The Dynamics and Contradictions of an Evangelisation in Africa
The Dynamics and Contradictions of Evangelisation in Africa

An Essay on the Kom Christian Experience

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To my dear beloved mother, Nawain Veronica Mai
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Generally, missionary enterprise is rightly or wrongly associated with the colonial era, which ended in Cameroon as in most African countries in the 1960s. In fact, the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) declared independence from the Cameroon Baptist Mission (CBM) in 1954, while the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), in the same manner secured autonomy from the Basel Mission (BM) in 1957. The Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) on the other hand, changed hands following the Episcopal ordination of Local Ordinaries in the Bamenda and Buea dioceses in 1970 and 1971 transforming itself from the RCM to the ‘Catholic Church’ (CC).

In a way, therefore, it could logically be argued that these excision processes concluded the missionary era in West Cameroon by 1972. Indeed, in terms of authority, structures, and conspicuous missionary presence in the field, this could be true, but missionary legacy is profound, complex, fascinating and has continued to engage much more than just academic interest and fantasy. This is because the contributions made and the challenges raised by missionary activity in Cameroon in particular, Africa and elsewhere, physically, psychologically and spiritually were enormous, dynamic and penetrating. Missionary impact is therefore an indelible part of our history.

Early accounts on the work of these intrepid ‘warriors for Christ’ were documented by a few of the missionary writers themselves but the task has since fallen into the hands of products of that enterprise themselves. There has been an influx of publications tackling that experience from various perspectives by beneficiaries or receivers, who proclaim missionary history from their own lived experience.

Brother Peter Awoh’s work can best be appreciated in this context. He tackles the subject using a broadly, engaging and an all-encompassing approach; combining historical, theological, philosophical, liturgical and socio-cultural concepts of the missionary enterprise in Kom. In short, the Kom (African) mind is placed within the wider framework of Church History. He raises serious concerns about the motivation and sustenance of missionary
interests and how profoundly these have been received and grounded in the Kom (African) Christian culture, and proceeds to make suggestions for meaningful inculturation. This work would certainly interest various formation houses and religious institutes, where it could generate further meaningful discussion and debate on missiology.

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