

# Utilization of Religious Education for Effective Inculturation of the Gospel

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## Abstract

“Go therefore make disciples of all the nations baptize them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit and to teach them to observe all the command I gave you” (Mt: 28:19), is a mandate given by Christ to preach the Gospel message to every nook and cranny of the world. The success of this mandate however depends on the degree to which the preaching of the Gospel is adapted to local cultures. To make it succeed, there is every need of the incarnation of Christian life and Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only find expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unites the culture, transforms it and remakes it so as to bring about ‘New Creation’. The gospel, therefore should penetrate the very life of culture, become incarnate in them, overcoming those cultural elements that are incompatible with the faith and Christian living and raising their values to the mystery of salvation which comes from Christ. The crux of this paper is to ascertain how religious education can be employed as a medium for the enculturation of the gospel message in Africa. Quantitative data collection was carried out in South East Geo-Political Zone (among the Igbo people) of Nigeria to investigate into the role of religious education in acculturating the gospel message in Africa. The outcome of the study revealed that religious education plays outstanding role in promoting enculturation of the gospel message. It has the specific vocation of bringing the gospel message to the heart of culture and enables all to understand for themselves and commit to the concrete living of Christian meaning and living. It makes possible, the conversion of persons, cultures and Christianization of ethos of the people’s cultures and through enculturation encourages evangelization to respect and preserve what is good in a culture. Recommendations included that those who are pastorally responsible for culture should resolutely be committed to finding ways of evangelization to reach minds and hearts, and to transform cultures in a way which also enrich them. The study was conducted in Igbo speaking states of South East zone of Nigeria. The findings were generalized to cover Africa as it is the same Gospel of Christ dialoguing with the various cultures of Africa.

**Keywords:** Religious Education, Inculturation, Gospel Message, Culture

## 1.0 Introduction

The enculturation of the Gospel message among the Nigerian people via religious education should begin with the recognition that the first evangelization of Africa was done by the missionaries formed by European culture and Christianity. Their background led them to reject many elements of African cultures. They failed to identify the ‘root paradigms’ of many African cultures. That is, they failed to recognize ‘an unquestioned and practically unquestionable - assumption about the fundamental nature of the world and humanity underlying and influencing all social actions within a particular cultural context’ (Bierntzti, 1993). The condemning of some African cultures without knowing their root paradigms made the gospel brought by the earlier missionaries to be opposed by the people. In turn, this also made the Good News not to be rooted in peoples’ cultures. Consequently, this led to the extinction of Christianity in some parts of African, especially the northern part of Africa.

This apparent failure of proper rooting of the Gospel message in Northern African succinctly points out that the Good News which is Christ’s Gospel for all men and the whole human person (both child and parent of the culture in which they are immersed) must reach them in their own culture, which absorbs their manner of living the faith and is in turn gradually shaped by it (Fides, et Ration 71). Making a gospel message and Christian faith to be a culture should be the bane of evangelization today. This imperative because ‘a faith that does not become culture is a faith not fully accepted, not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived (John Paul II, 1982). Thus one principal measure of the success of the Christian Gospel and mission has been the degree to which the teaching and worship of the church was adapted to local cultures (power 1990). The church therefore through religious education should communicate its message to the culture in which it lives, in the idiom of the culture, using the ideas and terminology understood in the culture (Gaudium et Spes. Gs#4#). The survival of Christianity and wider spread of the Gospel message of Christ in Africa should largely be determined by the successful implementation or enculturation of Christian faith within the African culture (Ndiokwere, 1994).

The implication of the above is that for the firm rooting of the Gospel Message in Africa, enculturation is a necessary tool to be employed. That is, enculturation is the logical consequences of effective evangelization. The importance of this lies on the fact that Christianity like any other religion is a cultural form. The Good News of Jesus Christ is therefore not addressed to isolated individual, but to people for whom culture is part of human

phenomenon. Since the Christian faith professes to affect a change of heart in those to whom it is addressed, evangelization necessary carries cultural implications. It is not only individuals that are evangelized, but also their cultures. As the Gospel message make's contact with the reality of the diverse African people and culture, there is a symbolic – enrichment of traditions. This process of mutual enrichment, with Jesus at the centre, is the crux in enculturation.

Enculturation makes the Gospel Message to be at home with the individual and community. Religious education should therefore adopt enculturation as the Launch pad for the spread of Good News. It is therefore against this backdrop that this paper seeks to investigate the role religious education can perform in inculturating the Gospel message in the African society. To achieve this aim, the related variables that are employed in this study are first clarified.

## **2.0 Clarification of Concepts**

### **2.1 Culture**

The concept of culture is notoriously difficult to define in a broad, inclusive sense. From Anthropological views, culture constitutes all the learned behavior acquired by an individual as a member of as social group or groups – that is non – genetically endowed behavior (McGrady, 1997). Sociologically, Giddens (1989) defines culture as consisting of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms which they follow and the material goods they create. Theologically, Shorter (1988) sees cultures as a transmitted pattern or meaning embodied in symbols, a pattern capable of development and change. He further collaborates that culture comes into existence through collective processes, and involves sets of symbols and conceptions, interpretation of experience, and sets of social identities, which are communicated both formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously. He neatly posits the analogy than culture is the grammar of a society. Lane (1993) opines that culture includes 'way of life, value systems, the rights of people, beliefs, and traditions shaping human identity. Longman Dictionary (2012) defines culture as the beliefs, way of life, art, and customs that are shared and acceptable by people in a particular society. Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes* (53) explain culture as particular way in which persons and peoples cultivate their relationship with nature and their brothers and sisters, with themselves and with God, so as to attain fully human existence. Culture according to Pontifical Council for Culture (1999), only exists through man, by man and for man. It is the whole of human activity, human intelligence and emotions, the human quest for meaning, human customs and ethics. Culture is so natural to man that human nature can only be revealed through culture. Man always exists in a particular culture, but man is not exhaustively defined by that same culture. Moreover, the very progress of cultures demonstrates that there is something in man which transcends those cultures. This 'something' is precisely human nature. This nature is itself the measure of culture and the condition of ensuring that man does not become prisoner of any of his cultures, but asserts his personal dignity by living in accordance with the profound truth of his being (*Veritas splendor*, 53).

