Christian Mission in a Multi-faith Context: An Exploration of Christian and Bahai Theory and Praxis in Mission

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Abstract

In 1910, various missionary organizations met in Edinburgh to reflect on the best ways of dealing with denominationalism in the context of evangelism and social action. Out of the conference, the ecumenical movement was renewed and given tremendous momentum. The protestant missionaries were concerned about the context of mission and evangelization. For the last 100 years, the outcome and the aftermath of the conference has continued to influence Christian mission and evangelism. Although African recipients of the missionaries were not represented at Edinburgh, Africa benefited from the missionary zeal and reorganization that was boosted by the conference. However, in the conference only protestant reformed missionary organizations were represented. The desire to include all Christians was evident in the action points that the conference agreed on. Africa in the 21st century, have a different context, things have changed since 1910. Africa has been identified as the spiritual reservoir. Apparently, critical observation questions the quality of Christianity in Africa. Multiple dynamics have shaped the kind of Christianity that we have. Even as we celebrate a hundred years after the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, the presence of other faiths in numbers and activities in Africa has increased with time. In this discussion the Bahai Faith and its global perspective in the theory and praxis of mission is of great concern. The Bahai Faith has continued to draw following from among Christian communities. *In my estimation, it is the lack of a proper perception and practice of Christian mission that has shaped the landscape of Christianity in Africa. On the other hand, Christian mission in theory and praxis does not seek to engage with other faiths and when there is engagement, it is not well thought through. To this end, we find gaps that aid the evangelization of Christians by other faiths and in this case the Bahai Faith.* We therefore find that, in the 21st century we cannot afford to ignore the praxis of Christian mission in a multi-faith context. From a comparative perspective, I will endeavour to demonstrate how the Bahais are making headways in their evangelization, their perspectives to mission and the goal of mission and demonstrate how and why the Bahai Faith among other faiths is a faith to dialogue with if the goal and objective of Christian mission is going to be realized. The big question will be if all faiths have a clear concept of their mission, is it possible for these faiths to join hands for the sake of humanity. What would be the implications of such a move? On the other hand, how should Christians contend their faith in a situation where other religions are ruinously transferring their culture and religion to even Christians?

Keywords: Key words: Edinburgh 1910, mission, Bahai Faith, covenant, praxis, nationhood, imperialism

1. Introduction

Commission IV of the Edinburgh 1910 seemed to advocate that the signs of God's presence could be found in all human religiosity albeit intermingled with inevitable error and corruption (Stanely, 2009, p. 212). Interestingly as Brian Stanley observes Bahai Faith received a few references in the report of Commission IV. Other religions mentioned are 'animistic religions', Chinese religions, Japanese religions, Islam, and Hinduism (Stanely, 2009, p. 213). The report advocated a dialogical approach to other religions. Christian missionaries were thus to enquire into the religions they encounter on the pointers of continuity from those religions to Christianity. But the ultimate goal for the missionaries was the extinction for all religions other than Christianity. Another approach to be found in the report of Commission IV is the idea of challenging the relevance of other religions and confronting their presuppositions.

The idea of Christian mission is traceable in the call of Abraham and the covenant that God made with him. One of the promises to Abraham was that, through him all the nations of the world would be blessed (Hildebrandt, 1996, p. 10). Throughout the Old Testament we read of the decedents of Abraham and how they responded to the Abrahamic covenant. The covenant had land, city, nation(s) and temple as its main features. The descendants of Abraham were promised land that would be used of God to supply their needs. The decedents were also promised a great nation and that through Abraham all the nations of the world would be blessed. The city encompassed the temple. From the city the reign of God was to be taken to all humanity. As for the temple, the presence of God (Yahweh) was to dwell among the people. However, the history of the nation of Israel does not demonstrate a welcome attitude towards other nations. Rather, the nation was very judgemental towards other nations. Little was done to welcome the nations to be partakers of the Abrahamic covenant. In an attempt to fulfil God's promise for the nations, the New Testament, outlines the life of Jesus Christ who is there to accomplish God's purpose of salvation. Jesus Christ gave a new meaning to the Jewish expectations of liberation and fullness of life. He charged his disciples to go to all the earth and make disciples of all nations. In

this charge, an application of the Abrahamic covenant is re-enacted and given new meaning and implication. The implication was that the disciples were to go to all corners of the earth. The purpose and response of the action of going out is well described in the New Testament. Beyond the New Testament, the history of the Christian Church illustrates the growth and consolidation of the church universal.

After the 16th century Protestant Reformation, the protestant churches took time to stabilize and act on the charge of going out. A lot of time was utilized to define their identity away from the Church of Rome which viewed protestants as heretical. In the process of clarifying their identity, the Protestants found themselves fighting one another. However, agreements to stop fighting amidst the spirit of nationalism enabled some peace to be realized. With the improvement of navigation apparatus new lands were discovered while new learning enhanced the spirit of adventure. Christian denominations found themselves among non-Christian people and even among people of other religions. The 20th century was the climax of missionary enterprise from Europe to the newfound lands. The Edinburgh conference brought 1200 missionaries from different missionary organizations. The main concern of the conference was Christian disunity among non-Christians.

Africa was one area where the Christian missionaries came and spread the gospel. By the early 19th century, the main religions in Africa were Christianity, Islam, and African Religion. Africa in the 21st century, have a different social, political, religious and economic context, things have changed since 1910. Socially, Africans have taken up cultural aspects that have come with foreigners who have been very domineering. Along the process, African culture has gone through myriad changes. Politically, Africa has embraced political styles from Europe and America in a way that has resulted to various types of governments in Africa. Economically the money economy has been introduced in Africa thereby negating the batter trade that was the dominant form of organizing and managing Africa's resourcefulness. Given the receptivity of foreign religions and their spiritually, Africa could be identified as the spiritual reservoir. Nevertheless, the quality of the religious life in Africa has been the subject of debate in the recent past. One wonders why the continent should be living such a contradiction. On one hand, it is the spiritual reservoir of the world and on the other, the kind of Christianity that is found in Africa has very little qualitative value.

For sure, many dynamics face Christian mission in Africa today. The dynamics have shaped the kind of Christianity that practiced in Africa. With the Christianization of most of Africa, has the quality of life in Africa improved? Do we find the elements of the Abrahamic covenant among Christians in Africa? Even as we celebrate a hundred years after the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, the presence of other faiths in numbers and activities in Africa has increased with time. In this discussion the Bahai Faith and its global perspective in the theory and praxis of mission is of great concern. The Bahai Faith has continued to draw following from among Christian communities. *In my estimation, it is the lack of a proper perception and practice of Christian mission that has shaped the landscape of Christianity in Africa. On the other hand, Christian mission in theory and praxis does not seek to engage with other faiths and when there is engagement, it is not well thought through. To this end, we find gaps that aid the evangelization of Christians by other faiths and in this case the Bahai Faith.* We therefore find that, in the 21st century we cannot afford to ignore the praxis of Christian mission in a multi-faith context.

