

IDENTITY, CATHOLICISM, AND LOZI CULTURE IN ZAMBIA'S WESTERN
PROVINCE

BY

BRADLEY JOHNSON

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Religion

May 2012

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Approved By:

Nelly van Doorn-Harder, Ph.D., Advisor

Simeon Ilesanmi, Ph.D., Chair

Mary Foskett, Ph.D.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my very sincere thanks to my two advisors, Drs. Nelly van Doorn-Harder and Simeon Ilesanmi. During my short time at Wake Forest, they have always been willing to help in any capacity possible, and I have often found discussions with them to be very fruitful, both in the classroom and in their offices. I also extend my gratitude to the other professors who significantly shaped my education here: Drs. Mary Foskett, Jarrod Whitaker, Tanisha Ramachandran, Kevin Jung, Nathan Plageman, Tim Wardle, and Leon Spencer. Each one forced me to think and stretch my mind in new ways, which is one of the best gifts I can imagine. Special thanks also to the Department of Religion for helping to fund my research trip to Zambia and lifting a sizable financial burden from my family. Without the assistance, the fieldwork might not have been feasible.

It is difficult to fully express my gratitude to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the Western Province and Lusaka. Despite knowing me only through email correspondence and the testimony given on my behalf by a friend, they took me in and treated me with the utmost hospitality for a month and a half, eager to provide me with research opportunities along the way. I would like to point out and thank Fr. Barnabas Simatende in particular, as he served as my point of contact for the entire trip, from the first introductory emails to driving me to the airport on the very last day. I would also like to thank Sharon Brinker, the friend who first connected me to the Oblates. This trip (and indeed, this project) would not have happened without her help.

My love goes out to my friends and family, in North Carolina, in Illinois, and scattered through the rest of the country and the world, who keep me sane amidst

schoolwork and other responsibilities. They mean more to me than I could ever say, and every day I am thankful that I have had the chance to know them.

Finally, I reserve my biggest thanks for my parents, James and Brenda Johnson. Their love and encouragement throughout my life has been worth more than I could possibly describe, and their unyielding support has been invaluable as I began exploring the strange and bewildering world of academia. For all the times they have sacrificed their time and energy for me, and all the opportunities they have given me, I thank them. I love you, mom and dad.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	vi
Chapter 1: Understanding Barotseland.....	1
Chapter 2: Understanding Inculturation.....	13
Chapter 3: Conversion and African Identities.....	37
Chapter 4: Inculturation in the Western Province.....	51
References.....	62
Curriculum Vitae.....	64

Abstract

Inculturation is conversion on a communal and cultural level. Using ethnographic fieldwork among Lozi Catholic communities in the Western Province of Zambia, the case is made that both conversion and inculturation represent the same process of identity formation. Conversion is defined as a process in which a person grants him or herself a new identity, and then follows through with action that is consistent with this new identity. Inculturation is shown to be analogous, because it consists in a community adopting a new identity, and then following through with action that is consistent with this new identity, while necessarily emphasizing continuity with its pre-existing identity. Using relevant background information from Lozi politics, history, and culture, the integration of Lozi traditions into Catholic Masses is examined. They are used as evidence that Lozi Catholic communities are intentionally pursuing inculturation, and that they should be interpreted as undergoing communal, cultural conversion, adopting and maintaining their identities as both Lozis and Catholics.

Introduction

The term “inculturation” is relatively new in theological discourses. It signifies a purposeful process in which a religious faith (usually Christianity) becomes embedded and ingrained into a particular culture. The point of achieving this synthesis is to correct a mistake repeated throughout Christian history. Many missionaries have insisted that the gospel must be brought to foreign cultures, but without acknowledging that their version of the gospel is draped in European or American garb. Unfortunately, this cultural baggage is imposed on the new society as an intrinsic part of the gospel, as a core piece of the Christian faith. The goal of inculturation theology is to allow these converts to Christianity (whether old or new) to undress the Western clothing from the gospel they have received, and redress it so that it is at home in their village, in their town, in their city.

I am proposing a possible paradigm for understanding inculturation. My thesis is that inculturation is essentially conversion on a communal and cultural scale. They are analogous to one another, and can be largely understood as a mode of identity change and formation. In order to demonstrate that they are the same phenomenon on different levels, I will discuss them within the context of sub-Saharan African Christianity, narrowing in on a particular community: the Catholic Church among the Lozi peoples in the Western Province of Zambia. I will establish criteria that define conversion, and then I will demonstrate how those criteria also fit the activity of certain Lozi Catholic communities. In other words, I will show that inculturation is cultural conversion, a process by which the community (and by extension, their culture) takes a new identity, which is synthesized with the old one to produce a dual cultural-religious identity by which the

community defines itself. In my study, I will focus primarily on inculturation in celebrations of the Mass, because many Lozi Catholics identified liturgy as being the central field for the work of inculturation.

In the summer of 2011, I conducted fieldwork in Zambia from late May to early July. For the first month, I lived with priests in the Order of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Mongu, the capital of the Western Province. I made two trips to the towns of Lukulu and Kalabo, as well. While in the region, I observed numerous celebrations of the Mass, interviewed Catholic leaders and laity, and collected literature that aided me in my understanding of Lozi Catholic culture. During my last two weeks, I stayed with the Oblates in Lusaka, where I continued to observe Masses in a more urban, cosmopolitan setting, in order to compare them to the celebrations I witnessed in the Western Province. I also conducted research at FENZA (Faith and Encounter Center Zambia), an archive of books and articles relating to Catholic theology, social anthropology, and Zambian history. The Catholic communities I lived with in the Western Province do not interact often with Protestants or other defined religious communities, and so my research focused exclusively on Catholicism. The fieldwork I accomplished in Zambia led to this thesis.

The paper is divided into four chapters. The first will focus on setting the context for the study, namely, the Catholic Church in the Western Province of Zambia. By providing a political history of the Western Province, I will show how Lozi cultural identity is shaped by their past as the independent kingdom of Barotseland, and how their group identity is unified in the figure of the Litunga and his most important ritual, the

Kuomboka. I will also give a short history of the Catholic communities I lived with, and show how they became attuned to issues of inculturation.

The second chapter will deal with the theory and justification of inculturation as an area that deserves serious thought and ministerial work. Using the writings of Aylward Shorter, Gerald Arbuckle, and Laurenti Magesa as guides, I will address three topics relating to inculturation. First, I will tackle the issue of how “culture” should be defined, and how religion should be viewed in relationship to it. Next, I will assess and relay biblical and historical precedents for inculturation, to show that it is a process deeply embedded in both the sources and history of the faith, and therefore, deserving of consideration. Finally, I will review the attitudes of the Vatican leadership in regard to culture and inculturation; after all, the decisions and actions of the hierarchy affect the processes of inculturation that take place on the ground, including in the Western Province.

In the third chapter, the discussion will turn to the phenomenon of conversion and how it interacts with both the maintenance and alteration of identities. I will talk specifically about ways that Africans have attempted to negotiate both African and Christian identities, and these points will apply to the specific situation of the Lozi, as well. With the help of Kwame Bediako, I will give a brief account of conversion in Christian history, and offer a definition of empirically-observable conversion based on two criteria: self-identity, and action taken in accordance with traditionally-designated norms for that identity. I will finish with a short look at how African Christians have historically been forced into patterns of discontinuity from their own traditions, and a small example for how some could achieve a higher level of continuity.

In the fourth chapter, I will provide examples of inculturation that I witnessed in the Western Province during my fieldwork there. I will show how the Kuomboka ceremony has embedded itself in the Catholic Mass, how the tradition of gift-giving to local authorities has become accepted in the Church, and how the worship style has been invigorated by local tastes. The reciprocity of inculturation will be demonstrated, as I explain how both the local culture and the religious faith are affected; inculturation is not a unidirectional process. I will then draw the final connections between conversion and inculturation, using the Lozi Catholic communities' acceptance of a dual identity as the model.

My hope is that this paper will make clear the connection between processes of conversion and inculturation that individuals and communities use to declare and assert their identities. One of the key ideas behind inculturation is that a community need not cast away its old identity in order to adopt a new one; in fact, it is good to hold onto one's cultural identity and traditions, even as one takes on a new, religious identity. In allowing ourselves to authentically and unashamedly define ourselves as we wish, we allow others the same right and the same volition.

Chapter 1: Understanding Barotseland

I have laid out the basic thesis, methodology, and outline of the paper, and as I begin to develop the argument I will present relevant aspects of the context as accurately and succinctly as possible. Issues of culture and politics in the Western Province have seen relatively little academic attention since the 1970s, so several alternative sources must be utilized, including websites, interviews, and other media. In later chapters I will discuss inculturation, and how Lozi Catholics have incorporated certain traditions and characteristics of their society into worship and liturgy as a way to validate dual Lozi/Catholic identity, but first it is necessary to provide a sketch of this society. Though I am not attempting to be comprehensive by any means, I will briefly describe its political history, its experience with the Catholic Church (especially the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, with whom research was conducted), and some key cultural ideas and traditions.

Political History and Background

To begin, many people within the Western Province of Zambia view themselves as subjects of Barotseland, a kingdom which has roots exceeding the reach of written (read: colonial) history. However, the Western Province is not completely coterminous with Barotseland. While the province consumes a sizable chunk of southwestern Zambia, the original boundaries for Barotseland included most of (what is now) modern Zambia, pieces of Angola and Zimbabwe, and the entire Caprivi Strip of Namibia.¹ The term “Western Province” is primarily used to designate a political region of Zambia; the term

¹ Turner, V. W. *The Lozi Peoples of North-western Rhodesia*. London: International African Institute, 1952. 9.

“Barotseland” hints at an independent, pre-Zambian society dominated by Lozi culture and headed by a king or paramount chief known as the Litunga. In both specialized literature and common parlance, these names are often used interchangeably. I will stick with the term “Western Province” for discussions dealing with the area after 1964 (the year of Zambia’s independence), reserving the term “Barotseland” for topics prior to that date, unless I intend to highlight the contemporary, political significance of Barotseland in today’s Zambia.

The story of how the Lozi (formerly known as the Luyi) arrived and secured power in Barotseland is controversial and contested. From the beginning of the 19th-century, tribes like the Mbalangwe and Mbunda moved into Barotseland and became integrated among the Lozi. The Kololo, refugees fleeing from Shaka Zulu, overpowered the Lozi in 1836. A Lozi prince named Sipopa pieced together an army after thirty years and successfully fought to re-establish control over Barotseland.² Sipopa was succeeded by the first Lewanika (one of the royal families of Barotseland), and under his rule, the Lozi either assimilated or conquered members of the Lunda, Kaonde, Ila, Tonga, and We tribes.³ As with most histories in Africa, the introduction of European, particularly British, colonists changed the power dynamics drastically.

The British South Africa Company was slowly advancing through southern Africa in the late 19th-century, and Lewanika I and his kingdom were trapped between Portuguese claims to the west and British lands to the east. Fearing also the encroaching power of the Ndebele tribe, Lewanika I chose to preempt any attempts to remove him from power. On the advice of well-trusted missionaries from the Paris Evangelical

² *Ibid.* 13.

³ *Ibid.*

Mission (who had come from Basutoland seven years earlier and had worked for the welfare of the Lozi), Lewanika I, his son, and his officials signed the Lochner Concession on June 27, 1890.⁴ This treaty with the British South Africa Company accomplished several important things. It designated Barotseland as a protectorate of the British Empire, meaning that the Litunga, Lewanika I, retained primary control over the land and its people. The BSAC agreed to respect Lozi sovereignty while actively protecting it from outside threats, and this promise came with a yearly payment to assist in the purchase of weapons against the Ndebele. However, it also came with a representative of the British government to reside at the court of the Litunga in Lealui, the Barotseland capital. The Concession also agreed that the BSAC would assist financially in development and education projects in the kingdom, and even the kingdom's borders were expanded quite generously (which became a source of contention with neighboring tribes). Why did the BSAC agree to all of these privileges for the Litunga? The Concession granted them unlimited access to minerals throughout the region, without interference from Lewanika I. Compared to other regions, colonialism came to Barotseland relatively peacefully.⁵

Problems began popping up almost immediately after the Concession was signed. As Caplan, perhaps the most famous historian of Barotseland, relates, almost every promise was broken, including the rights of sovereignty given to the king: "No payment was made for the first seven years, no school or industrial establishment was ever maintained with Company money, and its resident arrived only in 1897..."⁶ He phrases the loss later in even starker terms, saying, "[Lewanika I] succeeded in remaining King

⁴ Caplan, Gerald L. *The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province*. Berkeley: University of California, 1970. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* 55.

only by forfeiting a large proportion of the traditional authority of the kingship.”⁷ Life as a protectorate under the BSAC was no better and in no way felt superior to simply being a colony of the British Empire. After roughly a decade, the Litunga was no longer the *de facto* sovereign of Barotseland, but the consequences of revolting against the BSAC were too dire to consider. Though subsumed under the Empire as a protectorate, there was precious little that separated it from other colonies. Though complaints about the breaking of the treaty were often aired, the next major era of Barotseland’s sovereignty began with Northern Rhodesia’s imminent independence in 1964.