According to John Paul II (1980), the first and fundamental dimension of culture is the healthy morality – moral culture. In its essential relation to truth and good, culture cannot only spring from the experience of needs centres of interest or basic requirements. But, when cultures are deeply rooted in experience, they show forth the human being characteristic, openness to the universal and the transcendent (*fides et Ration*, 70). However, the Pontifical Council for Culture (1999) warns that care must be taken because cultures aimed at achieving their fulfillment and the human dynamics of their history share also in sin, and by this very fact, require the necessary discernment of Christians. When the Word of God takes on human nature in all things but sin (Heb. 4:15), he purifies it and bring it to fulfillment in the Holy Spirit. The Vatican document (1984) explains that revealing himself in this way, that God opens his heart to mankind by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with others and let man discover in human terms the mysteries of his love in order to invite and receive man into his own company (*Dei verbum*, 2). The foregoing points to the need of inserting Christianity in human cultures in order for it to reach human beings in their cultures. This necessarily calls for the cordial relationship between culture and religion.

### **Culture and Religion**

Religion is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion (Tillich, 1987). Religion is not divorced from or above culture – along with other elements such as science, technology, and the arts; it both shapes, and is shaped by the culture with which it interacts (McGrady, 1997). In consonance with this, Fore (1993) points out that every religious act, both of organized religion and individual faith is culturally formed. Religion according to McGrady (1997) comes clothed in culture's language, uses culture's history and its art forms, relies on those common understandings which are supplied by cultures' current mythology and refers to current cultural experiences. He further explains that there is no other way it can be communicated except through culture and its form.

Religion, especially Christianity has the power to get to the core of every culture and to purify it, to make it fruitful to enrich it and make it blossom like the boundless love of Christ. The reception of Christ's

message thus gives to a culture whose two fundamental components are, in a completely new way, the person and love. The bond of the Gospel that is of Christ and of the church, with man in his human nature is a creator of culture in its very foundation. By living the gospel, the church illuminates the meaning and the value of life, broadens the horizons of reason and strengthens the foundation of human morality. The inculturation of Christian religion with different cultures has created something new. It creates original cultures in the most varied context. The original culture is the culture where faith (religion) has become culture and culture has become faith. The culture in which God who is totally different from us, manifest Himself in Jesus Christ as totally one with us'. The word of the eternal father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men (Dei Verbum). This symbiotic enrichment of culture and religion is better explained by the term inculturation.

### **Inculturation**

The term inculturation, was first coined by Joseph Masson in 1962. It was used by Pedro Arrupe during 1977 synod of Roman Catholic Bishops and was the subject of the letter which he addressed to the society of Jesus in 1978. It was first adopted officially by John Paul II in the synodal document *Catechesis Tradendae* of 1979, and has since entered into theological currency. It is a term popular with African Christian theologians who see Africa theology as the foremost instance of inculturation and means to combat cultural alienation in the African church (Shorter 1987).

Shorter (1987) further points out that the ideas that underlie the concept of inculturation have a long history and are indeed rooted in the inclusive approach of the earthly Jesus. It also implied by the universalist resurrection faith of the early Christian communities, which had first to free themselves from the dominant Jewish religious culture before effectively entering into dialogue with the pagan cultures of Greece, Rome and Near East.

The concept of inculturation has come into prominence as a direct result of the adoption by the mainline churches of an empirical approach to culture. Since the mid – twentieth century culture has been accepted by them as a plural phenomenon and cultures are deemed to have an equal status in a universal communion that is ideally multicultural.

Inculturation is therefore a theological concept derived analogically from the human experience of cultural education. Missionary religions, such as Christianity, which claim to be exclusively identified with any one of them are deemed to acquire a culture in a manner analogous to the individual who learns the elements of the culture into which he or she is born.

Inculturation includes various and diverse levels which must be distinguished but which cannot be separated. Nevertheless in the multiplicity of the approaches with which we shall deal, the fundamental and always valid principle is that inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian message and life in a concrete cultural area, in such a manner that experience not only comes to express itself with the proper elements of the culture in question (which may not be a mere superficial adaption), but that it is converted into the animating, normative and unifying principle which transforms and recreates that culture, thus originating 'a new creation' (Arrupe, 1982).

Hence inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unites culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about 'a new creation' (Arrupe 1982). For Arrupe, inculturation relates not only to the first insertion of faith into a culture but is an on-going task. Since culture is a developing process there must be a continuous dialogue between faith and culture.

Blomjous (1980) in Onwubiko (1992) introduced an important aspect to the understanding of the concept of inculturation. According to him 'inculturation or inter-culturation means facing up to the total reality of the present mission situation, which includes elements like; the fundamental changes in mission thinking, return to the Bible and to early Christianity, development of ecclesiology, search for spiritual values, the reality and appreciation of pluralism and of human community'. The importance of this view is that the term inter-culturation calls attention to interecclesia cultural exchange which is a practical expression of communion. Whereas inculturation pays attention to rooting Christianity in a culture, inter-culturation points to exchange of Christianized cultural values among local churches within the universal context of the church (Onwubiko, 1992).

The extraordinary synod of Bishops (1985) explains that inculturation is different from simple external adaptation, because it means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity in the various human cultures. Following from this, Crollius in Amateze (1988) defines inculturation as 'the integration of the Christian experience of a local church into the culture of the people in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the church universal. This is precisely what inculturation in African situation is set out to achieve.

According to Shorter (1987), inculturation involves the insertion of the tradition of Christian faith into a non-Christian culture and a subsequent ongoing dialogue between that faith and the culture into which it is inserted. Christianity however, like any other religion, is a cultural form. The insertion and dialogue must therefore follow upon a process of inculturation in which evangelists with form of Christianity which nevertheless a particular cultural form of Christianity encounter non-Christian of another culture. On the other hand, inculturation represents a further stage in the Evangelization process, namely the transcending of more cultural form of Christianity which nevertheless possess recognizable continuities with its non-Christian predecessor (Arrupe, 1982). It is the Christian claim that its teaching contains universal elements which enables a culture to become even more authentic and even more faithful to its truest insights. This claim according to Shorter (1987) is expressed theologically in the doctrine of the Logos (word), the principle of eternal truth through whom the world was created. Elements of this truth or 'seeds' of this Logos are found in every human culture. This Logos has become flesh in Jesus Christ, in the light of his incarnation, such seeds are able to grow dynamically through the process of evangelization. Thus inculturation is the logical consequence of effective evangelization.