The multifaceted nature of human life challenges human beings in the 21st century to go beyond mutual understanding, respect and trust. Divisions out of faith have continued to hinder human progress civilization in many ways. For one, a majority of people tend to relate within the scope of their faith. Others only think and act in terms of their faith. Relations between different faith groups have often times been strenuous. Where one faith is a minority, the members of the majority faith community persecute the minority. The minority group often times feels persecuted and in need of protection. Examples of such situations include Nigeria, Sudan, and Northern Africa countries.

Ecumenism refers to the activity within the household of faith among all the people of God. However, there is Christian faith, Islamic faith, Bahai faith among many faiths in Africa. In this paper, the household is pictured to include people of different faiths but their convergence is their believe in God and their praxis of the Abrahamic covenant (God's mission).

2. Christian and Bahai Mission Perspectives

History has it that, the evangelical revival in Europe and America, made Christians realize that the 'end times' were very near. Christians felt it their responsibility to inform others of the gospel before judgement comes. On the other hand, they believed that Christ would not return until all people in the world had heard the gospel. Because of this desire to reach out with the gospel to other people, many different protestant missionary societies were formed(Hildebrandt, 1996, p. 80). The implication of this kind of understanding and mission is that, people and Africans for our case were being prepared for heaven and not for the life here on earth. Christians then did not pay much attention to political matters, social matters, and economic matters. The main concern was being heaven bound and always prepared for the second coming of Christ. However, the zeal that the missionaries had in converting Africans was itself questionable among the Africans. John Karanja documents in the book

Founding an African Faith (1999), how clan leaders among the Kikuyu would weigh their options before accepting to corporate with the missionaries. Different Christian missionaries would visit the African leaders and lure the leaders and their people into Christianity. The Africans realized that there was some value attached to them by the different missionaries, out of the realization, the African leaders would give attention to the missionary organization that would promise more benefits. From this perspective, the goal of a majority of Africans in embracing Christianity was not in tandem with the missionary goal of preaching the gospel. Even with the comity agreement of missionary spheres of influence and operation, the context of the Africans was not considered by the missionaries (Karanja, 1999, p. 12). On one hand, the hurry was to make Africans escape God's judgement by being candidates of heaven. On the other hand, the missionaries wanted to have as many adherents as possible before other missionary organization would lay claim to the allegiance of the African. Rarely the political, social and economic needs of the Africans were addressed.

In the second half of the 20th century, Africans had realized that they needed to practice Christianity as per their understanding and context. The emergence of the independent church movements aimed to address the need of authentic African Christianity. Among the missionary churches, the East African Revival Movement took root (Karanja, 1999, p. 246). As Africans were responding to the activities of the missionaries, the world was changing very fast. Before they realized, they were already dependent on the European systems in many ways. The European and American way of life was the ideal that a majority of Africans would aspire to copy. In Kenya for instance, the war for independence pitied the Africans against the European settlers who had come to dominate the Africans. It is during the height for the struggle for independence that the phrase that *gutiri muthungu na mubia* (No difference between a settler and a missionary), was coined. The Africans had read the Bible. The Africans had come to realize the ideal that describes the people who have accepted to be disciples of Jesus Christ. The ideal was not evident among many missionaries.

The identification of Christianity with oppressive powers created a lacuna that would welcome other religions into the scene. Such religions include Islam, Hinduism, and Bahai Faith among others. For the purpose of the current discussion, the Bahais arrived in Kenya in the early 1950s just before a state of emergence was declared. The Kenyan government was in the hands of the British government. The relations between blacks and the whites were strained to the extent that there were restrictions on movements for the Africans. The tensions were great in Central province and the parts of the Rift Valley province. Blacks were not expected to freely mix with the whites. The missionaries were caught between allegiance to their government and allegiance to the tenets of the gospel. However, a majority of the missionaries agreed that the interests of the Africans were paramount whenever they conflicted with those of the settlers. The Devonshire White Paper was meant to ascertain this claim and fact (Baur, 1994, p. 478).

When the Bahais found the political situation in Central Kenya to be very volatile, they opted to move to western Kenya. In western Kenya, the Bahais started their activities to the point that today (2009) the majority of Bahais in Kenya are in Western Kenya. The first generation Bahais in Kenya cite the openness of the Bahai missionaries who were themselves white that attracted them to the Bahai Faith (Mwangi, 2000). The African who were working in Nairobi were encouraged by the hospitality of the Bahais in a situation that demanded restraint when dealing with Africans.

While the Kenyan Christians were demanding for indigenous church and political leadership, the missionaries started to work towards devolution of power and authority to the Africans. Among the Bahais, the local leadership was to be linked with the international leadership through the Bahai International Congress held in 1963. Kenyan Bahais participated in the conference that elected the Universal House of Justice.

Henry Venn the honorary secretary of CMS had proposed that the euthanasia of a mission would only happen when the "Three Selves" (self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating) principle was put into place (Hinchliff, 1993, p. 486). When the "Three Selves" are in place, local people would be allowed to manage the affairs of the local church. In this arrangement, leadership structures of a majority of Christian denominations save for the Roman Catholic are regional if not national and not at most international. The challenge of different leadership structures with no central authority compounds the way the nations are to be blessed through the activity of the Christian Church. A good example is when the moratorium debate was high among the Kenyan Christians (Baur, 1994, p. 312). Many missionaries thought that they were being victimised by the very people that they had worked hard to 'civilize'. The point is that the insight for authentic African Christianity was mainly coming from below and the European and American missionaries felt victimised.

Among the Bahais, the principle is different. Theirs is an organic community created on the teachings of the founders of the Faith. The aim of the Bahais when they evangelize a new area is establish a Local Spiritual Assembly from among the local people. The Bahai missionaries and leadership structures are co-ordinated by the international Bahai council - the Universal House of Justice (UHJ). At the end of it all, a divine civilization is expected to be realized here on earth. The divine civilization has governing structures and regulations that are to make it work. The significant deference between Christian and Bahai perspective to mission is that, the Christian mission has been interpreted to have a very strong heaven bound approach and a very weak earthly approach.

The Bahai mission appears to be earthly bound and has a weak heavenly perspective save for the keen adherents. The implication of this difference is that Christianity appears to be strong at the local level and week at the global level while Bahai Faith appears strong at the global level and weak at the local level. The perspectives to mission affect greatly the praxis of mission.