As the final plans for Zambia were drawn up in 1963, leaders in Barotseland were concerned with the status of their kingdom within this new republic. Presenting a united front, the Litunga Mwanawina III and both traditional and elected leaders petitioned that Barotseland still retain a measure of sovereignty within the new Zambian state.⁸ Kenneth Kaunda, the leader of the United National Independence Party and soon-to-be the first president of Zambia, fought back but soon realized that Barotseland would not otherwise join the new republic. As a result, “The Barotseland Agreement 1964” was signed by both the Litunga and Kaunda on May 18th of that year.⁹ The document stipulated that “Barotseland was to become an integral part of Zambia with its traditional rights preserved, and the Litunga was to retain powers over local government matters greater than those granted to any other chief in Zambia.”¹⁰ The U.K. served as a witness of this document which granted the Litunga power to create laws and maintain ownership of the

⁷ *Ibid.* 91.

⁸ *Ibid.* 207.

⁹ *Ibid.* 209.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 210.

Barotseland's land.¹¹ The document also emphasizes the responsibility of the national government to invest in development in Barotseland and treat it equitably among the other regions of the country.¹²

It soon became clear that the Agreement was a tool used by the central government to consolidate the regions into a single, united nation; a UNIP official intimately tied to the issue admitted a year later that the government had no real intention of honoring the Agreement.¹³ In October 1964, a mere five months after the document was signed, the Zambian Parliament passed a bill that transferred land ownership in Barotseland from the Litunga to the state. The Litunga maintained his office as the political figurehead of the region (as he still does today), but Barotseland had been reduced from a once-independent kingdom to the poorest province of Zambia, the Western Province.¹⁴ Perceived as belonging to the most neglected and undeveloped region of the country by its citizens (with statistics to support those claims), many Lozi of the Western Province are at least sympathetic to independence movements and feel they have been cheated by different actors throughout the last two centuries.

The issue has not died. On January 14th, 2011, a bit more than four months before my arrival, police in Mongu used gunfire to break up a meeting held by men advocating adherence to the Agreement and secession from Zambia (which goes a bit beyond the actual text of the document).¹⁵ In the ensuing riots, two men were shot dead and over a hundred more were arrested. In late March 2012, a group identifying itself as the Barotseland National Council directly called for the secession of Barotseland, and was

¹¹ *The Barotseland Agreement, 1964*. London: H.M.S.O., 1964. 5-6.

¹² *Ibid.* 6.

¹³ Caplan, *Elites of Barotseland*, 210.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 221.

¹⁵ AFP. "Group in Western Zambia Seeks Independence." *Daily Nation*. 28 Mar. 2012. Online.

predictably met by harsh criticism from the government and new security measures.¹⁶ It is unclear where the movement will proceed from here, as many Zambians seek to maintain “One Zambia, One Nation,” while a number of Lozi (and members of minority groups) in the Western Province seek a return to Barotseland.

The Catholic Church in the Western Province

Having filled out several important points of the region’s politically-charged history, it is also worth our while to give attention to the Catholics who planted churches in this area. Members of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) were the first evangelists to enter Barotseland in 1884, and they soon secured a deal with the Litunga that they would be the only Christian organization allowed to work in Mongu.¹⁷ In 1931, an Irish Capuchin priest by the name of Timothy Peter Paul O’Shea ventured to Barotseland with several other priests in order to begin planting churches. They arrived in Livingstone (the capital of Northern Rhodesia at the time) to find Catholics living near an army camp, and they started holding regular church services. They opened the first Catholic church building in 1933.¹⁸ Frs. O’Shea and Killian desired to move further into Barotseland, but the Litunga’s pact with the PEMS prohibited them. On December 8th, 1936, the PEMS lifted the ban from towns in outer parts of the region, and the Capuchin missionaries settled first in Lukulu. They established the Sancta Maria parish there, and almost immediately started directing construction on schools and hospitals in the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "History: Lukulu." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. <<http://www.omizambia.org.zm/Missions/Lukulu/lukulu.html>>. 30 Mar. 2012.

¹⁸ Mitchell, Mary. *Bishop T.P. O'Shea OFM Cap: Brief History and Reflection*. 2002. 3-4.

surrounding area.¹⁹ In 1942, the Capuchins also founded a mission station in the remote town of Kalabo, and in 1947, the PEMS lifted restrictions on building churches around Mongu.²⁰

However, the Capuchins are no longer in charge of these mission stations and churches, and I encountered very few Capuchins during my time in the Western Province. As stated earlier, the order I stayed with was the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, or OMI. The Oblates are an order of Catholic priests founded in 1816 by a French priest named Eugene De Mazenod.²¹ Their stated mission is to live and serve among the poorest of the poor, which is why most of their Zambian parishes are located in the Western Province. The history of the Oblates in Zambia began with the arrival of four missionaries from Texas in 1984: Frs. Jack Joyce, Pat Gitzen, and Paul Duffy, and Bro. Joseph Kaplinger.²² They came to the Western Province to find that the Capuchins had been forced to shut down their mission stations due to shortage of personnel several years prior. The Oblates re-opened and re-staffed the Lukulu mission in 1984, and moved to drastically expand the number of services available to the nearby population. Since the parish covers a huge area with lots of outlying villages, they built new mass stations for Catholics who lived too far away to regularly attend the services at Sancta Maria.²³ In 1986, they also appropriated the Capuchins' former mission station in Kalabo and thereby put St. Michael's parish under Oblate jurisdiction.²⁴ Following the strategy in

¹⁹ "History: Lukulu." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. 30 Mar. 2012.

²⁰ "History: Kalabo." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*.

<<http://www.omizambia.org.zm/Missions/Lukulu/lukulu.html>>. 30 Mar. 2012.

²¹ "About the Oblates." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*.

<<http://www.oblatesusa.org/Connect.aspx?path=root/momi/Connect/faq#who>>. 30 Mar. 2012.

²² "Zambia Delegation History." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*.

<<http://www.omizambia.org.zm/history.html>>. 30 Mar. 2012.

²³ "History: Lukulu." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. 30 Mar. 2012.

²⁴ "History: Kalabo." *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. 30 Mar. 2012.

Lukulu, a lot of energy was directed towards building outstations and improving the local school facilities.²⁵ Within twenty years, the Texan Oblates had succeeded in handing over leadership in the parishes to local, Zambian priests, demonstrating their concern that the churches become self-sustaining and embedded in Lozi culture. Fr. Paul Duffy, who served as the Bishop of Mongu diocese from 1997 (an area roughly equivalent to the Western Province), was replaced by Fr. Evans Chinyemba on May 27th, 2011, an event which I witnessed.

The Oblates also maintain a priest house in Mongu, but their primary ministry in the town is Oblate Radio Liseli. Launched in May of 2004, the radio ministry broadcasts throughout the Western Province in order to reach multiple towns and parishes, including areas that are often unreachable following the wet season.²⁶ Radio Liseli is staffed by both clergy and laypeople. The station's content consists of hymns, Gospel music, jazz, community bulletins, regional and national news, English and Silozi lessons, homeschooling aids, catechisms, and a live mass on Monday mornings (complete with in-studio congregation).²⁷ They are also not adverse to the occasional Lady Gaga song. Aside from Mongu, the Oblates also have a community about 18 kilometers away in Limulunga, and a formation house in Lusaka. However, I did not visit the community in Limulunga, but I lived in Lusaka for about two weeks, where I primarily contrasted the masses I witnessed in the Western Province with the masses of the more urban Mary Immaculate parish in Lusaka. As stated in the introduction, my research was based in Mongu with trips to the parishes in Lukulu and Kalabo.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Inambao, Pamela. Personal interview. 30 May 2011.

²⁷ Ibid.

Lozi Culture

Finally, this project would be incomplete without attempting to give a sense of the culture of Barotseland and the dominant Lozi tribes. I want to be cautious in describing them with general characteristics, because, as we will discuss in the next chapter, cultures are not homogenous entities. I should also acknowledge that one of my primary sources, Victor Turner, is working with research conducted in the 1920s and 30s, and interprets his evidence through the anthropological lenses provided by that era. In his defense, his assertions were typically buttressed by comments that arose in an interview I conducted with a member of the Barotseland royal family. Without assuming that every Lozi person adheres to these ideas or shares the same understanding of them, I would like to briefly outline a worldview common to many within the culture.

Zambia has a large Christian majority, and most Lozi are either Protestant or Catholic. Before Christian missionaries arrived in Barotseland, the people were essentially monotheistic. God was known by the name Nyambe (a term which is still used today, though Mulimu is now more common), and was credited with creating the world and all the people in it. Nyambe created a man, Kamunu, who became so skilled at hunting that Nyambe fled the world to Litooma, a village in the sky, lest he be struck down by Kamunu's weapons.²⁸ Turner argues that Nyambe appears to be deistic, stepping back from his creation, as he also quotes Louis Jalla in saying that Nyambe is fundamentally human and flawed in many aspects. He links the early conception of God with the Litunga: "I suggest, from a reading of Lozi history, that the ambivalent nature of *Nyambe*, is a projection of the difference between the ideal role of the kingship as the institution which maintains both the natural and the moral order and the tyranny and

²⁸ Turner, *The Lozi Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia*, 48.

weakness of actual kings.”²⁹ Since Turner is connecting Nyambe with the Litunga, and because the Litunga plays such an important role in Barotseland history and culture, it is worthwhile to explain the position a bit more clearly.

When Barotseland was an independent kingdom, the Litunga was its king, or paramount chief. Today, as the figurehead of a region of Zambia, the Litunga seems to function as a mediator between the people of the Western Province and the national government. He collects revenue from taxes and has primary control in how it is spent.³⁰ He has advisors, a council known as “kuta”, and a top advisor known as the Ngambela.³¹ The Litungas have varied wildly in popularity with the people depending on how well they are perceived to represent the people’s interests to the national government. Perhaps most importantly, the Litunga is seen as a symbol of the Lozi people that unites them under a single authority. When I personally asked Mr. Kusiyo Lewanika (the grandson of the Litunga Lewanika I) to identify the most essential custom that sets the Lozi apart from other tribes of Zambia, he immediately referred to the role of the Litunga as a uniting force.³² It should be unsurprising, then, that the Litunga is at the center of the defining Lozi ritual, the Kuomboka.

By 1979, very little written record of the Kuomboka existed, but Lozi elders remembered it from their childhoods and from stories of their elders. The ritual’s exact origins are unknown.³³ It is a yearly event that attracts people from around the province, throughout Zambia, and even outside the country. The festival almost serves as a synecdoche for Lozi culture. At the end of the wet season (usually sometime in April),

²⁹ Ibid. 49.

³⁰ Lewanika, Kusiyo M. Personal interview. 9 June 2011.

³¹ Turner, *The Lozi Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia*, 36-37.

³² Lewanika, Kusiyo M. Personal interview. 9 June 2011.

³³ Kalaluka, Likando. *Kuomboka*. Ndola: National Educational Company of Zambia, 1979. 6.

the Litunga travels from his summer palace on the Zambezi floodplains in Lealui to his winter palace on higher, drier ground in Limulunga. People assemble at both ends of the journey, with eating, drumming, and dancing lasting for a few days. In Lealui, the Litunga boards the signature vessel, known as the Nalikwanda. This long boat is identified by an elephant statue positioned in the middle, to signify the king's authority, and several dozen men who row and dance through the roughly five-hour journey. The Litunga's wife and court also take the journey on other, less prominent boats. Upon reaching Limulunga, the Litunga disembarks to much fanfare and enters his winter palace, thronged by people who (this year) will be wearing commercially-produced "Kuomboka 2012!" T-shirts.³⁴ The term "kuomboka" means "to get out of water", in Silozi, and it is an occasion for the Lozi people to unite around the king as he escapes the floodwaters and moves to higher grounds in dramatic fashion. The ritual strengthens the unity of the Lozi tribes with the Litunga, and unavoidably sends the cultural and political message that their identity is intimately tied with his status. It will become a major factor in the discussion of identity and inculturation later in this work.

