpretation of "serious sin". Allen has written of a

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23. B. Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa; London: S.C.M., 1960, p. 288.
24. Presumably sexual lust was what was intended here.

similar tendency observed elsewhere: "The standard of morals which (the Church) tries to enforce is something less than the Christian standard; its enforcement presents the Gospel as a system of law, and undoes the victory of St Paul over the Judaizing party in Jerusalem ...".[25] Certainly it would appear that the tendency to understand Christian morality in legalistic terms is aggravated by a system of public discipline that deals almost entirely with outward expressions of sin.

One question we need to ask is: "Which has in fact been more disruptive of the congregation, sin or the church's traditional manner of dealing with it?" How does the individual respond when dealt with publicly under the system of church discipline? A considerable majority of respondents to this question felt that discipline produced negative feelings of extreme embarrassment and humiliation, and failed to produce any genuine degree of contrition and repentance. Many replied by saying that church discipline "only worsens the person's feelings and attitude"; others felt "it only frightens people instead of convincing them of the seriousness of sin".[26] Some believed that church discipline "only served to punish", and that in reaction people frequently would deliberately commit the same offence in secret. It is interesting to note the exceptional reaction of an elder Catechist: "Most people reform because they heed their lessons in the penitents' classes and change their hearts"; only three other <u>old</u> people expressed similar approval of the system, whereas none of the <u>younger</u> informants agreed with this attitude. There was recurrent agreement among

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25. R. Allen, <u>The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church</u>; London: World Dominion, 1927, pp. 80-81.
26. Possibly producing a legalistic attitude founded mainly on fear.

informants that people frequently did not sufficiently understand the nature of their own sin or the spiritual effects of sinful conduct in general. In these instances, public discipline might be instructive through the penitent's classes, but the discipline nevertheless would be mainly punitive.

The excommunication which accompanies church discipline[27] is a particularly severe punishment in terms of tribal life and understanding. One might say the tribal equivalent of Hell would be to be separated from the fellowship and life of the society. However, in the mission church this is precisely what is experienced when an individual is publicly disciplined and excommunicated. Thus, as the wages of sin is death ultimately, by the tribal standards the immediate punishment for sin is experienced in similarly severe terms. Whereas Western theology generally has defined Hell entirely in non-social terms: "The misery of Hell is to be banished from the presence of God",[28] this definition lacks a necessary social dimension, if indeed fellowship with man and relationship with God are inter-related. Moreover, one could argue that man's fellowship with others is a significant human part of the "presence of God",[29] and that reconciliation in one direction eventually requires reconciliation in the

27. Vide supra p. 184 for a description of the procedure involved.
28. Cat., p. 27: 123.
29. There is abundant Scriptural evidence to support this notion: cf. Gal. 3.28: "all one in Christ"; I Cor. 1.9: "called unto the fellowship of Christ"; Rom. 8.17: "joint-heirs with Christ"; Eph. 1.10: "all things in Christ"; see also Luke 10.20, I Thess. 4.17 and others.

other. The human condition of being separated and cut off from the social benefits of fellowship, such as recognition, acceptance, support, peace and love, is directly relatable to the concept of Hell. But in traditional Western theology this emphasis has not been given, which could present a richer, more meaningful concept to traditional thought. In this sense, church discipline denies the implications of Romans 5. 18-19[30] and any expression of the human solidarity of mankind, both as sinners and as redeemed men, is neither evident nor intended. However kindly such public disciplining might be performed, the overriding emphasis and implications are "look what you (individually) have done", and for which the individual is singled out and publicly chastised. In Romans 5, Paul is stressing the two crucial aspects of man's solidarity and fellowship: in our common bond of sinfulness and need ("as the one sin condemned all men . . . "), and in our redemption done for us "while we were yet sinners". Thus, in a profound and mystical sense, on the missionary frontier the Church should be addressing redeemed men and women, whether baptized or not; the difference between the two is one of grace, in which the baptized should know they are redeemed, but the solidarity remains in that together all men should know they are redeemed sinners. Excommunicating the brethren because of sin, for which there has been due repentance and contrition, seems self-defeating in this context.

It is significant that a majority of individuals interviewed maintained that when one is publicly disciplined by the clergy,

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30. "It follows, then, that as the issue of one misdeed was condemnation for all men, so the issue of one just act is acquittal and life for all men. For as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." N. E. B. translation.

alienation is felt towards the clergy but not towards the congregation. A minority said they still felt "wanted" by the clergy when they were put under discipline, whereas most felt definitely "unwanted". In terms of social standing and acceptability among the Kwanyama little in fact is lost when a Christian lapses or is excommunicated, and in this sense the whole procedure of official church discipline has little effect. There is rarely a degree of social stigma within the community, and a remarkable degree of tolerance is shown towards those who are out of favour with the church and the clergy. Possibly for this reason humiliation and shame are felt even more acutely, when in the presence of friends and relations one is disciplined and treated almost as one of the heathen. Nevertheless the Prayer Book rubric allowing the exclusion (excommunication) of the "notorious and evil liver" as a harmful and corrupting example to the congregation, is applied quite irrespective of the fact that almost no one of the congregation is the least "offended" by what the sinner has done. Thus, lapsed and disciplined Christians generally feel accepted outside of the church and rejected within, at least by the hierarchy, and the problem has become a serious threat to Christian fellowship in the mission church. Significantly, statistics of lapsed Christians are not kept by the clergy, but an increasingly large percentage of Christians, the writer estimates possibly as high as 35%, are falling into this category or have remained so, some for as long as 25 years.[31]

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31. Referring to a similarly deteriorating situation in the Anglican Church in Buganda, Taylor writes warningly: "A Church in which the majority of adult members are permanently excommunicated is a monstrosity which demands the most serious reappraisal of basic assumptions". J. V. Taylor, Growth of the Church in Buganda; London: S. C. M., 1958, p. 182.

From the old system of church discipline, excommunication, although now a totally ineffective means of action, has become practically the only device the priest has for dealing with untoward conduct which may or may not in fact be sinful. In 1965, for example, it became an offence punishable by excommunication for any church member to brew, buy or sell intoxicating liquor. However the regulation was never implemented because such vast numbers of Christians were involved, including clergy.[32] The other device used by the clergy for inducing conformity is a form of simony which demands that church dues or other fees be paid in full before one can be baptized, confirmed or married.

While widespread formal excommunication such as is reported in Buganda does not yet exist in Ovamboland, nevertheless it is possible that a psychological form of separation could be developing that is based on resentment and guilt: resentment of the traditional attitude towards sinners and the official practice of discipline, and the guilt of knowing one has violated Christian principles of morality. Men especially who have "fallen" now very often simply remove themselves voluntarily from active membership in the Church, rather than endure the punitive effects of public discipline which aggravate and do not help the individual. Thus, apart from disciplinary measures taken in the schools and hospitals, one may conclude that excommunication in the mission church is unregulated, punitive rather than pastoral, and usually drifts into permanence.[34]

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32. In more recent days, informants report that people have been excommunicated for holding or expressing attitudes and opinions contrary to those of the white bishop and Mission authorities.
33. Valuable information would be provided by a survey of lapsed Christians.
34. Cf. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 245ff.

The holy communion, as recorded in the Gospels and especially in I Cor. 11, was instituted as the great reconciling act of all Christian worship which can take place only in fellowship with other Christians. Theologically one cannot have communion with God apart from communion and fellowship with man.[35] Yet historically the latter dimension has not been sufficiently stressed, and holy communion as a symbol of social reconciliation therefore has not been adequately emphasized. The Catechism defines the nature of the sacrament and the benefits to those who partake as follows:"... the strengthening and refreshing of their souls and bodies, and the building up of their life in His likeness".[36] While one cannot find fault with this definition, nevertheless it is woefully incomplete in not teaching explicitly the social implications of communion. This one vital aspect and "benefit" of communion has largely been ignored, while at the same time major emphasis has been upon penitence, forgiveness, personal strength and peace. The Catechism has said nothing about the sacrament as a unifying, healing act of worship in which discipleship and brotherhood are seen and expressed. Yet the unity which tribal society experiences implicitly can only be demonstrated explicitly in the Church by fellowship, "so that men may see that God does actually effect the reconciliation of men with Him and with one another; unifying, mutual burden-bearing love visible to all is the only pragmatic proof of the claims of Christ that a sceptical world (and tribe) will accept".[37]

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35. Cf. 2 Peter 4.20.
36. Cat. p. 53:258.
37. Anderson, The Theology of the Christian Mission: London: S.C.M. 1961, p. 267.

Again, it must be acknowledged that Anglican theology in its definition of communion has been thorough.[38] Ironically, the weakness of catechetical statements on communion is given one plausible explanation in a basic Anglican theological textbook: "All the main types of Anglican tradition agree in regarding communion as a central and essential element in the Eucharist. The very fact that controversy is not raised upon this point has tended to diminish the stress laid upon it in doctrinal statement, and clear thinking about its nature and implications is often neglected, simply because it is not a subject of dispute".[39]

It is not surprising therefore that among Kwanyama Christians the holy communion is understood predominantly in personal terms. Among 50 people given the question "What to you are the most important benefits of the Holy Communion?", only three replied in social terms: a trained catechist and a nurse replied that "kindness" was an essential benefit, which implies a relationship to others, while another said "to share the same table and food" was a major benefit. A number of respondents were unable to give any answer to the question. Most Christians replied in terms of personal benefit, using catechetical terms such as "everlasting life", "personal strength and power" and "joining us to Christ". Even when asked the question "Do you feel the Holy Communion joins us to our fellow Christians?", there was

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38. See Doct. in the Church of England., pp.165 ff. wherein five actions are identified: (1) an activity of God in Christ towards His faithful people; (2) the appropriation of Christ by the faithful; (3) surrender of themselves in worship; (4) the unity of the faithful with one another; and (5) individual union with Christ.

39. ibid., p. 164, italics mine.

considerable divergence of opinion ranging from a majority of affirmative replies to about twenty per cent who disagreed, and an equal number who were unsure or gave equivocal replies. It is significant that among confirmed Christians, on so basic an issue as this there were widely divergent views, and in many cases, confusion.

