REMODELLING CATECHESIS IN POST VATICAN II AFRICAN CHURCH
A Generation Approach

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Introduction

Faith comes from what is heard (Rom 10:14-17), and the good news is adapted to the changing circumstances (Acts 17). Following Vatican II's call for radical adaptation of the gospel, the Church began looking for means of making the gospel at home in cultures. This essay viewing the Church as teacher examines the content of the faith and the Church's teaching methodology in Africa. Particularly, the essay examines how faith has been passed on in Africa in the last three generations with reference to three eras: before Vatican II, immediately after Vatican II, and the present times. The essay proposes the use of "generative themes" for African catechesis, which is akin to focusing on the topic or theme of discourse and learning that is of interest to both educator and learner. "As both educators and learners we know well from experience that it is nearly impossible to teach or learn anything if there isn't real interest."[1] This can be done in two ways, by reproduction of catechetical texts considering African moral symbols, and by adopting a teaching methodology that moves from experience to Scriptures back to experience.

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[1]Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*, New York: Harper One, 2011, 286.

In discussing Africa, we must be aware that there is no Africa in the sense of a single culture or national entity. Thus, we cannot speak of Africa in the same way we might speak of Ireland, England or Germany. Africa is a continent with fifty five countries and over 1.1 billion people.[2] It is divided into North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (i.e. Africa south of the Sahara desert). The north is predominantly Arab and identifies more with the Middle East. The sub-Saharan is predominantly black with white population in the east and southern countries.[3] While I acknowledge that there is no single Africa there are definite similarities that cut across many African tribes and cultures. In this essay I draw out benchmarks for catechesis in an African context. I am using the Tiv[4] ethnic group of Nigeria as a case study. The Tiv people are the fifth largest ethnic group in Nigeria inhabiting the central part of the country.

Pre-Vatican II: *Eurocentricism*

Catechesis at this time was by cramming of the catechism with transliterated texts and words. For instance, the word, *Grace* was rendered in my Tiv tribal language as *Gracia* or *Gratia*; the word, *Sacrament* translated as *Sakramentu*; *nature* was rendered *natura;* while the word, *Trinity* simply returned as *Triniti,* and *Christmas* as *Kirimishi.* The more incomprehensible is that, *Holy Order* was translated as *Cighan Ordo.* Understanding these circumstances, faith was passed on simply by cramming and assenting to these laid down words.

Pre-Vatican II Christianity went hand in hand with colonialism, which instituted cultural and ideological imperialism. This is well captured in Jomo Kenyatta's words when he said that the missionaries "told us to close our eyes for prayers, by the time we opened them, our lands had been taken away from us and a Bible placed in our hands."[5] There was an assumed Eurocentric notion of one cultural destination for the whole human race, and that cultural destination was already well polished in Europe.[6]

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[2]This information is based on the recent data from US Census Bureau, accessed on September 16, 2011 from www.internetworldstats.com.

[3]There also exists the division between Mediterranean and Nilotic Africa.

[4]The term Tiv refers to "the people, their language as well as their progeny." See Ajiki, P.T., "The Tiv Christian Family and the Moral Formation of the Child," Unpublished Masters Thesis, CIWA, Port Harcourt, 1989, 4.

[5]Jomo Kenyetta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1962, 24.

[6]Luke N. Mbefo, *Towards a Mature African Christianity*, Enugu: Spiritan Publications, 1989, 21.

Post-Vatican II: *Cultural vs Identity Crisis*

Post Vatican II catechesis was done in a question and answer style, with no much difference from the penny catechism of Vatican I era. The emphasis here was to encourage participation in the spirit of Vatican II. Attempts were made at "radical adaptation" according to Vatican II Council. For instance, in Tivland like other African societies, Tiv language replaced Latin and Tiv liturgical music was allowed for the first time in 1978.[7]

This era was marked by cultural renaissance and identity crisis in Africa. Africans began to question Eurocentric values and appraised African values. This era was precipitated by three factors. First, World War II opened the society to the outer world as many Africans were drafted to fight alongside their colonial masters. They saw how Christianity as practiced in these countries was different from what they encountered in African countries. Second, African intellectuals educated oversees became reactionary and questioned those values that African Christianity was built on. "Christianity as it has been lived in Western world leads to suicide. After all, it is in the Christian west that secularism and humanism have appeared as the offshoots of Christianity."[8] Third, the spirit of the era was marked by pan-Africanism characterized by independence struggles on the continent.