We have set some of the framework and background for our investigation into this context. In this chapter, I have brought attention to the Western Province's history as the formerly-independent kingdom of Barotseland. Having been integrated into Zambia and feeling very neglected compared to other regions of the country, many Lozi people have been more intentional in asserting their Lozi identity. The missionary experience in the Western Province has led to an indigenous leadership that takes seriously the concerns of inculturation and self-sustainability. The unifying force and figure of this identity is the Litunga, who is at the center of Lozi culture and is the focus on the

³⁴ Ibid.

Kuomboka ceremony. We can now begin to discuss matters of inculturation with some idea of what the Catholic faith is being inculturated into. The next chapter continues with an analysis of the theories we will be using to understand religion and culture in the Western Province.

Chapter 2: Understanding Inculturation

In order to properly grasp how inculturation is the communal equivalent of conversion and how it functions in Catholic communities of the Western Province, we must first set some theoretical groundwork that will help us to understand the concept and its accompanying phenomena. The term “inculturation” is relatively new (only a few decades old), but it refers to a process that has been occurring throughout the Christian Church’s history. The young age of the term indicates the recent effort of theologians to systematically think about the issues and implications of inculturation. There are two primary problems I see in the area of inculturation that I hope to highlight in this chapter. First, the meaning of “culture” has not received enough serious consideration, and second, theologians working in the area constantly feel the need to justify the task for observers and the Catholic leadership. For assistance in arriving at a working definition of inculturation, I will draw on the work of three major Catholic thinkers who have developed and advanced this discourse: Aylward Shorter, Laurenti Magesa, and Gerald Arbuckle. By examining their formulations of inculturation and the issues they bring up in this area, we will be prepared to understand the case studies in Lozi Catholic communities in chapter four.

I must make three clarifying notes. First, though the term “contextualization” has gained popularity in recent years, as it points to many different facets that influence adherents’ experience of faith, I will be restricting myself to the language of inculturation. It is the preferred term used by the thinkers I wrestle with at the times in which they wrote, and I want to be careful about using nuanced language that they might not necessarily agree with. Second, we should be careful about romanticizing the host

culture in ways that ignore injustices in pre-colonial African society. Many aspects of a culture can negatively impact certain groups, and an uncritical retaining of them in the process of inculturation would simply extend their reach to do harm. For example, in the Western Province, it was difficult to find a single Lozi Catholic woman who believed that polygamy was acceptable for Catholics. Such institutions may need to be phased out, but the agency should lie with local communities. Third, I should distinguish the more anthropological term “enculturation” from “inculturation,” since they can very easily become confused. Enculturation refers to the process by which an individual is raised in and adapts to a particular culture; the thought patterns, behaviors, morals, worldviews, etc. that a person gains from his or her environment. The term describes the process by which a person becomes rooted in a culture. “Inculturation,” which we will more thoroughly define shortly, refers to the process by which a religious faith becomes rooted in a culture. Through both conscious and unacknowledged effort of believers, Christianity embeds itself into a culture. How do our three major thinkers sum up the phenomenon of inculturation?

Our Primary Thinkers for the Task

Aylward Shorter, a British Catholic priest who has taught in Africa and Europe, published a book in 1987 entitled *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, in which he lays out a history of inculturation throughout the Church’s life, and offers normative analyses on the future of the process (all of our thinkers give suggestions as committed Catholics). Early in the book, he sums up inculturation as “the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. More fully, it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the

Christian message and a culture or cultures.”³⁵ He goes on to stress three primary points about the process that will be relevant to our study. First, he emphasizes that inculturation is indeed a process, and though the term includes the initial contact between the faith and the culture(s), it encompasses the continuing history of contact between these two things. Again, he presents this as a process that *should* continue, for the sake of an authentic faith.³⁶ Second, he insists that the Christian faith cannot be considered outside of a cultural context, meaning that there is no “pure” faith that exists outside of a particular time, place, and language. After all, the faith is usually transmitted through the words and symbols of missionaries, who were necessarily enculturated into a particular environment that was at least familiar with a Christian faith. He says that “When we describe inculturation as a dialogue between faith and culture, we are really speaking of a dialogue between a culture and the faith in cultural form... We are speaking about acculturation or the interaction between cultures.”³⁷ Later on in this chapter, we will examine Shorter’s thoughts on the relationship between religion and culture a little more closely, but it is worth noting here that he is essentially presenting inculturation as an exchange between two cultures, though he still accords one of these elements special status (“the faith in cultural form”). Third and finally, Shorter highlights the teaching that inculturation must involve critical reformulations of both the host culture and the faith being implanted; both are changed in the process.³⁸ He believes this process, better termed as “interculturalization,” demonstrates the fact that the faith and the culture must adapt to each other, must both be transformed. He decries older models that asked only converts to change (not the

³⁵ Shorter, Aylward. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999. 11.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid. 12.

³⁸ Ibid.

missionaries), remarking that “One of the most valuable insights of the Second Vatican Council was that God’s all-encompassing grace and activity is not limited by the visible institutions of the Church. With this truth in mind, it is easier to accept that missionary activity is a two-way process, and that inculturation is really an intercultural activity with intercultural benefits.”³⁹ All of our major thinkers insist that the host culture has value instilled by God, and that the faith benefits from the encounter just as much as the culture. In the fourth chapter, I will take care to show how this reciprocal process takes place in the culture and faith of Lozi Catholics.

The next major thinker, Laurenti Magesa, is a Tanzanian priest whose book, *Anatomy of Inculturation*, draws on surveys concerning inculturation across Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda to create a framework for discussing the process. He explains: “From the Christian theological perspective, inculturation is understood to be the process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture...It fuses with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into a novel religious-cultural reality. In practical terms, this process involves the interaction of mutual critique and affirmation.”⁴⁰ Like Shorter, Magesa emphasizes the embodied nature of the Christian faith: it cannot be divorced from the cultural baggage in which it is presented by its transmitters. Though he does not employ the term, Magesa also seems to refer to the process of interculturalization, as both faith and culture are given reign to mold and sculpt each other.

Gerald Arbuckle is a New Zealander priest who has written a fair share on inculturation, but he brings a useful perspective to the discussion as a cultural

³⁹ Ibid. 15-16.

⁴⁰ Magesa, Laurenti. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004. 5.

anthropologist. He defines inculturation in terms nearly identical to those of Shorter and Magesa, but he highlights a problem that they acknowledge but do not address in-depth. Arbuckle argues that many inculturation theologians do not properly consider the definition of culture in discussing the process.⁴¹ He dedicates a fair amount of space in his book attempting to delineate the differences between classical, modern, and postmodern notions of culture and their implications for inculturation. Arbuckle stresses that his priority in the book is to promote a better understanding of culture in a postmodern context, and then explain how this affects the discussion of inculturation in a way that many theologians have not accounted for.

As an analogy for understanding inculturation, the theological concept of the incarnation of Christ is often used to explain what the process signifies. Shorter traces the use of incarnation imagery back to the Second Vatican Council, when serious discussion of inculturation truly began.⁴² The idea that the Son of God entered human history and culture in human flesh sends a message about how the Christian faith must enter each new context, according to Shorter. Just as Christ came to people in a certain culture, at a certain time, and in a certain physical body, so the Christian faith can only come to people clothed in a certain culture's framework. Though Shorter is drawing attention to the process of enculturation in Jesus's life, he also wants to make a larger point that the Christian faith cannot exist apart from concrete contexts.⁴³ Again, the point is that the message cannot be fully divorced from the messenger and the methods by which the message is delivered.

⁴¹ Arbuckle, Gerald. *Culture, Inculturation, & Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010. xx.

⁴² Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 79.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 81.

The Boundaries of Anthropology and Theology

As Arbuckle hopes to make clear, “the thorniest methodological problem in inculturation is the confusion surrounding the meaning of culture.”⁴⁴ Catholic thinkers who deal with inculturation often work with notions of culture that are notably different than cultural anthropologists. The former approach the topic through a theological lens, while the latter focus on purely human phenomena. As briefly mentioned earlier, Arbuckle wants to create a bridge between these discourses by drawing on his expertise in cultural anthropology and Catholic theology. He begins by outlining three definitions of culture: classicist, modern, and postmodern. A classicist conception of culture attempts to reify societies as unchanging entities that can be judged by how closely they correspond to an assumed standard (almost always European civilization).⁴⁵ Inheritors of the normative culture should be benevolent by bestowing their values and traditions onto those who belong to “lower” cultures. Arbuckle argues that 19th-century anthropologists and the Catholic Church (up until Vatican II) have subscribed to this view.

A modern notion of culture is more desirable in that it does not automatically arrange all cultures into a hierarchy. Arbuckle beautifully sums up this conception: “modern definitions of culture emphasize a type of ‘billiard ball’ model of cultures as separate, impenetrable units, passing with little or no change from one generation to the next in a quasi-automatic way, self-integrating to maintain the status quo, resistant to external influences, homogeneous, and devoid of internal dissent.”⁴⁶ However, by continuing to treat each culture as a clean, unified system that can be easily described and categorized, the modern definition still falls short. Arbuckle suggests recommends

⁴⁴ Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, & Theologians*, xx.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 4.

postmodern definitions of culture, which treat them as fragmented, porous systems of symbols and meaning embedded in concrete situations and open to change according to location, time, and outside influences.⁴⁷ By acknowledging that cultures, and their relationships with each other, are extremely complex entities, we can begin to discuss issues of inculturation more accurately.

Arbuckle devotes most of his book to laying out major topics and perspectives in postmodern cultural anthropology for the sake of theologians. One of these topics is understanding culture as narratives that shape identities. With a particular culture come myths and narratives that shape a community and how the individuals of that community view their past, present, and future. In short, what story do they tell about themselves? In reflecting on this, Arbuckle highlights the importance of storytelling for people existing in societies, both now and in the Bible. He says that “the most powerful method of relating mythologies to daily life is through storytelling in its many forms,” and that this insight should serve as a guide in processes of inculturation.⁴⁸ In a later chapter, he discusses the importance of understanding “ritual” in all of its facets, introducing the reader to a variety of different perspectives by which the term can be understood. He emphasizes the central role that many rituals have in a society for structuring communal life, defining boundaries, showcasing foundational stories, and so on.⁴⁹ In a reflection that is immensely relevant for our analysis of Lozi inculturation, Arbuckle states, “Symbols, myths, and rituals are not replaced as quickly as buildings or landscapes or mass-produced as neatly as automobiles or toothbrushes. The uprooting of the inner framework of cultures, even when there is conscious and intellectual assent to what is happening,

⁴⁷ Ibid. 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 80.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 84-90.

destroys the stable sense of belonging and people's individuality."⁵⁰ The significance of keeping traditional rituals intact in the process of communal conversion will be explained in the next chapters.

While Arbuckle tackles the (perceived) shallow understanding of culture in theological circles, Aylward Shorter is quick to dive into a discussion of how religion and culture interact from a Catholic point-of-view. In his book, Shorter seems to acknowledge two conceptions of religion: the classicist and modern definitions. This is not to say that his thoughts on the topic are simplistic or naïve. He heavily criticizes the former, but he seems to hold to the latter in some sense. In Shorter's ideas, one can discern a major difference between anthropological and Catholic theological views on religion and culture. From the standpoint of anthropology, religion is a major aspect of culture, and inculturation is necessarily and primarily the exchange of particular cultural elements. Shorter writes that the concrete elements that constitute a religion are unavoidably a cultural system.⁵¹ He argues that cultures can be conceived as systems of symbols, and as both a host culture and a foreign religion interact with one another, their symbols borrow and develop new meanings. Thus he says, "Inculturation is all about a symbiosis of different symbol-systems."⁵² At the bare minimum, religion is essentially culture, and inculturation, from a secular perspective, becomes an experiment in straightforward acculturation.

However, from a theological standpoint, a religion must be transmitted from culture to culture in concrete terms, but it signifies something transcendent that is more than just a cultural element. A religion is like a culture, but it is more. Shorter places the

⁵⁰ Ibid. 97.

⁵¹ Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 40.

⁵² Ibid. 35.

