APT 10 (2020) pp. 89 - 102

The Model Missionary and the Missionary Commissioning: A Study of Luke 10:1 in the Light of *Maximum Illud*

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In the wake of the centenary celebration of the promulgation of the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* of Benedict XV, Pope Francis announced October 2019 as the "Extraordinary Missionary Month" with the theme "Baptized and Sent: The Church of God on Mission in the world." Intending to revive the missionary element of our Christian calling conferred on us at baptism, he urged "the whole Church (to) revive her missionary awareness and commitment…(to give a) fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again."[1] Deriving its authority from the *Great Commission* of Matt 28:19-20, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation', the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men."[2] The essence of the life of the Church, therefore, is evangelization and proclamation of the Good news of Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit received at baptism.

This work, therefore, seeks to explore the commissioning of the seventy (two) in Luke 10:1, and highlight the nature of the sender and the sent, the model missionary and the missionary commissioning, in the light of the African experience and reception of the Church's missionary mandate as introduced by *Maximum Illud*.

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[1] Pope Francis, "Message of His Holiness Francis for World Mission Day 2019: Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World," http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/papa-francesco_20190608_giornata-missionaria2019.html (accessed 04.01.2010).

[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), no. 849.

The Context: The Mission of the Seventy (Two) and the Parallels of the Twelve

The commissioning of the seventy (two) in Lk 10:1, has no other direct parallels in the Gospels. There is, however, a structural relationship to the commissioning of the twelve narrative in Lk 9:1-6 with parallels in Mk 6:7-13 and Matt 10:5-16. Clearly, in these latter passages, Jesus sends his apostles into the mission. The narrative of Lk 10:1, therefore, expands the number and category of those sent to share in this divine work of evangelization. Lk 10:1 from the pericope of Lk 10:1-24, is set in the context of Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem (9:51–19:27). In the broader context, it comes after his ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50) and before his ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38).[3] Geographically, the Lukan gospel sets the city of Jerusalem in sight, indicating an apparent movement towards this significant location. The ascent towards Jerusalem bears a literary and theological impart in understanding the entire narrative.[4]

In the immediate context, the commissioning of the seventy (two) is set after Jesus was refused entrance through a Samaritan village because he was on his way to Jerusalem (9:51-56). The pericope is followed by Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, where he taught his disciples about who a neighbor is and how to be a merciful neighbor to others (10:25-37). The rejection by the Samaritan village does not, therefore, exclude them from God's mercies and missionary encounter, since everyone and everything God created is good (Gen 1:31; 1 Tim 4:4).

It is noteworthy also that, the sending of the apostles into mission by Jesus in the synoptic gospels and their parallels (Matt 10:5-16; Mk 6:7-13; Lk 9:1-6), are all preceded by a string of miracle stories which include the healing of Jairus' daughter and the haemorrhaged woman (Matt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Lk 8:40-56). The twist here, however, is that, in the Markan account, this healing episode is followed by Jesus' rejection, not by a Samaritan village (cf. Lk 9:51-56), but by his hometown (Mk 6:1-6). The unbelief of his

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[3]Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 226.

[4]Luke Timothy Johnson and Todd C. Penner, *The Writings of the New Testament:* An Interpretation, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 220.

people amazed Jesus, such that he declared that "prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house" (Mk 6:4).

The "sending of the twelve" story is set in the context of miracle stories (healing and feeding the multitude). In contrast, the "sending of the seventy (two)" is set in the context of missionary activities, with its goal towards Jerusalem. Although, the missionary mandate of the Church derives from Matt 28:19-20, Lk 10:1 expands on this missionary outlook. It presupposes the importance of carrying out the missionary mandate without discrimination, since there is good, even in the least expected places, in this case, among the Samaritans.

Analysis of Luke 10:1

> Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα **ἀνέδειξεν** ὁ κύριος **ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο]** καὶ **ἀπέστειλεν** αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ **δύο [δύο]** πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι.
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> *And after this, the Lord commissioned seventy [two] others and sent them two by two ahead of him into every city and place which he himself is about to go.*

Some essential questions immediately emerge from this verse. What do the verbs ἀνέδειξεν and ἀπέστειλεν imply? What does the number ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο] (seventy-two) indicate? Furthermore, how does the ἑτέρους (others) differ from the Twelve sent in Lk 9:1-5?