The key preposition of inculturation, according to McGrady (1997) include:

- The expression of the revelation upon which a religious faith is based reflects a particular historical culture. An ongoing task of evangelization is that of continually re-expressing faith in the context of a plurality of cultures. As Lane (1993) states, 'The issue is no longer one simply of faith and culture but rather one of faith and cultures... Faith must be re-born in every age and culture.'
- The encounter between faith and culture is one which brings about transformation. Lane (1993) states that 'inculturation brings out what is best in culture or equally it can enable culture to realize creatively its full potential', it 'means embracing the modern world in a spirit that is constructive and yet critical that announces and denounces at one and the same time.'
- Within the context of Roman Catholic Theology, inculturation has a strong grounding in incarnational theology. In Christ not only has the divine entered decisively into the realm of the human, but the human has been taken into the realm of divine. Since the 'word has been made flesh and dwelt among us' any distinction between the sacred and the secular is meaningless (the opposite of the sacred is the profane and not secular). Since the whole of creation, including human culture has been transformed by incarnation, religion and culture cannot be seen as two opposing entities.
- The task of the re-expression of faith is more than one simple translation. It is an interactive process of entering into communion with a culture, a process in which each culture is purified by the religious tradition and the religious tradition itself is purified by the new culture

In summing up, Akpunonu (1992) maintains that inculturation is an attempt to prove that the Gospel was at home in every culture and among all peoples and that all peoples could maintain their cultures that were not at variance with the Gospel and be authentic Christians without losing their cultural identity.

### **Evangelization and Inculturation**

The pontifical council for culture (1999) explains that for the church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. It is a question of not only preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's, criteria of judgment, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation.

Evangelization constitutes the church's essential mission, her grace, her very vocation and her deepest identity (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14). It is the means that are most suitable and effective for communicating the Gospel message to men and women of over time. Evangelization, however is a complex process made up of varied elements. The renewed of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complements and mutually enriching. Each one must be seen a relationship with the other (Political council of culture, 1999)

Evangelization as such consists in the explicit proclamation of the mystery of Christ's salvation and message, for God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). This implies according to Ad Gentes (7) that 'every one ought to be converted to Christ who is known through the preaching of the church and they ought to be baptized to become incorporated into him, and into the church which is his body. To do this, man's culture and cultures need to be evangelized (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thing veneer, but in a vital way in depth and right to their very roots) in the wide and rich sense which these terms have always taking the person as one's starting point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God (Pontifical Council, 1999).

The Pontifical Council for culture (1999) further clarifies that the Gospel and evangelization, are

certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture and cultures. Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any of them. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter, according to Evangeli Nutiandi (18-20) will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed. In order to do this, it is necessary to proclaim the Gospel in the language and cultures of men.

Good News (Gospel) should address the human persons in their complex wholeness, spiritual and moral, economic and political, cultural and social. To realize this, the church should not hesitate to speak of the Evangelization of the cultures, that is to say, mentalities, customs and behavior. Based on this, the new evangelization requires a lucid, serious and ordered effort for the Evangelization of culture. (Ecclesia in America, 70). Here inculturation is needed to inculturate the Gospel message in the society. Just as Pastors Dabo Vobis (55) posits that a further problem that is strongly felt these days is the demand for the evangelization of cultures and inculturation of the message of faith. The Evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the Gospel go hand in hand, in reciprocal relationship which proposes constant discernment in the light of the Gospel, to facilitate the identification of values in a given culture, so as to build on the former and vigorously combat the latter. In pursuit of this, one must take cognizance of the fact that cultures are subject to change and decay, and that the primacy of Christ is an unquenchable source of life and communion (Eph. 1:8, Col 1:8-12). The Gospel Missionaries, as the bearer of the absolute novelty of Christ to the heart of different cultures, should incessantly exceed the limits of each individual culture without allowing themselves to be ensnared by the earthly visions of a better world. An evangelizer whose faith itself is linked to a culture, must always give clear witness to Christ's unique role, to the sacramental nature of his church and to the love his disciples have for every person and for "everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise" (Phil 4:8), which means rejecting everything that is a source of sin and fruit of sin in the heart of cultures.

However what is good in people's culture should be respected and preserved. According to Buhlman (2006), we must follow the very prudent norm that when peoples embrace the gospel message, we should not ruin or destroy anything good, decent and beautiful in their own character and native spirit. Everything in the customs of peoples that is not inextricably bound up with superstition or error should be examined favourably and, if possible preserved in tact". In this perspective, the primary objective of Evangelization to culture, is to inject the life-blood of the gospel into culture or cultures, to renew from within and transform in the light of revelation.

The central message of Evangelization from the above is the making of the Gospel message more meaningful to the people. But, Ndiokwere (1994) regrets that the message has not taken root in Africa. The Good News of Christ needs to be fully incarnated in the African cultures. To effect full inculturation of the Gospel message in African, Religious Education should be employed to pilot this project.

### **Religious Education**

In the opinion of Ozele (2007), "education in general is not amenable to a single meaning. It means learning, training and bringing up. Harris (1989) gives a "broad and extensive" description of education as "form giving". For her, education, like all other artistic endeavours, is a work of giving form. More specifically, it is a work, especially concerned with the creation, re-creation, fashioning, and refashioning of form. Christian Religious Education, according to Ozele (2007) is applicable to the various forms of information, formation and transformation of Christian believers by the communication of the Christian Gospel, to become part of a Christian process of social engagement and transformation: For Vrame (1999), Religious Education is an effort of the entire community, strives to nurture all of its members in all stages of life towards whole personhood through the ministries and curricula of the church. Religious Education nurtures not just the individual's trust in God or loyalty to particular doctrinal propositions, but an engagement of the individual's intellect and affectivity which is subsequently manifest by lived actions. It is educating for a faith that is an existential reality. On this, Vrame (1999) further posits that Religious education is seen holistically, that is involving:

- i. The whole person – mind, body, spirit etc;
- ii. The whole community – all believers and their collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of past and present, and
- iii. The whole tradition – orthoxia and orthopraxia.