Christian faith above cultures, arguing that cultures may change, but the faith must be essentially preserved in the interaction. He says, “If a religion is radically transformed through its contact with a culture, then we are not speaking of inculturation, but of culturalism – the absolutization of culture, or at any rate, in a given instance, the triumph of culture.”⁵³ According to Shorter, the integrity of the religion takes precedence over the culture, so they are not equal. He adopts an essentialist view of religion that regards Christianity as a force that goes above and beyond mere cultures, a force that is based in supernatural realities. Though he elsewhere says that the process of inculturation would be better termed “interculturalism” (mutual dialogue and exchange between two cultural systems), he ultimately adopts this more theological position that regards the Christian faith with a kind of purity that should not be damaged.⁵⁴ The inconsistency might hinge on what he considers to be a “radical transformation” in the faith. Still, he believes that elevating it above the realm of cultures is necessary for the task: “The principle of inculturation stands or falls by the integrity of the Christian faith. Its cultural expression may vary, but its essential meaning cannot be contradicted. At the level of meaning, the Christian faith may develop, but there can be no loss of content.”⁵⁵ To be fair, he also stresses that elements of the foreign culture (in which the Christian faith would be embedded) should not “overwhelm” or overpower the host culture. Inculturation involves not only dialogue between the host culture and the faith, but also the culture of those transmitting the Christian faith to this new culture.⁵⁶ Shorter is quick to criticize the

⁵³ Ibid. 42.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 14.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 43.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 63.

notorious years of classicist missionaries who conflated Christianity with European civilization.

Before we move on to biblical and historical sources, I wish to clarify a possible point of confusion. An observant reader will notice that I have avoided the language of “syncretism” in describing the phenomena occurring in African churches, and this is intentional. The term has a history in theological and missiological discourses that has been largely pejorative, and many writers appear to use it to describe inculturation that they feel has gone “too far.” Therefore, to avoid any normative connotations that may come with the term “syncretism” and discussions of it in African Christian contexts, I have chosen to stick with the term “inculturation.”

A History of Inculturation in the Bible and the Christian Church

Because thinking in the Church about culture and inculturation seems to be so outmoded, most theologians involved with inculturation feel compelled to offer an *apologia* for why the task should be considered important in the first place. They do this through two major ways: showing precedent for inculturation within the biblical texts, and demonstrating how it has played a great role throughout Church history. I will investigate how Shorter and Magesa explore these two areas. My main purpose here is not to criticize their arguments (though some of that is involved), but to merely present the type of rhetoric they utilize to support their vision of inculturation.

The biblical texts arose in specific contexts that shaped the texts themselves and the communities that composed them. The Israelites were not isolated by any means; they encountered the customs and values of their neighbors in a myriad of ways. Returning to

Shorter's idea that inculturation might be better termed interculturalism (due to the way it necessarily involves dialogue and exchange between both parties), he argues that "the Jewish people and their traditions were, humanly speaking, the product of this remarkably varied cultural interaction, and were themselves contributors to the on-going intercultural process."⁵⁷ For example, the Mosaic Law did not arise in a vacuum; it bears influences from the Babylonian, Assyrian, and other law codes that surrounded and preceded the Israelite community. Deuteronomy follows the same structure and basic content of a Hittite suzerainty treaty.⁵⁸ The authors and redactors of the Torah evidently took certain cues from their contexts when trying to formulate Israel's relationship with its God. At other points, the biblical narrative seems to be more self-aware about the influence of nearby cultures. In 1 Samuel 8, the elders demand that Samuel provide them with "a king to govern us, like other nations." Samuel is hesitant, because the Law of Moses seemed to prescribe an explicitly theocratic plan for government, but God solemnly grants him permission to anoint a king, as a concession to the people. The centralized kingship of Israel, which is first regarded as negative influence from the other, godless nations, eventually becomes sanctified with the reign of David. Much later on in the narrative, when Jesus is crowned by terms like "Son of David" and "King of Israel," it almost seems as if the monarchy was part of the plan all along. Commenting on this development, Magesa writes "In the beginning these borrowings went fundamentally against the community's initial convictions about what it thought itself to be; but, in spite of all that, many of them finally won the day and were incorporated into the religious

⁵⁷ Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 106.

⁵⁸ Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation*, 89.

consciousness and practices of the people.”⁵⁹ Shorter also wants to draw attention to the Temple. Citing its architecture (which bore startling resemblances to places of worship in other Near Eastern societies), the types of sacrifices and the animals involved, and other details of design, he argues that the Temple was the site of the “most extensive inculturation” in Israelite religion.⁶⁰ As we will see in the final chapter, the style and location of worship is one of the most common indicators of inculturation in progress.

Moving onto instances of inculturation in the New Testament, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the overarching image of incarnation that is used for these projects; thus, Jesus’s project and mission on Earth is seen as a model for faith ingraining itself into the lived experiences of the Church’s members. Our two theologians investigate other parts of the canon to bolster their argument as well. Shorter’s analysis ends with disappointment. He seems to find a few incidents in Acts that could point to inculturation, but ultimately concludes that they are deficient. For instance, Paul’s speech at the Areopagus in Acts 17 could lend itself to a favorable interpretation: Paul is attempting to relate the Gospel to the Athenians, to show that Gentiles can and should believe in Jesus, too. However, Shorter explains that Paul was only interested in attracting individual Greeks, and “showed no inclination to invite a response to the Gospel from Greek culture...The most that can be said about the speech, and about Paul’s missionary activity in general, is that it was an instance of acculturation, a preliminary missionary encounter leading to a later and more profound intercultural dialogue.”⁶¹ Shorter has a valid point, as Paul seems to primarily characterize Athenian religion as ignorant and idolatrous. At the same time, Paul does acknowledge that they have already been worshipping the true

⁵⁹ Ibid. 91.

⁶⁰ Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 110.

⁶¹ Ibid. 127.

God in some sense, when he expresses his desire to “make known” the unknown god for whom they have built an altar. Since a large piece of the work of inculturation is attempting to pinpoint places where God has already made himself at home in the culture, I think Shorter is a little pessimistic in his evaluation of Paul here. He is even harsher in his judgment on the Jerusalem church, which he actually labels “an obstacle to inculturation.”⁶² The elders of the Jerusalem church had reservations about accepting Gentiles into the fold, and their insistence that early Gentile converts follow certain rules derived from Judaism leads Shorter to devalue their role in early evangelization. He goes so far as to say “Christianity’s new creation of human cultures only started when the Jewish religious culture was destroyed and the Jerusalem community had ceased to exist.”⁶³ Whether or not the Jewish-Christian churches stood in the way of inculturation as much as Shorter argues, it does raise the troubling issue of how the discourse of inculturation might conflict with the narratives of Messianic Jews or other groups who are determined to practice Christianity within a specific, cultural matrix.

Magesa relies more on a broad picture of the New Testament Church’s story, and he is much more optimistic about its implications. In reference to the letters that form the NT canon, Magesa summarizes an account by Raymond Brown and remarks, “Each of these sub-apostolic books in the New Testament...is a result of a situated process of appropriating faith in Jesus in a particular situation.”⁶⁴ The Pauline and catholic letters are reacting to problems and issues brought up in concrete, specific contexts; they are evidence that the Church members and leaders are trying to live authentically as Christians in their situations. Magesa does not stray far beyond this observation. Instead,

⁶² Ibid. 129.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation*, 106.

he wants churches today to see the apostolic period as a model for how Christians should respond to issues, by thinking carefully about the context and suggesting solutions that would ideally be amenable to the Gospel and the host culture. He appears to see no contradiction between the methods of the early Church and of inculturation theologians and practitioners.

Moving beyond the period of the New Testament, both writers also spend space discussing the relevance of inculturation throughout Church history. They point out instances where the Church and its missionaries have successfully embodied the principles of incarnation, making a true effort to appropriate the faith for a specific context. They also point out failures, as examples to avoid. Magesa raises the Alexandrian school of theology in the patristic era as a positive example, as it demonstrated the meeting of Hellenistic philosophy and Christian faith in a way that produced a synthetic whole. Alexandrians such as Clement and Origen adopted an allegorical reading of Scripture that placed a high value on the use of reason and the faculties of the mind in pursuit of theological knowledge.⁶⁵

Skipping forward in time, Shorter discusses the evangelization of England at the end of the 6th-century. Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, is dispatching a missionary to assist in evangelization efforts on the England, and sends a letter that suggests how St. Mellitus should deal with the local religious traditions. Gregory demands that the idols be demolished, but the temples and the practice of sacrifice may be preserved.⁶⁶ Though it seems more ideal than an outright campaign of destruction against the traditions already in place, Shorter notes that it is still very problematic: “There is no explicit desire to

⁶⁵ Ibid. 120.

⁶⁶ Bede, the Venerable. *A History of the English Church and People*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1955. I, 30.

evangelize the Anglo-Saxon culture from within. Nor is there any consciousness of the need for dialogue. What is proposed is a forcible appropriation of Anglo-Saxon religious institutions, a substitution of religious meaning, with the barest physical or seasonal continuity.”⁶⁷ Besides, the Roman Church was clear that any churches planted in Britain would have to perform their liturgies in Latin and adhere to the Latin rites. They were simply allowed to keep some of the structures in place.⁶⁸ Shorter provides a much more mixed analysis of the Greek brothers Cyril and Methodius, who served as missionaries to Russia and Moravia in the 9th-century. By translating biblical texts and church codes into Slavonic, they set the precedence for liturgy in the vernacular and encouraged converts in those areas to participate in their own language. However, at the same time, they often destroyed shrines and temples belonging to their host people.⁶⁹ While sometimes acting in ways even more draconian than Gregory’s suggestions, they still paved the way for a Slavic Christian culture that still exists to this day.

During the period of European exploration that began in the late 15th-century, missionary efforts grew in unprecedented ways. As the Spanish and Portuguese settled South America, Catholic clergy came in and started evangelizing the local populations. The problem, as Shorter points out, was that the clergy was completely foreign, and essentially created its own subculture apart from the laity. Since the European priests and South American laypeople belonged to very different cultures, a strongly indigenized form of Catholicism took hold among South Americans. Because it was (and has been) so unfamiliar with many Catholic leaders and thinkers, it has often been labeled

⁶⁷ Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 141.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 143.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 144.

“syncretistic.”⁷⁰ Shorter believes that the conscious involvement of the clergy and leadership is indispensable for processes of inculturation; without a strong understanding of both the host culture and the faith, a true dialogue is impossible.

Moving on from a broad picture of the situation in South America, Shorter considers the cases of a few specific missionaries. The first is an Italian Jesuit born in 1552 named Matteo Ricci. He went to China and took on a Chinese name (Ma Dou), and donned the dress, customs, and language of a Confucian scholar in order to gain credibility with the intellectual leaders of China. Unfortunately, Catholic leadership in Rome disagreed with Ricci’s favorable stance toward Confucius and certain burial rights after his death, going so far as to condemn them among Catholics over a hundred years after his death.⁷¹ Still, Shorter sums up Ricci’s legacy among the Chinese by saying, “[His] goal was to achieve a Christian reinterpretation of Chinese culture which would, in turn, provoke a Chinese interpretation of Christianity presented in this sympathetic Chinese form. It is, perhaps, a measure of the success of this policy that three thousand people had been baptized by the time of Ricci’s death in 1610.”⁷² Working around the same time as Ricci, another Italian Jesuit by the name of Roberto de Nobili traveled to India and adopted the dress and practice of a Brahmin, the highest caste. He learned Sanskrit and read the Vedas in an attempt to find common ground between them and teachings of Christianity. Like Ricci, de Nobili found himself in trouble with the Vatican, who suspended his ability to baptize for thirteen years while they deliberated on whether or not his methods were in accordance with Catholic teaching.⁷³ Though they eventually

⁷⁰ Ibid. 154.

⁷¹ Ibid. 159.

⁷² Ibid. 158.

⁷³ Ibid. 160.

decided in his favor, de Nobili's mission died with him, and a similar dialogue with Indian culture was not attempted again until after Vatican II.

Following this narrative, Christian history seems to be dotted with genuine attempts at what many would today call inculturation, and attempts to keep the Church uniform in its cultural expression. Interestingly, both of these forces seem to be at work in almost every example. Shorter admits that history is full of tension between the Catholic leadership and lay movements, especially in this realm.⁷⁴ Though some tried to engage respectfully with cultures outside the Church's norm, the organization never truly gained the tools or the urgency to pursue this cause until the Second Vatican Council and afterwards.

The Vatican on Culture and Inculturation

A discussion of inculturation and perceptions of culture would be deficient without considering the Vatican's stance on such issues. How has the Church defined culture, and how does that affect its mission in pursuing inculturation? Again, Arbuckle insists that many Catholics' views of culture are outdated and inadequate for the ambitious task of inculturation, and calls his fellow believers to a more sophisticated understanding of the relevant problems.⁷⁵ He presents a short outline of very prominent declarations and writings on culture within the Church, showing how their understanding of culture directly influences the way they approach the task of inculturation.