The Lord Commissions His Missionaries (Lk 10:1a)

In the different contexts of Jesus calling and sending his disciples into the mission, the pattern "*he called*... and *he sent*" is observed. In Matt 10:1,5; Mk 3:13-14; Mk 6:7 and Lk 9:1,2, Jesus called (προσκαλεσάμενος/προσκαλεῖται/ Συγκαλεσάμενος) his twelve disciples and sent (ἀπέστειλεν) them to evangelize.[5] John the

[5]The verb προσκαλεσάμενος/προσκαλεῖται from προσκαλέομαι means "t*o call to oneself, summon, invite"* and Συγκαλεσάμενος from συγκαλέω means "*to call together*" or "*to call to oneself* – middle sense." They are both from the verb καλέω which may translate as "*to call, summon or say*." Cf. Barclay M. Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 2014), 156.

Baptist, also called (προσκαλεσάμενος) two of his disciples and sent (ἔπεμψεν) [6]them to ask if Jesus was the One (Lk 7:18-19). Although, Lk 10:1 presents a structural pattern similar to the sending of the twelve, the verbs used, however, differs. The Lord ἀνέδειξεν (appointed/commissioned) seventy (two) others and sent (ἀπέστειλεν) them ahead of him.

He Commissions

The verb ἀνέδειξεν, from ἀναδείκνυμι, is used in the Lord's *appointment* of the seventy (two) others whom he sends. In the Old Testament (OT), ἀναδείκνυμι in its rare different occurring forms appears in the LXX (Greek Septuagint) where it translates the Hebrew verbs יָדַע (*yada*) – *to know* or *to make known* in Hab. 3:2; מָנָה (*minah*) – to appoint or be counted in Dan 1:11 and מָצָא (*matsa*) – to find or to be found in Dan 1:20. In these cases, the verb expresses a revelation of knowledge (Dan 1:20), the need for the Lord to reveal knowledge (Hab 3:2), and the appointment of a care-taker person given all rights, authority, and responsibility with accountability to the person appointing (Dan 1:11).

In the New Testament (NT), the word occurs in Lk 1:80, Lk 10:1 and Acts 1:24 with a common contextual understanding. On the one hand, in the context of Lk 1:80, the nominal form ἀναδείξεως from ἀνάδειξις which means "to lift, show forth or declare" expresses the meaning of a public appearance, commissioning or installation, a showing forth or an announcement.[7] The aorist imperative ἀνάδειξον, on the other hand, is found in Acts 1:24 where the apostles prayed that the Lord might ἀνάδειξον (reveal, show clearly or appoint) one of the two names to join the college of Apostles. In Luke 10:1, the verb ἀνέδειξεν implies "to consecrate or set apart" or "to assign to a task or position". It indicates the showing forth or commissioning in a public sense of revelation and "public

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[6]ἔπεμψεν from the verb πέμπω means "*to send*" but is distinct "from ἀποστέλλω (*send forth, send out*)," which focuses on the authoritative commission behind the sending, πέμπω focuses rather on the sender and the act of sending (Jn. 5.37; cf. 3.17)" Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament: Baker's Greek New Testament Library*, Bible Works v.10 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

[7]G. Abott-Smith., *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 29.

recognition of appointed officials." This understanding is expressed clearly in the sending of the seventy (two).[8]

It infers, therefore that it is a superior authority who publicly presents, commissions, or reveals a person or group of persons. In Lk 10:1, it is the Lord who commissions the seventy (two), with the sense of announcing them to the public and giving them the authority to carry out the mandate He entrusts on them.

Seventy or Seventy-Two?