Shading light on this, Ozele (2007) explains that what Religious Education aims at then, is not merely information but living, not merely knowledge but dynamic action, because the purpose of Christian faith ultimately is service to the reign of God. The values of the "kingdom" that Jesus preached and taught were profoundly social as well as they were personal and spiritual. It was through the prism or the "kingdom" that one

could adequately understand the ministry of Jesus.

This goes to say that the education ministry of the church should be understood also through this prism. On this, Groome (1980) argues that “if then the church is to be effective sign of the kingdom.... It will have to preach those values of the kingdom. But preaching alone will not be enough. To be a credible sign of the kingdom, it will have to embody within its own structures the values it preaches”. Further it has to harness its ministry and whole way of being in the world toward helping to create social/political/economic structures that are capable of promoting the values of the kingdom. Structures which obviate the realization of the kingdom, or, as is often the case, promote its opposite, must be opposed. He further argued that the kingdom of God in Christ should be overarching purpose of religious Education. he insists that the privatization of faith and individualistic interpretation of the kingdom of God becomes the central element of education, from ongoing, must lead people into authentic service to God’s reign by engaging them in action –reflection rhythm of Christian praxis (Ozele, 2007).

The Vatican council using the Catholic Education to express Christian religion and religious education argues that the catholic schools is based on “an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony (The Religious Dimension of Education in Catholic School, 1998 #51), and that “one of the characteristics of a catholic school is that it interprets and gives order to human culture in the Light of Faith (#52). Thus, “while faith is not to be identified with any one culture and is independent of all cultures, it must inspire every culture (#53). The curriculum of the catholic education school should provide for careful rigor in the study of culture and the development of critical sense (#101), being, especially attentive to the practical effects of culture” while strengthening “those aspects of it which will make a person more human’ and identifying the ethical requirements” to be person or of the world as totally autonomous (#53).

Education, as seen so far, can play an outstanding role in promoting the inculturation of the Gospel (Ecclesia in America, 71). For instance Christian Education brings the child through adolescence to maturity. It begins within the family which is always the best context for education. Any pastoral approach to culture and any deep evangelization relies heavily on religious education, and has the family as its starting-point; a place where the education of person primary takes place (Ecclesia in America, 17). Religious education has the specific vocation of bringing Gospel message to the heart of culture. Ozele (2007) adds that the proper inculturation of the Gospel message of Christ in the African cultures demands a Religious Education that is not simply indoctrinating in ideology of memorization of dogmas. In an age characterized by socio-political and economic emasculations and devaluing of human life, religious education needs a pedagogical framework that enables all to understand for themselves and to commit to the concrete living of Christian meaning and value.

Although the ministry of Jesus and the early church did not reveal a definite educational, ministerial and organizational pattern to be followed in the later centuries, it did present the church with a normative language of education and ministry, it promotes servant leadership model of authority, a Christian ideal of regional pluralism and apostolic unity and participation. In inculturating the Gospel message, Religious Education should adopt these normative languages.

### **Religious Education and Inculturating of the Gospel Message in Africa**

Religious education from the foregoing has been earmarked for the inculturating of Gospel Message in Africa. To do this, Religious education should explore the following areas.

1. Inculturation of the Gospel Message through the discovering of the “Root Paradigms” of an Element of a culture.

For Religious Education to fully implement the Good News in a culture, it must discover and respect the root paradigms’ of the cultures upon which the Good News is to be rooted. The understanding of these root paradigms will help Religious Education to understand the people to whom the Good News is preached to. This will also help not to reject people’s cultures at surface. Biernatzki (1991 and 1993) and Montefiore (1992) agreed that a key method of inculturating that Gospel message is that of the identification of root paradigms. “A root paradigms” is “an unquestionable and practically unquestionable – assumption about the fundamental nature of the world and humanity underlying and influencing all social actions within a particular cultural context” (Biernatzki, 1993). These are so taken for granted that they are invisible within a culture, and are regarded as a depiction of “the way the world, ‘really is’ not merely the way our culture teaches us to think it is” (Biernatzki, 1993). Values and symbols are found upon the root paradigms of a culture, and can point towards them, especially when appealed to emotionally in conflict situations.

In the application of the root paradigms analysis to the incultuation of the Gospel message, religious education should first discover the root paradigms of a culture with which it is seeking to communicate the Gospel message. It should again formulate the Gospel message in the context of that root paradigms and associated symbols. This method agrees with the opinion of the pontifical council on culture (1999) that those wishing to communicate the good News and its values should first try to penetrate not only its values and symbols or the culture but even to the root paradigms which underlie them. Communication of the Gospel

message which is not somehow consistent with the deepest assumptions of the people in question, about the nature of world, the nature of humankind and the expectations about the human motivation and which the people take for guaranteed will have little chance of success.

Just as mentioned before, the failure of the North African Missionaries to root the Gospel message in the culture of the people led to eventual demise of Christianity in the area, even though that many church fathers came from the area. To avoid the repeat of this in Africa, in spreading the Gospel message in terms central to today's culture, the culture associated with the Gospel message should be constructed around defining the root paradigm. With the discovering of the root paradigms of a culture, the Gospel message will be properly inculturated by adopting those cultural elements that are intrinsically bad and extrinsically good. Adoption of this method agrees with the Law of Evangelization stated in *Gaudium et Spes* (Gs#44) that the church must communicate its message to the culture, using the ideas and the terminology understood in the culture. In this sense Religious Education should use the resources of different cultures to inculturate and explain the message of Christ.

### **Employing Family as means of planting the Gospel Message in a Culture.**

Family is a community of persons. It is the first human society. It originates from the conjugal covenant of marriage, which opens the spouses into a lasting communion of Love and Life, and it is brought to completion in full and specific way with the procreation of children: the communion of spouses gives rise to the community of the family (Letter to Families, 1994, 7). As the cradle of life and love, the family is a source of culture. It is the place that welcomes life and the school of humanity, where future spouses are best formed to become responsible parents.