Throughout Africa, for the past five decades or so, there has been steady movement in both artistic and intellectual life to establish an African identity. Coupled with the colonial experiences of Africa, there is high desire to restore the lost dignity and recover those noble aspects of African culture that colonialism has perverted overtime. Colonialism, conquest and the Christianization of Africa went hand in hand. Consequently, the growing African renaissance that swept the continent has left Africans who embraced Christianity with identity issues. It is at times Christianity without an African identity or Christianity with a wrong African identity. Theologians are today questioning the relevancy of Christianity to Africa and are calling for an African Christian renaissance. Is it the stranger that needs some form of adjustment and adaptation or the host who receives the sojourner on his/her unshakable grounds?

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[7]Peter Kparev (in a discussion with the author), June 1995. Kparev who died in August, 1997, was a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Makurdi in central Nigeria, and he composed the first Tiv Catholic hymns.

[8]Mbefo, *Towards a Mature African Christianity*, 21.

To understand an African, the African cultural matrix must be understood. The cultural matrix produces the mind set within which a people interpret the world and find meaning. In this connection, Gadamer regards understanding, interpretation and application as one unified process: "understanding always involves something like applying the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation."[9] This discovery makes people to ask, can Africans who embrace Christianity experience Christ within their world view? This essay proposes the use of intercultural hermeneutics in enhancing inculturation theology as a practical catechesis in an African setting. Intercultural hermeneutics understood analogically is a conversation between people who speak different languages. In order to understand themselves, both will get into the world of the other. This involves moving from one culture to another, so it is not a matter of simple translation of texts but is like placing what is learnt in another culture in a different cultural context. There are two reasons why this theological method of interpretation is appropriate in the African context. First, the problem of language necessitates the importation and transformation of concepts to suit the local setting to enable an effective communication of the gospel. Language is a necessary means of communication and "it is the dimension in which thinking takes place."[10] Language includes the symbols and signs that are used in rituals which are culture specific.[11] Second, for the gospel to be real good news for Africans, it needs to address their distinctive situations, that is, a real incarnation of the word which is inculturation theology.

At Present: *Inculturation Era*

In recent times, the focus is on RCIA, which emphasizes experience, Bible and resultant Christian living. Concurrently, there has been an increased awareness of the need for inculturation theology as a means of inserting the gospel into different cultures. Inculturation theology is fashioning possible ways of making the gospel much more meaningful to people in their distinct situations be they African,

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[9]Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, New York: Continuum, 1999, 308.

[10]Gail Stenstad and Kenneth Maly, "Language as Saying: The Way of Gathering and Disclosure," *Theology Today* 30, 2 (1986) 127.

[11]Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, Grand Rapid: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992, 80-81. Thiselton in discussing semiotics notes that codes are culture specific and to make a mistake about a semiotic code distorts its meaning.

Asian, European, American etc. This process embraces all cultures in their distinctive and symbolic experiential application of the gospel to their daily lives and cultures. There have been efforts by various theologians to accomplish this task. For instance, while trying to contextualize theology in Germany, Metz examines what it means to be Church by digressing from the transcendental theology of his former professor, Karl Rahner and situated his theology into historical consciousness.[12] Decrying the irrelevancy of the theology and ecclesial structures of the time, Metz laments, "a growing inability or unwillingness to have new experiences and to apply them critically to a self understanding of the Church and its constitutions and documents."[13]

Paramount in the work of Metz is the fact that theology must be practical to be relevant. The task of a practical theologian is not to recover the transcendent theology of the scholastics but rather to advance inter-subjectivity. This essay is an effort toward advancing inter-subjectivity between the Christian message and African culture. If Christianity is to be fully relevant to Africans, the gospel must become incarnate in African culture, taking an African 'flesh.' The process of doing this is intercultural hermeneutics, that is, the interpretation and application of the gospel to the cultural modes of a people, and in this case the Africans.

African Catechetical Resources

Crucial to African theology is the fact that Africa is an oral culture. Africa has a long rich oral culture and we need to emphasize the oral presentation of the gospel in Africa. The brand of Christianity in Africa is a religion of the written word in a civilization of the spoken word.[14] The ways in which God's revelation takes place are coded in proverbs, myths and stories which await the activities of the evangelization of African culture. Although they originated in stages of human history which may be called the "not yet" of the fullness of Christ's revelation, they point to truth. Though truth in a cultural context – or truth in several cultural contexts – it is also truth about the universal. By exploring the traditional understanding (that is, in both apprehension and expression) of truth in the light of the

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[12]Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. Matthew Ashley, New York: Crossroad, 2007, 62 and 64.