Some manuscripts read seventy-two, while others read seventy.[9] K. Aland opines that, although the number seventy occurs more frequently in the OT, the number seventy-two does not often appear except in Num 31:38. He strongly argues, for seventy-two, explaining that it is more likely for the copying to change from seventy-two to seventy than vice-versa. Nevertheless, on the merits of the importance of the available manuscripts, it is difficult to support the reading of "seventy" over "seventy-two" and vice versa,[10] since they both are well attested in trustworthy ancient manuscripts. While in the NT, ἑβδομήκοντα occurs five times with other subordinate variables,[11]in the OT; however, it is used in different contexts. There are seventy members of Jacob's family (Exod. 1:5, seventy-five in LXX; Deut 10:22) and in Acts 7:14, they are seventy-five, like the LXX. Jerubbaal's sons are seventy in Jdg. 9:2. The king of Babylon was served for *seventy* years in exile (Jer. 25:11). Yahweh's portion of goods was seventy-two (Num. 31:38).

The significance of the seventy (two) can consequently, be filtered from the reference from two main OT passages. First, Yahweh instructs Moses, to appoint seventy elders to assist him in his responsibilities (Exod. 24:1 and Num. 11:16) and bestows his spirit

[8]Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall, *Luke*: A Handbook on the Greek Text (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2010), 341-342.

[9]In the critical apparatus of the Greek Text δύο is added to ἑβδομήκοντα in ℵ A C D K N W Γ Δ Θ Ψ whereas it is absent in 75 B D 0181. Cf. Barbara Aland, *et al.* eds., *Nestle-Aland – Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

[10]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London – New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 151.

[11]The following compound numberings are found in the NT. ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτά - *seventy times seven* (Matt 18:22); ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο] – *seventy (two)* (Lk 10:1,17); ἑβδομήκοντα πέντε – *seventy-five* (Ac 7:14); ἑβδομήκοντα – *seventy* (Ac 23:23) and ἑβδομήκοντα ἕξ – *seventy-six* (Ac 27:37). Cf. Nestle-Aland 28th edition.

of prophecy on them (Num 11:24-25). Two other men, Eldad and Medad, not present with the others also received the spirit and began to prophesy in the camp (Num 11:26). This brings the total number of the anointed elders to seventy-two. The other is the "table of nations" recorded in Gen 10. The overall record of nations is seventy in the MT and seventy-two in the LXX. Also, the total number of languages on the earth are seventy in the MT and seventy-two in the LXX (Gen 10:5, 20, 31). The numbering in Luke probably echoes the Table of Nations and languages of the world (Gen 10) and so, "represents and symbolizes the totality of all nations of the earth."[12] Invariably, the link between the mission of the seventy-two and Gen 10, is the symbol of universality in their mission and the evangelization of the world.[13] Luke, therefore, develops the universality of the Church's mission in the ministry of Jesus.[14] The number "seventy-two" thus encapsulates this mission with knowledge of the total number of elders (Num 11:16-26), table of nations (Gen 10:5-31), and the critical apparatus. The seventy-two would also represent the choice of appointing assistants to help carry out the missionary mandate of Jesus as with the seventy-two elders who assisted Moses in carrying out his work.

The Others (ἕτερος)

The term ἕτερος[15] is predominant in the Luke-Acts corpus in place of ἄλλος, which is more prevalent in the other Synoptics. These terms, both translate as "others or another," and indicate the different functions, nuances, and usage by different evangelists. K. Haacker opines that Luke bids to maintain the original meaning of ἕτερος as "the other of two" in his distinctions and affinity for ἕτερος over ἄλλος.[16] H. W. Beyer explains that "as an indefinite number, ἕτερος

[12]Nathan C. Johnson, "'Sent into All the World' Luke's Sending of the Seventy(-Two): Intertextuality, Reception History, and Missional Hermeneutics," *Princeton Theological Review* 18, no. 1 (2015): 9-19, at 17.

[13]Johnson, "Sent into All the World," 12.

[14]Raymond Brown et. al., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 701.

[15]Although in the NT, the term ἕτερος occurs 100 times while ἄλλος occurs 134 times, its prevalence in the Luke-Act corpus is obvious. It occurs about 47 times in Luke-Acts (and 10 times in Matthew, once in Mark, once in John and 21 times in the Pauline writings), while ἄλλος occurs 19 times in Luke-Acts (and 29 times in Matthew, 22 times in Mark, 33 times in John and 31 times in the Pauline corpus). Cf. Nestle-Aland 28th edition.