It is primarily the responsibility of families to educate children knowing that tomorrow's world depends on today's education, and education cannot be seen merely as a transmission of knowledge. It forms people and prepares them for their participation in social life by fostering their maturity (Pontifical Council, 1999).

According to John Paul II (1995), the challenge of proclaiming the Gospel to children and young people, from school to university, calls for religious Education programme for evangelization of culture. Religious education in the family, at school or at university should not only create profound relationship between the educator and one being educated, but also make them both share in truth and love, that final goal to which everyone is called by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Letter to Families, 16). Religious education in laying the foundation for the Gospel message in the children should rightly initiate them into social life and citizenship, into relationships based on respect for rights and duties in a spirit of welcome and solidarity, and with moderate use of property and possessions which will guarantee just condition for everyone. In same way, Religious Education should in various ways use families to bring the leaven of Gospel message to the children in idiom of their own cultures. Inculturating the Gospel message in the children through the idiom of their culture will help to guide the children to live in the dictate of the Gospel message of Christ.

Inculturating the Gospel message through promoting Bi-cultural Education

Religious Education in its bid to inculturate the Gospel message should promote Bi-cultural Education. Bi-cultural education is an education which is committed to bridging the gap between the socially inherited and socially acquired cultures. Otherwise known as "home culture" and "school culture:" respectively. The main thesis of bi-cultural education is that cultural difference ought no longer to be permanent element of tension and crisis between peoples of different cultures or different generations of the same cultural base, it believes that cultural similarities as well as differences must be exploited for harmony and existence (Onwubiko, 1999).

Bi-cultural education as a necessary equipment for missionaries, according to Onwubiko (1999), dates back from the time of Paul, who brings into apostolate his dual heritage – his Jewish home culture and his acquired Greco – Roman culture, being a Jew by birth and Roman citizen by Law. Bi-Ligualism was indispensable for Paul as an effective Missionary. This is because it helped him to develop a "highly emphatic power to enter into emotional harmony with traits of a particular culture so as to appreciate its works of art and to perceive with satisfaction their native esthetics and natural values.

The importance of this in the task of inculturation is that it calls attention once again to the fact that effective evangelization must be integral and that correct mental orientation today must be of the formation of evangelists who must appreciate the cultural importance of culture centres if they must preach the Gospel effectively. According to Onwubuike (1992) it has been the wish of the church to protect and evangelize peoples in the context of their traditional religious and cultures. This has meant bringing out religious change in the Christian sense, through religious development which reaches the core elements of people's lives – rituals, morals, customs and cultural practices. According to Lineamenta (2000), "We must have recourse without undue hesitation to philosophy to the wisdom of peoples that is to their customs, their sense of the life and social order. This should be done both for a better comprehension of the revealed message as well as for an evaluation of the cultural values" Religious Education should popularize the Bi-Cultural education as this will help to make easy the inculturation of the Gospel message in the African Cultures.

### Application of Transcultural Aspect of Inculturation in Inculturation of the Gospel Message

For full inculturation of the Gospel message Religious Education should apply the transcultural aspect of inculturation. This implies that transcultural evangelization goes beyond the culture itself but through it, transcends it, leading the cultural bearer to Christ. Onwubiko (1992) clarifies that in this aspect evangelization goes beyond the culture itself but through it, transcends it, leading the cultural bearer to Christ. Onwubiko (1992) clarifies that in this aspect, inculturation is not to be identified with culturalism which is the bid to make a culture an end in itself. In other words, transcultural evangelization implies transcultural education, which in terms of inculturation, has that permanent function of liberating the Gospel always from whatever cultural accretions that tends to imprison it – the Gospel- in its own (culture's) systems. Transcultural education takes seriously the organic unity that must exist between the Gospel, the people and their culture and binds them to their Christian vocation (onwubiko, 1992). By employing transcultural education by the religious education, will facilitate the inculturation of the Gospel message in the African Society. This is true because Transcultural evangelization demands that at the initial proclamation of the Gospel, religious education should train missionaries which must not only meet the people where they are, but also must be prepared to move with them to where Christ wants them to be. This is because transcultural evangelization implies a regeneration of man's culture and cultures, is a vital way through the power of the Gospel "affecting and as it were upsetting... mankind's criteria of judgement, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, source of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation".

### Utilization of Art and Leisure for Inculturation of Gospel

To ensure the grassroot and speedy inculturation of the Gospel message, Religious Education should employ the Art of the People. The necessity of this is found on the fact that true work of art is potentially a way into religious experience. Recognizing the importance of art in the inculturation of the gospel means recognizing that human genius and sensitivity are a kin to the truth and beauty of divine mystery. Since works of art bear an imprint of invisible, it look beyond itself for its absolute goal; its nobility comes from being directed to the ultimate goal of human person, the Religious Education should employ some of that are not at variance with the Christian faith, to inculturate the Gospel message among the people.

Moreover Religious knowledge, should through the artists find extraordinary potential for the expression of new formulas and for the definition of new symbols of metaphors through the brilliance of liturgical genius in all its creative force, steeped in centuries of church imagery with its ability to express the omnipotence of grace. The inspiration of Christian artists can attract people of any faith or of none of beauty and truth. Religious Education should therefore employ the artistic works as an excellent way of reaching a whole host of people who many have no other contact with the message of Christ.

Religious Education should also take cognizance of the world of leisure and sport, travel and tourism, as undeniably and important element in modern culture, along with which the church has long been present, and so should be another new forum for evangelization. Having become almost universal, sport undoubtedly has its place in the Christian vision of culture and can promote both physical health and interpersonal relationships. However, sport can be taken over by commercial interest or become a vehicle for expressing tribal, national or racial rivalries and give rise to occasional explosion of violence which reveals the tensions and contradictions which are part of contemporary society, and thus become an anticulture (Pontifical Council, 1999). This area is therefore an important area for inculturation of gospel. Religious Education should bring it to the mind of the people that despite the variety and complexity and chestier of symbols and commercialism, leisure pursuits, that sports create not just an atmosphere but a whole culture, a way of life and value system. Religious Education should therefore formulate well articulate pastoral policy that will enable it to employ these good elements as springboard for inculturating the Gospel message of Christ.