[13]Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 97.

[14]Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an African*, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, 34 and 36.

Christian understanding, the faith shapes African moral understanding. This process, which confirms the truth in the traditional understanding, clarifies African proverbs, myths and stories in a Christian mode.[15] Here I explain some Tiv proverbs, myths and stories in the light of the Christian message.

Proverbs

Proverbs are short sayings in common use expressing a well-known truth or common observation. They cover maxims, adages and by-words. Proverbs are valued as source materials for religious beliefs of African societies. They spring spontaneously from the people and consequently, should be accepted as a true index of what a people regard as true, and are interpretative of their principles of life and conduct.[16] According to Randhall as cited by Ogunleyemi, "proverbs have myriads of correlations in the message of Christ."[17] Ikenga-Metuh accepting this position illustrates the relationship between God and human beings with Igbo proverbs. He concludes that proverbs are indicative of human awareness of God and an ardent desire to enter into intimate communication with God.[18]

In Tiv world view, proverbs are divine wisdom, a way of God communicating with human beings that could be equated with the Christian wisdom literature of the Bible. For instance, a Tiv person says, *i tesen or Aondo ga,* literally meaning, "nobody is shown the Supreme Being." In other words, everybody knows that God exists – almost by instinct. This can serve as an instrument for catechesis. The understanding of this proverb is similar to the opening teaching of the Catholic catechism textbook in Tivland: "God has made me to know him, to love him, to serve him, to glorify him and be happy with him in this world and forever in heaven." From this knowledge of God we are gradually led directly to be committed to the responsibility that goes with that knowledge.

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[15]U.D.H. Danfulani, "Integrating Traditional African Morality into the Contemporary Christian Religious Education Curriculum in Nigeria," *Jos Bulletin of Religion* 3, 1 (1996) 51-64.

[16]Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, Onitsha: IMICO, 1992, 20-22.

[17]Tunde T. Ogunduyilemi, "The Exploration into Selected African Wise sayings," *WAJES,* 4 (1992) 75-100.

[18]Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, 20.

Again, one could say, *angereke ka chaver ibaa,* meaning, "gossip is a torn or worn out sack." This might imply that gossip is like a weak sack full of holes, which cannot hold anything as such, is discredited. A biblical correlate may be in Matthew 15:10: "Not what goes into the mouth that defies a person." Just like whatever goes into the sack does not tamper with its worth except when it fails to hold it. Whatever information a person receives does not tamper with his/her personality and that of others within the community by extension unless he/she lacks the ability to hold and control himself/herself. Gossip contains some truths and some lies. They are most often used for character assassination. They do not help the salvation of souls. They create holes in the sack of human community and solidarity.

Another example could be, *ka ibume nyon iwe iya sha kon onmbur man ilu a mfe u mgbe u u ga ye,* literally meaning, "the foolish bird builds a nest on a dried tree and does not know it will be cut down." This may correspond with Luke 5:37: "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed." The Christian needs a new life of grace – a "new tree" – in Christ to build.

There are many proverbs that can be used in Tivland and other parts of Africa with good application to practical Christian living. The list is endless. I proceed in the next subsection to explain how myths have potentials of divine revelation in Africa.

Myths

In ordinary usage, myth is used for a certain kind of story that is not true. This usage is no doubt connected with the popular idea of myth as sheer fiction. Oxford dictionary defines myth as a purely fiction narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events. Myth in some form appears in almost every culture known to history and anthropology, it deals with questions of cosmic and human origins, the origins of human institutions, human quest for happiness and success or failure in finding it, and the end of the world. Myth is the "unique way of expressing the primordial situations of human existence."[19] Its particular interest lies in the relations of nature with gods and with human beings. It presents reality in a symbolic form, which is an unknown transcendental reality that lies beyond

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[19]Ela, *My Faith as an African*, 36.

observation and simple deduction, but which is recognized as existing and operative. This reality is perceived and represented in events and not in abstractions, and the events are in form of story. Myths certainly tell us about a people's world view including their religion.

In Tiv mythologies, incidents telling us about the divine realm do abound. In a popular myth, the entire Tiv people claim their descent from a single ancestor, Tiv. Tiv is said to have been the son of Takuruku, who is thought to have been the first man. Takuruku had two sons namely, Uke[20] and Tiv. Tiv was his beloved son and when Takuruku was dying he intended to pass his estate to Tiv. Tiv had gone out for hunting and Uke craftily stole the blessing meant for Tiv. When Tiv came back, Takuruku discovered this deceit and gave him the last part of his blessing which is farming.