As a visible and effective means of expressing unity and reconciliation within society the holy communion is not being used. On the contrary, stress on penitence, confession and being in good standing with the official church, in effect excommunicates increasingly large numbers of Christians. And while the membership increases significantly each year,[40] the number of actual regular communicants is not seen to increase in direct proportion. For the past twenty years concern has been expressed over this failure.[41] In gathering information from representative age groups and geographical areas, three types of explanations were given for this: (1) Christians have "too many problems, troubles and sins now" which make them feel unworthy and unable to receive holy communion. Penitence, which is the necessary response to this situation, has become for many a complicated and possibly bewildering process. Since personal repentance and contrition are not regarded as sufficient in cases of public church discipline, but require the addition of something else besides, the question naturally arises what constitutes this additional requirement in cases of private contrition and repentance? For here too, mere repentance and contrition cannot in themselves atone. In

40. Confirmations averaged 800 to 1000 in the years 1960-68.
41. Cf. Mission Reports, Maramba and Ovatumua, 1948-68.

such cases, if that which is needed to restore a person to communion can only come by means of public discipline, which is still largely the case, most will choose to remain outside.[42] (2) For many Christians the diversions of "civilization" occupy their attention on Sunday. The rapid spread of "shebeens" and "camps", often near the church, have provided greater attraction than the parish church, where sermons and services are usually predictable. Still others use the day for visiting friends, resting and drinking. Even in remote Ovamboland, which is still largely uncomplicated by civilizing influences, Westermann's observation is surprisingly accurate: "The African Sunday, young as it is, assumes the features which largely characterize it in Europe: it is the day on which those things are done for which there is no time during the week ... a chance of enjoying a prolonged sleep ... housework ... and sport".[43] (3) A third explanation was that "people don't fear God anymore" or they have "lost interest in the Church". These general statements probably indicate a number of basically indifferent attitudes; however, a trained nurse believed that many people were no longer interested in the Church because "many things that were taught about God they have seen to be wrong". Another informant elaborated on this statement in saying: "so many things happen in life which cause doubts and what I was taught is not always what I see in the world". He believed that in the early 1950's Christians began questioning some of the simple truths they had been taught earlier; increased contact with

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42. In 1966 one parish (Onekuaja) experimented with abolishing church discipline. The result, according to the priest, was an immediate and dramatic increase in male members who had been lapsed, many of them for years. (From conversation with the Rev. L. N. Ndakalako.).
43. Westermann, op. cit., pp. 130-1.

civilization produced a wider awareness of the world, and "people began learning that life wasn't just one way only". It is significant that the educative experience of discovering the outside world quickly produced a political awareness as well among the Ovambo people, and it was in this decade that Ovamboland political organizations formed and grew powerful.[44]

The place of Christian marriage and the function of healing the sick in the mission church require some discussion in relation to the spiritual maintenance of the community. Both of these functions were an integral part of life in the tribal community. The Church's teaching and policy concerning monogamous marriage is discussed elsewhere.[45] In response to the question "Would it be a sin for a Christian to have more than one wife today?", there was almost equal division between those who agreed that it would be a sin and those who did not. However, it is significant to note that among those who disagreed (24), a large majority (19) admitted that "the Church says it is sin" but they personally either disagreed entirely with this or had reservations about it. Among those who agreed with the Church's traditional teaching on polygamy (25), approximately one-half indicated they didn't know why they agreed.

44. For a good historical resumè of this development, see "How the People Organized" in R. First, South West Africa; Baltimore: Penguin, 1963, pp. 196-208.
45. Vide supra, chap. 3.

In Ovamboland the practice of polygamy among the heathen has decreased steadily in the past three decades, more for economic reasons than from any other pressure. In a study on polygamy elsewhere in Africa, Price lists four pressures which have reduced the practice of polygamy generally:[46] (1) mechanization in farming methods, (2) increasingly smaller gardens to require attention, (3) money and a change from a strictly agrarian economy, and (4) Christian teachings. With some exception of (3), these influences hold true for Ovamboland. While Christian teaching has served as a pressure against polygamy, and thus has become an effective deterrent for Christians, it appears that the influence of these teachings has been unconvincing for the majority. Sound and consistent biblical and theological evidence for condemning polygamy has not yet been produced, and the Church has relied almost entirely on authoritarian pronouncements which even within the relatively unsophisticated society of Ovamboland are no longer convincing to many people. The judgemental and narrow views of African marriage at the Lambeth Conference of 1888 which condemned polygamy became typical of later means frequently used to deal with and to suppress the issue. Whereas in the early and mid-nineteenth century Anglican bishops were not prepared to set hard and fast rules, and advocated the baptism of polygamists under certain conditions,[47] among the C. M. S. missionaries in the 1880's polygamy was alleged to be the principal

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46. T. Price, African Marriage (I. M. C. Research Pamphlet No. 1); London: Lutterworth, 1954, pp. 24ff.
47. cf. E. Stock, The History of the C. M. S., Vol. III; London, pp. 129ff.

reason for "sexual immorality and looseness" in Africa. It was in this heated atmosphere, and a direct result of it, that the issue of polygamy was included in the Lambeth Conference Agenda in 1888. It has been conclusively shown[48] that the final decision of that Conference was the result of C. M. S. influence and lobbying, and not of any sound and learned theological debate or discussion.[49] Subsequent conferences have respected the earlier "investigation" and decision of 1888, and have been unwilling to reverse the decision. Webster, in his analysis of the situation and the subsequent origins of the African Church Movement among the Yoruba, concludes: "European missionaries appeared to base their hostility to polygamy not on the Bible nor on reason, but on the belief that it implied more sexual activity and was therefore immoral. To the African it did not imply this. The mission societies circulated the myth that the cause of the African Church Movement was the desire to practice polygamy, the unwillingness, as they put it, to accept the moral

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48. See J. B. Webster, op. cit.
49. Basically the strife which led to Lambeth emanated in the Upper Niger region, and a reaction to the ill-treatment of Samuel Crowther, the first African bishop of the area. The powerful C. M. S. alleged that gross immorality was practised among the majority of Christians and clergy, and polygamy was cited as the reason. The C. M. S. had a wide audience in England whereas the African Christians had none. Moreover, at Lambeth those directly involved in the committee discussions on polygamy included the English (C. M. S.) bishops of the Niger region, a majority of white bishops who knew nothing of the cultural implications of polygamy, and a pitifully inadequate African representation. Of the total of 104 bishops present, 21 were prepared to accept polygamists while 34 were opposed to any concession, including the admission of wives to membership of the Church. For an interesting discussion on this, see J. B. Webster, op. cit, ; also, 1888 Lambeth Conference Records, in The Six Lambeth Conferences: 1867-1920; London: S. P. C. K., 1920, p. 133.

standards laid down in the Bible, and a retrogressive reversion to neo-paganism".[50]

In speaking about polygamy as it has existed in Ovamboland, informants agree that it has not been principally an occasion for "sexual immorality and looseness". On the other hand, all marriages have tended to follow the tradition of giving loyalty to the clan before the spouse. Thus, while the biblical ideal of Christian monogamous union ostensibly is accepted,[51] in practice rarely will one "forsake all others" for the sake of the spouse. Informants tend therefore to agree that "the Christian marriage vow is a lie (when) it says I take a wife and I shall leave ... my parents and all for her sake".[52] Although this is a flagrant contradiction of the ideals of Christian marriage as taught by the Church, it is an attitude that no amount of Church legislation or official statements can change: only sound and patient teaching will redirect the old clan loyalties and affinities in a new direction. The mission church, however, has been vague and unclear in making plain the distinctive nature of the Christian ideal of marriage. It has accepted traditional patterns of inheritance in marriage; it has condoned the traditional practice of childrearing by the family of the mother's brother; both the government and the church have sanctioned the age-old strict separation of all property between

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50. J. B. Webster, op. cit., pp. 90-1; see also Kenyatta, op. cit., pp. 271ff.
51. Cf. Mark 10. 7-8.
52. Cf. Brandel-Syrier, op. cit., p. 193.

husband and wife;[53] and the church has accepted the traditional major role of the kinsfolk in arranging the marriage, and the fact that frequently love and affection are not primary considerations in arranging a marriage.[54] Thus, while so much of traditional marriage custom is accepted by the church tacitly or otherwise, emphasis on monogamy has become essentially the only overt and distinguishing characteristic of Christian marriage. And it would seem that if so many traditional customs are acceptable in "Christian" marriages, while the sole aspect of polygamy is not, there is inconsistency in both the mission church's thinking and teaching. One inconsistency is especially apparent when the clergy urge couples married by customary union to have their marriage "blessed" by the church; after this is done, without benefit of instruction, the marriage is considered a Christian one. Following such "weddings" there is usually a joyous wedding feast and celebration, irrespective of how many years the couple have actually been "married".[55]

Confusion as to the nature of Christian marriage is therefore understandable and for which we can identify at least two causes: first, the lack of consistent, persuasive evidence to support monogamy in teaching on Christian marriage; and second, the many inconsistencies which are allowed to exist in Christian marriage, so that there is

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53. Cf. Government Proclamation of 1928 excluding community-of-property to natives of the Union.
54. Indeed, unwittingly the church has actively minimized the importance of true love in the marriage relationship by its traditional ruling that when a boy makes a girl pregant he must marry her.
55. Information by informants.

virtually no apparent difference between a good customary union and the average Christian marriage in Ovamboland.

The Catechism has taught Christians that they "ought to believe that the power of Jesus Christ can heal the sick today".[56] However, with the introduction of scientific medicine and the mission hospital, a separate "department" of healing has developed which may appear to have little to do with Jesus Christ and his Church. Moreover, as the Christian healing ministry has developed by means of scientifically-operated hospitals, a dichotomy, real or otherwise, has grown up between the ministry of the "church" and that of the hospital. Accordingly, Christians were asked to answer and comment on the following question: "Do you think the Church today can heal some illnesses which the hospital cannot?". Considerably more than half the individuals interviewed (50) replied negatively to the question, with varying comments: "there is no such illness", "the Church doesn't have that power", "the Church can only heal sins"; while many people indicated in their replies that whereas in earlier days the Church was seen to have powers of healing, today "the Church does not heal sickness <u>anymore</u>". Those responding negatively included two trained nurses, a trained catechist, a teacher, the wife of a clergyman, and two mission workers. That a number of the better-educated Christians responded in this way might indicate an increasingly

56. <u>Cat.</u>, p. 56:271.