### Utilization of Cultural diversity for Inculturation of Gospel

The world in which the church carries out her Mission of Evangelization today is the world of diversity of cultural situations which have developed from the perspective of different religions. Religious Education have to recognize these religious values and promote those which are consonant with the Gospel. The recognition of these values will provide a fertile ground for cultivating conversion to Christ. According to Ecclesia in Africa (30-37, 42), Africans have profound religious sense of the sacred of the existence of God, the creator and spiritual world. The reality of sin in its individuals and social forms is very much present in the consciousness of these peoples, as is also the need for rites of purification and expiation. Religious Education should filter the positive values enshrined in these traditional cultures, such as a sense of family love and respect for life, veneration of ancestors, a sense of solidarity and community and respect for the chiefs and elders. The filtered positive values should be used to form a solid basis for the inculturation of the gospel. Through this means, the gospel penetrates the whole of culture and brings it to fruition (Ecclesia in Africa, 59-62). Religious Education should use the Good News of Christ the savior, as expressed in the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-12) to offer a firm and

resolute challenge to attitudes from these traditions which clash with the gospel.

Pope John Paul II (1984), clearly puts it that, many elements of spirituality and mysticism, like holiness, self-denial, chastity, universal love, a love for peace, prayer and contemplation, bliss in God and compassion, which are very much alive in these cultures can lead on to faith in God of Jesus Christ. It is then incumbent on religious education to draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with the faith, in order to enrich Christian thought (Fides at Ratio, 72). The employment of these will ensure proper inculturation of the Gospel message in African Society.

### **Religious Education Inculturation of the Gospel through the upholding of Justice.**

Religious Education should through its teachings device means of promoting the dignity of human person. It should struggle to cleanse society of violence, social injustice, the abuses of which street children are victims, drug trafficking, etc. In this context, it should show love for the poor and the excluded. It is duty-bound to promote culture of solidarity at every level of society, government institutions, public institutions and private organization. With the culture of solidarity, the gospel message is inculturated in the life of the poor and excluded.

### **Religious Education and Inculturation of Gospel Message among Young People**

Religious Education should make the Gospel message to bear on the culture of young people. It should employ the teaching, higher education and leisure which make a deep impression on the young people as a process of evangelization. All the activities that form young people's culture should be exploited and it should form an integral part of pastoral effort to implement "a new kind of dialogue, which would make it possible to bring the originality of the Gospel message to the heart of today young people's mentalities. Through inculturation, Religious Education must make Christ's word to appear in all its freshness to the young generations whose attitude are some times difficult for minds to understand but who are from closed to spiritual values" (Traition fidar). The Young People are the future of the church and of the world - pillar of evangelization. Religious education should therefore use the cultures of the young people to inculturate the gospel message among them.

By employing and exploiting all the areas discussed so far, it is evidence that through inculturation, Religious education makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces people, together with their culture, into the Christ community. Religious Education should transmit into the cultures that value of the Gospel and at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in the cultures and renewing them with the Gospel message. Through inculturation, the religious education makes the church, for her path, to become a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission (Redemptions Missio, 52). Through Religious Education, inculturation which is the very opposite of backward – looking archeologism and worldly mimicry, is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. This encounter deprives cultures of nothing; rather they are actually stimulated to open themselves to the newness of Gospel's truth and to find it an incentive for further development (Fides at Ratio, 71).

In tune with the objective demands of faith and its mission to evangelize, religious education should takes account of the essential fact that the meeting of faith and culture is meeting of things which are not of the same order. Pope Paul II (1980) clarifies that the inculturation of faith and evangelization of cultures go together as an inseparable pair, in which there is no hint of syncretism, this is the genuine meaning of inculturation. Inculturation seeks to obey Christ's command to preach the Gospel to all nations even unto the ends of the earth such obedience does not signify either syncretism or a simple adaptation of the announcement of the gospel, but rather the fact that the Gospel penetrates the life of cultures, becomes incarnate in them, overcoming those cultural elements that are incompatible with the faith and Christian living and raising their values to the mystery of salvation which comes from Christ (Pastores Dabo Vobis, S5). What is, therefore at stake for Religious Education is the conversion of persons and through them of cultures, the Christianization of the ethos of people (Evangeli Nuntiandi, 20). It should through incarnation make the Christ's Gospel for all men and whole human person to reach them in their own culture which absorbs their manner of living the faith and in turn is gradually shaped by it. Inculturation of the gospel message via this mean will ensure that the message of Christ is well grafted and propagated in the life of the Africans.

### **Methodology**

The research deign adopted for this study is the survey deign. It is chosen on account of exploratory nature of the study. The design is directed at collecting data using the questionnaires and interview responses. Selected number of people, especially knowledgeable people who are in better position to given a vivid, accurate and authentic information on the Religious Education efficacy in inculturating the Gospel message in Africa. Apart from conducting oral interview relevant data were gathered from distributing a structured questionnaire to the respondents. The size of the sample is 300 respondents which were drawn randomly following the principle of convenient sampling which refers to a non-probability sampling method involving selection of individuals on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond. The strength of this method is that the result is

objective since respondents made themselves available out of their own volition. Therefore, the outcome of the research cannot be spurious. The items in the questionnaire were constructed around three options – Yes, No and Not Sure (N.S).

The research Questions are as follows:

1. What potency does Religious Education has in inculcating the Gospel message in African Cultures with reference to Igbo People of Nigeria?
2. What are the importance of inculturation to Evangelization or spread to Gospel message in African Society with reference to Igbo people of South East Nigeria?
3. What means can Religious Education employs in the inculturation of the Gospel message in Africa with reference to Igbo people of South East Nigeria?

Data from the questionnaire were coded and the responses from the subjects were analysed using simple percentage analytical techniques.

#### Results, Analysis and Discussion

This section indicates the respect of the data collected and analysed in this research. The responses are grouped under the three options – Yes, No and Not Sure (N.S). The analysis of findings is done using simple percentage. This is intended to aid a deeper exploration of the research findings and promote a better understanding of the people regarding the role of Religious Education in inculturation of the Gospel message in Africa.

#### Research Question I

What potency does Religious Education has in inculcating the Gospel message in African culture with reference to Igbo people of Nigeria?