3. Christian and Bahai Mission Theory and Praxis

Having looked into the mission perspectives, we now turn to look at the mission theory and praxis among the Bahais and Christians. Theory is a set of ideas that help in explaining, describing and predicting trends or events. There is no monolithic theory of Christian mission. The different Christian orientations have different theories when it comes to mission. However, for the current discussion I take the evangelical aspect of Christian mission. The evangelical mission theory rests very much on the Bible as the authoritative word of God in matters faith and practice. It means that Christian mission among evangelical Christians is biblical in its foundation and expression. The challenge with this aspect is the lack of a common hermeneutical framework for biblical interpretation. Without a common hermeneutical framework, divergent interpretations of biblical passages are evident among different Christian denominations.

The divergent interpretations mean that the praxis part of the mission is divergent. Denominationalism in Christian mission in the 21st century is a big challenge to Christian mission in a multi-faith context. Denominationalism in a world that is getting smaller is tragic for Christian mission. The world is moving towards internationalism, where humanity attempts to solve its problems with an international approach. The realization is that whatever affects Kenya for instance will have an effect on the world in one way or another. The nations of the world have been thrown together through growing contacts of trade, travel, communications and military threats. One may therefore observe very strong local mission praxis among Christians with a very weak global praxis. In the localization of Christian mission, many Christians tend to think that mission is only to be a Christian prerogative (Antes and Waldenfels, 1997, p. 305).

Mission theory among the Bahais appears to be homogenous. The teaching on progressive revelation of truth is the cornerstone of Bahai mission theory and praxis, which seeks to build a civilization governed by the teachings of the Bahai Faith. Using the doctrine of progressive revelation, Bahais advocates religious pluralism as the first step towards one world religion. The core aim of the doctrine is to win other faiths into the Bahai Faith. In winning members of other faiths into the Bahai Faith, Bahai Faith teaches that, the 'Religion of God' goes through renewal. The recent renewal is in the Bahai Faith. By implication, members of other faiths should abandon their faiths and embrace the Bahai Faith because it is in the Bahai Faith that the spirit of God is at work. This teaching does not appreciate the renewal that is evident on every religion that the Bahai Faith attempts to re-interpret.

The structured Bahai leadership from the local to the global favours a mission praxis that is world affirming and world embracing. Two forces propel Bahai civilization. One force is by the Bahai themselves, the other force is by non-Bahais. The Bahai force (Minor Plan of God) entails rolling out into the world a new way of doing things guided by the teachings of Bahai Faith. In this force, the greater peace will be achieved. From the non-Bahai force (Major Plan of God), chaos and turmoil bring people to a realization that they need one another. Although the two forces work hand in hand the ideal is to have human beings turn to peace and progress willingly and not by default.

> ...man's glory and greatness do not consist in his being avid for blood and sharp of claw, in tearing down cities and spreading havoc, in butchering armed forces and civilians. What would mean a bright future for him would be his reputation for justice, his kindness to the entire population whether high or low, his building up countries and cities, villages and districts, his making life easy, peaceful and happy for his fellow beings, his laying down of fundamental principles for progress, his raising the standards and increasing the wealth of entire population(Abdul-Baha, 1997, p. 67)

The recurrent movement of seasons in the religion of God is characterised by times of crisis and times of splendour. According to the Bahai Faith humanity in its existence goes through the cyclic season of winter, summer, autumn, and spring. Religion has the same nature of death and decay and resurrection. Harmony in this perspective is only attained when individuals learn to understand the times they are in and live according to the needs of that period. The Bahai Writings teach that former religions have taken humanity into autumn and only the Bahai Faith can take them through spring (divine civilization). The crises in the universe are harbingers of a new life that is breaking into the world. The Major Plan of God uses calamities to push people into the recognition of their times while the Minor Plan is in the hands of those who have dared to listen to the voice of God in that particular moment. In this age, Bahai Writings teach that the mouthpiece of that divine voice is none other but Bahaullah (Huddleston, 1980, p. 154).

From the perspective of the Major Plan of God, Bahais from any part of the world are ready to accept crises in their context as heralds for good tidings. For instance, in the practice of the Bahai Faith, in Ipapa Tanzania, Bahais seek to avert crises and maintain harmony with the universe by accepting the teachings of the

Bahai Faith.[1] The challenge for the Ipapa Bahais is to seek harmony with the universe by maintaining order in the universe in a system that appears to be beyond their ability. In so doing, they are to break away from inertia mode and in Bahai language offer themselves to Bahaullah who will direct them into the spring of humanity where harmony is to be experienced by all humanity. They should work for this harmony in spite of their situations of need. In the new world-view the Ipapa people are to accept the hard doctrine that human beings at times have been called, not to enjoy unique power, wealth, and glory, but to bear unique burdens and to suffer, unique tribulations for the fulfilment of God's purposes in the universe. The Ipapa Bahais are to shift their view of reality from below (centred on humanity) to a view that is from up (centred on God). The view from up, appreciates that God has a purpose and will for the entire humanity. Concerning conversion, this shift is gradual and the feelings of deprivation, alienation and frustration may not let the community embrace the needs of the Bahai Faith in its own terms without a give and take principle. The Bahai teachings insist that it should be a personal enterprise to investigate the truth to the point that one will have a clear understanding of what is needed of him or her. Bahai institutions, work with individuals and communities in helping them realize their part in the purpose of God for humanity.

Mission in a multi-faith context may entail dialogue and ecumenism that should not substitute evangelism. However, it can be a contribution in helping people of different faiths to work towards common course in resolving issues of peace-making, social justice and religious liberty (Chatfield, 1998, p. 86). In a common course, faith groups interact with each other at different levels and need to consider the following:
- o Whether and how far, God speaks in and to other religions
- o Whether and how far, dialogue may and should lead to conversion
- o Whether and how far, different faiths may work together in service to humanity

Every faith group must strive to bring its best in the multi-faith context perchance its version of the reality is seen to be the practical or an integration of the best approaches to reality. However in a multi-faith context, the dominant faith group is always seen as arrogant by members of the minority group. Yet, as human beings, we interact on very many areas. We meet in public places, involvement in social activities, sports, entertainment areas, school, in university among others. In such meetings, we meet as human beings with a given common purpose. At such times, our different faiths do not dominantly feature in the way we interact with one another and how we relate with the common objective that has drawn as together. However, religious attitudes and motivations would be inherent in the way religious people transact any social or private business.