"scientifically" orientated outlook towards illness and disease, and a positivist approach to their religion. At the same time this sophistication has tended to diminish belief in any effective role the Church may once have had in healing the sick. However, the mission church has for the past twenty-five years been slow to practice any effective role of healing, and the "Ministry to the Sick" in the Prayer Book (pp. 456-470) is seldom used unless in extreme illness.

In the Mission, various factors can account for the loss of a direct spiritual role in healing. The rapid increase in the institutional demands placed upon the clergy (for a review of this development, vide supra, pp. 76ff.) made it difficult to visit the sick regularly. Also within the hospital the gradual acquisition of impressive medical equipment and facilities and the increase of medical staff created a general impression of self-sufficiency in caring for the sick. Finally, the introduction of science into the schools by the missionaries created, almost simultaneously, a questioning of many earlier assumptions about illness as well as any biblical interpretation of it. Nevertheless, it is possible that the scientific-technological scheme in healing has produced its own barriers. Welbourne believes, for instance, that within the strictly scientific approach to illness (without an equal scientifically "neutral" spiritual emphasis) "the exclusion of devils has made Christian doctors unable to treat men who believe themselves possessed of devils (and) by its scorn of the unscientific, it had made impossible any study of traditional medical wisdom ...".[57]

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57. Welbourne, op. cit., p. 178.

The writer attempted to register how extensively the magico-religious understanding of illness continues to co-exist with the scientific awareness developing among Christians in Ovamboland today. Unfortunately the question was poorly phrased and therefore failed to evoke any useful information from over half those questioned. However, several responses revealed attitudes and hidden beliefs of particular individuals. For instance, the daughter of a clergyman and a trained nurse of some years' experience in the central mission hospital, replied that the family did not refer a recent illness to the witchdoctor "because it was not the type to be treated by the ondudu or we would have gone there".[58] A teacher and principal of a small mission school replied that during a recent illness they visited the ondudu and then went to the hospital; a hospital worker, the wife of a catechist, said that a recent illness in her family was caused by a garment which someone else had worn before; the ondudu was consulted before going to the hospital. At Omboloka, a primitive area quite remote from Mission contact, although a Lutheran hospital is situated only twelve miles away the majority of those interviewed said they referred to the ondudu as a matter of course.

From these tentative findings therefore it appears that among Christians, including those with considerable education and contact with scientific medicine, there is possibly a tendency to respect

58. The most common conditions referred to the ondudu include a a type of bleeding sickness, certain unusual births (e. g. twins), convulsions and fits, and disseminated and localized aches and pains.

western medicine as an effective means of curing sickness, but regarded as a power in addition to traditional medicine, in which the mission hospital is a supplement rather than a substitute for the ondudu. Thus, in a number of cases where the ondudu was consulted, the patient proceeded to the mission hospital later. Unfortunately we do not have information to indicate if the patient was advised by the ondudu to go to the hospital, or if he went because he needed additional treatment. Frequently however the reverse is the case, in which patients leave the hospital after a period of time and seek a "proper cure" from the ondudu, even though it is an excommunicable offence for Christians to consort with witchdoctors. One incidence of this, of which the writer has first-hand knowledge, involved a sub-headman (Valungameka) who was also a church warden (elder). Suffering from pain in the lower leg he visited the local hospital; as there were no organic symptoms apparent, he was given an external application. After visiting the hospital for many months with no satisfactory improvement, he sought treatment from a local ondudu. In an interview with him two days later he reported that his leg was greatly improved and stronger than it had been in many months.[59]

The Church's outright condemnation of the magico-religious understanding and approach to illness has been ineffective in changing peoples' secret attitudes and ideas about illness. Moreover, it has been an insensitive and often ignorant approach to tribal culture

59. However, the "cost" for his cure was great: in addition to payment to the ondudu of several oxen and money, Valungameka was excommunicated for six months. While he did not object to the former, he was completely bewildered by the latter and could not understand why the church did not want him to get well!

which ultimately may have done more damage than good. "Even if the educated white man proves more or less completely unsusceptible to the type of fear ... which proves so potent with simple folk, it does not follow ... that the immature mind will therefore be any better for being cut off from such restoratives ...".[60] And Welbourne has concluded "that our experience in Africa makes it necessary, for the time being, to accept both the scientific and the mystical hypotheses, however incompatible, as each covering, for its own particular culture, the same fundamental phenomenon of the ill-adjusted personality, whether the adjustment is conceived in terms of his own psyche or of psychic forces exterior to him".[61]

Experience has shown that patients frequently refuse to go to the hospital at all, maintaining that some illnesses "can only be treated by native medicine".[62] "Just as it is impossible to treat a neurosis in scientific man by speaking in terms of spirit-possession ... so it is most unlikely that one who believes himself to be bewitched or possessed can be treated without an empathy which may be beyond the powers of the scientifically trained doctor".[63] One such case involved an informant, a Standard VI schoolboy, who believed he had been "poisoned" and would die within five days if he did not return home for treatment. No amount of persuading by the mission

60. R.R. Marett, Sacrements of Simple Folk; London: O.U.P. 1933, pp. 197-8.
61. F.B. Welbourne, in Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists; London: Longmans, 1964, p. 126.

The eminent psychologist, C.G. Jung, once said: "If something which seems to me an error shows itself to be more effective than a truth, then I must first follow up the error, for in it lie power and life which I lose if I hold to what appears to me true".

62. Cf. the reply of the nurse above.
63. ibid., p. 125.

doctor or the threat of dismissal from school would convince the boy he was "wrong", and he chose to leave the mission school in order to return home. For him, it was clearly a matter of life or death, and however important education was, it was secondary to his health and well-being.

We have noted ways in which the Church in Ovamboland has gradually forfeited an active and significant role in the Christian ministry of healing. The dislocation between the two ministries of the clergy and the hospital has occurred to such an extent that leading members of the church today believe "the Church does not heal sickness anymore". Moreover, it would appear that people have given only provisional acceptance of the mission hospital while reserving a significant place for the ondudu in the treatment of certain sicknesses. It has been suggested[64] that the provisional attitude maintained towards the Church's hospitals is partly the result of a misleading role they have been forced to play in the mission of the Church, almost from the beginning. Hence insofar as they have been used primarily as instruments of evangelism, as they have been in Ovamboland (vide supra, p. 35), rather than as disinterested instruments of Christian charity, people have remained suspicious. Certainly in the eyes of the non-Christian, and to a certain extent to the Christian as well, in the mission hospital "what the Church is doing does not have the significance that the Church sees in it, and that she intends others to see. Some of the force of the Gospel message is lost, because it is toned down or because of prejudice, while the witness given by loving service is concealed by what are regarded as

64. Cf. I. R. M. Vol. 52, pp. 27ff.

false motives; ... the measure in which the hospital insists that its purpose is 'evangelistic' as well as 'charitable' is the measure in which its motives become suspect and the clear shining of the Gospel is hidden".[65] While the evangelistic element is inherently present in the institutional work of the Church, such as hospitals and schools, it is obvious that the purpose of these institutions should be primarily to minister to people's needs, rather than to evangelize. And if such institutions operate on this principle, they become valid expressions of the ministry of the Church; yet through the services rendered an evangelistic witness might also find expression.

The last section of our discussion concerns aspects of leadership and ministry in the Church in Ovamboland. Once again we can present only a limited cross-section of opinion from our findings, the significance of which lies more in the intensity of individual comment than in the extent of inquiry. Various questions were asked to determine (1) how individuals felt towards the clergy in relation to the imposition of church discipline; (2) how people commonly regarded the authority of the priest; (3) who were popularly regarded as "the most important people in the Church"; and (4) the degree of respect accorded the Church's ministers in Ovamboland today.

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65. "The Mission and Ministry of the Church", in I. R. M., Vol. 52.

When a Christian has fallen into a serious sin, a sizeable majority of people interviewed (33 to 17) said that in such a situation they would feel "unwanted" by the clergy. However, an identical ratio of people said that under the same circumstances they felt "wanted" by the congregation. This is not surprising if we recall the undesirable role of the priest in administering discipline, in which traditionally he has acted publicly as judge and prosecutor. But it is significant that apart from having to suffer the indignities of church discipline, people still feel condemned by the institutional church and its ministers, in which it appears that the clergy perform chiefly a punitive function rather than a pastoral one. Similarly, two informants indicated that the priest's role as confessor frequently is neither impersonal nor impartial and that people in serious sin therefore are reluctant to go to confession; many feel they can turn to no one for spiritual guidance and comfort in such a situation.[66] However, since church discipline is meted out on an increasing scale according to the frequency of the offence, (<u>vide supra</u>, p. 184), it is inevitable that some record of the individual's sins be kept, and hence that the priest's concern <u>appears</u> to be more with punishment of the sinner than with loving acceptance and forgiveness. The approach of the mission church appears to have aggravated the pastoral role immeasurably, to the extent that in many cases the clergy are feared rather than revered by the sinner.

Despite the severe image many have of the clergy, a large

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66. This probably occurs more often with prominent church members and leaders in which the risk of censure and exposure is greater than with rank-and-file members.

proportion of those interviewed nevertheless believed "the priest has the right or authority to tell you how to live your daily life". Only two out of fifty respondents gave a negative reply, while a few restricted the priest's authority to the context of preaching or giving advice; the majority (35) replied affirmatively. While this may indicate a latent influence of clericalism, a correlation was discovered between these results and the question that followed: "Who are the most important people in the Church?". With only two exceptions, the same people who had acknowledged the priest's authority over their lives felt that "the people" or "the congregation" were the most important part of the Church.[67] Moreover, the majority response here included two trained catechists, two wives of catechists, one clergy-wife, and two mission nurses; whereas those who believed priests and bishops were the most important people in the Church included two catechists, one catechist's wife and a priest's daughter. The overall correlation between the two questions tends to suggest that the effects of the clericalism of the past are breaking down slowly, and the priest no longer has the exalted role he once had.