Table I

S/N	ITEMS	Frequency and Percentage of Respondents						Total
		Yes	%	No	%	N.S	%	
1	Religious Education involves Studies of the whole person – body, mind, Spirit, etc.	250	83.4%	43	14.4	7	2.3	300
2	It makes possible education of the whole community - all believers and their collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of the past and present.	263	87.7	33	11	4	1.3	300
3	It studies the whole religious traditions, both beliefs and practices.	231	77	60	20	9	3	300
4	It generates various forms of information, effects formation and transformation of Christian's believers by the communication of the Christian gospel.	270	90	30	10	0	0	3400
5.	It gears towards realization of the kingdom of God in Christ.	247	82.4	49	16.34	4	1.3	300
6	It interprets and gives order to human culture in the light of faith.	238	79.3	58	19.4	4	1.3	300
7.	It provides critical rigor in the study of culture and the development of critical sense.	288	96	12	4	0	0	300
8	It plays an outstanding role in promoting inculturation.	249	83	48	16	3	1	300
9	It has the specific vocation of bringing gospel message to the heart of culture.	277	92.3	23	7.7	0	0	300
10	It enables all to understand for themselves and commit to the concrete living of Christian meaning and value.	245	81.7	48	16	7	2.4	300
	<b>Total and Average Percentage (%)</b>	<b>2658</b>	<b>85.28</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>13.47</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>3000</b>

The table above indicate the potency of religious Education in inculcating of the Gospel message in Africa. The percentage shows that the great majority of the respondents accepted all the items in the table. The analysis in table I shows that the items 1-10 has percentage of 84.4%, 87.7%, 90%, 82.4%, 79.3%, 96%, 83%, 92.3%, 81.7% respectively. The average percentage of acceptance is 85.28%

**Research Question II**

What are the relevance of inculturation to the evangelization or spread of Gospel message in African soil with reference to Igbo People of South East Zone of Nigeria?

Table II

S/N	Items	Frequency and Percentage of Respondents						Total
		Yes	%	No	%	N.S	%	
1	Inculturation incarnates the Christian message and life in a concrete cultural areas	197	65.7	70	23.7	33	11	300
2	Inculturation helps evangelization to insert the Christian faith into non Christian culture	209	69.7	67	22.3	24	8	300
3	Inculturation helps evangelization to continually re-express faith in the context of a plurality of cultures	213	71	40	13.3	47	15.7	300
4	Inculturation transmits into various cultures the values of the Gospel.	218	72.7	55	18.3	27	9	300
5	Good elements in a culture, through inculturation are taken and renewed with the Gospel message	188	62.7	63	21	49	16.3	300
6	Inculturation stimulates cultures to be open to the newness of the Gospel truth	243	81	16	5.3	41	13.7	300
7	Inculturation makes possible the conversion of persons, cultures and Christianization of the ethos of the people	251	83.7	28	9.3	21	7	300
8	Inculturation encourages evangelization to respect and preserve what is good in peoples culture	217	72.3	53	17.7	30	10	300
Total and Average percentage (%)		17.36	72.4					2400

Analysis of table 2 above demonstrates that inculturation is relevance to Evangelization or spread of the Gospel message. The question items 1 to 10 has the percentage of 65.7%, 69.7%, 71%, 72.7%, 62.7%, 81%, 83.7%, 72.3% and 72.4% respectively. These figures show that the respondent agreed that inculturation is relevant to the spread of the Gospel message.

**Research Question III**

What means can religious education employ in the inculturation of the Gospel message in Africa with reference to the people of South East Nigeria?

Table III

S/No	Items	Frequency and percentage of respondents						Total
		Yes	%	no	%	S.N	%	
1	In order to fully acculturate the Good news in a culture, religious education must discover and respect the 'root paradigms of cultures	230	76.7	20	6.7	50	16.6	300
2	Religious education uses the resources of different cultures to inculcate and explain the message of Christ	189	63	37	12.3	74	24.7	300
3	Religious education in various ways use families to bring the leaven of the Gospel to the children in idiom of their culture.	247	82.3	13	4.3	40	13.4	300
4	Religious education should develop a highly emphatic power to enter into emotional harmony with traits of a particular culture through B1-cultural education.	195	65	41	13.7	64	21.3	300
5	Religious education takes seriously the organic unity that must exist between the Gospel, the people and their culture and binds them to their Christian vocation through transcultural education	210	70	27	9	63	21	300
6	Religious education should employ the art of the people that are not at variance with the Gospel to ensure grassroots and speedy inculturation of the Gospel message	234	78	31	10.3	45	15	300
7	Religious education should employ sports as a springboard for inculturation of the gospel message of Christ	228	76	30	10	42	14	300
8	Religious education should filter the positive values enshrined in diversity of African cultures like love and respect for life, a sense of family, etc, to form a solid basis for inculturation of the Gospel message	256	85.3	0	0	44	14.7	300
9	Religions education should use the culture of African solidarity to inculcate the Gospel message	218	72.7	37	12.3	45	15	300
10	Religions education should exploit all the activities that form young people's culture and use them to inculcate the gospel message among the young ones.	249	83	13	4.3	38	12.7	300
Total and Average Percentage (%)		2256	75.2	24.9	8.29	505	16.84	3000

Table 3 indicates that all the items outlined as the means to be employed by Religious education in inculturating the Gospel message are accepted by the respondents. Item 1-10 has the following percentage in the acceptance side: 76.72, 63%, 82.3%, 65%, 70%, 78%, 76%, 85.3%, 72.3% and 832 respectively

#### Discussion

**Research question 1:** What potency does religious education has in inculturating the Gospel Message in African cultures was analyzed in table I. The findings show that religious education has potency of inculturating of the Gospel because it involves studies of the whole person, body, mind, spirit, etc, it makes possible education of the who community – all believes and their collective wisdom, knowledge and experience of the past and the present, it studies the whole religious traditions, both beliefs and practices, it generates various forms of information, effects formation and transformation of Christian believes by the communication of the Christian gospel; it gears towards realization of the kingdom of God in Christ, it interprets and gives order to human culture in the light of faith; it provides critical vigor in the study of culture and the development of critical sense; it plays an outstanding role in promoting inculturation; it has the specific vocation of bringing gospel message to the heart of culture; and it enables all to understand for themselves and commit to the concrete living of Christian meaning and value. These findings agree with the opinions of Ozele, 2007, Vrame (1999), Groome (1980) and the document on the religions dimension of education in catholic school, 1998. The agreement of these finding with the opinions of these authors shows that the findings are credible.

