

The African Synod in Rome, 1994: Consequences for Catholicism

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I will begin by taking some time to put the Synod, its preparation and what followed into context before moving to specific discussion of its elements.

The first point of orientation is to note that although there is a central event here, that event was part of a process which is yet to be concluded. The purpose of gathering many African bishops together was to advise on the agenda of the Catholic Church's evangelising mission in Africa in the next Millennium. Just as we are still seeing the consequences of the Second Vatican Council develop thirty-five years after the event, so the consequences of the African Synod, itself a consequence of the Council, are still unfolding. There was a flurry of publications leading up to the Synod, around the synod and immediately afterwards. What concerns us this afternoon is not simply to analyse what happened in April- May 1994 but what is happening into the third Christian Millennium and what will happen in that future.

A first obvious immediate series of consequences is that the pattern adopted for Africa has been extended for other regions. The Americas, Asia, Oceania and Europe have been or are going through parallel procedures. Each region is being consulted to take stock and consider where the Church's mission in their region is proceeding into the next Millennium. The equivalent Synod for Europe will be this coming October.

A direct fruit of the African Synod was the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, which was the major document produced by the Pope in 1995 in response to the Synod and which took on board (or in some instances downplayed) the discussions which fed into the Synod and which occurred at the Synod. Other consequences are less direct but perhaps more interesting. Not least, the Ecclesiology which develops from the Synod both in terms of the relationship between the Roman centre of the Church and the African

local Churches and the specific presentation of the Church-as-family as an inculturated ecclesiology.

Although inculturation was an element in the African Synod, in many ways the entirety of the synod was an essay in inculturation within the control of the Church. Note the two vectors there: inculturation, certainly, but also within the control of the Church. Just before the Synod an instruction on Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy was issued to greet the African Bishops as they arrived in Rome; perhaps as a warning shot across the bows to discourage them from going too far. This used a definition of inculturation (borrowed from *Redemptoris Missio*) as:

"an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures." [1]

Such a double focus, integrating culture into Christianity and implanting Christianity into culture is very much the purpose and pattern of the work of the Synod and will be used again as a description of inculturation within the Synodal and Post-Synodal documents. However, it must also be noted that this implies a dynamic tension between integrity and context, between those things which authenticate the universality of the Church in unity of faith and those things which address the particularity of cultures and situations. The processes of the African Synod left many with a strong impression that the integrity of the Catholic Church, as represented by the centralising of the Roman Magisterium may have greater weight than the context, represented here by African culture and the African social, economic, political and historical context. This can be overstated -- this was not ruthless ultramontanism, there was in this process a genuine interaction -- but there was much concern about how much scope for action Africans were really given.

The Process

The Catholic Church in Africa has grown increasingly confident of itself and its ability to be responsible for itself. One expression of this has been the calls for an African Council – something to do for Africa what the second Vatican Council did for the whole Catholic Church. Since the mid 1970s there have been public calls for the African Church to establish a Council on African Soil to deliberate on, make decisions for and legislate for the African Church. Indeed in his visits to Africa John Paul II had hinted that this was a possibility.

However, this is not what we got in the African Synod. Publicly the explanation has been that there was no majority among the African Bishops in favour of such a Council.[2] The decision for a Synod rather than a council was counted by some a slight. However it was also noted among theologians

that there is no Canonical Structure to enable such a council to happen.[3] There has been no move to revise the Canons to make such a council possible.

Instead, to considerable surprise and quite a lot of excitement, the Pope announced in January 1989 that there would be a Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. There being Canonical form for such a body.[4] It is primarily a consultative body, called by the Pope to assist and advise him.

Canon 343 The function of the synod of Bishops is to discuss the matters proposed to it and set forth recommendations. It is not its function to settle matters or draw up decrees, unless the Roman Pontiff has given it deliberative power in certain cases; in this event, it rests with the Roman Pontiff to ratify the decisions of the synod.