He begins with documents that arose from the Second Vatican Council, arguing that they primarily deal with "culture" as classicists, treating European-based, Catholic

⁷⁴ Ibid. 163.

⁷⁵ Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, & Theologians*, xxii.

culture as the norm to which others should aspire.⁷⁶ As an example, he refers to the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, a constitution designed to encourage greater lay participation in the liturgy. The document says that all rituals and actions in the liturgy should be done with “noble simplicity,” in order to communicate their purposes clearly, but Arbuckle points out that “noble simplicity” is not a virtue in some culture’s rituals, where extravagance and repetition are put to use. He writes, “The principal of liturgical reform behind the document is in fact the revival of the ‘noble simplicity’ of Roman cultural values, which are now to be reimposed on the world church.”⁷⁷ The attitude that the liturgy throughout the world should align with the aesthetic expectations of Rome pervades the Vatican II documents.

Arbuckle also devotes some time to analyzing Pope John Paul II’s approaches to culture, but he does not come to drastically different conclusions. Noting his famous rhetoric regarding the “civilization of love” versus the “civilization of death,” he characterizes John Paul II as mostly employing the classicist notion, and then setting up a duality between European Catholicism and others. “He is using culture not in the empirical sense but as synonymous with intellectual and artistic achievements. Europe, in his view, is the model for the rest of the world of how these accomplishments can be attained through the interaction of the Gospel with cultures.”⁷⁸ Several letters penned by John Paul II emphasized the need for liturgical renewal, but they also harshly criticized any perceived “innovations” or anything that would mark the local liturgy off from the

⁷⁶ Ibid. 140.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 141.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 144.

standard Roman rites.⁷⁹ The Roman rite, as described by the Vatican, is the measure by which the other church's liturgies are evaluated.

Moving in a more positive direction, Arbuckle also highlights the career of Karl Rahner, who paid great, careful attention to the shifting ideas of culture in his time and began his theological work with the lives of laypeople. As a result, he found much to criticize in the contemporary Catholic Church's attitudes to other cultures in the second half of the 20th-century. He wrote that "The actual concrete activity of the Church in its relation to the world outside of Europe was in fact...the activity of an export firm which exported a European religion as a commodity it did not really want to change but sent throughout the world together with the rest of the culture and civilization it considered superior."⁸⁰ Rahner claimed that, strictly judging by appearances, the Roman Catholic Church had no interest in letting the faith adapt to different contexts. Instead, the faith is considered to be a vehicle through which other societies are introduced to European culture, and are expected to conform. By critiquing the Church in this way, Rahner rejected the classicist notion of culture that formed a major part of the Catholic leadership's discourse up to and after Vatican II. The emergence of talk about inculturation is evidence that other Catholic thinkers began to agree with Rahner, and started to comprehend that "there will no longer be any one single and universal basic formula of the Christian faith applicable to the whole Church and, indeed, prescribed for her as authoritatively binding."⁸¹ Catholic thinkers (like Arbuckle, Shorter, and Magesa) have been trying to lead discussions in this field as the questions raised by Rahner and

⁷⁹ Cf. *Varietates Legitimae* and *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, in particular.

⁸⁰ Rahner, Karl. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," in *Theological Studies* 40, 1979. 717.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 718.

others have become more urgent: How will the world church look if each local community is given the right to practice the faith in accordance with their traditions and values? And how have outdated, classicist conceptions of culture created obstacles for this process? By forcing those in the highest positions of leadership to understand how certain views of culture negatively affect other parts of the world, the way can be opened to more fruitful discussions of what authentic inculturation would look like.

Having devoted some time to considering the Church's interpretation of cultures, how does the Vatican deal with inculturation? What is the leadership's official stance on the issue? We will look briefly at some of the important documents in the last few decades that have made issues of inculturation prominent in Catholic discourse.

Gaudium et Spes, one of the major documents to come out of Vatican II, contains one of the first and most important declarations on the Church's relationship with culture that goes beyond classicist formulations. In describing the Church's missionary focus, it says "The Church has been sent to all ages and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern. The Church is faithful to its traditions and is at the same time conscious of its universal mission; it can, then, enter into communion with different forms of culture, thereby enriching both itself and the cultures themselves."⁸² The passage seems to follow the most basic definition of inculturation, meaning the dialogue between Christian faith and a local, concrete culture. The only issue that might arise from the language is the impression that the Church exists as an entity independent from culture. However, the Church necessarily must enter into

⁸² *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1965. 53.

dialogue with other cultures while already in the guise of a particular culture; the Church is always and unavoidably embedded in certain contexts. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, an exhortation given by Pope Paul VI in 1975, seems to use the same language in regards to the Gospel in stating that “The individual Churches...have the task of assimilating the essence of the Gospel message and of transposing it, without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth, into the language that these particular people understand, then of proclaiming it in this language.”⁸³ Though Shorter finds a lot to praise about the document, he criticizes it for a significant gaffe: “The weakness of the passage lies in the concept of the Gospel emerging from a world of essences.”⁸⁴ The Catholic Church primarily regards its organization and its message as being free from cultural bias or context, and this unwillingness to acknowledge its cultural clothing is an obstacle to honest attempts at dialogue between Catholic theology and particular cultures.

Pope John Paul II’s thinking on inculturation was influenced heavily by his home country of Poland coming under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union. He became convinced that certain cultures (like those defined by “atheistic Marxism”) were irredeemable, and he held suspicions about fruitful dialogue with some partners.⁸⁵ Even so, John Paul II also wrote the groundbreaking encyclical, *Ecclesia in Africa*, which stressed the importance of inculturation for the Church’s work in Africa. Released after the African Synod of Bishops in 1994, the document states that Episcopal Conferences should “set up study commissions, especially for matters concerning marriage, the veneration of ancestors, and the spirit world, in order to examine in depth all the cultural

⁸³ *On Evangelization in the Modern World: Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Dec. 8, 1975. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1976. 63.

⁸⁴ Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, 217.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 223.

aspects of problems from the theological, sacramental, liturgical and canonical points of view.”⁸⁶ In this and several other sections, the exhortation calls for serious work to be done in the area of inculturation, both theoretically and on the ground. John Paul II’s attitude toward inculturation seems to contradict his generally classicist views of culture, and Shorter notes that the pope’s overall stance appears ambiguous, his opinion on the cultural autonomy of churches wavering back and forth over his career. Nevertheless, the attitude highlighted in *Ecclesia in Africa* must become even more pervasive for the Church to address issues that specifically pertain to African Christians.

The Place of Liberation in the Discussion

Before I conclude this chapter, I should note that another theological discourse has also found a home in African Christian circles. Liberation theology calls attention to God’s preferential option for the poor and suffering; God sides with the oppressed, as he did in the Book of Exodus. Theologians who work within this discourse are concerned with empowering Africans and seeking changes in public society that would alleviate poverty and remove systemic injustice. Inculturation and liberation theology have been perceived as incompatible. Melted down to their basic foci, one is concerned with culture, and the other is concerned with justice. Thinkers on each side believe the others have wrong priorities, as Simeon Ilesanmi points out in summing up one of the strongest criticisms: “The preponderant emphasis on culture, the liberationists contend, has reduced

⁸⁶ John Paul II. *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, and All the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995. 49.

the theology of inculturation to ethnological parochialism and irrelevant traditionalism.”⁸⁷

How can inculturation theologians focus all their attention on liturgy and cultural self-identity when there are more immediate and severe issues for African Christians, like hunger and state-sanctioned violence? How is inculturation even relevant to issues of justice?

Ilesanmi suggests that both sides can find (and in many cases have found) common ground in this debate. The injustices that plague many African societies are extensions of the legacy of colonialism, which subjugated African people and African cultures under European people and cultures. Colonialists built structures and institutions that attacked and devalued African agency in both politics and culture. Ilesanmi quotes Adrian Hastings (whom we will encounter in the next chapter) in arguing that political freedom and celebration of culture are both linked. Inculturation and liberation both seek to re-establish African agency and values, just in seemingly different arenas.⁸⁸ In writing about issues of inculturation and liberation in the Western Province of Zambia, Fr. Francis Kabika says that “Inculturation empowers the people to shake off some of the shackles of the culture in order to reshape and redirect the culture in a more life-giving direction that is offered by the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.”⁸⁹ Both inculturation and liberation refer back to the keyword of empowerment. Inculturation theology wants to cultivate a dialogue between the Christian faith and culture that will result in a true celebration of both as they intertwine in a beautiful way. It affirms the inherent value of African cultures when past Christian voices have repeatedly degraded them. Liberation

⁸⁷ Ilesanmi, Simeon O. “Inculturation and Liberation: Christian Social Ethics and the African Theology Project.” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 1995, p. 49-73. 62-63.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 51-52.

⁸⁹ Kabika, Francis. “Untitled.” Seminary paper, 2011. Received in personal correspondence. 20.

theology seeks to correct injustices that have been built into the system. It affirms the value of human life, and recognizes the need for people to be free in order to worship God. Neither of these discourses should be neglected, and both have played an important role in the development of the African Christian church to this day.

In conclusion, inculturation theology is a relatively new discourse that demands better understanding and more attention by the broader Church (and world) in order to be comprehended as a communal and cultural form of changing identity. How we define and think of both “religion” and “culture” determine our approach to the topic, but whether we speak of two cultures coming into contact, or of a faith embedding itself in a cultural system, we are still discussing identity change. The phenomenon of inculturation is rooted in the Bible and Christian history, though tensions between continuity and discontinuity arise in almost every context (and this tension will be addressed in the next chapter). Due to the Vatican’s power, how the leadership of the Catholic Church frames issues of culture and inculturation has implications for churches throughout the world, and will influence to what extent the process may be seen as a legitimate means of negotiating identities. Having explained the process of inculturation in this chapter, I will undertake to describe conversion and its role in defining identities in the next. In the final chapter, we will see how these two processes are analogous to one another in the particular context of Lozi Catholic communities. In doing so, I will show that inculturation is important because it provides a way in which communities establish dual identities for themselves in a visible way.

Chapter 3: Conversion and African Identities

In the first chapter of this paper, I outlined the context and background of the Western Province, highlighting issues and concepts that figure into our understanding of its religious culture. In the second chapter, I looked at different theories of inculturation and examined some of the concerns surrounding the discourse. Since I am making the argument that inculturation is analogous to conversion on the communal and cultural level, I will be tackling conversion and its role in constructing African identities. The discussion will also lead us to address the spectrum of dis/continuity, which measures how much of one's old identity a convert rejects or retains. As African Christians reflect on their dual identities, they must decide which parts are compatible with one another. Of course, this issue will also come into play in the next and final chapter, in which I will bring the concepts of conversion and inculturation together in analyzing how Lozi culture appears in public Catholic rituals in the Western Province.

In this chapter, I will cover three primary areas. First, I will briefly examine some of the major issues raised by constructions of African religious identities, both past and present. Then I will investigate a case study of conversion in Christian history and spell out its main implications for how we understand the process and function of conversion. The chapter will finish with a discussion of ways in which African identities have been quashed in Christian contexts, accompanied by a short proposal for how African theologies can properly acknowledge the continuity of traditional beliefs and practices. Though the reasons why Africans have converted to Christianity are numerous, multifaceted, and sometimes controversial, I will narrow the discussion to issues of how identity relates to the process.

Issues with African Religious Identities

We move into a discussion of African religious identities with consideration of their past constructions. In the colonial era, when Africans held almost no power over their representation in Western academia, they were portrayed in wildly different ways. Many European missionaries and anthropologists arriving in Africa found nothing that seemed to resemble Christianity as they knew it, and they forwarded these impressions to the academies back home. Due to the “primitive” modes of worship exhibited in these communities, and the era’s conviction that different kinds of religion can be arranged into a hierarchy of low and high religions, European thinkers often categorized African religions as “animism.”⁹⁰ Working within a system that established Christianity as the obvious paradigm for religion, Europeans regarded African religious practices to be unhealthily centered on fetishes or other material objects used in rituals. The term “animism” essentially referred to any religious system that seemed to lack a textual basis, appeared to be superstitious in practice, and belonged to lower, ignorant, and immoral races of people. Though commonly used in classifications of world religions at the beginning of the 20th-century, animism was largely a pejorative word meant to characterize Africans as backwards, primitive, and in need of proper civilization/Christianity. Missionaries obliged.