[16]K. Haacker, "ἕτερος," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translation of: *Exegetisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Balz, H. R., *et al.*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 65-66. Henceforth, *EDNT*.

denotes the new member of a series distinct from those which preceded (e.g., Lk 14:18; 1 Cor 12:8) ... As a definite number, it is used when two specific things or groups are compared or contrasted, (e.g., Ac. 23:6) .... As a distinguishing *adjective* or *adverb*, it denotes something which is not identical with what has been referred to previously. This may involve a more or less pronounced qualitative distinction, in which case the term acquires theological significance."[17] Furthermore, It is also explained as the "*other* of two, contrasting a definite person or thing with another," indicating "another, different *from* what precedes, externally or internally."[18]

Although ἕτερος ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο] can translate as "another seventy-two" or "seventy-two others" like ἄλλος, the interpretation and function of ἕτερος here differ with regards to the content of the seventy-two to include the Twelve or not. On the one hand, "seventy-two others" implies seventy-two disciples as different from other messengers, and "another seventy-two" implies a second set of seventy-two. On the other hand, reflecting the Lukan affinity for "dramatic contrasts and contrasting pairs," the mission of the seventy-two can be viewed as a close parallel to the sending of the Twelve (9:1-5) with the understanding that the seventy-two are different and does in no way include the Twelve as ἄλλος would have indicated.[19] The clarification of ἕτερος meaning "another of a different kind and ἄλλος meaning another of the same kind" intends that, the missionary proclamation of the kingdom is not the sole business of the *Twelve* but extends even to a larger group of missionaries, the seventy-two other than the twelve, who also form part of Jesus' disciples.[20]

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[17]H. W. Beyer, "ἕτερος," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. eds., G. Kittel, et al., (electronic ed.), 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 702.

[18]W. Arndt, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 315.

[19]Haacker, *EDNT* 2, 66.

[20]In her thoroughly researched work, Sandiyagu demonstrates that Luke's use of ἕτερος means "another of a different kind" while ἄλλος means "another of the same kind." As she noted in the abstract of her research, "this conclusion is reached through a redaction-critical study which shows that Luke substitutes ἄλλος with ἕτερος and vice-versa when dealing with his sources." Virginia R. Sandiyagu, "ΕΤΕΡΟΣ and ΑΛΛΟΣ in Luke," *Novum Testamentum* 48, no. 2 (2006): 105-130, at 110. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25442487 (10.11.2019).

The Lord Sends them into Mission

The verb ἀποστέλλω[21] means "to send forth or to send out" with focus on the purpose and goal of the mission and the completion of the given assignment. Although the subjects of ἀπέστειλεν can either be human beings or God, the one who sends, in this case, is the Lord (*Kyrios*), who desires to communicate a message to the recipients (the cities and places where He intends to visit). The "the seventy-two", the objects of ἀποστέλλω, are ready to serve as willing and obedient messengers like the Apostles (Mk. 3:13–19; 6:6f.; Matt. 10:1ff.; Lk. 6:12–16; 9:1ff.; 10:1ff.).[22] In Lk. 6:13, Jesus named the twelve, Apostles (ἀπόστολος), an official designation for those whom He called and sent to be his emissaries. Although the seventy-two are not named apostles, they are nevertheless sent (ἀπέστειλεν) with the same apostolic mission, to declare peace to households (Lk 10:5, see also Mk. 6:10; Matt. 10:12-13; Lk. 9:4), cure the sick and proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near (Lk 10:9, see also Mk. 6:7; Matt. 10:7-8; Lk. 9:1-2).

The assignment given to the seventy-two reveals the universality of the ministry of evangelization. This ministry is not limited to the exclusive group of the Twelve. It is accommodative of a more significant number of willing and obedient messengers called to execute the apostolic mission of spreading the words of Christ to places He intends to visit.