The above sounds similar to the Genesis 27 account of how Esau missed his father's final blessing to Jacob. In both instances there is an incident of deceit. These two events present the long consequences of this evil once discovered. It leads to hatred, which sows seeds of discord in the community. This is quite evident, the Tiv people have an age-long ill feeling towards the Uke people. In the situation of Esau and Jacob, Esau contemplated killing his brother Jacob (Gen 27:41) that he was compelled to go into self exile in spite of the hardships that accompanied that decision. This should teach us not to idolize our emotions up to the extent of altering the truth.

Again, according to oral history, the original home of the Tiv was in the Swem Hills.[21] One of the popular stories about the origin of Tiv people was that, the people were driven from their shadowy home beyond the water; somewhere in east Africa by an implacable enemy called the Ugenyi. In a headlong flight from the enemy who pursued them, they came to a very big river they could not cross. It was at this

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[20]In a loosed sense the term Uke designates non-Tiv tribes while in a strict sense it denotes the Hausa-Fulani tribes in northern Nigeria.

[21]There is no agreement among scholars on the exact location of the Swem Hills. According to Doki, the "exact location of Swem has been a matter of speculation and choices of individual researchers." See Gowon Ama Doki, *Traditional Theatre in Perspective*, Makurdi: Aboki, 2006, 14. For instance, Makar locates the place a mile away from the Nigeria and Cameroun border that is part of Tivland. See Tesemchi Makar, *The History of Political Change Among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1994, 4.

time that a friendly green snake called "Kyarem" formed itself into a wooden bridge for the Tiv to cross safely. "By the time their enemies arrived, the snake had moved away, and the enemies could not cross. The Tiv show a lot of reverence for *ikyarem*. They do not kill it. When a Tiv comes across a dead one he throws some sand over its body giving it a symbolic burial."[22]

In this second myth, it portrays an idea similar to the exodus event of the Israelites at the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex14). There are four basic significant insights that we can draw from these stories. First, in both instances the saving instruments are tangible – snake for the Tiv and Moses' staff for the Israelites. Second, there are prayers of desperation uttered by both the Tiv and the Israelites before God. Third, there is an element of divine presence and assistance in the two presentations. In the case of the Tiv people they were in despair with an advancing enemy to attack them, only for the snake to mysteriously come to their aid when they shed tears of desperation. It was not a different story with the Israelites but during this time it happened at the hand of Moses through the staff. Fourth, the incident serves as a memorial and reference point. The Tivs call this snake "Ikyarem" meaning 'friend.' It is a taboo to kill it. It is probable that the snake derived its present name for the service it rendered to the Tiv people. The Tiv word for a friend, among others, is "ikyar." "Ikyarem," means my friend. Ikyar could also mean an agreement (covenant). This snake has come to be of great importance in Tivland that the sight of it recalls an incident which is looked upon as a sort of covenant. As for the Israelites, the staff was of vital importance that it kept to mind the finger of God in their history. Prior to the crossing of the red sea, Aaron's staff was turned into a snake before Pharaoh in Egypt to prove that God supported their demand for freedom (Ex 7:8-13). While in the desert, at God's command Moses made the image of the bronze serpent and set it on the tree to facilitate the healing of the people bitten by other serpents (Num 21:4-9). In all these, the loving, caring hands of God are clearly seen; a situation requiring a response in faith and love on the part of the Tiv people and the Israelites. Here, we have a great lesson on the mysterious nature of evil and divine salvation. The snake represents a paradox of both evil and salvation. The snake appears as a symbolic element in Tiv mythology, an image

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[22]James S. Moti and Shagabaor F. Wegh, An *Encounter Between Tiv Religion and Christianity*, Enugu: Snaap Press, 2001, 13.

that is also present in the Bible. There is the Genesis 3 account of the destructive serpent as evil and at the same time there are instances of salvation among the Israelites in which the snake is involved. Connecting this with the story of the Tiv people saved by a snake, we may conclude that myth like metaphors have polyvalent meanings. On this note I turn to the religious and moral meanings we can find in African stories.

Stories

A story is an oral or written account of a real or imagined event. "[T]he story... mingles the real with the imaginary, and creates archetypal heroes who are both images and symbols. ... The story also has an initiatory function."[23] It is a narrative of real or, more usually, fiction, designed for either entertainment or teaching a lesson (moral or evil). It puts forward a series of traditional or imaginary incidents forming the matter of a suitable narrative. Stories have a revered place in speech making or public speaking in Africa. For an effective catechesis, this mode of expression needs to be encouraged so as to make it deeply rooted in the African heart and mind. I now give two examples to illustrate this point.