As these missionaries planted churches around the continent and converts began populating them, two broad schools of thought arose over the role of Christianity in Africa. Both of these schools still have supporters and can be succinctly summarized by the approaches of two 20th-century Ghanaian thinkers: Osofo Okomfo Damuah and

⁹⁰ Bediako, Kwame. *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999. 230.

Clement Anderson Akrofi. Damuah was born with the name Vincent Kwabena Damuah on April 30th, 1930. He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1957 and led a very prolific academic career in which he studied and taught at various schools in the U.S. and Jamaica. He returned to Ghana in 1976, but in 1982, he left the Catholic Church, renamed himself Osofo Okomfo, and founded the Afrikania Mission, because he became convinced that Christianity and an African worldview were incompatible.⁹¹ This project sought to discover resources in African Traditional Religion (ATR) that could help Africans live as free, self-determined agents in a postcolonial world. Damuah believed that ATR had the key to understanding African personality and was the right path to take for Africans seeking fulfillment. After so many decades in the Roman Catholic Church, he heavily questioned the value of Christianity for Africans, and argued that it was ultimately not compatible with African values. He wrote: “Christianity is generally viewed by Africans as not indigenously African, but rather a white man’s religion, because...Christian missionaries often opposed or denigrated traditional local customs and institutions...overall, Christianity’s image in Africa is still that of a de-Africanizing institution, whose educational and proselytizing practices lead to the adoption of an alien culture and a turning away from African roots.”⁹² Therefore, it is very difficult to reconcile an authentic African identity with being a Christian.

Clement Anderson Akrofi was a Guan scholar who built on the work of a German missionary named Johannes Christaller to produce a Twi translation of the Bible.

Convinced that authentic African Christian identity is only made possible by making the

⁹¹ Bediako, Kwame. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997. 18.

⁹² Damuah, Kwabena. “The changing perspective of Wasa Amanfi Traditional Religion in contemporary Africa.” Diss. Howard University, 1971. Unpublished. 102.

foundational texts available in the vernacular, Akrofi revised Christaller's translation and wrote a grammar of the Twi language itself. At a ceremony in 1960 where he was honored for his work, he remarked, "In view of the general tendency to regard Christianity as a foreign religion, I will remind my fellow Africans that although Christianity is Europe's greatest gift to Africa, it is not exclusively the white man's religion...Christianity is a world religion because Jesus Christ is the Lord and King of the Universe."⁹³ Christianity is not European, it is for the whole world, and therefore it is for Africans as well. The idea that Christianity can be appropriated as authentically African, and that it is not intrinsically foreign, is behind most attempts by African Christians to develop an African theology.

Those are the two strands in African history, but to be far more specific, how is Christian identity conceived in the Western Province? This question is complicated by the fact that Zambia has been constitutionally defined as a "Christian nation" since 1991. Though space is explicitly made for practitioners of other religions, fellow Zambians are very often assumed to be Christians. The idea that Christianity is something that is or should be foreign to Zambian life is now rare. Of course, plenty of controversy abounds concerning Zambia's designation as a Christian nation. Many citizens decried it as a political ploy used by then-President Chiluba to bolster his support among evangelicals; the Catholics I stayed with believed that Chiluba described Zambia as more of a Protestant nation than a Christian one. In any case, most of the Lozi in the Western Province are Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant. However, there is more to religious identity than a single proper noun, and part of my task in this chapter is to see

⁹³ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 57.

how certain continuities and discontinuities play into these identities. Before I dive into that, I want to address an important caveat.

Gerrie ter Haar has worked with African Christian communities in the Netherlands, and she is wary about the discourses of identity surrounding these groups. She writes, “The insistence by many non-Africans on the existence of a specific African identity may be inspired by a concern for religious orthodoxy, or otherwise respond to a need of white Christian communities to distinguish themselves from black Christian communities in their midst.”⁹⁴ Is the focus on African religious and cultural identities a peculiarly non-African concern? Those in the Western academy should always be careful how they speak of the Other, even in cases where they have good intentions. What is the purpose of highlighting ethnic identity in this case? Ter Haar is concerned that much Western talk about African identities is designed to establish African Christians as substantially different from Western Christians, creating a distance from which they can be studied.⁹⁵ Though they share the common faith of Christianity, sometimes Westerners are in danger of overemphasizing the importance of ethnic identity in ways that Africans do not. I take this point seriously, as I do not want to make a bigger deal of ethnic or tribal identity more than the Lozi Catholics themselves.

Clarifying Conversion

Bearing in mind these issues with religious and cultural identities in the African, and particularly Zambian, context, we must try to account for this phenomenon known as

⁹⁴ Ter Haar, Gerrie. “Who Defines African Identity? A Concluding Analysis,” in James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar, eds., *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003. 267.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 269.

conversion. Kwame Bediako, the late, renowned Ghanaian scholar of African Christian theology, wrote his dissertation on the relationship between conversion and culture in the 2nd-century Greco-Roman world, and how it finds parallels in the modern African context. He was keen on demonstrating that many of the issues of dis/continuity that plagued early Roman Christians found resonances in how African Christians deal with their religious backgrounds. I will focus on his thoughts concerning conversion, as they will help us link the discussion to inculturation later.

According to Bediako, religion in Roman society was not simply a private affair. Belonging to the Empire meant that one had certain religious duties to the civil authorities, such as sacrificing to the gods or praying to the genius of Caesar. As Bediako points out, associating religious activities with the obligations of citizens ensured that national and religious identities were intertwined; voluntary associations were typically assimilated into the Roman worldview, and very seldom were they exempted from participation in the civic cult.⁹⁶ Thus, when Romans began converting to Christianity, identities became confused. The guidelines of this movement prevented them from sacrificing to the traditional gods, and many were unaware of how they should approach their heritage. If so much of Roman tradition was built on pagan ideas, what was acceptable to keep? What, if anything, had to be thrown out as incompatible with the new Christian faith? Christians were faced with the enormous challenge of trying to reconcile the demands of their new faith (as they interpreted them) with the demands and influences of their Greco-Roman identities.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, 21.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 32.

Early critics of Christianity easily saw these tensions and pointed to them as proof of Christianity's incompatibility with Roman society. Many charges focused on the faith's novelty and disconnection from history and tradition, while highlighting its foreign and "barbarian" origins.⁹⁸ Its adherents disrupted Roman society and refused to honor the traditional gods and the sacrifices due them. Christians were forced to confront their own past. How should Greek philosophy be interpreted? How can a "pagan" heritage be redeemed in a way that allowed a person to fully identify as both Roman and Christian, living within both streams without completely cutting off another? For almost all early Christian thinkers, the issues boiled down to the re-interpretation of non-Christian tradition, their cultural inheritances.⁹⁹ For example, Justin Martyr adopted the idea of the Logos, referred to in the Gospel of John, and identified areas in Greek philosophy that he believed had seen the light of Christ. It was unnecessary to portray a complete break between Greco-Roman culture and Christianity. God had surely been at work in the former before the latter officially arrived. Of course, other thinkers disagreed. Tertullian held that one must make a dramatic break from the Greco-Roman past. In order to think and believe in a Christian way, one must swear off the pagan philosophers.¹⁰⁰

In examining contemporary issues of African religious identity and conversion, Bediako sees a very similar situation at work. Given Christianity's history in Africa as a system brought in by powerful exploiters of the land and people, many Africans may be unsure whether or not the faith has a real place on the continent. The tension between a new Christian identity and one's traditional heritage can be felt as acutely as it was in the

⁹⁸ Ibid. 48.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 49.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 117.

early years of the Church. Though he notes that there are significant differences (e.g. the power to influence a society held by the early Roman Christians vs. the European colonialists), Bediako nevertheless suggests that the dilemma posed by conversion can be approached through the same method employed by the early Christians. A reckoning with one's heritage and deciding how to interpret it in the scheme of salvation history is essential, and individuals and communities must work and think about how they will appropriate their African traditional heritages.¹⁰¹ Bediako writes that the African Church has a lot to learn from the early Greco-Roman Church on the dynamics of conversion and dealing with the past, and he establishes common ground between them, saying, "The effort to trace a salvific dimension in the pre-Christian tradition and so by implication to identify 'Christian' antecedents in it, answered to a single urge, namely, to articulate a unified world-picture in which the God of Christian revelation was seen to be Who He really is; the one and only God of all mankind."¹⁰² A convert who takes his or her dual-identity seriously will attempt to find the places where they interlock.

With these concerns in mind, it is enormously important to determine how we define "conversion." A clear sense of what I mean by the term will help us later see the parallels between it and inculturation. Bediako builds his understanding of conversion on the work of A.D. Nock, who specialized in Greco-Roman religion and offered a specific definition of the term. He says conversion is "the reorientation of the soul of the individual, his deliberate turning from indifference, from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 432.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 435.

old was wrong and that the new is right.”¹⁰³ Therefore, conversion subsists primarily in change, and more specifically, change in identity. Unfortunately, according to Nock, this change cannot be easily seen by others. It is something that seems to occur almost entirely in the mind of one who is undergoing conversion. This poses a problem for me and other students, because we cannot measure or see instances of conversion if conversion is simply an alteration of a discrete mindset. In order to have a more empirical (and thus easier to demonstrate) definition of the term, I suggest two criteria for an individual or community’s change to be considered as conversion.

First, there must be a change in self-identity. How a person explicitly defines and describes him or herself is obviously one of the most crucial aspects of identity, and a change in identity will be demonstrated in new ways of self-identifying. In Lozi culture, this can perhaps be seen in an individual who once did not describe herself as Catholic, but now does. I believe this criterion is fairly straightforward.

The second criterion is a change in action that signifies this new identity. The convert does something that is designed to indicate and be a reflection of the change in his or her identity. Baptism and confirmation are very simple, clear actions that serve this precise purpose in many Christian congregations. The action that is undertaken must be embedded in the community or tradition that the individual has converted to, where it would be interpreted as something that identifies the person as a member of the group. Again, baptism, confirmation, or even devoting time to serving the poor would be actions that Christian groups would interpret to be marks of Christian identity, and thus they can work as indicators of a conversion that has taken place. Picking up golf or tennis would

¹⁰³ Nock, A.D. *Conversion (The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander to Augustine)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933. 7.

not be considered an important mark of conversion to Christianity, because no Christian community (as far as I know) would associate those activities with Christian identity.

Given these two criteria, what are the implications for a convert's relationship to his or her cultural identity, which has not changed, and his or her new religious identity, which has? History is filled with different reactions to the adoption of new identities, usually emphasizing to varying extents the level of continuity or discontinuity with old identities. Adrian Hastings, who worked and taught in Africa for decades, has thought about the issue in the African Catholic context: "In religious conversion there are bound to be numerous elements both of continuity and of separation. The latter are required to make the point of conversion emphatically clear, the former to make the transition in commitment intellectually possible and to undergird the new world-view by reinforcing it with props from the past...Lines of continuity and discontinuity are most necessary and most painful the nearer one gets to the heart of the religion itself."¹⁰⁴ Once again, the issue is defined in terms of how a convert or community deals with the past. In studying African Independent Churches in Zimbabwe, Ezra Chitando explains that many Christians follow in Tertullian's steps. "Ancestors, the different spirits, traditional medicine, and other facets of traditional culture are all seen as evils to be conquered...Conversion is interpreted to mean a radical break with the past."¹⁰⁵ A number of Christians do take this path, regarding elements of their past life to be actively interfering with their spiritual progress as a new Christian. Other African Christians in AICs have been known to hang on to many aspects of their heritage, even parts that

¹⁰⁴ Hastings, Adrian. *African Catholicism: Essays in Discovery*. London: SCM Press, 1989. 15.

¹⁰⁵ Chitando, Ezra. "Christianity in A Pluralistic Context: Religious Challenges in Zimbabwe," in James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar, eds., *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003. 113.

(Western) Christians would interpret as conflicting with true Christian identity. Many African Christians continue to follow food regulations passed down by traditions, polygamy, and dream interpretation as a medium for communication with God.¹⁰⁶ The spectrum of dis/continuity is very wide, and in the next chapter, we will try to ascertain where several Lozi Catholic communities land on it.