Christian and Bahai mission theory and praxis appear to address differently the individual and corporate human needs: transport and communication, health care; education; security; employment; water; electricity; self-esteem; human dignity among many. The concerns are fundamental for human development. In a world that is fast moving towards internationalism, there are many possibilities of different faiths coming together for the common good of humanity. Towards this end, organic unity may be worked among faith groups. Organic religious unity will concern itself with the common humanity of all the inhabitants of the globe, their common needs and work for neighbourliness that appreciates human beings for being human beings. The convergence may mean long-range planning, skilful exploitation of the media and the establishment of common areas of expansion such as study and worship centres. At the bottom of every human need is the need for affirmation and a sense of belonging. Proactive mission praxis and theory need to be anchored on human needs and how to respond to the needs contextually, efficiently and effectively.

If and when organic unity of different faiths do not take place, the market phenomenon dictates that the needs of the consumer will dictate what commodity or service the consumer will buy. Other factors may mitigate the choice for a given faith. As Christian and Bahais place themselves in the market interfaith conversions cannot be ruled out. In the social market faiths pose as commodities or services for consumption. Nevertheless, the ontological function of each faith will drive her members to showcase their superiority in terms of consumer satisfaction. Religious advertisement is high in a market context. Religions will fish from each other's basket. Quoting Van Der Leeuw, Peter Antes and Hans Waldenfels notes that,

> …As soon as missionary expansion is understood to be essential activity of the community, it receives a quite different character. Its influence then becomes a fully conscious propaganda of doctrine and worship, and generally of the specific characteristics of a religion (Antes and Waldenfels, 1997, p. 304).

4. Bahais Fishing in the Christian Basket
We have noted that the Bahai Faith is a recent entry into the market of missionary religions. It means that its members are largely drawn from the main religious groups in the continent. Research from Kenya and Tanzania demonstrate that a majority of Bahais were Christians from different Christian orientations. Our example in this

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[1] I am indebted to the Ipapa Bahai Community in Southern Tanzania who I spent much time as I researched for my PhD thesis "The Role of Religion in Social Transformation Disharmony: The Integration of the Sinai Church and the Bahai Faith in Ipapa, Tanzania, 1972-2005" PhD thesis, University of Nairobi, 2008.

discussion is the Sinai Bahai community that was initially a Christian community from the independent church orientation of Christianity. During the 1960s, two men, Yohannes Simbowe and Petero Simbeye in Ipapa Tanzania through mystical command and conscious efforts, started a community of Faith (Simbowe, 1999). Before founding the Sinai Church, both Petero and Yohannes had gone through various mystical experiences that culminated in dreams and visions (Simbowe, 1999). Through the dreams and visions, the two men were commanded through a mystical voice to found a religious community (the Sinai Church). The voice was identified to be that of the Divine or his agents. Petero would record what the voice uttered. The dual founded a faith community. The name of the faith was "*Kanisa la Sinai - Dini ya Mila na Utamaduni*" (The Church of Sinai - A religion of Culture and Traditions).

Before *Kanisa la Sinai* had taken shape Petero and Yohannes continued to meet on the ridge (*Mlima Sinai)*. When on the mountain they would hear the voice address them on what to teach and do for those that would join them. Luckily, they put down on paper what they heard.[1] Also they recorded the dreams and visions that they received. In 1972, four individuals joined Petero and Yohannes. From then the community grew rapidly. The four claimed to be led in visions and dreams to Yohannes and Petero for religious leadership and guidance. As the community grew, dreams and visions continued to be received but this time projecting the Sinai Church into a different religion that would have a worldwide appeal.

Kanisa la Sinai incorporated traditional rituals including dancing for therapeutic purposes. The ritualistic aspect gave the Sinai community (and later the Bahai Community that thrived from it) an African character so integrated that it appears natural. This is an integration that scholars of religion advocate for when talking of owning a faith. For twenty years, the Sinai Church thrived as an Independent Church movement.

In 1993, the Tanzanian Bahais arranged a teaching/mission campaign in Ipapa. It was at this time that the Sinaists and the Bahais met one another. The Sinaists were very receptive to the Bahai teachings. After consulting amongst themselves (without the presence of the Bahais), the Sinaists agreed to embrace the Bahai Faith. The Sinaists wrote a letter to the national administrative body of the Bahais' of Tanzania known as National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Tanzania (NSABT) requesting for membership into the Bahai Faith.[2] The Sinaists saw the fulfillment of their dreams and visions in the Bahai Faith. The Bahais saw a receptive mission field. On the other hand, we find the members of the Sinai Church making a choice to embrace the Bahai Faith and not Islam or mainstream Christianity.

After the NSABT received the letter, a program of activities was initiated in order to make the receptive Sinai community a Bahai one. In a nut shell, the following factors influenced the integration of the Sinai Church into the Bahai Faith:

- The functional advantage of the Bahai Faith
- The concern of the Bahais with the needs of the Sinai Church
- The weak kind of Christianity that was planted in the area
- Lack of ownership of Christianity by the local people
- The failure of Christians to embrace and showcase the authenticity of African culture that appeared appealing to the Africans

For a religion to have civilizing power, it must ride on a language and a culture both of which will cut across a spreading area. The acceptance of the Bahai Faith by the Sinai community resulted in new practices based on new teachings and renewed hope for a better life. From a Bahai perspective, the first observable evidence of the acceptance of the Faith was the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies (the basic administrative unit in the Bahai Faith) in the place where the Sinai Church used to be. Hope and encouragement of the human potential is a strong point that favoured the Bahai Faith in Mbozi district. The scriptures of the Bahai Faith that relate to the social transformation of society were very assuring to a community that had experienced marginalization from the government and mainstream Christianity. The formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies meant that the institutions would be in a position to liaise with the NSA and even the UHJ. It is evident that the Sinai community wanted and desired this link. The Sinai community wrote letters to the NSA and the UHJ as a sign of their commitment to the Bahai institutions.

The life of any Bahai community is to be found on the functioning of the LSA and the believers respecting the LSA decisions and supporting the institutions of the Faith. The Bahai institutions offered new life to the Sinai Bahai community that would be part of the global Bahai Community. The Bahais teach and believe that, the same way there was Pax Romana, Pax Britanica and Pax Americana, in the same vein there will be one time Pax Baha. Pax Baha will come because of Bahai institutions being mature to address social, political, and economic issues of the world (Abdul-Baha, 1997, p. 115). Pax Baha is well described in the New World Order anticipated by the Bahais. The biggest challenge is that the comparative paxes (sic) are political empires

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[1] The author has hand written materials on the history of the Sinai Church by the founders.
[2] While researching for my PhD thesis in Southern Tanzania, I obtained the original letter from the founders of the Sinai Church.

reinforced with military might and economic hegemony, yet the Bahais want theirs to be reinforced by obedience to Bahaullah and the institutions of the Bahai Faith.