He Sends them 'two by two' ἀνὰ δύο [δύο][23]

The idea of sending *two by two* (ἀνὰ δύο [δύο]) presents "an intersubjective significance as proof of witness."[24] Deut 19:15 presents the need for two or three witnesses to make credible

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[21]ποστέλλω occurs 97 times in the Gospels, 27 times in Acts and 12 times elsewhere in the NT.

[22]J. A. Bühner, "ἀποστέλλω *apostellō* send forth," *EDNT* 1, 141.

[23]Δύο occurs 132 times in the NT (synoptics 86 times, John 13, other NT books 33). When ἀνὰ occurs with numbers like "δύο", it bears a distributive sense doubling the number, translating as *each* or *apiece* (cf. Mk. 6:7; Lk. 9:3; 10:1). The doubling "δύο δύο," is observed in a few manuscripts (B K Θ *f*13 565. *l* 2211 syh; Eus), whereas it is single in more important manuscripts (ℵ A C D L N W Γ Δ Ξ Ψ 0181 *f*1 33. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542 .) The inserted δύο may be for emphasis or simply a scribal error. Cf., F. Blass, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 130; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 364.

[24]Dormeyer, "**δύο** *dyo* two" in *EDNT* 1, 360.

evidence of accusation for a case, instead of a single witness. This is also corroborated in Matt 18:16; 26:60; John 8:17; 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19 and Heb 10:28. In Mark 11:1, Jesus sends two of his disciples as messengers to make them credible messengers.[25]

The sending *in pairs* also presents a community dimension in the missionary enterprise of those commissioned. The *pair* (two), therefore, forms the basic cell of a community for the ministry as he sends them two by two (Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1). For instance, Dormeyer explains that "the call of pairs of brothers to be disciples (Matt 4:18–22) proceeds from the numerical doubling (from one family more than one is selected), then becomes a firsthand proof (two members of a family represent the mission of Jesus in the society), and finally becomes the founding act of a new basic cell (the pairs of brothers become fishers of men). The request by the sons of Zebedee turns this point of view around (Mark 10:35 v.1; cf. Matt 20:21). Further basic cells are mentioned in Matt 18:19, 20; 26:37; Luke 9:30, etc."[26] It implies that the sending of the seventy-two in pairs is intended for the sake of mutual support and companionship among the missionaries who have become a small community. It is also to acquire the credibility for witnessing to the truth they testify and be a living embodiment of the gospel of peace they preach (see Acts 13).[27]

Maximum Illud and the Personalities in Mission

The Permanence of The Sender; The Model Missionary

The one with the authority to "commission and send" is but *the Lord* (Kyrios). He communicates His divine message of salvation to all peoples, through his willing messengers, the missionaries. The character of the sender remains constant throughout all ages. The same Lord, the model missionary, who called and commissioned his Apostles and the seventy-two and sent them to evangelize, continues even today to call, send and equip missionaries for the divine mandate and character of the Church.

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Dormeyer "**δὐο** *dyo* two" in *EDNT* 1, 360.

[27]Brown, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 701.

Pope Benedict XV described the Lord Jesus as the model of the good missionary since He was also sent by the father to save the world.[28] He affirms that "the good missionary burns with charity, and numbers even the most abandoned unbelievers among God's children, redeemed like everyone else with the ransom of the divine blood" (MI #28). The missionary, therefore, a willing, obedient messenger (either Apostle *or the others)* takes his/her confidence from the Lord, the model missionary in whom their authorities lie. It is for this reason that the missionary is ready and willing to face whatever challenges he may encounter during his missionary journeys. Benedict XV accentuated inquisitively, "what obstacle can arise, what annoyance or danger exists that could deter this emissary of Jesus Christ from fulfilling the task he has begun? There is none" (MI #28), thereby echoing the words of St. Paul in Rom 8:38-39.