A number of factors which have contributed to this development in Ovamboland may be noted: (1) the growth of other trained professions of authority and leadership, e.g. teachers, principals, clerks and secretaries, government officials and inspectors; (2) contact with white civilization where authority and prestige are more diversified among other professions, and the role of the clergyman is not always

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67. It is understandable that the two who explicitly denied the priest had any such authority would reply similarly.

a prominent one; (3) growing disenchantment with many earlier teachings of the clergy which were over-simplified or ineffective answers to life's problems; (4) reaction to the priest's vaunted authoritarian role of the past; and (5) an increasing discontent with the indiscretions of the clergy, which at times have bordered on outright corruption.[68] One informant (a deacon) explained that among the common people discontent and lack of confidence in the clergy first began to develop "when the clergy started turning away from what they were teaching". In particular, he cited anger, impatience, lack of love, and hardness as qualities among the clergy which have been mainly responsible for a change in popular attitude. Thus, of those asked to comment on the question "Do you think the Church's ministers are respected deeply and sincerely by most Christians today?", there was almost equal division of opinion: 25 felt they were still respected,21 definitely did not, and four gave equivocal answers. As one might expect, all of those who regarded the clergy as the most important element of the Church also believed they were still a highly respected group.

Anglican Church polity rests on the principle of the autonomy of the episcopate. However, in an African society such as that of the Kwanyama, autocratic government is an innovation which, while being organisationally effective is less effective in gaining genuine popular support. Informants agree, for instance, that if an

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68. The most notorious example of this occurred in the 1950's when a senior clergyman was found guilty of sexual immorality in a tribal court of law. No disciplinary action was taken by the church, however, other than transferring the man to another area.

ecclesiastical authority decrees a policy or introduces a measure, or even takes part in its preparation, the common man sees himself as divorced from participation; and depending on the nature of the decision this may frequently be the overriding factor determining his response, however good the issue or the decision may be. Brandel-Syrier, from similar observations, concludes of the attitude of the common man: "The Africans present will, of course, agree with everything. If the Europeans who convened the meeting are also the employers[69] or dispensers of favours or positions, it would be foolish to do otherwise".[70]

Clericalism has aggravated the leadership role of the clergy considerably, in producing a kind of absolute authority which has become an accepted pattern for the clergy. Whereas Anglican theology defines clearly the role of the laity, it is significant that the Catechism does not incorporate this definition into its teaching:

> "The fundamental priesthood of the Church is ... the priesthood of the whole Body. This is the meaning of the doctrine of the priesthood of the laity ... that the laity are members of that Body which is in its entirety priestly. The 'representative' conception of the priesthood is an expression of this truth, and means that the priest acts as the commissioned representative not either of the hierarchy or of the laity, but of the whole Body of Christ."[71]

Also, the Church is defined as the Body of Christ which "has a ministerial function derived from that of Christ (and) in this function

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69. e.g. bishop, mission director or archdeacon.
70. Brandel-Syrier, op. cit., p. 175.
71. Doctrine in the Church of England, p. 157.

every member has his place and share according to his different capabilities ... (and) the particular function of the official Ministry can only be rightly understood as seen against the background of this universal ministry".[72] In the mission church, the "representative" function which the priest has in conjunction with the congregation is apparent neither in the exercise of the priest's ministry, nor in the selection and ordaining of ministers. Clergy have been selected by higher leaders in the church and trained without any reference to the home congregations where the candidates are best known. And while the Anglican canons allow a constitutional check for congregational dissent at the end of a man's theological training prior to ordination,[73] objections have never been raised by the congregation, even when it was commonly known that there were serious impediments to prevent a candidate from being ordained. In the case of an unfit ordinand when asked why the congregation did not exercise their right of disapproval, people replied: "The leaders have chosen him and they must know what they are doing".[74] If the Church genuinely wishes to invite congregational response to the Si Quis, this must be published either at the time a candidate is being considered for training, or some other time well before the last moment before actual ordination. Another factor which inhibits congregational response is the fact that a man's theological training is paid for by an outside source. In the eyes

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72. ibid., p. 114.
73. Cf. the form of Si Quis, canons of the C.P.S.A.
74. From conversation, July, 1968.

of the people, one is always strictly responsible to whoever pays for education, and whose wishes and decisions are always final. "Where candidates for the ministry are selected by a superior order, where they are ordained solely on the authority of the superior order, and are appointed to their posts by the sole direction of the superior order, those who are appointed are apt to lose any sense of responsibility to the congregation among whom they minister ... and where the superior order consists almost wholly of foreigners, the result is often deplorable".[75]

To what extent the possible trends we have indicated are the result of the historical development of the Mission in Ovamboland, the conflict of cultures, and the emerging educational, social and political awareness of the Kwanyama, it is impossible to say at this point. Historically, while the foreign leadership of the Mission ensured efficiency and "control", it also produced stagnation, frustration and dependence. Clericalism established the undisputed authority of the clergy, but it also isolated the clergy from the people and prevented laymen from taking any active role in the running of the church. The

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75. Allen, loc. cit., p. 100.

It is encouraging to note that the Association of Southern African Theological Institutes (ASATI) is aware of this problem. The Report of the General Secretary of ASATI, January, 1970, made mention of a developing programme of theological education "by extension" with the further statement: "The inclusion of such a seminary in ASATI ought to open our eyes to the possible inclusion of other institutions and/or theological education schemes, which, though they may differ in structure from the typical seminary ... are nevertheless theological institutions working for higher academic and spiritual standards of theological education ..." (from the Minutes of the A. G. M., Jan., 19-21, 1970)

catechetical approach to teaching ensured that the convert was instructed, but failed to educate him in the implications and significance of becoming a Christian. The mission hospitals cured the body, but often failed to evangelize the soul. And while the sacraments of the Church have doubtless brought comfort to many, for many others they have become symbols of Christian acceptability, rather than a demonstrable healing power for sinner and society.

Has the cost been too great? In the conclusion which follows this question will be discussed, along with some possible ways and means for the future of the Church in Ovamboland.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In much of Africa today Christianity has become an institution so taken for granted that little is said about it. The Conference on African History and Archaeology held in 1961 included 123 scholarly presentations, and only one touched even briefly on the Christian Church.[1] Similarly, the First International Congress of Africanists, held in Accra in 1962, ignored entirely the subject of Christianity and its influence in Africa today. Northcott concludes: "To be disregarded and ignored is worse than opposition and destruction for the Christian Church".[2] That the Church's former position of influence and unquestioned authority in Africa exists no longer is everywhere apparent. National governments have assumed responsibility for social services once provided by Christian missions. In quite another way, the spiritual teaching and authority of Christianity is being challenged and ignored: challenged by the forces of nationalism and chauvinism which have given a new dignity and respectability to African culture, and ignored by a growing number who believe the outdated teachings and moral codes of earlier missionaries have nothing to say to modern Africa. In a sense,

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1. Even this reference had nothing to do with present-day Christianity, but referred to the Ninth Century, when Christianity had largely failed to root itself in Africa.
2. C. Northcott, Christianity in Africa; London: S. C. M., 1963, p. 33.

therefore, Christianity in Africa is at a crossroads. Stripped of its former glory and power by secular advances, and with the rightness of many traditional teachings being questioned, the Church urgently needs a critical review of its role in present-day Africa.

As Christian missionaries taught their converts to sing the Magnificat, a revolutionary canticle in any society, and proclaimed the infinite value of each individual in the sight of God, it was inevitable that a social revolution should follow. But many of the earlier missionaries were blind to the implications of their teachings. Indeed, "part of the tragedy of our day is that Christians have rejected the revolution they created, and others stepped in to claim it who have had no part in creating it",[3] and whose systems now often stand diametrically opposed to the Christian ideal and philosophy of life. Cox, van Leeuwen and others have suggested that the process of emancipation from religious constraints, often referred to as "secularisation", is itself the product of Western Christian civilisation.

Anthropologists have maintained it is easier for a society to embrace a new culture in its entirety, than to attempt to piece together two cultures.[4] Christian missionaries in Africa have generally operated on this principle. H. Richard Niebuhr has described five classical patterns of interaction between Christianity and culture, in

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3. All Africa Churches Consultation, 1965, p. 38.
4. However they do not offer any examples of such wholesale take-overs.

which two are most clearly represented in Africa.[5] Missionaries from the west have tended to accept the "Christ of culture" attitude towards their own culture, and the "Christ against culture" attitude towards African culture. This is clearly the characteristic tendency in the history of the Anglican Mission in Ovamboland. Missionary efforts to civilize and Christianize were inextricably bound up together, and on occasion this accounted for the condemnation of traditional practices that could not be condemned purely on Christian principles alone.[6] While the tendency of associating Christianity with Western culture has produced a missionary culture of its own, this is only one aspect of the whole "Christian-western" culture,[7] a culture which is also scientific, industrial, democratic, and to a great extent individualistic. In Ovamboland, for instance, among the clergy, there is a determined resistance against any fundamental changes in the music, liturgy or order of the mission church; likewise, the laity resist attempts to introduce new practices into their worship, however "indigenous" they may be. Thus, existing habits and practices in the church, which have become a part of the missionary culture, may be entirely "western" but not essentially "Christian".

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5. See H. R. Niebuhr, Christ and Culture; New York: Harper, 1951, chaps. 2-6. The five types developed by Niebuhr are Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ transforming culture.
6. e. g. witchdoctors, polygamy and native medicine.
7. Welbourn uses this term to describe the condition in which "the faith is inextricably interwoven with the techniques and values of a civilisation which it has itself helped to create". See F. B. Welbourn, East Africa Rebels; London: S. C. M., 1961, pp. 170-1.

It was inevitable that early missionaries in Ovamboland should make numerous assumptions in their approaches; yet whenever the superiority of these was assumed, the life of the mission church was jeopardized. "It is the gravest possible mistake for Europeans to suppose, because of the technological success of modern Western civilization, that other cultures can offer no desirable alternative ... the white man must at least respect the African's right to be different, even if he is too slow to realize how much the world needs the African vision".[8] What has beenthe nature of these assumptions in the policy and practice of the Ovamboland Mission?