The dynamic approach (as has been here described) of putting the Bahai Faith in the hands of the masses of people is geared towards a new civilization. The control and co-ordination offered by the UHJ gives the whole enterprise the authority and power it requires. In so doing, the activities that the Bahais engage in as guided by the institutions, are seen as part of the unfolding of the Minor Plan of God. The whole process is well organized to the extent that the Sinai community found a vision and mission to identify with. If the mission is realized an alternative way of organizing society and viewing reality will be exhibited. On the other hand, it is difficult to sustain mass enthusiasm over an extended period of time when there are no evident and obvious personal advantages being gained. The institutions may function but individuals must also be involved in the process.

The instructions from the UHJ to all pioneers and Bahais in general to be aware of the needs for an encounter between the Bahai Faith and the cosmology of the masses of people's culture and traditions is overwhelming (Huddleston, 1980, p. 37). To view it comparatively, it took Christianity many years to have institutionalized missionary enterprises and talk about making Christianity at home in people's homes. For Christianity, when the inculturation and contextualization were being talked about, the damage had already been done. Christianity was divided into various denominations each aspiring to express Christianity in the thought forms and patterns that were understandable to them. The Sinai Church therefore opted for an organic union with the Bahai Faith on the functional and developmental value that the Bahai Faith added to the adherents. The integration suggests that the Bahai Faith appeals to the dormant and active African culture, which has been buried by the religious fervour, found in Christianity. The fervour in Christianity right from inception might be due to the misunderstanding of the station of Christ in relation to humanity and the role of God in building humanity towards himself from the beginning of history.

The new development in Ipapa resulted not merely in the use of new terms and formulae. There were subjective changes, the attitude, points of view, and the contents of new and fresh flow of experience. The people in the region realized what they needed and worked their way to the vision that they had for the society. The people in this region were ready to experiment with anything that promised better life in accordance to what they thought and saw as their vision of a better society. The self-sacrifice, renunciation, self-denial, faith in the best for humanity and confidence in the future or the unseen, are some of the factors that worked in the hearts and minds of the Ipapa community. In a bid to bring out this need and desire, the outpourings of dreams and visions became extensive in the community. The well-being of individuals and the entire community was at the heart of the dreams and visions.

While the progress notable in Ipapa brought better conceptions of reality, at the same time it certainly increased the responsibilities, duties and abilities that the community had to concern itself with. The progress also magnified the possibilities of good and evil. The development, therefore, is extremely significant for the relation between the local people and reality at the local and global level, as they understood it. The Bahai Faith brought to the Ipapa community a deeper recognition of the necessity of higher standards of moral, spiritual, and intellectual life. For instance Bahais are challenged to pride themselves in being members of the human race and not in being members of a given tribe or nation.

The development of new conceptions of reality in this case affected the life of all who embraced the Sinai Church and later embraced the Bahai Faith. The striking differences between the Bahai Faith and the Sinai Church in terms of ethical, spiritual and intellectual aspects, is in their conception of God and the expression of the same. The difference could be attributed to human nature. God is the name given to the sublimest of realities. Humanity becomes conscious as standing in a uniquely personal relationship with that reality. The relationship between humanity and the Ultimate reality contribute to the resultant varying conceptions. The conceptions can thus develop further and in so doing, lead to newer and more effective convictions of reality. The situation in Ipapa demonstrates how human perceptions develop and the search for meaning take them to new convictions of dealing with reality.

The development of the Sinai Church and its spontaneous shift into the Bahai Faith means that an adequate conception of the ultimate reality was being sought. In the search for adequate meaning, the imperfect conceptions were to be replaced. The result is increased power and ability for social change. The social change has to put into consideration the individual, the community and the institutions as main actors of social change. The development is not so much of the self-alone as of an environment or a system of relations of which the self is the centre. The development for it to bring forth the desired social transformation demands continued discipline and re-organization. Stanley Cook observes that, belief systems must connect human activities with those of the universe, whether directly or indirectly (Cook, 1967, p. 961). Belief system should be plausible to the best of the practitioners' experiences and expectations. He asserts that,

…although progressive thought may reject certain explanatory conceptions or theories, human beings require some organization of experience, some adequate body of thought, some tolerable outlook upon the

universe, which will enable them to direct and understand their experiences and to realize the significance of human existence so as to be able to live healthy and useful lives for the good of a universe from which they can never escape (Cook, 1967, p. 393).

The experiences that adherents of the Sinai Church went through informed their thought patterns to the extent that their religiosity at its best involved the immediate consciousness of transcendent realities of supreme personal worth, vitally influencing life and thought. The experiences have been expressed in forms which are conditioned by the entire phase of development reached by the individuals and the community. There is a positive development of consciousness and thought in history, and consequently it is possible to seek to correlate both the static aspects, which are essential for all stability, and the dynamics, which are indispensable for future progress. For to do justice to the ultimate facts of harmony and of development in the universe, is one of the main functions of religion (Cook, 1967, p. 393). From this perspective the growth and development of the Sinai Church and the integration with the Bahai Faith are concomitant to a people who are seeking to realize their destiny in this world and to some extent in the world to come. In this regard, the practice of the Bahai Faith may not have replaced the practice of the Sinai Church it may only have changed form and style and added more dynamism for the progress of the community.

The Ipapa community illustrates that religion and society form the systems of thought, feelings and behaviour of human beings. In this regard, the Sinai Church and the Bahai Faith are seen as paradigms for social transformation. The acceptance of the Bahai Faith in Ipapa indicates that, humanity cannot improve society simply through its own ploy or machination. A higher authority is sought in an attempt to legitimatize human activities towards social transformation. A credit to religion! Society is not merely the artificial creation of individual contractors. On the contrary, the individual was formed by society, and society, by God. This process of formation brings about the interrelations between community, religion, tradition, authority, and the individual, which the Tanzanian government failed to accomplish through the socialist policies it advocated. *Ujamaaism* advocated more inward looking than outside looking attitude. At another level, religion was not given institutional recognition.

Religion as an institution has a social function, it is not just a matter of dogma or faith. Religion at its best should be allowed to influence transformation at institutional level. It is this aspect among the Bahais that challenges the Christian approach to religion as a matter of being 'heaven bound'. As the socialist ideals were compelling people to become what they were not at home with, the Sinai and Bahai shift portrays growing surge for toleration in a land where the state had a fixed legal, political, religious and economical attitude towards the Tanzanian growing nation. Toleration was to embrace all manner of alternatives provided they worked for the well-being of the individual and society as a whole. In this regard, the founding of the Sinai Church and the shift to Bahai Faith was a critique to the socio-political and religious paradigms of the day.