A story is told of a crab and crablet (baby crab) that were on a journey. Walking along the seashore, the crab grew angry all of a sudden. "Look how badly you walk! Why can't you walk like the other animals? They all walk forward while you walk backwards." The crablet was startled at the scolding. "But, Mother! I learnt to walk from you. I walk just like you do. If you want me to walk forward, then walk forward yourself." The lesson here is clear. Practice what you preach. Christ reproached the scribes and the Pharisees for failing to practice what they preach. They would bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders; but they themselves would not move their fingers to touch them (Mt.23:3-4).

Again, another story could be told of a man whose wife had died in mysterious circumstances leaving behind an only child. Many people in the village accused him of being responsible for the death. He decided on sojourning to another village. He saddled his horse, placed some load on it, some on his head and some on the child's head. On the way, a traveller complained that he was burdening child and asked him to put all the loads on the back of the horse. This

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[23]Ela, *My Faith as an African*, 36.

he did. While on the way; again he met another traveller who advised him the other way round. These series of differing advice went on till a traveller strangely advised him to carry the horse on his head. This too he did. But on reaching his destination he was denied entry into this village because they thought he was mad for carrying a healthy horse on his head instead of riding on it. This could be a lesson on living with firm conviction and commitment to ideals rather than allowing ourselves to be swayed by unnecessary criticisms.

Criticisms are bound to come in whatever we do. If we take a look at Matthew 11:18-19, we discover Christ himself was criticized. Unlike John the Baptist who the people said he was possessed, Jesus was named a glutton, drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. These ideas purely arose as a result of misinterpretations, misjudgement and misconstruction of the person of Christ. The only thing is, 'know what you are doing.' Hear what Christ said here in reply: "Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds" (Mt 11:19). In whatever we do, ask these questions meditatively: are we seeking the favour of people or of God? If we are only pleasing people, we are not true disciples of Christ for his values surpass those of the world.

Given the above as it is, we might be tempted to say that the African moral sense does not involve any moral consciousness or a reflected perception of the goodness or badness of individual norms or prohibitions. From this perspective, one could argue that African moral sense is not governed by the dictates of conscience or by any interior divine law but by blind conformity to customs and traditions, which are the prohibitions of ancestors or taboos, the infringement of which evokes mystical sanctions. Against these impressions, Ikenga-Metuh argues that, these observations are generalizations, which distort the true image of African morality.[24] It is acceptably true that many moral forms in different African societies derive their binding force from customs and traditions. Indeed, many are of the nature of taboos, which generate automatic mystical sanctions. However, it is a fact that modern Christianity's norms, codes of conduct and morality derived their binding force from customs and traditions which are at times alien to the African mind.

Ikenga-Metuh observes that many African maxims, stories, myths (both cosmogony and cosmology) reveal that besides taboos and

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[24]Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, 233.

traditions, there is a basic consciousness among Africans who possess them. Some idioms recall that consciousness, for instance, a person who 'eats his word,' 'breaks his oath,' 'violates the blood bond,' or by breaching the incest taboo, commits a personal moral sin.[25] A careful study of myths and stories in African world view shows that the human person and even the deities and ancestors must always be in tone with the will of God and that of the ontological order created by the Almighty God. Any deviation creates a misbalance, a disharmony and that attracts some punishment in this life or in the next. According to Danfulani, "some traditionalists observe certain moral and ethical codes or taboos for fear of punishment in afterlife. The most dreaded punishment usually associated with it is the denial of powers of reincarnation in the generations unborn."[26] For the African, the goal in this life is to become an ancestor which could involve reincarnation.

Furthermore, another source of catechesis in Africa is the conceivable functioning of conscience which is clearly defined in some African societies. For instance, the Yourba term for conscience is *ifa aya, (eri-okan)* means "the oracle of the… inner heart (self judgement). Similarly, in Rwanda, the word for conscience among the Tutsi is *kamara*, which is something that is internally felt and situated in the heart."[27] The Tiv call it *ishima* (heart). The Tiv notoriously insist that in matters of ethics and morality, a person's *ishima* should tell him/her what is right and wrong. The Tiv would refer to a clear heart (good conscience) as *ishima i idedoo* and ugly heart (bad conscience) as *ishima i bo.* Indeed various expressions of African moral consciousness are endless. In the next section, I explain how an African catechetical formation program will function.