Roles of authority in the mission church were carefully guarded almost from the beginning. In the earliest years the independent authority of the missionary was considered necessary to establish respect and influence for the Mission in the country. Ten years later, when the first two Ovambos entered the Ministry, two unmistakable lines of authority had developed: the white missionary over the African, and the clergy over the laity. In the first instance, opportunities occurred repeatedly for a more equitable sharing of authority with the African clergy, but in each instance the basic assumption of white supremacy prevailed. Logical explanations were almost always available. Ironically, the issue of the white control of young churches was dealt with in unmistakable terms in the Lambeth Conference of 1908, many years before: "There is no reason for alarm even if mistakes (in managing their own affairs) are made. It is far better

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8. J. V. Taylor, Christianity and Politics in Africa; London: Penguin, 1957, p. 102.

that mistakes should be made, and bring with them the lessons of experience, than that the Native Christians should stagnate in a position of perpetual dependence".[9] Although the Ovambo clergy were entrusted with the spiritual care of hundreds of parishioners, and on occasion with very little prior experience (vide supra, p. 76), they were never given the responsibility of keeping their own finances, determining Mission policy in their own areas, or making administrative decisions concerning the Mission as a whole. The recurrent assumption by the whites was that the Africans were not sufficiently ready for this kind of "greater" responsibility.[10] As Venn's "three-self theory"[11] for the full development of local churches was drastically altered after his death, so in Ovamboland self-support became the implicit sine qua non for everything else. Self-government became tied to the criteria of moral and intellectual readiness, and the missionaries became the arbiters of African readiness for leadership. In the meantime, the role of the missionary became all-important as he filled the essential positions of responsibility in the young mission church. "The major condition which set Africa apart from Europe or America was the presence of the missionaries. Adaptation meant finding a

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9. Lambeth Conference Reports: 1888-1920, Committee on Self-support and Self-government, p. 376.
10. Commenting on the perrenial question of whether the African is "ready" for self-government, whether politically or ecclesiastically, Taylor maintained in 1957 the question was irrelevant. "Almost all honest African leaders will say that they do not feel ready for political responsibility. But no one can learn to drive a car until the instructor takes his hands off the controls; and if the police insisted on 100% road safety, there would be no cars on the road at all...". Taylor, op. cit., p. 95.
11. Self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing.

a place for themselves in the Church in Africa. They sought to be external to the Church, yet in a position of control while giving a semblance of authority to African leaders ..."[12]

In the early 1950's, after Dymond's declared policy of "consolidation" and cut-back in expansion, (vide supra, chap. 1, p. 81), a dramatic increase in the statistics is recorded. While this suggests possibly a brief "revival" in the mission church, it is more likely the statistics reflect a reaction to the white Director's policy, which was forced upon the clergy and catechists despite numerous local requests for expansion.[13]

Tractarian influences have remained in the Church of the Province and help to account for the clericalism prominent in the mission church. The authority of white clergy over African provided the example for the authoritarian role of the parish priest. It is significant that no steps were taken, either in the Church of the Province or in Ovamboland, to implement the 1920 Lambeth Resolution which urged that congregations establish councils "which shall be fully representative of the congregations, and have real responsibilities of government".[14] The Resolution stated further that these local bodies should be entrusted with "a real share in the financial control and general direction of the work of the Mission".[15] Neither the laity of the congregations nor the parish priest enjoyed these privileges, and all

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12. J. B. Webster, The African Churches Among the Yoruba: 1888-1922; London: O. U. P., 1964, p. 192.
13. Although the statistics given in Chapter 1 indicate a definite lowering of standards in baptismal and confirmation preparation, it it very possible that these standards, which were largely established by the white missionaries, were deliberately lowered in a reaction to the resented policy of consolidation - for the latter in effect meant saying "no" to those who were asking to have the Gospel preached to them.
14. See Resolution 34, Sect. 1, Lambeth Conference Report of 1920.
15. ibid., Section 3.

"financial control and general direction" rested with the white Mission Director and his white colleagues.

Although tribal society depended upon the mutual support and interdependence of every member, the mission church failed to exercise these relationships in a meaningful way. The unquestioned authority of the missionaries introduced a rift and clericalism, once entrenched, made it complete. A significant opportunity to build upon an existing essential social principle was thus lost to the young mission church: "The essence of native social values is a readiness to give mutual help, a feeling of interdependence which is realized in service. If this is not present in an African Church, it has lost the best of its national heritage".[16] Laity were not used in the leadership of the local church, nor was a shared ministry apparent at any level. The notion of lay service to the church, although attempted as an alternative means of paying church dues (vide supra, chap. 1, p. 65), failed to gain popular support and was generally ineffective. There was little sense of mutual responsibility for the life and maintenance of the church, as these were largely clerical concerns. Moreover, without church councils or a representative body, the congregations were powerless to voice any opinion to the bishop or provide any check on their ministers. Thus clergy were appointed without reference to the congregations concerned, and training for the Ministry gradually came to place greater emphasis upon the character and education of the man than upon the needs of the people in the local church.[17]

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16. D. Westermann, Africa and Christianity; London: O. U. P., 1937, p. 173
17. Cf. R. Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church; London: World Dominion, 1927, pp. 177 ff.

"There is much justification for saying that one of the frustrating features in the life of the younger churches is that they are ... still to a large extent in their structure and form of expression, spiritual colonies of the West ...".[18] Dating in South Africa from the time of Robert Gray, unwieldy diocesan (and hence parochial) structures were perpetuated in Damaraland and Ovamboland. The Bishop of Damaraland was unable from the beginning to minister effectively to the diocese of some 250,000 square miles, and Ovamboland received only an annual visit from the bishop. As the Mission grew both in numbers and size, the clergy were increasingly less able to minister effectively to their people. Although the problem was basically one of structure and administration, no alternative solution was sought in these terms, short of "consolidating" the work of the Mission and appealing in vain for more missionaries.

> "The conception of the Church, held both by the Episcopacy at home and by the leaders of the societies, was identical ... the only Church organisation with which they were familar was the organisation of a national Church, in a country which had for centuries been nominally Christian. They thought of bishops as great officials governing and directing ... large numbers of clergy ... in dioceses so large that they could not possibly visit the parishes except at rare intervals. They thought of parish priests ... who ruled almost autocratically in their parishes, responsible not at all to the laity for their conduct ... they thought of the laity not so much as members of the Church but as people whose

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18. H. Kraemer, quoted by B. J. Marais, Two Faces of Africa; Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1964, pp. 184-5; italics mine.

> duty it was to obey the Church as represented by her bishops and priests ..."[19]

The clergy became administrators of the sacraments and had time for little else; essential teaching and preparation of converts was neglected or left for others to do.[20]

The institutionalizing of the Mission in Ovamboland was a natural extension of clericalism and its authoritarian structures. As each department grew, greater emphasis was placed upon the specific function of each department than upon a common and uniting purpose for the Mission, one in which each should have an equal responsibility and share. In time the clergy had less to do with the healing work of the hospital, and in turn the nurses felt no obligation towards the spiritual work of the church; on the contrary, they saw little relevance of it to their scientifically-orientated department (vide supra chap. 4 p. 246). Mission teachers likewise saw their work as having little to do with a purpose in common with any other "department" of the Mission. Thus, "secularization" started to occur more from a

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19. R. Allen, op. cit., pp. 163-4.
20. Sundkler cites the instance of a keen layman, who in similar circumstances in Nigeria urged that laymen be authorized to perform the sacraments, including Holy Communion, to which the bishop replied: "The desirability of too frequent communions for a primitive people is one which is open to grave question". However, in the same context, the bishop ended by saying: "The greatest problem which the Church has to face is the rapid growth of its numbers". B. Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa; London: S. C. M. 1960, p. 69.

lack of overall strategy and integrated purpose than as a natural maturation process. The laity were defined exclusively in terms _distinct from_ the clergy, and the important concept of the _laos theou_, the people of God, as presented in 1 Peter 2, was neglected entirely. These developments in the mission church were the inevitable consequence of the tractarianism characteristic of the whole Church of the Province. Moreover, Anglican canon law in general has assigned a limited role to the laity, subordinate to the clergy in matters concerning the administration of the parish, electing a bishop, and appealing to the Metropolitan; and none of the spiritual or evangelistic functions of the clergy are enjoined upon the laity by canonical definition.[21]

In addition to unwieldy administrative structures inherited by the mission field, liturgical forms of worship were obviously foreign. Certainly this was unavoidable in the beginning, when Christian worship was a totally new innovation. But as people learned to praise God in worship, they continued to do so in foreign idioms of music, words and forms not always conducive to a full and spontaneous response. In time, these foreign expressions were accepted as a necessary part of Christianity, and local forms of expression for Christian worship implicitly were regarded as an antithesis. A few efforts were made to incorporate indigenous music and rhythm into worship services (_vide supra_, chap. 1, p. 50); and while these experiments were moderately successful, they were basically _superficial_ efforts and failed to provide

21. See especially Canons XXV and IV in the _Constitution and Canons of the C. P. S. A._; Cape Town, 1962.

any lasting value. Later, brief attention was given to the possibility of Christianizing the efundula initiation rite and using it in conjunction with baptism or confirmation, but this effort was abandoned because of heathen associations and suspected forms of immorality in the ceremony. While missionaries frequently saw the need for making Christian worship more "relevant" to the Ovambo people, the issue was never examined on a sufficiently fundamental level to achieve anything. The Church as a whole has been reluctant to study this issue deeply, partly because of traditional assumptions that Anglicanism cannot survive too far removed from Prayer Book terminology and plainsong settings. Instead, attempts to relate local culture to obviously foreign forms of worship have been confined to periodic minor compromises.