Tanzanians in a way proved that statehood alone could not bring about social order and nationhood. Rather it begets frustration and alienation that are a hindrance in the development of nationhood. The frustration and alienation created an occasion for religion to prove its worth to human activities. In the circumstances of frustration and deprivation, the Ipapa community entered into a relationship with a sacred ground of existence and experience. In the process, a view about empirical reality was developed in terms of that transcendent and sacred relationship. In this regard social security and meaning, both adjustment and hope were realized and means to maintain them sought. In this light, Bahai Faith becomes an alternative way of ordering society. Politically this might not be a threat to any government or religion in the late 20th century and early 21st century, since Bahai Faith is a nascent community worldwide.

As tentacles of the Bahai Faith continue to reach out to every corner of the world in a very subtle way it is a matter of time and the Bahai community worldwide will be a force to reckon with. The world systems will be forced to deal with the Bahai Faith. In the Tanzanian case, the need for social transformation compelled the Tanzanians in this region to accept a faith that took their social and political life seriously. The acceptance of the Bahai Faith implied the institutionalization of the Sinaists endeavours in social transformation. Functionally, religion maintains the social system by providing an answer to the problem of meaning. This happens as religion justifies the socially accepted goals, by renewing solidarity through ritual and cultic practices. Religion also maintains social harmony by deepening the acceptance of norms through their sacralization. It also provides some catharsis for frustration and making it understandable in the context of a larger religious view and a deeper relationship to the sacred.

Peter Berger observes that, in those parts of the world where Christianity has been the dominant religious tradition – and where historically it has been identified with the interests of colonial powers – there is a fascination with liberation theologies that sometimes advocate social and political revolution (Cook, 1967, p. 384). Religion at its best has to be institutionally identified with the well-being of the society. New institutions will emerge when religion fails to play its part in social transformation. Liberal theologies do not negate religion rather they critique the purpose that religion serves.

In societies where religion does not yield social transformation among the recipients of missionary

enterprise, the relations between religion and society are shaped by new formulations of faith that are tailored to facilitate transitional or revolutionary activity (Cook, 1967, p. 383). In this social manifestation, religion still presents itself as a guardian of sensitivities concerning distinctions between the sacred and the profane. Moreover, in its religious dimensions, society continues to be known by the collective aspirations to which its sanctioned activity lends expression. Religious innovation may arise because of a peoples' experience of the Holy Being. The experience then leads to an organized society. On the other hand, religious innovation may result from a situation of compromise in a given society when people in protest seek for new ways of relating with the sacred and in return organize society.

In Ipapa, the two responses are notable; innovation and shift. The formation of the Sinai Church is an innovation while the acceptance of the Bahai Faith is a shift. The political establishment had compromised people's religious sentiments with statehood and the dominant religious orientations in the Ipapa area. Moravians, Last Church of God and Roman Catholic did not seem to minister to the needs, aspirations, hopes and fears created by this situation. The institutionalization of religion helps to carry transformation to heights that individual members cannot. Ipapa was starved institutionally at all levels. The religious experiences of the leaders of the Sinai Church led to the formation of an independent church. The leaders of the Sinai Church formulated the idea out of the religious experiences that they had gone through. The idea of a religious movement was initially couched in the cultic practices of the Sinai Church.

The context of the Ipapa community facilitated the formation of the Sinai Church and the acceptance of the Bahai Faith. To understand this context, the integrating and stabilizing functions of religion are relevant. It is within functioning institutions that religion will influence its adherents towards integration and stability. Institutions are greater than the individuals who staff them and the individuals they serve. The Tanzanian government and its concomitant policies contributed greatly to the feelings of alienation, deprivation and frustration in a region whose people thought they must be taken seriously. On the other hand the religious orientations in Ipapa did not institutionally help the Ipapa community towards a given identity and solidarity.

The leaders of the Sinai Church were in a context where the society had compromised its identity and solidarity. In protest, the leaders of the Sinai community led the community to voice their need to be integrated into the national and international community. In this endeavour, authority of was needed. The para-normal experiences that leaders of the Sinai Church became the authority to rally the community behind them. In mobilizing the Ipapa community behind themselves, aspects of African Religion and Christianity were blended to form the Sinai Church. Three social actors namely individual, community and institutions must be in harmony with social change for the process of transformation to be conspicuous. The Bahai Faith promised to meet this need. Hence, the Sinaists notion of social change became the agenda within the main agenda of the Bahai Faith. Religion has the functional ability to maintain social solidarity and the promotion of social change. The institutionalization of religious sentiments in Ipapa produced institutions with a hierarchical structure. In this case, religion is seen to be a factor of social integration.

In both the Sinai Church and the Bahai Faith, there is an appeal to revelation. The appeal to revelation goes together with the wellbeing of life in all its forms. The revelation offers inspiration to those who accepted and believed. Central to the activities that took place at Ipapa is the community's view of God. From the attitudes and thought patterns, words and actions were inspired. The attendant events set trends and processes that resulted to religious institutionalization. The institutionalization of religion helped the adherents to be cared for within the vision of their religion for the society.

The Sinaists embraced the Bahai Faith as individuals and as a community for varying reasons. The acceptance and progress into the Bahai Faith was augmented by innumerable acts of faith, trust, surrender, and reliance. As the occasions varied in intensity and objective significance, the three social actors were involved. At the individual level, some part of the self is affected and developed and at times, the whole self seems to be renounced only to gain 'a higher' or 'better self'. Individuals and the Sinai community saw the Bahai Faith in general as way of attaining better heights in social, religious, political and economic fields.

The feelings of surrender in human relations, is mostly in the religious sphere of life. The step of surrender in many cases has a leap into the unknown even though there is the confidence that underneath are the everlasting arms. In this leap to the unknown, are experiences varying in degree and uniting the individual and one's ordinary life and thought with that which is most profound and ineffable in the universe. The experiences correlate uniquely the non-religious and the religious, the known and the unknown, and forming the basis of all adequate conceptions of existence, knowledge and reality (Cook, 1967, p. 383).

The blending of the African traditions, the Christian and the Bahai faith, demonstrate a combination of ultraconservative trends with the drive for change in Tanzania and Ipapa community. In their attitude towards change, the Sinai community moved from a conscious attempt as a form of social change, through the teachings of African traditional norms combined by Christian values to an extreme, drastic outlook and change aimed at putting an end to the Christian and any other religious influence in the region. The role of Christianity and the state in the problems of the community were highlighted in the process of change. The founding of the Sinai

Church was a conscious effort of the community in finding its own identity away from the forces of the state and the church. The shift to the Bahai Faith can be explained as a drastic move on one hand and defiance on the other. As a drastic move, the community opted to become Bahai en mass after consultation. It was defiance to what the church and state stood for, for they sought other avenues of being themselves apart from what the state and the church were driving them to.