The African Synod was being asked to discuss the theme of *Evangelisation in the African Context*. Canonically this was at Papal request. However, it should be noted that this was in fact the Pope acting under advice. In particular under the advice of a group of some 10 senior African Bishops and 2 senior members of the Roman Curia who met in the pontifical apartments at the end of 1988. This group formed an Ante-Preparatory Commission. To prepare for the Synod a Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops was established. To the Ante-Preparatory Commission were added a further 8 African and Madagascan Bishops and another dicastery head. (Making 18 African Bishops + 3 from Roman Curia.) This council was fundamentally responsible for the preparation of the Synod. It worked on preparing the *Lineamenta*, the outline document. While the *eminence grise* of the Curia was indeed present, it must be noted that there was a solid majority of Africans in these discussion, all be they African bishops noted for their loyalty to the Holy See. The *Lineamenta* was publicly released on African soil (at Lomé, Togo) in July 1990 in English, French and Portuguese – the official languages of the Episcopal Conferences in Africa. The text or parts of it were subsequently translated into many other languages. The *Lineamenta* began with a brief survey of the history of the Catholic Church in Africa, from the early centuries until the present day. It then considered the meaning and necessity of Evangelisation. However, the most important parts were the five chapters on the tasks of evangelisation.

The missionary tasks of the Church were considered under five themes:

- Proclamation of the Good News
- Inculturation
- Dialogue
- Justice and Peace
- The Means of Social Communication.

These themes formed the framework for all the subsequent work preparing for the Synod, for the Synod itself and for the post-synodal documents.

Attached to the *Lineamenta* were 81 questions. I have to say that whilst these may be the questions that Bishops ask, I do not think they were the questions foremost in the minds of most African Catholics. Several are statistical, most are in the obscure theological language of official documents. Consider some examples:

Qn 15 Do you consider inculturation as urgent and necessary, *hic et nunc*, for the Church in Africa?

Qn 23 To what extent have the modern means of transport and social communications affected closer interactions between adherents of different religions in your area? How has this affected the Church's mission of evangelisation?

Qn 27 According to Vatican II, what are the objectives and importance of ecumenical dialogue with non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities?

I have to say I'm tempted to give some of these as awkward essay titles for my students.

Nonetheless these questions were sent out to the Episcopal Conferences of Africa. Certain dioceses did consult widely before responding. There were examples of parish discussions, listening exercises and information giving groups. Thus Sr Maria Rita Matika IHS declares:

"Musoma, where the Immaculate Heart Sister's Center is located, is a typical rural town of nearly one million people on the shores of Lake Victoria in northeastern Tanzania. Like many rural towns in Africa, it has no television and newspapers seldom reach us. Yet, I would wager that every one of Musomas's 300,000 Catholics knows about the African Synod and has discussed the major themes at parish meetings."[5]

This may not be typical but neither is it uncommon. The *Lineamenta* and attached questions did stimulate discussion and debate, and considerable publication of responses.

There was a high response rate (over 90%) to the *Lineamenta*. These responses shaped the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the working document of the

Synod. The preparatory council brought in 5 African experts to assist them in preparing this text and the final text was prepared by one bishop from each of the three official language groups of SECAM and two African theologians. The *Instrumentum Laboris* was published February 1993 and the meeting of the Synod itself announced to begin on April 10 the next year in Rome. In fact the latter announcement generated more heat than the document. There were several critical voices raised who felt that the African Synod should be in Africa, possibly by having a series of sessions in different locations. However, Rome was chosen, and this was presented as the choice of the majority of African bishops, even if probably not the choice of the majority of Africans. The Synod itself met from 10 April to 8 May 1994. The liturgical celebrations during the synod utilised all the liturgical rites approved for use by Catholics in Africa: the Roman Rite, the Ethiopian Rite, the Egyptian Rite and the adaptations of the Roman Rite approved for use in what was then Zaïre. These are interesting in so far as the middle two represent models of the Church organically inculturated (before it has to be said their formal incorporation into the Catholic Church), whose Rite, theology etc. has grown from within the culture, what we might call "bottom-up". The Zairean Liturgy is a creation of liturgists approved in long, protracted and eventually successful negotiation with the Roman Curia and although it strives, and largely succeeds in being authentically African, still has something of a "top-down" flavour. Nonetheless this last deserves recognition as so far the only inculturated liturgy in Africa to use the system and become officially sanctioned.[6]