Cullen Young has suggested such efforts are misplaced; a more fundamental study is required: "It is necessary to bring into prominence the great body of African belief *out of which* those rites and ceremonies have grown, rather than spend time in debate as to which if any ... may be suitable for treatment so as to bring into an acceptable shape to Christian thought".[22] The essential problem is not the adaptation of African ceremonial by foreign hands, but to make clear that Christian worship is a responsive act performed by many different cultures of men, and that the authenticity and spontaneity of the response depends essentially upon a meaningful expression of the culture. But "meaningful expression" is related to thought, to the

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22. C. Young, *African Ways and Wisdom*, London: U. S. C. L., 1937, pp. 121-22; italics mine.

Weltanschauung of the local people in every instance, so these things must be studied first. Whatever develops in new forms of worship will then come from within the African system of thought, from within the African mind. This underlines the fundamental need for more theological study of the traditional assumptions made by Western Christendom in the Church's Mission to Africa.

In addition to the theological implications involved in relating Christianity to Africa, there are equally great political and social implications. Any consideration of the indigenous non-Christian world-view, out of which the Church might hope to rescue selected elements for meaningful incorporation into Christianity, must be submitted to the crucial test of what Christianity looks like in Africa today. If this is done, one may suddenly find there is weakness at the very point where there should be strength.[23] Christianity professes fellowship and comradeship in Jesus Christ, but in Africa it manifests insufficient of either to make up for the essential social interdependence of clan life. The Mission in Ovamboland suffered because there was no apparent interdependence or mutuality between the missionaries and the people. The relationship was essentially paternalistic, as giver to receiver. Missionaries lived in special houses with comforts and amenities vastly superior to the people; they travelled in vehicles, managed the affairs of church, school and hospital, and depended on the African only to cooperate and obey instructions in getting the job done. And although

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23. Cf. Young, op. cit., p. 126.

missionaries thus depended on the people for very little, the people depended on the missionaries for almost everything. Real interdependence of mutual giving <u>and</u> receiving therefore became impossible.

In attempting to introduce scientific medicine into a primitive society, two approaches are possible. One may regard traditional beliefs about sickness as nonsense and try to <u>disprove</u> them by scientific argument and evidence. Or one may employ the approach used by Jesus in dealing with a bewitched person; he maintained that no power of magic can be omnipotent and that God's healing power is sufficient to overcome all powers and devices of man. The wisdom of the second approach is obvious: while it might make full use of scientific medicine, it did not deny the reality of the individual's conviction that he was bewitched. However, the scientific-western approach has been more characteristic of medical missions, and of the Mission in Ovamboland. But, it is equally certain that the attempts to deny, argue, cajole or ridicule the sick and the bewitched into submission have succeeded in doing little more than that. Witchcraft is <u>still</u> a force to be reckoned with, and the witchdoctor may have as many customers as he ever did. Little has been achieved by condemnation, especially as this has generally occurred without real understanding. The real question the Church in Africa needs to ask

is not how it can best counter heathenish beliefs and convince the people they are wrong, but how the Church can bring Jesus Christ into this situation as the liberator from all powers of evil. The one involves preaching the Gospel: the other involves defending scientific technology.

In forming conclusions as to the effect of theological and doctrinal teaching in the mission church, one thing seems clear from the evidence: the manner in which the faith was taught has generally been as problematical as the actual teachings. For example, to require extensive learning before baptism and confirmation may have been more detrimental than helpful, and Christianity for many today has come to involve greater commitment to a body of doctrinal information than to a personal relationship to Jesus Christ.[24] In severe crisis, it is Kalunga who is invoked more often than the Saviour. (*vide supra*, chap. 3 p. 173). While one can understand the arguments in favour of thorough preparation before baptism, they nevertheless were based largely on the unproven assumption that to baptize primitive people before extensive teaching would result in ignorant Christians with little commitment and devotion to Christ.

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24. Allen has commented: "Our doctrine so dominates our minds that we can scarcely believe that men can love Christ and be saved by Him unless they know and use our doctrinal expressions". (*op. cit.*, p. 75.).

But can one assume that learning many "correct answers" ever produces genuine commitment and dedication to Jesus Christ?

Much of the doctrinal teaching of the Mission was in fact a form of denominationalism. This was particularly obvious in relation to the neighbouring Finnish Lutheran Mission which, in turn, required its own forms of Christianity much in the same way as the Anglicans. Christians from the Anglican Mission were usually keenly aware that they were different from (and generally superior to) their Lutheran neighbours: they were "catholic", whereas the latter were rival Protestants with different beliefs and practices.[25] Oosthuizen has observed of the divisive forces of denominationalism: "Missions and churches had their share in disintegrating tribal life, but the complaint is often heard that they have replaced it by tribalism of another form: denominationalism".[26] Moreover, in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Ovamboland Mission, there was often an incalculable gap between the Gospel as taught and the Gospel as it was understood. The sinfulness of man which caused the Crucifixion, the Atonement of the Cross, the necessity of grace through the sacraments which unite man with Jesus Christ - all of these elements were there. But the message that was received, and upon which individuals have based their Christian faith, is mainly about a transcendent God and a legalistic system of moral conduct which qualifies or disqualifies one from good standing in the church and

25. It is not surprising that the popular antipathy expressed towards the protestant Lutheran Christians was seldom shown towards Roman Catholics, whose doctrine and practices were similar to the Anglican Church.

26. G. C. Oosthuizen, Theological Discussions and Confessional Developments in the Churches of Asia and Africa; Amsterdam; Wever, 1958, p. 265.

participation in the sacraments.[27]

The effectiveness of Our Lord's teaching was largely because it was rooted in the common life and experience of his hearers.[28] Although missionaries in Ovamboland were aware of the cultural characteristics of the society, insufficient cognisance was taken of the psychological and mental characteristics of the people in teaching the Christian faith. Essentially one catechism has been used throughout the Anglican Communion, and missionaries have used it, virtually unaltered, in dealing with widely differing cultures. Whereas in India, China and Japan, early steps were taken to adapt Christian missions to the indigenous religions, "in Africa a distinguishing mark of missions has been their almost unanimous refusal to incorporate elements of the local traditional cults in any shape or form within the Christian system of religious thought and practice".[29] The experience of the Ovambo was not sufficiently taken into account, and many teachings thus were superficial. The degree to which Christianity has remained

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27. Taylor comments on a similar situation observed in Uganda, in which the Anglican missionary emphasis was strongly evangelical: "The average Christian knows about the Cross, and the salvation of his soul, almost to the point of glibness. But the whole of the Faith and the Bible in particular, seems to him often remote from his daily life...". J.V. Taylor, I. M. C. Research Pamphlet No. 6; London: S. C. M., 1958, p. 21.
28. Educators today speak of this discovery, almost as if they invented the technique: "It is of prime importance to link education with experience and life-situations ... and a new understanding of what is meant by experience ... can achieve a 'breakthrough' in Christian education ...". D. S. Hubery, Teaching the Christian Faith Today; Surrey: N. C. E. C, 1965, p. 52.
29. C. G. Baëta, Christianity in Tropical Africa; London: O. U. P., 1968, p. 6.

foreign to the Ovambo people may be in direct proportion to the methods of teaching, which have not been based sufficiently on the culture and the background of the hearer.[30] However, a dilemma was created by the introduction of Western education into the mission schools, in which experienced-based learning was clearly not possible. Teaching in the schools was understandably more concerned with content than with method; but the same approach was used in teaching the elements of Christianity, and extensive use of memorization and recitation became indispensable aids to "learning". Thus, in dealing with the problem of educating the African in general, and preparing him for "intelligent" participation in the Church in particular, the solution often adopted by missions has been "to transform the minds of native children into European minds; but then this is only in appearance a solution ... (for) much of what they teach natives is quite unintelligible ...".[31]

Of the actual teachings presented by the missionaries, not much remains to be said (vide supra, chaps. 3-4 for a detailed discussion). The shortcomings and weaknesses appear to be characteristic of the Christian Mission in Africa; membership through baptism and confirmation has divided those formerly united by tribal ties, without

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30. For a discussion on this subject, see "The Meaning and Place of Missiology Today", in I. R. M. Vol. 57 (1963), pp. 460ff.
31. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Theories of Primitive Religions; London: O. U. P., 1965, p. 14.

achieving a comparable sort of unity in the new group; holy communion has been interpreted more in personal terms as a sacramental sign of respectability than of grace and goodwill towards others; a Christian marriage is any monogamous union blessed in church, but differing little from customary union; and sin is understood largely in terms of breaking a commandment or a rule of the church. "Christian missionaries have set their faces against all the patently 'uncivilized' aspects of native culture, whether or not they were strictly forbidden by the Scriptures: they have opposed polygamy, slavery, the payment of the bride-price, initiation ceremonies, dancing, wailing at funerals, and the beliefs in magic, along with human sacrifice and the exposure of twins, as all being equally repugnant to a civilization in which mechanical warfare was a recognized institution".[32]

The attitude towards polygamy was fixed by Anglican policy in 1888, and it is not within the scope of this thesis to undertake a critique of Lambeth Conference policies. However certain observations can be made here in terms of the missionary setting.[33] While it is true to say that the practice of polygamy is slowly decreasing in Ovamboland, the experience of the writer indicates, and informants confirm, that polygamous-like sexual conduct is today quite common for men. Writing on Africa in general, Professor Southall states: "The usual male reaction (to monogamy) has been either to practice successive monogamy ... which is polygynous from the diachronic point of view, or to combine official monogamy with concubinage, (while)

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32. Welbourn, op. cit., p. 179, quoting Mair, An African People, p. 3; italics mine.
33. See Appendix for a summary of the attitudes and policies of the major churches in South Africa on the matter of polygamy.

only small numbers of men in the elites strongly influenced by Christian belief set a positive value on the strict observance of monogamy".[34] Modern conditions in Africa have introduced a new pattern of broken but undissolved marriage, where the husband leaves home seeking employment and is separated from his wife for long periods of time. An intolerable situation is thus created in which the only advice the Church can give is for both husband and wife to uphold the principle of chastity in maintaining the marriage vows. While sexual licentiousness can never be condoned, regardless of rulings on polygamy, nevertheless a situation exists in which the Church can give little useful pastoral guidance or comfort. Although the issue of polygamy was "settled" officially by ecclesiastical statement in 1888, it has yet to be solved adequately in terms of biblical evidence and a thorough understanding of it in terms of African culture. The imposition of an inflexible ruling has been insensitive to innumerable personal problems, often with extenuating circumstances "... in which it would be sheer brutality for the Christian Church to confront men with the choice between baptism and institutional polygamy".[35] Nevertheless, this _is_ the alternative Lambeth has presented to Africa to the present. Hellander, in a study on polygamy, has pointed out that the Bible, which has much to say about marriage, is clear in condemning loose, irresponsible sexuality and adultery, but says nothing clearly condemning polygamy as an established form of marriage.[36] While the New

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34. A. W. Southall, _Social Change in Modern Africa_; London: O. U. P., 1961, p. 281; cf. also J. V. Taylor, _Growth of the Church in Buganda_; London: S. C. M., 1958.
35. Karl Barth, _Church Dogmatics_, Vol. III, Part 4; Edinburgh: Clark, 1961, p. 203.
36. Cf. G. Hellander, _Must We Introduce Monogamy?_ (A Study of Polygamy as a Mission Problem in South Africa); Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1958, pp. 52ff.