The missionary is motivated and inspired by the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, and embarks on his missionary mandate with profound confidence, knowing that the Lord has sent him to towns and places where He the Lord is about to visit (Lk 10:1). The Missionary, therefore, having been sent on the mission, becomes a "John the Baptist" of a sort that prepares the way for the Lord, makes his path straight, and preaches repentance for the coming of the Christ (Mk 1:3-4; Lk 3:4,8). However, "he must recognize that the basis of his confidence rests entirely on God, *for* only God can enter men's hearts and illumine their minds with the radiance of truth." (MI #29)

The Universality of the Sent

In his thoroughly researched book, *Maximum Illud and Benedict XV's Missionary Thinking*, Valentine Iheanacho affirms that the apostolic letter of Benedict XV is an epoch-making event of the twentieth century that considered the missions of the Church from a universal perspective, intending to establish the Church's missionary dimension through the development of local Churches outside Europe.[29] This missionary dimension of universal

[28]Jn 20:21 "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so also am I sending you" (see also, Matt 10:40; Lk 10:16; Jn 17:18; Jn 3:17).

[29]Valentine U. Iheanacho, *Maximum Illud and Benedict XV's Missionary Thinking: Prospects of a Local Church in Mission Territories* (Saarbrücken: Scholars' Press, 2015).

commitment is succinctly expressed in Lk 10:1. The commissioned and sent are not confined to the "ἀπόστολος – The Apostles". The task of the missionary, therefore, extends to the many *unnamed others (the seventy-two others)*, who are also sent (ἀπέστειλεν) and entrusted with the mission. These missionaries are to go to the many towns and villages where the Lord himself would visit. Unlike Matt 10:5-6 where Jesus gave the twelve, clear instructions to "go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," the Lukan text of the sending of the seventy-two (Lk 10:1), expresses a universal dimension instead, to the places "where Jesus himself would go." The universal dimension of the sent is highlighted in *Maximum Illud's* mission to evangelise the over "one billion souls" of non-believers (a number which has exponentially increased today). It also aims to share with them, divine blessings of redemption, through encouraging local clergies and missionaries, and propose valuable methodologies to assist in this mission (MI #6,7).

While the missionary task which is paramount and necessary is not only about increasing the number of the baptised, it is more about the encounter with the Lord, building faith, with a universal view that cuts across peoples, cultures, and races. For a successful missionary assignment, there is a need for ongoing formation for those entrusted with evangelization. The document encourages the Bishops (MI #8) and Superiors of Missions (MI #9-13), to invest in the expansion and establishment of more mission stations and posts, and to invest in the proper and careful training of local candidates for the sacred ministry, wherein "lies the greatest hope of the new Churches" (MI #14,22-24). Indispensably, the one who is adequately trained must indeed live a saintly life by being a "man of God" in words and deeds, and a person "dedicated to prayer and constant union with God, a man who goes before the Divine Majesty and fervently pleads the cause of souls" (MI #26-27). The proper formation of those entrusted with these tasks, the new seventy-two others, would certainly yield success in their missionary activities.

Maximum Illud and the African Involvement in Mission

The missionary movement presented in *Maximum Illud* was partly to overcome the colonialists' engagements in conquered territories and to follow the mandates of Christ to evangelize. This movement later took root in Pope Paul VI's acclamations of Africans becoming

missionaries to themselves and the world. Seeing that "the dramatic development in contemporary missiology is that mission is from everywhere to everywhere,"[30] he stated in his homily in Uganda that "by now, you Africans are missionaries to yourself.... In other words, you Africans must now continue, upon this Continent, the building up of the Church."[31]

Since this prophetic missionary call, the Church in Africa has come a long way in its missionary attitude within itself and to the world, through 'evangelisation and Church formation' (AG 6). Therefore, the increase of priestly and religious vocations in the continent has resulted in the indigenous hierarchy of the Church in Africa and the increased establishment of higher ecclesiastical institutes around the continent. Furthermore, is the founding of many priestly and religious congregations and seminaries; and a large scale burgeoning increase of baptised members in recent years.[32] This has also resulted in the upgrade of many Mass stations into viable parishes with resident priests to cater for the spiritual nourishment of the faithful. This is a testament to the activities of, and participation in the universality of the sent, the seventy-two others sent into mission by Jesus.