The Synod began with two interventions from the Roman Curia. From Cardinal Arinze who gave a brief opening address and from Archbishop Schotte, the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops who gave a long speech on the preparations for the Synod. What we might call the Synod proper began with the *Relatio ante disceptationem*. [7] This was a significant and long speech which orientated the Synod and raised several issues. This was followed by the opportunity for each Synod Member to make an intervention. Each bishop was limited to but 8 minutes, yet that still meant that these interventions lasted some weeks. There were a few special addresses to the Synod, and also a number of "fringe events" where less formal, and

less limited, discussion took place. The interventions of the Bishops were summarised in the *Relatio post disceptationem*. Subsequent to this the Synod broke into smaller discussion groups based on language, the *Circuli minores*. Some Bishops pointedly hoped that at these smaller groups the voices of the lay women and lay men present as observers would be heard.

The immediate fruit of all these discussions were two-fold. One was a series of proposals to the Pope, the *Propositiones*. The other fruit was a public statement "The Message of the Synod" addressed to the Church in Africa, but effectively an open letter to any who were interested.

Key issues

So much for the process. What was being discussed? Many issues were raised. There was substantial discussion of issues of Justice and Peace. While the Synod was sitting news of the genocide in Rwanda began to filter out and the Synod responded immediately to this.[8] The poverty and underdevelopment of Africa, debt and war were all addressed. It is a fair summation of the discussion in this vital field that the Post-Synodal exhortation declares:

"[People] are demanding even more insistently the recognition and promotion of human rights and freedoms. In this regard I note with satisfaction that the church in Africa, faithful to its vocation, stands resolutely on the side of the oppressed and of voiceless and marginalized peoples. I strongly encourage it to continue to bear this witness. The preferential option for the poor is 'a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the church bears witness.... The motivating concern for the poor-who are in the very meaning of the term 'the Lord's poor'-must be translated at all levels into concrete actions until it decisively attains a series of necessary reforms."[9]

One could expand this with further quotations about specific issues, but I think for us it is worth noting the remarkable harmony between the Church's Social teaching expounded by the Magisterium and the commitment of the local Churches.

One image which many have taken up from the Synod has been an interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Thus again from *Ecclesia in Africa*:

"For many synod fathers contemporary Africa can be compared to the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; he fell among robbers, who stripped him, beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. (Cf Lk 10:30-37). Africa is a continent where countless human beings – men and women, children and young people – are lying, as it were on

the edge of the road, sick, injured, disabled, marginalized and abandoned. They are in dire need of good Samaritans who will come to their aid.

For my part, I express the hope that the church will continue patiently and tirelessly its work as a good Samaritan. Indeed, for a long period certain regimes, which have now come to an end, were a great trial for Africans and weakened their ability to respond to situations; An injured person has to rediscover all the resources of his own humanity. The sons and daughters of Africa need an understanding presence and pastoral concern. They need to be helped to recoup their energies so as to put them at the service of the common good."[10]

Authentic inculturation cannot ignore the political, economic and social contexts. There is a danger of inculturation imprisoning cultures in some form of museum. Cultures are constantly transforming and much of the engine of transformation comes from the political, economic and social forces which impinge upon people. A key phrase in recent Catholic missiology is "integral human development"[11]: that is to say the development of the whole person and whole communities in their many and several dimensions. These dimensions include the political, the spiritual, the economic and much else beside. As one of the *propositiones* put it:

"Inculturation is a movement toward full evangelization. It seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, cultural, economic and political levels so that they can live a holy life in total union with God the Father, through the action of the Holy Spirit."[12]

The Family: Church-as-family.

The Family rose as a key issue. As discourse the image of the family functioned at practical, rhetorical and theological levels. Not only was the African family applauded but also fears were expressed for its future. Christian marriage was affirmed and a debate happened over the status of customary marriages in Africa. Issues of marriage and reproduction were raised, not least with a view to the imminent UN Cairo conference on population and development. There were several interventions on the role of women and more in the discussions which happened parallel to the synod. Perhaps most significantly the ecclesiological phrase "Church-as-family" became effectively the slogan of the Synod.