Testament holds up the many aspects of Christian morality as the ideal to which one must strive, Western tradition holds up monogamy as the prerequisite to baptism itself. Far from being merely a goal of Christian morality, it has been treated as a requirement, along with repentance and faith. "We preach with our mouths that Christ came to save, but by our action we preach that men must do first for themselves what we say He came to enable them to do".[37] Paradoxically, as the Church has encountered primitive societies it has invariably emphasized a religion of law rather than one of grace, and frequently the laws were ready-made, such as the law of monogamy.

The effect of imposing a legalistic moral code upon a primitive society is strikingly apparent in the mission church's dealing with sin. Previous analysis with regard to various individuals has shown a common lack of a sense of personal responsibility for sin (vide supra, chap. 4). Hence, in presenting Christian morality to a society formerly guided by corporate social pressure (conscience?) and mutual responsibility to the tribe, the individual was taught that he was personally responsible to God for his own actions. But stressing Christian morality by means of injunctions and prohibitions imposed by an outside authority(the Church)generally did two things. First, it relieved the individual from being answerable to society for misconduct; and secondly, it denied, for many, any sense of personal responsibility to God for sin and misconduct. Had teaching on sin and forgiveness been more evangelical in nature, stressing judgement before God, understanding might have been different; however, "judgement" was

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37. R. Allen, op. cit., p. 94.

invariably seen as a function of the clergy, who imposed varying degrees of discipline on sinners, the logic of which was by no means obvious.

In conclusion therefore one can suggest at least two weaknesses in the approach to Christian morality. First, ideals as they have developed in the West tend to be individualistic, in which the place of the individual is more important than that of society; personal acquisition, competition and excellence have become desirable standards for individual conduct. The conscience of the individual plays an important role in that one is held personally responsible for success or failure, right conduct or wrong, within the limits of the standards. African society, on the other hand, is based psychologically and emotionally on tribal man as the personification of a number of forces. He "exists" <u>because</u> of his society, not in competition with other members of it, and morality and conformity are the result of <u>social</u> pressure rather than individual responsibility. But Christian missionaries from the West have taken little account of these fundamental differences, in attempting to teach personal moral responsibility. This has liberated the individual from the restraint of social forces, and at the same time it made him answerable to an external code of conduct laid down by the mission church to which he feels only limited commitment. One African has therefore observed: "What is distressing is that the fear of the evil consequences of immorality which once existed with superstition ... has been dispelled by Christianity and education", resulting in a lack

of any moral restraint for most.[38]

Secondly, as a result of this individualistic emphasis in the mission church there has been nothing comparable to replace the tribal community which within the primitive standards of its day was mutually supportive and corrective. The mission church congregation probably could have become an effective substitute for the old society, but the laity were not given sufficient responsibility or authority for this to develop. (vide supra, especially chap. 3, p. 186). Nearly 50 years ago Smith warned of what was happening:

> "The invasion of Africa by Europeans means the innoculation of the Africans with the germs of individualism ... which is carrying everything before it with a rush: taxes are levied and paid by individuals; wages are paid to individuals; when a crime is committed it is the single person and not the clan that expiates it; the missionary seeks the conversion of individuals and teaches that every man and woman is personally responsible to God."[39]

Developments in Ovamboland since 1964 indicate the need for a reappraisal of the Christian Mission in the area that will penetrate

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38. H. Debrunner, Witchcraft in Ghana; Kumasi, 1959, p. 69, quoting a Ghanaian Christian teacher.
39. E. Smith, The Golden Stool; London: Holborn, 1926, p. 214.

beneath the visible structures required for self-government and self-rule, to the cultural assumptions and theological teachings upon which the mission church was founded and developed. Such developments include: State take-over of mission schools in 1964 and extensive development of Government schools throughout the country;[40] Government control of all mission hospitals and clinics; increasing facilities for higher education, including university and teacher-training programmes; marked increase in Government employment and a sharp rise in salary scales for all employees of the State; a degree of "self-government" by means of a Legislative Assembly; the admission of other churches into Ovamboland, including Zionist and Pentecostalist sects; and tighter control of all missions with regard to all non-religious social programmes and development. Thus, many of the old institutions within the missions either have been usurped by the State, or are continuing in competition, often unsuccessfully and at a financial loss, with those of the State. The prestige and influence of the remaining institutions is now generally small, and people regard them as nothing more than social services. The white missionary is seen as little different from white Government officials, whose motives are frequently suspected. Hence, the mission church which grew influential by means of service institutions is now facing a new era in which most of these functions are no longer effective or necessary. Today the Mission in Ovamboland, like the Church elsewhere, faces a "radically new situation and nothing will suffice save a radical

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40. With the exception, in the Anglican Mission, of three higher primary schools and one secondary school.

rethinking of the nature of her mission ... (which) must include both a realistic understanding of the new facts with which the mission has to deal, and a humble return to the source of the mission in the Gospel...".[41] In discussing this widespread problem at the All Africa Churches Consultation in 1965, the following statement was made:

> "Unless the Church of Christ in Africa ... can so sit loose in this day to the forms which it has inherited from the past as to leave itself free to be the servant of God in the ways which He is trying to show it, then it won't survive; ... in the meantime, there is a lull and perplexed uncertainty in the area of social activity in the life of the Church while governments are taking big strides to make up for time lost in community development and social progress."[42] (pp. 18-27)

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41. Leslie Newbigin, The Theology of Christian Mission, ed., by G.H. Anderson; London: S.C.M. , 1961, p. xiii.
42. Regretably, however, these views are not shared by all churches and missionaries in Africa. Some in fact are oblivious to the revolution taking place and the need to re-examine traditional policies in the light of such developments. In 1965, Dr Z.K. Matthews posed two questions to the churches in Africa: "What is the difference between services conducted by the State and those conducted by the Church?" and, "Are there any differences between a government school and a church school?" Some replies reflected nothing more than perennial missionary assumptions: "... those who have been educated by the Church have that Christian conscience which draws its nourishment, its strength, from Jesus Christ, and this distinguishes them from those who have had a secular or state education". (ibid.)

The Ministry is also facing a crisis. In Ovamboland, with the rapid increase of education, many of the laity are intellectually more developed than the clergy. Moreover, secular employment is providing salaries far in excess of church salaries, as well as creating influential and responsible positions for the laity. Thus, three basic factors at present affect the ministry and may account for its failure to attract young men in any sufficient numbers:[43] (1) The economic position of the priest in the community has deteriorated considerably. "In many areas the pastor receives very much less than the minimum salary paid to the primary school teachers in his parish, while the unordained church worker (e.g. catechists) is often paid less than a house servant".[44] Both situations are true in certain parts of Ovamboland today. (2) The ordained ministry is now inadequate in relation to the number of church members, in which 13 African clergy must attempt to minister to an estimated 42,000 members; and (3) The existing ministry is inadequately trained. Too often the parish priest is regarded by the educated laity as "an itinerant dispenser of sacraments, a collector of subscriptions and dues, or a man whose pay is so often in arrears that one can only think he has a very bad employer".[45]

A vicious circle is thus developing. As society moves away from a tradition of clericalism which centered around the parish priest,

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43. See Appendix for the seven factors given for the overall shortage of clergy in Southern Africa, as given at the First Theological Institute in South Africa, held in 1963.
44. All Africa Conference of Churches Report, entitled "The Crisis in the Ministry"; Kampala, 1963, p. 4.
45. ibid.

so too young men of intellect and determination are moving away from the simple rustic life of the kraal. And those who might be giving valuable and creative Christian insight into new social and economic problems, or explaining the Christian point of view to the young intelligentsia in training colleges and government centres are not there. Secular society in Ovamboland is advancing much more rapidly than the Church is growing. Part of the reason for this is the heritage of a long history of entrenched clericalism. It was a natural step for the clergy to become the functional counterparts of the missionaries whom they are slowly succeeding, and like them to be the sole source of initiative in the Church's work. Conversely, "for the most part African laymen are far too reluctant to take responsibility for action in the Church, while the clergy on their side are often jealous of their position and slow to welcome lay cooperation except under their own restrictive supervision".[46] It is obviously not enough to increase the education and training of clergy alone. What seems to be required is finding a way for all members of the mission church to grow together.

The need for reassessment and changes in the structure and administration of the mission church is becoming increasingly clear.

46. Taylor, loc. cit., p. 12; See also, B. Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa, London: S. C. M., 1960.

However, the essential need for theological reassessment of the Church's Mission in Africa is not as widely recognised. One writer has observed that no All Africa Conference of Churches has yet been held to discuss thoroughly the Church's approach to African religions,[47] and traditional assumptions and teachings continue much as they have done for over 100 years. Moreover, the Anglican Church in South Africa is faced with a double dilemma: on the one hand there is a plurality of cultures that makes a uniform theological approach impossible, in which nevertheless the European still holds the upper hand. Hence, the tacit solution to the present has been to adopt traditional Western theological expression characteristic of Anglicanism overseas. On the other hand, the Constitution of the Church of the Province precludes any expression of faith that is not according to the Church of England; it "disclaims for itself the right of altering any of the ... Standards of Faith and Doctrine" as set forth in the Church of England.[48] Nevertheless it is possible to have liturgical alteration of services, "as may be required by the circumstances of this Province".[49] In other words, the Church in South Africa is empowered to make local adaptations of such relatively minor things as forms of worship, but is denied the freedom to make more basic changes such as theological re-definition of doctrine. Compare this to Article 2 of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa (Kenya) which states:

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47. Cf. Oosthuizen, op. cit., p. 260.
48. See Constitution and Canons of the C. P. S. A., "Standards of Faith and Doctrine", Cape Town, 1962, p. 7.
49. ibid.