Recommendations and Conclusion

A renewed African catechesis calls for a much more dialogical approach that goes in stages.[28] This requires using African moral symbols for catechesis. This is a methodology for religious education,

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[25]Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, 234-235.

[26]Danfulani, "Integrating Traditional African Morality," 52.

[27]Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, 234-235.

[28]Thomas Groome discusses this under his shared Christian praxis and movements. See Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1991, 133-281 particularly with a summary of the movements from 146 -152.

which Groome prefers to call it "an approach" because it is an intentional and reflective way of educating in faith.[29] This approach admits "that social practices, in particular virtues, are united within and constitutive of narrative traditions... which shape and guide the lives of individuals and communities."[30] It is a three way process: moving from Life to Faith and back to Life. In the words of Groome, "it is unpacking life to faith to life."[31] 1), *From Life:* An experience from praxis is presented to stimulate the emotions and curiosity of participants who are facilitated to share out their interpretations and emotional feelings about the experience. 2), *To Faith:* As people of faith, every experience has religious and scriptural implications, thus participants seek to relate the praxis to their faith knowledge and parallels. In other they access the wisdom of their faith tradition. 3), *To Life:* A return to their practical life at this point is meant to draw out new interpretation, meaning, decision and planning for appropriate action. What is the new perspective they develop from the shared praxis? What action will they undertake, if they should? What new meaning and lesson have they learned? This approach follows two patterns:

Emphasis on traditional African moral typology: Preachers, teachers, religious instructors should be able to lay emphasis on traditional African moral typology and imagery where such cultural traits are in conformity with biblical teaching. For example, the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16) or the story of Joseph (Gen. 37-45) demonstrates the dignity and worth of the human person, a norm recognized in pre-literate time. Other Christian norms found in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2-17; Dt. 5:6-21) existed as moral codes of conduct among many African peoples. Among other works, the great African ethicist, Benezet Bujo's work, *Do We Still Need the Ten Commandments?*[32] points in this direction. It is hoped that African virtues and values would be taught alongside Christian virtues. This can be effectively achieved if our theological set up is designed to accommodate African moral virtues, vis-à-vis those of Christianity, to give birth to a new morality

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[29]Groome, *Will There Be Faith?*, 273.

[30]Bradford Hinze, *Practices of Dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church*, New York: Continuum, 2006, 14.

[31]Bradford Hinze, *Practices of Dialogue in the Roman Catholic Church*, 272.

[32]Benezet Bujo, *Do We Still Need the Ten Commandments*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1990.

– the African Christian morality which will be truly Christian and truly African.[33]

The phenomenological–comparative approach: The transmission modes should be reviewed to reflect the overlapping nature of traditional African morality with the Jewish-Christian morality. This wedding of the two moralities would naturally give birth to a new but comprehensive African Christian morality. For example, David's sin of adultery with Uriah's wife (2 Sam. 11 and 12) under the Law of Moses required a death penalty (Lv. 22:10). For the Christian even the thought of adultery is abhorred by God, and for most African societies, the culprit was executed, exiled or heavily fined. This was the case with the Mwaghavul who required seven goats from the culprit payable for seven years to the husband of the woman taken in adultery.[34] For the Nuer, it attracted mystical sanctions. Adultery besides the infringement of the husband's rights, which is made good by a compensation paid in cattle, also brings pollution on the culprits. The pollution may also affect the husband if he has an intercourse with her wife before purification rites, this may cause him a serious sickness. Purification rites are therefore arranged as soon as possible to pre-empt this danger.[35] The application of this phenomenological-comparative approach should start at pre-baptism instructions. Moral concepts for comparison drawn from biblical themes should be simple in structure and content.

To make effective this teaching methodology, we need good catechists to implement this catechesis. Catechists should be trained to integrate African and western concepts. "We present day Africans are the products of two heritages the one foreign, the other indigenous. Our wholeness rests on our identity to handle both valid inheritances with maturity and creativity."[36] This approach when taken will ground the Christian faith in Africa and integrate the western concepts learnt by the present generation of Africans.

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[33]Danfulani, "Integrating Traditional African Morality," 54-55.

[34]Danfulani, "Integrating Traditional African Morality," 54.

[35]Ikenga-Metuh, *Comparative Studies in African Traditional Religion*, 236-237.

[36]Mbefo, *Towards a Mature African Christianity*, 25.