Reconciling Authentic Identities

As a general rule, most of the European Christian missionaries who arrived in Africa sought to ensure that “discontinuity” described the experience of African converts.¹⁰⁷ In her history of the Christian Church in Africa, Elizabeth Isichei catalogues a number of incidents where Europeans intentionally separated Africans from their own culture in order to “Christianize” them better. Mission stations created Christian villages where converts were often re-located, away from the supposedly spiritual toxic environment of their home villages. “The establishment of Christian villages often reflected the belief that Africans could not practice a Christian life in a traditional environment, that it was necessary to make a clean break.”¹⁰⁸ Aside from isolation, African Christians who remained in their own villages were prohibited from certain practices that would seem to be “neutral” in regards to religious commitment. For example, Ganda converts were kept from practicing a wedding ritual whereby the bride sits on each parent’s lap several times before leaving to be with her husband, in order to

¹⁰⁶ Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. “Christian Engagement With African Culture: Religious Challenges,” in James L. Cox and Gerrie ter Haar, eds., *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003. 97-99.

¹⁰⁷ Hastings, *African Catholicism*, 24.

¹⁰⁸ Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. 135.

represent that she will always have a home there.¹⁰⁹ The custom is a marker of Ganda cultural identity, but there is nothing about the act that should conflict with Christian identity.

When the customs or concepts were even more explicitly tangled with religious matters, European criticism became harsher. Without homogenizing the whole of African traditional religions, many Africans (including the Lozi) maintained belief in a Supreme God before missionaries arrived. However, because many African religious worldviews go beyond this one God, Europeans were still highly suspicious of it; their monotheism did not look enough like Christian monotheism.¹¹⁰ In terms of practices, libations to spirits and even communal prayers were condemned. As Oduyoye explains, “Sacrifices associated with...festivals and with healing and reconciliation and other rites and rituals were attacked and prohibited to Christians as unnecessary as the final sacrifice has been made on the cross by Jesus the Christ.”¹¹¹ European missionaries set themselves up as the arbiters of African Christian identity, and they proscribed the limits and each community’s placement on the dis/continuity spectrum.

How are African Christians stepping forward from this past? How are they reclaiming agency in the process of negotiating their own dual identities as Africans and Christians? Once again, Kwame Bediako has very worthy thoughts on the subject, and he suggests that a proper understanding of how a traditional African worldview works is part of the key. African theology has thus far done right in trying to show continuities between the Christian faith and the pre-Christian traditions of Africa, but it is still approaching the faith with Western eyes. He argues that “the wider spirit world of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 133.

¹¹⁰ Oduyoye, “Christian Engagement With African Culture,” 93.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 94.

African primal religions – divinities, ancestors, natural forces” is left out of discussions, and they must be included.¹¹² He proposes that the African worldview primarily conceives reality as a distribution of different powers, spiritual and natural. God is the most powerful of these entities, but other spirits and forces are configured into the equation as well.¹¹³ Given this schema, conversion is not merely changing one’s mind about an idea and acting on it, but re-arranging oneself into a radical new relationship with the powers of the universe. As he states, “Christian theology in the West seems, on the whole, to understand the Christian Gospel as a system of ideas. And yet, when the apostle Paul described the Gospel...he wrote: ‘I have complete confidence in the Gospel; it is the power of God to save all who believe...’. Surely, this calls for a new idiom.”¹¹⁴ Bediako is drawing attention to aspects of both continuity and discontinuity in an ideal African theology. By re-imagining the relationship between Christianity and traditional African worldviews, a more authentic synthesis can be achieved where African Christians find their dual identities to be fully reconciled. I believe Bediako is showing a way in which this is possible.

In this chapter, I sought to explain the relationship between conversion and the identity issues among African Christians. We witness two major strands in African attitudes toward Christianity: either it is foreign and cannot be embraced, or Africans can in good conscience take on the faith and become converts. Bediako’s study of the ancient and African churches show us that the key to solving the tension between old and new identities lies in how one reconciles with his or her past, and the community’s past. Should the person count his or her culture’s story as part of God’s narrative, and

¹¹² Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 97.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 99.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* 106.

incorporate the old identity into a new understanding of oneself? Or does one reject his or her past and traditions as worthless? In creating a working definition of visible conversion, I suggested that it be characterized by self-identity and activity in accordance with this new self-identity. Finally, we are reminded that history is replete with examples of African Christians (and others) feeling pressured to break away from their past. However, the final chapter will show us that trends of inculturation should give us hope in this area; a Christian community can faithfully hold on to both identities in the process of conversion. I will finally bring the pieces together to show that inculturation is the communal/cultural equivalent of conversion, and I will use examples from my fieldwork as evidence for this claim.

Chapter 4: Inculturation in the Western Province

In this final chapter, I will finally present examples of how Lozi cultural traditions have inserted themselves into public Catholic celebrations, most notably the Mass. I interpret the presence of these traditions and symbols to be signs of an inculturated faith, evidence of a community that has allowed its faith to embed itself so deeply in its culture that a new synthesis has been created: a distinctly Lozi Catholic culture and identity. By explaining some of the results of these processes of inculturation, I intend to show how they are essentially conversion on a communal and cultural scale, as they are markers of communities that have embraced a significant change in their religious identity. I will begin with discussing the most important and visible ritual in Lozi society: the Kuomboka.

The Kuomboka in Mass

In chapter one, I described the Kuomboka and the significance it holds in Lozi culture. Every year, as the wet season draws to a close and the Zambezi floodplains are submerged under copious amounts of rainwater, the Litunga embarks on a regal journey from Lealui to Limulunga. Riding aboard the Nalikwanda, his boat is flanked by a number of others transporting members of the royal family or other important people. The Litunga and his trip are celebrated by throngs of Lozi, other Zambians, and tourists on both ends. The event is literally emblematic of Lozi culture, as a number of middle-class Zambians even possess small models of the Nalikwanda to decorate their homes. Thus, when I began attending and observing Mass in the Western Province, I was startled

to find that the Kuomboka had become a seamless part of many important celebrations. How exactly does it fit in?

The Roman Catholic liturgy divides the Mass into different sections. Beginning with the entrance of the priests and the greeting of the altar, the congregation is led in an Act of Penitence, which is a short prayer of confession. That is followed by the Kyrie eleison, a repetition of the prayer “Lord, have mercy.” It is not necessary to list all the steps here, but the idea is that the Mass is endowed with a strong structure that reserves spots for special prayers, processions, and readings. The middle section of the Mass is referred to as the Liturgy of the Word, where Scripture is read and a homily is preached. On certain events and holidays, a text known as the Book of the Gospels (which contains only the first four books of the New Testament) is brought in and used in the celebration. Typically, a deacon will carry in the Book of the Gospels at the beginning of the Mass, and it is kept on the altar until it is time to be read. What does this procession have to do with the Kuomboka?

I attended several Masses in the Western Province where the procession of the Book of the Gospels was highlighted. These were major events, such as the consecration of the new Bishop of Mongu, Evans Chinyama Chinyemba, on May 28th, and the Mass celebrating his return to the parish church of his home village. I will focus on the latter event, because I did not yet grasp what I was seeing at the ordination.

At the Sancta Maria parish church in Lukulu on June 12th, 2011, I observed the Mass hosted by Bishop Evans Chinyemba. As with all the Masses I attended, it followed the general structure of the Roman rite, but created considerable space for dancing and singing between almost every step. The atmosphere in the sanctuary was ecstatic; a

worship band with guitars and drums played excitedly as men and women sang, moved, clapped, and ululated. Most of the service was in Silozi, but I received help in translating and understanding what was happening. When we arrived at the Liturgy of the Word, a deacon wearing a red beret (the signature clothing item of the Nalikwanda rowers) came to the podium beside the altar, and announced the next step in the Mass. He was met with loud cheers around the room. The worship band and the choir led a new, joyful song as the deacon headed to the back of the sanctuary, where a new procession was beginning. As he started dancing forward down the aisle, women dressed in white followed him. They divided themselves into two rows, side by side, and danced. In their hands were sticks, with which they pantomimed rowing. These women positioned themselves in front of a few other women carrying a model boat on their shoulders. This was about four to five feet long, but did not seem to be painted in any special way. Behind the boat was a group of women in beautiful dresses, covered in bright shades of blue, purple, yellow, red, and green. They danced just as energetically, but held no tools and did not seem to be rowing. The procession leading the boat made its way down the aisle very slowly, carrying it carefully and giving members of the procession plenty of time to demonstrate their rowing dance skills. During this time, the music kept playing and the congregation continued to dance, sing, and ululate. When the procession finally reached the altar, its members bowed as one of the priests walked over. He was accompanied by altar boys carrying candles. The boat was set on the raised platform containing the altar, and the priest picked the Book of the Gospels (in Silozi translation) out of the boat. He lifted it high above his head, displaying it to the congregation as the singing and music grew to an

apex. Once the singing ends, everyone sits down, the boat is taken away, and the Book of the Gospels is handed off to a woman who begins the first reading.

It is clear to see what has happened, and every priest and layperson I spoke to confirmed it. The Kuomboka is being replicated in the Mass, and instead of the king, the Litunga, traveling from his summer palace to his winter palace on higher ground, it is the Scripture (the Gospels, specifically) traveling through the sanctuary to the altar, which is literally higher ground. What should we make of this? What kind of message does this action send? On the surface level, we can say that this is an example of inculturation. Even as they celebrate the Catholic Mass, these people still take pride in their own culture, and regard it as an important and valuable aspect of their identity. They have taken a central tradition of their culture and included it in the way they worship. This is a concrete picture of the type of inculturation we have been discussing in this paper up to this point.

What else can we say about it? We can reflect on the pieces of the Mass Kuomboka and what they are meant to represent. In the traditional Kuomboka, the king is transported in the boat from one place to the next. In the Mass, the king is replaced by the Book of the Gospels, by Scripture. As I spoke with priests after the celebration (which lasted four hours), I asked what this use of the Kuomboka meant. They answered that the Book of the Gospels represents the Holy Spirit riding in the boat. In the midst of dancing and worship, the Holy Spirit is transported to the altar where it can proclaim the Word of God to the congregation. This seems to signify a great change not only in the Mass, but in the meaning of the Kuomboka as it is celebrated.

As I explained in chapter one, the Kuomboka is an event where the Lozi peoples unite around the Litunga as a figurehead for Barotseland. Part of the ritual's purpose is to work as an annual celebration of Lozi culture, but an unavoidable (and, in all likelihood, very intentional) aspect of the ceremony is that it also lifts up and bolsters the authority and legitimacy of the Litunga. It establishes and maintains him and his office as the center of Lozi culture. What happens when that figurehead, the star of the show, is replaced by the Holy Spirit? It is as if the spotlights have been trained on the lead actor with dazzling intensity, only he is not there, and another is in his place. By switching out the main figure, the Kuomboka is not simply inserted into the Mass; in the process, it is repurposed and changed, uniting Lozi Catholics around the exaltation of the Holy Spirit instead of the Litunga. Both the Mass and the Kuomboka undergo change, and their resulting synthesis is a sign that inculturation is at work, and that this community is proclaiming its dual Lozi Catholic identity. The unifying figure and image of Lozi culture is the Litunga, riding in his boat from Lealui to Limulunga, but the unifying figure and image of Lozi Catholic culture is God, riding in his boat from the entrance of the sanctuary to the altar.

Other Signs of Inculturation

Other parts of Lozi culture easily found their way into public Catholic celebrations, as well. In Lozi society, a recognized way of acknowledging others' authority is by bringing them gifts, or tributes. Victor Turner wrote that families were often expected to donate goods to the Litunga, the royal family, or chiefs, and in return,

they would (ideally) be granted goods which they lacked.¹¹⁵ Functionally, this tradition worked as a tax and asserted, once again, the Litunga's rightful rule over Barotseland. Yet the idea that giving gifts is a proper sign of respect to authority is part of Lozi culture, and it has found its place in Lozi Catholic culture.

On the day before the Mass in Sancta Maria parish church that I described earlier, we visited Bishop Evans's home village, about a twenty-minute drive outside of Lukulu. The community there built a makeshift altar outside and Mass was celebrated there. After the end of Mass, the village still wanted to honor Bishop Evans, so they laid out a blanket in a clearing and set up seven chairs facing the same direction. Bishop Evans sat in the middle, and several priests (and I) sat near him. As music played, people began lining up and dancing to present Bishop Evans with various gifts. The most common gift was a congratulatory card with some cash folded inside. Others brought food, like banana bunches or oranges. As time went on, the gifts became more extravagant, with several people offering live chickens, goats, and a number of mattresses. One family brought in a live bull, which was restrained only by ropes and did not seem happy about the transaction. Again, all these gifts were offered with singing and dancing, and after the gift-giving, a brief dance party was held, followed by a large meal.