Table 2 handled the research question 2, what are the relevance of inculturation to evangelization or spread of Gospel message in African soil? The results show that; inculturation incarnates the Christian message and life in concrete cultural areas; it helps evangelization to continually re-express faith in the context of plurality of cultures, it transmits into various cultures the values of the Gospel, good elements in a culture through inculturation are taken and renewed with the Gospel message, inculturation stimulates cultures to be open to the newness of the Gospel truth; it makes possible the conversion of persons, cultures and Christianization of the ethos of the people; and it encourages evangelization to respect and preserve what is good in peoples culture. These findings align with the opinion of Arrupe (1982) that inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context and that of Shorter 1987 that inculturation involved the insertion of the tradition of Christian faith into a non-Christian culture and a subsequent ongoing dialogue between that faith and the culture into which it is inserted. The agreement of these findings with the authors opinion show that the findings are authentic, that is, that inculturation is relevant in spreading the Gospel Message in Africa.

The third research question ‘what means can religions education employs in the inculturation of the Gospel message in Africa was analysed in table 3. The result obtained revealed that in order to fully inculturate the Good news in a culture, religious education must discover and respect the ‘root paradigms’ of cultures, it should use the resources of different cultures to inculturate and explain the message of Christ; in various ways, it should use families to bring the leaven of the Gospel to the children in the idiom of their cultures’ it should develop a highly emphatic power to enter into emotional harmony with traits of particular culture through B1 – Cultural education; it should take seriously the organic unity that must exist between the Gospel, the people and their culture and bind them to their Christian vocation through transcultural education.

It should employ the arts of the people that are not at variance with the Gospel to ensure grassroot and speedy inculturation of the gospel message; sports should be employ as a springboard for the inculturation of the Gospel message of Christ; Religions education should also filter the positive values enshrined in diversity of African cultures, like: love and respect for life, a sense of family, etc. to form solid basis for inculturation of the Gospel message; it should use the culture of African Solidarity to inculturate the Gospel message; and it should exploit all the activities that form young people’s culture and use them to inculturate the Gospel message among the young ones.

These findings tally totally with the opinions of many authors. Biernatizki (1991 and 1993) and Montefiore 1992 posited that a key method of inculturating the Gospel message is that of the identification of root paradigms. Also they tally with the opinion of the Pontifical council on culture (1999) that those wishing to communicate the Good news and its values should fist try to penetrate not only the values and symbols or the culture but even to the root paradigms which underlie them. John Paul II (1995) requests that Religious education should in various ways use families to bring the leaven of the Gospel message to the children in idiom of their own cultures. The findings also agreed with the opinion of Onwubiko (1999) and (1992) , John Paul II (1994), Pope Paul II (1980), and the documents of second Vatican council – Redemptoris Missio, 52, Fides et Ratio, 71, Pastors Dabo Vobis, 55; etc. The agreement of these findings with the opinion of these authors show that the finding made through the analysis in table 3 are genuine and should be used not only by religious education but also by any evangelist that wants to inculturate the Gospel message properly in any part of Africa.

#### Conclusion

The examination of the role religious education plays in the inculturation of the gospel message in Africa shows that Religious education has all the required potency of inculturating the Gospel message. This fact is inferred from the fact that religious education interprets and gives order to human culture in the light of faith and provides critical vigor in the study of cultures. It also has the vocation of bringing Gospel message to the heart of cultures and commit the culture to the concrete living of the Christian meaning and value. Through inculturation, religious education makes the Christian message and life to incarnate in concrete cultural areas. It makes evangelization to express faith in the context of plurality of cultures and thereby transmits into various cultures the values of the Gospel. Religious education through inculturation takes good elements in the cultures and renews them with the gospel truth. It initiates the conversion of persons, cultures and Christianization of ethos of the people.

Religion education in its inculturating efforts, employ the resources in different cultures to inculturate and explain the message of Christ. It also employs the culture of family, culture of the children and young, cultures associated with Arts and SPORT as bases for inculturation of the Gospel message among the people.

The study as has been exposed prove that religion education has the potency of inculturating the Gosepl message and indeed it has made giant steps which has yielded inestimable fruits in successful inculturation of the gospel in many areas. For further progress in the inculturation of the Gospel, it is incumbent upon the churches, schools and religious groups to give full recognition to religious education, widen its horizons and give it full acceptance so that it becomes more effective in further inculturation of the gospel message in Africa.

#### Recommendation

- i. Special attention should be given to the teaching of philosophy, history and literature as they are essential elements for the encounter between the faith and different cultures.
- ii. Teachers who are knowledge, who can link religious education and catechesis should be employed in pastoral schools and other religious institutes in order to meet with success the pastoral challenges of the area.
- iii. Christian universities, colleges and research centers should take care to ensure fruitful encounter between the Gospel and different cultural expressions.
- iv. Christian institutions should have the specific vocation of bringing the Gospel values to the heart of cultures.
- v. Those who are pastorally responsible for cultures should resolutely be committed to finding ways for evangelization to reach minds and hearts, and to transform cultures in a way which also enrich them

- vi. The church should be more open to cultures in order to allow for the OSMOSIS of culture and Good news.
- vii. Competent theological formation that has a sound knowledge of tenants of the faith should be established. This is necessary for a true evangelization.
- viii. A pastoral approach focused on the inculturation of faith should be established with the training of ministers who are competent in the field of theology and in the field of pastoral work.
- ix. Local churches, pastors and teachers should be encouraged to study the traditional cultures and religious practices of their own region, to reach a discernment of values, customs and rites which might help root Christianity more deeply in local cultures.
- x. Christian education should seek to identify the good things in the pagan culture and have them assimilated into the Christian religion so as to produce a Christian culture within a given community.
- xi. All African Christians must see inculturation as an urgent priority, for firm rooting of the gospel in Africa and as such make it always the central issue of the church.

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