While some may opine that the socio-political and economic state of the continent may be a reason for heightened missionary activities of African Christians, Daniel Ihunnia argues vigorously that,

> to view the increase in the number of African missionaries as a mere sociological issue is reductionist because there should be more to it. It is also hard to conclude that Africa is now a self-sufficient missionary powerhouse. However, if we traced the history of faith development in Africa, we

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[30]Joseph G. Healey, "Now It Is Your Turn: East Africans Go in mission," *Missiology: An International Review* 31, no. 3, (2003): 349-366, at 351.

[31]Paul VI, "Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium Organized by the Bishops of Africa, Homily of Paul VI, Kampala (Uganda), 31 July, 1969," http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731.html

[32]Francis Anekwe Oborji, "The Mission 'ad gentes' of the African Churches," *Omnis Terra* 336, no. 37 (2003): 155-164.

> may discover that this phenomenon is part of a larger project of God, in which Africa may have been budgeted to carry on the light of the Gospel in a reverse mission.[33]

Although the success stories of the Church in Africa, can be seen in the growing numbers of Churchgoers and their active participation in liturgical activities, there is, however, still much to be done. The increasing number of religious and priestly vocations also makes the continent a hub for harvesting missionaries. Many priestly and religious congregations are being founded, and the Pontifical Mission Society (PMS), as well as some local dioceses, are effectively engaged in evangelisation. The Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria, which now boasts of about 300 priests, a fruit of Pope Paul VI's advice for Africans to become missionaries to themselves and the world, is a true testament to the result of the missionary journey initiated by Benedict XV's *Maximum Illud*. The society which started as an act of faith and trust in God, through the conviction of the Nigerian bishops to be part of the missionary movement, is now yielding abundant fruits with missions in many countries in Africa and around the world.[34]

Notwithstanding the good news and successes recorded in the missionary efforts of the Church in Africa, it is astonishing that many local Churches still rely on Rome, Europe, and North America for sustenance. The need for dependence is not unrelated to the frail economic and political situations of many African countries. Benedict XV, in his prophetic vision, addressed the need for the mission heads not to limit their interests to their immediate missions (MI #13). He called on them to be involved in the multifaceted training of the missionary, to acquire proficiency in all branches of learning, including the "sacred and profane subjects" (MI #23). This evokes the urgency for African Christians and missionaries to be involved in the different aspects of nation-building, politics, and economic formations, to make the Church a significant player in both local and international politics and the

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[33]Daniel O. Ihunnia, "How Africa is Changing the Face of Mission: The Role of the Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria (MSP)," *SEDOS* 49, no. 1-2 (2017): 2-10, at 2.

[34]*Constitutions of The Missionary Society of St Paul of Nigeria* (Iperu-Remo: The Ambassador Publications, 2009), iv.

ecclesiastical sphere.

Conclusion

The apostolic letter of *the missionary pope*, Benedict XV, also referred to as "the Magna Carta of modern Catholic missiology" – *Maximum Illud*,[35] is a prophetic document that propelled the Church into authentic missionary outreach. This outreach has brought liberation and unity to the Church in the areas of relationship to herself, the world, and the Lord Jesus. Since Christ Jesus is the Lord and source of the missions, he sends whomever he wishes to the missions, be they *Apostles* (or those to whom it may seem their right and prerogative), or the *seventy-two Others* (myriads of others sent to the missions till date), with the same goal, to proclaim the good news to those whom the Lord himself would visit.

In this centenary of the promulgation of *Maximum Illud*, we acknowledge so far, the growth of the Church in her missionary efforts. However, it is of utmost importance for the Church in Africa to keep reflecting and pondering new ways of evangelisation in this modern age. This introspection would positively affect the much-needed change and engagement in the ecclesiastical hierarchical participation of the Church and create positive and notable impacts on the socio-economic and political landscape in the continent.

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[35]Cosmas K. O. Nwosuh, *Cardinal Dominic Ekandem and the Growth of the Catholic Church in Nigeria* (Iperu-Remo: Ambassador Publications, 2012), 3.