> "This Church receives the historic confessions of the Faith ... (and) until such time as the Church shall exercise its right to frame its own confession of faith, it also adopts as subordinate standard the statement ... adopted by the Presbytery of British East Africa."[50]

Article 3 thus continues:

> "This Church has the inherent right ... to frame or adopt its subordinate standards, to notify the forms of expression therein, or to formulate other doctrinal statements ... but always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith."[51]

Anglicanism, far from allowing this sort of continuous discussion and restatement, tends to create a static and unchanging theological climate.

The expression of Christian doctrine should be the prerogative of the younger churches, as one Afro-Asian commented: "If we do 'de-mythologize' and purge out 'Western elements', ... if our doctrine is Biblical, it is the task of Western, African and Eastern Churches to get down to the Bible and render its teaching incarnate in his own situation".[52] Such a fresh restatement of doctrine by the Church in Africa could greatly enrich the Church elsewhere and restore a wholeness to Christianity of certain elements largely lost to Western Christendom: a fuller concept of the koinonia of believers in Christ, a new understanding of man's social interdependence, the relationship

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50. Oosthuizen, op. cit., pp. 270ff; italics mine.
51. ibid.
52. M. A. C. Warren, Perspective in Mission; New York: Seabury, 1964, p. 47.

of the "sacred" and the "secular", and the sanctity of all life. John Mbiti suggests that a theology suitable for the Church in Africa must necessarily include (a) traditional Christian theology, both Eastern and Western, (b) biblical theology, (c) the theology of African religious concepts and practices, and where possible, their theological encounter with Islam.[53] But, he concludes, "so far the Church in Africa ... depends entirely on imported theology from Europe and America".[54]

"They shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into the city" (Rev. 21.26). Only that which will indeed allow and encourage the Church in Africa to express its own distinctive "glory and honour" will be worthy of the Mission of Christianity in the future. We have seen some of the effects of "partisan Christianity" in Africa, as represented by various societies and denominations. And to this one can conclude that "... a little less Presbyterianism, a little less Anglicanism, a little less Lutheranism .. would do no harm, while a little more Africanism would do a great deal more good. Christianity ... must become as African a religion to the Africans as it is today a European religion to the Europeans".[55]

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53. Cf. J. Mbiti, Christianity in Tropical Africa, ed. by C. G. Baëta; London: O. U. P., 1968, pp. 332ff.
54. ibid.
55. B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets in South Africa; London: O. U. P., Second ed., 1961, p. 31.

The "Africanization" called for does not imply abandoning Christocentric worship nor forsaking fundamental doctrine, but a more meaningful expression of the saving truths of the Gospel and the African's heart-felt response to them. Only when these things are accomplished in the Church will the African have, in the words of F. B. Welbourn, "a place to call home".[56]

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56. Cf. F. B. Welbourn, East Africa Rebels; London: S. C. M., 1961.

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APPENDIX A

FIELD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questions were used in interviewing individuals in various areas of the Mission's work:

1. When you were first taught about the Church, what were you taught that Christian Baptism actually meant?

2. a) Does the Church forbid a Christian attending a heathen festival?
   b) Would the Church forbid a Christian taking part in a sacrifice for your brother's son, if he was at the point of death?

3. What have you been taught to understand Confirmation is?

4. What made you a member of the Church: baptism or confirmation? Explain why you chose the answer you give.

5. Do you think this sacrament saves a man regardless of his later life?

6. What do you understand the Holy Communion to be?

7. What, to you, is the most important benefit of the Holy Communion?

8. Do you feel that the Holy Communion joins us to our fellow Christians in any way? How?

9. Why do you think people don't go so often for their Holy Communion, as they did in the early days?

10. When did you last attend a sacrifice for the ancestors (ovakwamungu), and for whom was it performed?

11. In the Old Testament, men often had more than one wife; would this be a sin today for a Christian? (if reply is in terms of what the Church says, find out personal opinion as well).

12. a) Have you or any member of your family been seriously ill recently?
    b) Who or what caused the illness?
    c) What did you do about it?

13. Jesus healed the sick Himself. Do you think the Church today can heal some sicknesses the hospital cannot? (any examples?)

14. a) What do you think are the three most serious sins?
    b) What do you think is the most common sin amongst Ovambo people?

15. Do you feel that Church Discipline helps the sinner to reform?

16. When you (or your friends) have fallen into serious sin, do you feel wanted/unwanted by: (a) the clergy? (b) the congregation? (c) the whole church?

17. Do you feel the Church shows that lapsed Christians are welcome in the Church?

18. What right or authority does the priest have to tell you how to live your daily life?

19. Who are the most important people in the Church?

20. Do you think that the Church's ministers are respected deeply and sincerely by most Christians today? If yes, why? If no, why?

APPENDIX B

DETAILED STATEMENTS FROM INFORMANTS P. AND E. CONCERNING INFANT BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

INFANT BAPTISM:

"P" stated that most people, if not all, still believe firmly in the necessity of having their babies baptised. "There is still a widespread fear that the child may die and thus go to hell if he is not baptised". "P" disagrees with this idea, however, "but I am in a very small minority who disagree; and I do so because I cannot understand how a baptism sponsor can believe for another person".

"E" still feels infant baptism is essential. His reasons are sentimental: "When my child grows up I want to be able to tell him he was baptised when he was very small". Other reasons are based on fear: "If he dies unbaptised, I have always been taught his soul would go to hell; and I don't want that to happen, so all my children were baptised as infants".

CHRISTIAN INITIATION:

"P" stated: "Baptism and Confirmation were believed to have some magical effect upon a person; the water was supernatural. And in Confirmation, some kind of power came through the bishop's hands into the person. It all wasn't just an outward sign, but we believed it was also an outward act, by which some great power was given".

"E" stated that in Baptism,"many people believed that the water came from the Jordan River, where Jesus was baptised . In Confirmation, people thought that the bishop was in close connection with Kalunga who spoke to him and gave him some special power; he was then able to give this power to other people by putting his hands upon them. "

CHRISTIANITY:

"P" believed that for most people (including himself, in the beginning), being a Christian meant mainly following a new set of rules. "Free will meant choosing God, but did not mean one was free to choose his own conduct". "One was given many new rules which helped one get to heaven, but he wasn't free to choose or decide things for himself".

"E" said "Christianity was mainly a set of rules in the beginning"; but through subsequent study and education, he has learnt that the freedom given a Christian involves deciding how to interpret the rules.

OFFICIAL MISSION POLICIES CONCERNING POLYGAMY IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Information taken from G. Hellander's study on polygamy, Must We Introduce Monogamy?; Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1958)

1. THE ANGLICAN CHURCH policy is not to baptise any man who is living in polygamous union. Women married to polygamists may be baptised, but any woman already baptised is forbidden by penalty of excommunication to marry a polygamist. The Bishop of Zululand stated: "It is not easy to prove the necessity for monogamy by reference to the New Testament. We appeal rather to the long tradition of the Church and teach our people the nature of love and family life".

2. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, while following substantially the Anglican policy on polygamy, by means of a special licence from the bishop, will allow a man with several wives to become a full member of the church. Hellander observes, however, that this seems to have been practised only in cases of chieftains.

3. THE BANTU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH formerly required polygamists to marry their first wives before being admitted into membership. However, present policy admits a man with his wives, but prohibits any man or woman living in polygamous union to be elected to any office in the church.

4. LUTHERAN HANOVARIAN FREE CHURCH baptises no polygamists "as a rule, except on the death-bed". At such time, he must dismiss all extra wives and arrange for their support.

5. THE LUTHERAN MISSION IN NATAL (Hermannsburg) reported: "We have no difficulty in convincing natives that monogamy is of a higher level than polygamy, or that it is commanded in the Bible. We may give occasional explanations why Christ preached monogamy ... but the ground on which this rule stands is the word of Christ alone".

6. MORAVIAN MISSION (East Griqualand) has rules that no polygamist may be admitted into the church, and that no exceptions be made. However, the Superintendent of the mission reported: "We missionaries do not feel happy about this application of principle and regard it as immoral and stupid, contrary to the spirit of Christ. Europe has no

right to set up rules and regulations or a code of principles for Africa ... polygamists in Africa can never be convinced of the necessity of monogamy, hence we do not even try to convince them".

LAMBETH CONFERENCE, 1958, Resolution 23 acknowledged "that in every place many problems concerning marriage confront the Church", and thus asked "each province to re-examine its discipline in such problems in full consultation with other provinces in a similar situation".

LAMBETH CONFERENCE, 1968, Resolution 120 (while affirming substantially the original decision of the Conference of 1888) acknowledged that "the introduction of monogamy into societies that practise polygamy involves a social and economic revolution and raises problems which the Christian Church has as yet not solved".

Following the 1968 Lambeth Conference, a Commission was appointed in the C. P. S. A. to study the whole subject of marriage, in which the issue of polygamy will be considered.

APPENDIX D

CLERGY SHORTAGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The following factors were mentioned as responsible for a shortage of clergy in South Africa, at the First Theological Institute in South Africa, held in 1963: (information from I. R. M., Vol. 52 (1963), pp. 280-281)

1. The low spiritual condition of the Church.
2. The decreasing respect for the African minister within his own community.
3. The difficulty that churches are experiencing in supporting the existing number of ministers.
4. Low stipends paid to African ministers.
5. The Church's failure to relate its message to the problems of society.
6. Failure on the part of the African Christian community to recognize the office of the ministry as an integral part of the Church's life.
7. Conservatism of older clergy.

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