The Bahais fishing in the Christian basket demonstrate that, mission has to bear in mind human needs at all levels. The Sinaists found their needs and value systems and structures for authentic actualization at stake. In such a situation, the Sinai community found itself responding with individual, communal and institutional survival tactics. The response was to the anxiety that the people had and the fear they felt about their future due to the trends that the community found itself in. T. C. Oden defines anxiety as the response of self to some envisioned future possibility which is symbolized as a threat to some value regarded as necessary for one's existence (Oden, 1969, p. 141). Anxiety is the awareness of potential threats to one's essential values. From an African point of view, the Ipapa community valued concord and progress in all the spheres of life with religion taking a central place. However, the leaders of Ipapa community felt threatened by what they were experiencing and what they expected was not forthcoming. The Sinai Church was a community running away from imagined potential destruction in terms of their identity and solidarity. They thought themselves, in a tight situation, under constriction, pressed into narrow, limiting circumstances. Forces were shaking the foundations of the community and flight or fight was needed for survival. The shaking was in social, economic, and cultural history and in the sense of being in a community. The community opted to take flight by founding the Sinai Church and accepting the Bahai Faith. Bahai Faith offered opportunities to solve institutional challenges amidst other needs of the Ipapa community. Nyerere identified disunity and ignorance as the two main weaknesses of African communities (Nyerere, 1967). The Bahai ideal was an alternative to what the government championed.

In the above mentioned circumstances the needs and the aspirations of the Ipapa community met with the needs and aspirations of the Bahai Faith. To some extent then a symbiotic relationship developed. The need and aspirations of the Bahai Faith was to make the world know that there is a better way to organize society and religion at its best has the panacea to an agonizing world. Enlisting new members was thus and is still a demonstration that Bahai Faith has influence. This explains the Bahai art of mastering the Bahai scriptures and making them theirs so that there is harmony of character when teaching. The Bahai Institute Process aims at this harmonization.[1] It helps those who go through it to master the skills needed to marshal their abilities and enhance capacities towards enlisting humanity into the Bahai Faith. On the other hand the needs and aspirations of the Sinaists were couched in simplicity and honesty and going by the promptings of the spirit. At the point of encounter, they kept their options open and simple. It implies that the two groups were reaching out to each other but for different reasons.

The two groups may be said to have had experiences of anxiety due to different needs and aspirations. Both are minorities, both are marginal and both have 'obscure' scriptures. The Sinaists wanted to survive and thrive in a very limiting world. The well-being of the Ipapa Bahais depends on how their expectations would be met. The expectations were the occasion for the Bahai institutions to be centrally relevant to the Ipapa community, by having a common vision and mission with them. In a pluralistic society, the Bahais wanted to demonstrate the validity of their faith. Since anxiety attacks the foundation of the security system itself, the individual cannot stand outside the source of the threat (Oden, 1969, p. 154). On the other hand anxiety is a correlate of freedom. The most elemental characteristic of freedom is to experience the capacity to determine oneself toward one option while rejecting the other options. In Ipapa Tanzania, there was no alternative and the people had to be innovative for their survival. However, how would this survival take shape in a changing political and economic environment? To the Bahais their validity would mean their continued existence. The Bahais continue to fish in a very sable way.

5. The Objective of Christian and Bahai Mission

For a long time, Protestant Christian mission has been construed to be a preparation of individuals for the life after death. Paradise becomes then the engagement of many thereby forgetting the now that is cash in hand. To make matters worse, paradise is for individuals not for families and not for all humanity. We go to heaven as individuals not as groups. The individual attitude has ramifications to all that one comes into contact with. It is observable that many individual Christians in families and social setups do not worry much about the family or the social group they come from provided their place in paradise is secure. The attitude raises concerns because it is a hindrance to effective Christian mission. In interacting with Bahais in Ipapa Tanzania and in Western Kenya I learnt that the failure of Christians in the neighbourhood to provide exemplary lives forced them to join the Bahai Faith. The Bahai Faith appealed to many because of the communal aspect that embraces an individual as a social being with variant social needs.

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[1] The Institute Process is the program of courses offered to Bahais in a bid to mature them in the Bahai Faith.

The Bahai Faith in Ipapa has challenged the notion of paradise with a civilization that is organic and all encompassing. The Ipapa Bahais wished to participate in their own social transformation that would provide them with affordable and available healthcare, quality education, functional communication and transport infrastructure, means for livelihoods for all and above all a hope for a bright future that is based on what is happening in the present.

Over the years, the ecumenical movement has realized the need for Christianity to respond to social, political and economic needs. However, the efforts towards social responsibility have not been crystallized to the point of a unified purpose by different Christian denominations. At the Edinburgh 1910 conference, the Faith and Work movement was to respond to such issues. The world in the 21st century is referred to as the global village. In this regard, Christians realize that there are other religious alternatives available for humanity. With this in mind, the relationship between Christianity and other religions in general and the Bahai Faith in particular need missiological articulation. In response to this scenario, a biblical hermeneutics is needed. The hermeneutics will help Christians reflect upon the Bible as the frame of reference of their mission and move beyond denominationalism. How we read and interpret the Bible affects the way we carry out Christian mission. The hermeneutics should not be a preserve of few scholars and practitioners but for all Christians and all the people of God. In 1913, the Kikuyu Missionary Conference was motivated by a need to present a united front against Islam and Roman Catholicism (Hinchliff, 1993, p. 494). There should be a better and higher motivation in coming together.

When people of different faiths come together in the spirit of ecumenism, they gain more value and bargaining space for collective interest and good (Getui, 2009, p. 191). The emphasis is that when people work towards a common purpose they achieve better results than when they go different directions. Christian mission should move towards an inclusiveness that seeks to have the Kingdom of God on earth, not only for Christians but also for all humanity. Christians may borrow from the picture that the Bahais have with regard to human civilization (Bahai World Order).