On one hand, this can be considered as an example of inculturation in the way that it blends Lozi and Catholic cultures into a harmonious whole. Much like the Kuomboka in the Mass, it subverts the Litunga's traditional role and replaces him with another figure. However, unlike that example, the Litunga is no longer replaced by the Holy Spirit or God, but by the bishop and the priests. Granted, Christian authorities are now the ones being honored by traditional modes of respect, but we should not forget the

¹¹⁵ Turner, *The Lozi Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia*, 21.

power dynamics at work here. In many Lozi Catholic communities, the Bishop of Mongu is viewed with the same reverence as the Litunga, and appears to fulfill a similar role. Structures that accord wealth to those in power and authority should always be evaluated thoroughly, especially in situations such as this where a group's identity may be represented in a single figure.

The worship celebrations in Lozi Catholic Masses are sights to behold. Weekday Masses are usually calm with singing interspersed throughout, but Sundays, holidays, and special occasions are full of spirited singing with a variety of instruments and outbursts of joyful ululation among the women in the congregation. Sprinkled throughout the order of the Mass are dance performances, where certain groups like teenage girls, middle-aged women, or young men will make their way to the front of the sanctuary, near the altar, and dance together. Often wearing colorful dance uniforms, they danced in unison to the music for several minutes before moving to the side and allowing the Mass to continue. One of the most common dance groups I saw were old women carrying small hoes, traditional farming tools usually utilized only by women. They would swing the hoes above their heads almost like batons.

For many Lozi, the celebratory mood of worship in the Mass is one of the most essential indications of inculturation they see. The priests remarked that they do not plan these songs and dances; the laity appear to have great agency over their styles of worship. These lively forms of worship are not limited to Lozi Catholics, of course. In examining his inculturation surveys, Laurenti Magesa found that most communities believed that a joyful and active style of worship was a positive sign of inculturation, as it fit better into the ways that Africans celebrate. He says, "Most respondents among all groups of people

interviewed said that the liturgy or worship services should be made livelier. In other words, the singing should be more cheerful and it should be accompanied by musical instruments, clapping and dancing.”¹¹⁶ The Lozi seem to share the same concern, and they have accomplished it to a great extent.

Conclusion

Given the evidence we have looked at, can we say that these communities of Lozi Catholics have experienced both conversion and inculturation? Can we then say that conversion and inculturation are analogous processes, simply describing the same phenomenon on two different levels? In the last chapter, I suggested two criteria to identify conversion in individuals. In applying them to the Lozi Catholic communities, and in showing how they define those communities’ experience with inculturation, I will demonstrate that inculturation is fundamentally a process of conversion on the communal and cultural scale.

The first criterion is a change in self-identity. A convert adopts a new identity and, depending on where they fall on the dis/continuity spectrum, he or she attempts to erase the old one or accepts a dual identity. The Lozi people who attend these churches proudly identify themselves as Catholic. They have created Small Christian Communities named after Roman Catholic saints, they belong to groups such as the Catholic Women’s Organization, and they call themselves Catholic Christians. Obviously there is a range of theological education and knowledge, but they identify themselves as belonging to this particular community. The second criterion is a change in action that signifies this new identity. They attend Mass, participate in the Eucharist, and are baptized. Many women

¹¹⁶ Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation*, 18.

in the community wear dresses and clothes stamped with the “Catholic Women Organization” logo on them. Men generally do not seem to have a similar dress scheme (and this gender disparity could be worth further study in the future). These are typically activities that should normally define an individual or community as being Catholic.

We have established that they are Catholic, and that they have undergone the experience of conversion. How is this connected to inculturation? By showing that they have held on to their cultural identity and integrated it with their religious identity, and by doing it with the same criteria used for the conversion, we demonstrate that inculturation is taking place, and that conversion and inculturation are connected as identity-forming processes. In order to show conversion, we assume they are Lozi and try to show why they should be considered Catholic. In order to show inculturation, we assume they are Catholic and try to show why they should still be considered Lozi.

We can use the first criterion again, only we regard them as “purely” Catholic to see if they can be empirically observed adopting “Lozi” as one of their cultural identities. People in the region do not commonly go around identifying themselves with the two words, “Lozi Catholic,” for much the same reason why people in small towns in the United States do not typically introduce themselves as “American Protestants.” Yet many people of the Western Province, mindful of the Lozi’s history, adopt the term to describe their tribal affiliation. In writing his paper on liberation in the Western Province, Fr. Francis Kabika stresses the importance of “the *Lozi* people...owning the church,” as people with particular and dignified cultural backgrounds.¹¹⁷ Though not loudly, many of these Catholics do self-identify as Lozi.

¹¹⁷ Kabika, “Untitled,” 18.

What of the second criterion? Do these Catholics act in ways that accord with being Lozi? This final chapter has focused on three major ways in which they have brought Lozi traditions into their worship and public, Catholic life. The presence of the Kuomboka in the Mass, the gift-giving ceremonies for bishops and priests, and the active mode of worship point to Lozi values that indicate that these people have adopted the dual identity of being Lozi and Catholic. Changes in both the Mass and the surrounding culture point to this reality.

In conclusion, conversion is a process in which an individual, or even a community, changes his, her, or its identity in some substantial way. This conversion may produce different attitudes about the old identity: should one's past traditions and identity be rendered meaningless and useless? Or should one continue to embrace one's identity as an important piece of oneself? Inculturation is a process in which a community changes its identity, but while necessarily keeping its culture intact and adopting a dual cultural-religious identity. Many of the Lozi Catholic communities in the Western Province of Zambia have achieved this synthesis, and I believe they are part of the justification for why the discourse of inculturation should have more import in the wider theological world. Africans have had to deal with possibly conflicting identities; have Westerners, Europeans and Americans, really dealt with the implications of having dual cultural-religious identities?

We may tell two or more stories about ourselves. Many people in the Western Province do. On one hand, they are the Lozi, a group united by the figure of the Litunga who has led an independent kingdom, now ill-treated by the national government but nevertheless resilient. On the other hand, they are Catholics, disciples of Christ who have

placed themselves under the authority of the Church, headed by the Bishop of Rome whose office represents the Triune God on Earth. According to my accounts of inculturation and conversion that seek continuity, these stories are compatible. They can define the same person without resulting in contradiction. They can define the same community without seeming absurd. The agency of men and women to determine their own identities is at least affirmed, despite once being limited by external forces and internalized ideas of conformity to Western Christianity. Problems still remain, but the discourse of inculturation has cleared away one major obstacle to the ideal of self-sustaining churches.

References

- AFP. "Group in Western Zambia Seeks Independence." *Daily Nation*. 28 Mar. 2012. Online.
- Arbuckle, Gerald. *Culture, Inculturation, & Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.
- The Barotseland Agreement, 1964*. London: H.M.S.O., 1964.
- Bede, the Venerable. *A History of the English Church and People*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1955.
- Bediako, Kwame. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Bediako, Kwame. *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999.
- Caplan, Gerald L. *The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province*. Berkeley: University of California, 1970.
- Cox, James L., and Gerrie ter Haar, eds., *Uniquely African? African Christian Identity from Cultural and Historical Perspectives*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003.
- Damuah, Kwabena. "The Changing Perspective of Wasa Amanfi Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa." Diss. Howard University, 1971. Unpublished.
- Hastings, Adrian. *African Catholicism: Essays in Discovery*. London: SCM Press, 1989.
- Ilesanmi, Simeon O. "Inculturation and Liberation: Christian Social Ethics and the African Theology Project." *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 1995, p. 49-73.
- Inambao, Pamela. Personal interview. Mongu, Zambia. 30 May 2011.
- Isichei, Elizabeth. *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995.
- John Paul II. *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, and All the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1995.
- Kabika, Francis. "Untitled." Seminary paper, 2011. Received in personal correspondence.

- Kalaluka, Likando. *Kuomboka*. Ndola: National Educational Company of Zambia, 1979.
- Lewanika, Kusiyo M. Personal interview. Mongu, Zambia. 9 June 2011.
- Magesa, Laurenti. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.
- Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. <<http://www.oblatesusa.org>>.
- Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. <<http://www.omizambia.org.zm>>.
- Mitchell, Mary. *Bishop T.P. O'Shea OFM Cap: Brief History and Reflection*. 2002.
- Nock, A.D. *Conversion (The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander to Augustine)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.
- On Evangelization in the Modern World: Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi, Dec. 8, 1975*. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1976.
- Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1965.
- Rahner, Karl. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," in *Theological Studies* 40, 1979.
- Shorter, Aylward. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999.
- Turner, V. W. *The Lozi Peoples of North-western Rhodesia*. London: International African Institute, 1952.

Bradley M. Johnson

bradley_email@yahoo.com
(618) 972-2556
2255 Woodlawn Ave.
Granite City, IL 62040

Education

Wake Forest University **2010-2012**
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Master of Arts in Religion
Thesis: "Identity, Catholicism, and Lozi Culture in Zambia's Western Province"
Current GPA: 3.93/4.00

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign **2006-2010**
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
James Scholar (Honors), Deans List
Majors, Philosophy and Religion (concentration in Christianity)
Minor, History
Cumulative GPA: 3.92/4.00
Magna Cum Laude

Granite City High School – Granite City, IL **2002-2006**
GPA: 5.6 on a 5.0 scale
Summa Cum Laude

Awards

Hoffman Family Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Study of Religion 2010
Lois Shepherd Green Scholarship 2010

Grants

WFU Religion Department Willis Fund (for research in Zambia), \$1000 2011

Memberships

Intervarsity Christian Fellowship – Large Group Coordinator 2011
Phi Beta Kappa 2009
Brothers and Sisters in Christ – Outreach Leader 2009

Employment

Global Studies Intern –University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign August 2009 – December 2009

- Facilitated classroom sessions of LAS 120 for Honors Freshmen
- Led classroom discussion and lessons on issues of global citizenship and local interest
- Graded homework and communicated with students about assignments and projects

Community Service

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship –Large Group Coordinator Academic Year 2011-2012

- Worked with staff in developing message themes and topics for each semester
- Organized and led a team that ran weekly group meetings for the ministry (attendance around 50 people)
- Served on primary leadership team, which cast vision for, directed, and made decisions for the entire ministry

El Buen Pastor Tutor –Winston-Salem, NC August 2010-May 2011

- Mentored and taught reading, math, and science skills to Hispanic elementary school students at a church-based afterschool program

Brothers and Sisters in Christ –Outreach Leader Academic Year 2009-2010

- Organized and hosted social events involving members and guests in public and private venues
- Developed recruitment strategies for the organization
- Worked with campus facilities and handled technical details involved with events

World Changers Crew Assistant/Crew Chief July 2009

- Washed, painted, and performed general repair and maintenance on houses and churches as part of a volunteer construction crew in New Jersey
- As Crew Assistant, helped Crew Chief in carrying out instructions, assigning duties, and ensuring the overall quality of work
- As Crew Chief, delegated work and led crew by example

Intensive English Institute Partner –Urbana, IL August 2008-May 2010

- Mentored international students from widely divergent backgrounds in English and American culture
- Hosted monthly “coffee hours” in which international and domestic students could converse and learn from each other in a comfortable environment

Mission Trip in Chicago

January 2009

- Mentored and assisted in teaching disadvantaged children at Sexton Elementary School in South Chicago
- Served dinner to homeless at various soup kitchens in Chicago

Hospital Volunteer –Granite City, IL

June 2000-August 2007

- Worked in the Health Information Services Department of Gateway Regional Medical Center since the age of 12
- Shredded, copied, stocked paper, filed, delivered documents, and other miscellaneous office tasks

Travel Abroad**Zambia**

Independent Research Trip

Summer 2011

- Located contacts in Zambia and independently planned an agenda for thesis research
- Developed an itinerary for travel, research, and living arrangements in Zambia in conjunction with Zambian priests
- Traveled alone to Zambia with financial support from the Wake Forest Religion Department
- Spent a month and a half in Lusaka and the Western Province, conducting observations of Catholic masses, surveys, interviews, and library research

Paris, France –HIST 396, History of France

Summer 2008

LAS Summer Course Abroad

- Completed a survey course on French history taught by University of Illinois professor John Lynn
- Traveled extensively around Paris, northern and eastern France, and independently to Geneva

Havana, Cuba

Summer 2007

Mission Trip –Church Sponsored

- Interacted with students on the campus of the University of Havana
- Visited and supported small churches

- around Havana
- Practiced conversational Spanish

Presentations

3rd Annual Religious Studies Student Symposium, University of Illinois at UC, 2010
“Hal Lindsey and *Left Behind*: Understanding Bible Prophecy in America.”

Foreign Language

Language

Spanish, 8 semesters

German, 6 semesters

Institution

Granite City High School

Granite City High School, University of Illinois