- A WORLD united politically, religiously, culturally; and educated under a common universal curriculum.
- A WORLD in which war is forever banned, and the energies of humanity are devoted solely to constructive enterprise.
- A WORLD where all men are seen as brothers and sisters and differences of colour, race, and nationality are no longer factors of prejudice but elements of pleasing variety in a vast cosmopolitan culture.
- A WORLD where language barriers are overcome by the use of a universal auxiliary language.
- A WORLD free from customs barriers and prosperity engaged in international interchange of goods.
- A WORLD in which the long and bitter conflict between capital and labour is changed into effective cooperation based on profit sharing and mutuality of interests.
- A WORD where jungle-like competition in industry and business has given place to the orderly workings of a planned economic society.
- A WORLD of plenty in which individual wealth is limited and poverty is abolished.
- A WORLD in which science walks hand in hand with religion, and knowledge is dedicated to human progress.
- A WORLD in which the business of government devolves upon fittest administrators and the best trained experts-a working aristocracy based on democratic universal foundations.
- A WORLD, above all, which knows God and seeks to follow ways of righteousness and peace.

Reproduced from the book *Security for a Failing World* p 199

The Bahai material culture demonstrated in Haifa Israel shows the possibilities for transformation and the potential that is in unity of purpose. The Bahai Gardens in Haifa has been a tourist attraction since the Terraces were inaugurated for public use in 2002. The Bahai Gardens among other sacred sites in Israel and Iran are pilgrim destinations for the Bahais.[1] The pilgrimage is organized in such a way that over 300 Bahais visit the holy places. Through the pilgrimage, they are encouraged to carry with them the spirit of the founders of the faith who at some point in time walked the paths the pilgrims walk.

At the thrust of Bahai and Christian mission, there is an agreement on the reign of God in the purification of religious and political structures starting with the individual. The Bahai pilgrimage experience is expected to revamp the mission component in the life of the individual, the community he or she serves and the institution through which service is rendered to the Bahai Faith in the now. The Christian mission structure is ultimately eschatological, hoping for the fulfilment of all things in God through Jesus Christ. In the now, the two

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[1] The author had a chance to participate in a Bahai Pilgrimage experience from April 12 to April 23 2009 in Israel.

religions appear to agree on dialogue and collaboration with all persons of goodwill for a better world. In the process of dialogue and collaboration mutual transformation will occur.

The photo of the Bahai Gardens in Haifa, Israel. At the heart of the Gardens in the Shrine of the Bab. Photo by the author April 20, 2009

The pilgrim experience joins Bahais of all walks of live to reflect on the Bahai Faith and get direction from the two Bahai international institutions namely the International Teaching Centre and the Universal House of Justice. In spite of the cost for a majority of Bahais, about 320 pilgrims visit Bahai holy places every two weeks from March to October every year. The effort is to influence as many Bahais as possible and to teach the Bahai Faith to the world as per the guidance and directions of the international institutions. The local community is also in this case a global community. The Bahai mission is very inclusive in terms of all the members. The main reason is that the Bahai Faith does not have institutionalized clergy.

Christian mission is mainly and generally, at the heart of the clergy in terms of praxis but in terms of reflection, it is in the hands of scholars. Few are the instances where, mission is a shared responsibility for the entire congregation in planning, execution, and reflection. The local congregation is mainly involved at the execution stage. Even as clergy plan for mission, the research component is very weak. Mainly the old methods of Christian mission are repeated year after year. There is then a huge gap between theory and practice and between the local and international aspects of Christian mission. Because of a blurred objective of Christian mission, mission praxis and theory is not organic.

The Bahai Faith incorporates all members in the Bahai mission objective and praxis. The local Bahai communities are involved in research in their neighbourhoods in order to devise the best ways of introducing the Bahai Faith to the neighbourhood. The objective is to raise a new kind of people and a new human civilization which will embrace the tenets of Bahai World Order (Huddleston, 1980, p. 123).

5. Conclusion - Edinburgh 2010 and Beyond

We have noted that in the 21st century human beings have various religious alternatives. In a multi-faith context, Christians should devise ways of realizing the will of God in such a context. In everything, acceptance and appreciation of diversity should replace prejudice and distrust when people of different faiths are working together. Christians have a choice of demonstrating that they are the salt and the light of the world. Blurred vision of Christian mission objective influences the theory and praxis of Christian that in turn creates room for other religious alternatives.

As we look back for the 100 years since Edinburgh 1910, we need to harness new knowledge on the

best way to carry out Christian mission in a multi-faith context. The constructive experience of the 100 years should be crystallized in a bid to have move into the future based on knowledge. The new knowledge is as a result of our coming together and sharing our experiences and findings and having a common objective. We read in the Bible of Moses sending spies to Canaan to spy the land the Israelites were to conquer and occupy. The concept of spying goes hand in hand with research. In a market situation each religion need to evaluate its missionary strategies by eliminating the shortcomings and working on the opportunities.

New skills for mission in a multi-faith context are needed. For instance, members of different faiths need to come together and explore the possibilities of working together in their context. Skills should be cultivated among the members to help them aid the process of integration and incorporation that will yield to organic union and growth. A road map for working together among religions should be drawn by the significant others of all religions in consultation with all the stakeholders. On the other hand, if we are to carry mission among people of different faiths, we need to understand their context very well and devise the skills needed in carrying out such a mission. It is a high calling that demands adherents to show forth the transformative force of their faith.

Governance need to be woven into the religious sphere with a democratic and participatory structure buttressed with theory and praxis, which will provide an integrated vision for both the society and of the universe. Local and international levels should be in harmony. Leadership structures should endeavour to create a civilization for the sake of humanity now and for generations. For a religion to have civilizing power, it must ride on a language and a culture both of which will cut across a spreading area. Christian mission in an attempt to live to its end should be in a position to establish the kingdom of God on earth. As Christians we need to ask ourselves, what is the ideal that we are aiming at? What steps should we take? What resources do we have?

Knowledge and skills are not enough if people's attitudes are not aligned to what they want to achieve. We need attitudes that embrace global perspectives yet remain locally relevant. Christian mission need to be well articulated by all Christian groups in Africa in a bid to work together in the area of multi-faith context.

Christian mission theory and praxis must be conscious and practical of the different faiths that are working for the African soul. The knowledge thereof is not enough there must be readiness for action in responding to the issues raised by these faiths. Many religions desire to have their religion to be conterminous with the African continent. Bahai Faith proposes and works for religious incorporation that will result into organic growth and response to human needs. But the existential needs of each context will mirror the kind of religion that is to be practiced. Christians should be wary of religious imperialism. When organic union takes place, each context will shape the religious expression that is adopted. However, there should be areas of congruence where no debate is expected. In the establishment of the common ground, the leadership akin to the Universal House of Justice will help in giving direction and leadership. Christians in Africa should realize that there are other alternatives apart from Christianity. Bahai Faith is one of such alternatives. In case of people not realizing their expectations in any one faith, possibilities of shifting from one religion to another are high as illustrated in this paper. As we celebrate a hundred years of Christian missionary enterprise, a new hermeneutic for dealing with a religious pluralistic society is needed.

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