The pastoral difficulty of those in non-canonical marriages presented real problems for many of the Bishops. In the *Relatio ante disceptationem* Cardinal Thiandoum (Archbishop of Dakar, Senegal) raised the issues in these terms:

"Marriage and family need to be looked at more closely, in order to recover and promote the precious values of the traditional African family. This could be a great contribution to finding an effective response to the crisis of the family in many modern societies. We need greater appreciation for our various customary laws of marriage and serious effort to harmonize them with Church laws on marriage." [13]

This concern was expressed more pointedly and forcefully by Bp Raphael Nzeki from Kenya.

"Many of our Christian faithful have finalized their marriage according to the African customs of their own tribe but for different reasons ... they have not yet come to the Church for sacramental marriage ... In the meantime they are considered by the Church to be living in concubinage because their traditional marriage has no canonical value. The consequence is that they are deprived of the reception of the sacraments, which, in the expression of some of our priests leads to a "Eucharistic famine" of many Catholics in our parishes."

He continues to make a number of possible lines of inquiry to rectify this situation, the core of which is that the Church should adapt Canon Law to African culture. [14] A suggestion not taken up with enthusiasm. [15]

These issues, although prominent in the Synod's discussions, hardly feature at all in *Ecclesia in Africa*. [16] Debate on the issue is not actually squashed, but the Post-Synodal document does go a long way to affirm the classic vision of Christian Sacramental marriage independent of reference to the cultural context of Africa.

The phrase which has resonated since the Synod has been Church-as-family. The actual content of what this means is ambiguous, but its use has become widespread. This is presented as an inculturated ecclesiology with special power in Africa: I suspect it would be better to think of it as the *precursor* to an inculturated ecclesiology. The strong African experience of family is held to provide a model for the Church.

63. Not only did the synod speak of inculturation, but it also made use of it, taking the church as God's family as its guiding idea for the evangelization of Africa. The synod fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the church's nature particularly appropriate for Africa. For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust ... "It is earnestly to be hoped that theologians in Africa will work out the theology of the church as family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the church." [17]

It has to be admitted that exactly what this means is unclear: the theology of it does indeed need working out.

English and Portuguese speaking Episcopal Conferences seem to use it as a warm, if fuzzy image best paralleled with Motherhood and Apple Pie. Perhaps the theologians will yet work on it to produce a more inculturated and more focussed ecclesiology. An example worth considering is that of Elochuwu E. Uzukwu (from Nigeria). In *A Listening Church: autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, he does develop ideas from Vatican II ecclesiology in the light of the African Synod, in particular he strongly locates the Church in terms of solidarity, a belonging together, drawing on an African concept of the human person. One particular outworking of this which he promotes being the Small Christian Communities. A further line of work which strikes me as interesting is that being pursued in part by Charles Nyamati, Bénézet Bujo and others, which utilise understandings of the place of ancestors in African cultures to reform Christian concepts. There is some mention of righteous ancestors in the Zairean Liturgy and this could yet be developed into a fruitful insight into an inculturated ecclesiology of the Church-as-family.

In francophone Africa the phrase *L'Église-famille* has had a stronger and more particular reference to Small Christian Communities SCCs. There are several layers of inter-penetrating language which mutually inform each other, and overlap, even if the realities are not co-terminous. Basic ecclesial communities (the favoured phrase from Latin America) living ecclesial communities, basic Christian communities, basic family community.[18]

Voices from Sierra Leone through Burundi to Kenya identified SCCs as the basis of Evangelisation.[19] The Message of the Synod made several uses of the Church of family including specific connection with Small Christian Communities.

"28. The Church, the family of God, implies the creation of small communities at the human level, living or basic ecclesial communities. In such communities, which are cells of the Church as Family, one is formed to live concretely and authentically the experience of fraternity. In them the spirit of disinterested service, solidarity and a common goal reigns. Each is moved to construct the Family of God, a family entirely open to the world from which absolutely nobody is excluded. It is such communities that will provide the best means to fight against ethnocentrism within the Church itself and, more widely, within our

nations. These individual Churches-as-Family have the task of working to transform society." [20]

However, again I must report, with considerable regret, that such discussions have relatively little profile in *Ecclesia in Africa*. Certainly the idea of Basic Ecclesial Communities as the foundational unit of ecclesiology in the Church-as-Family is not promoted. Although there is one paragraph which mentions them as it re-forms the paragraph quoted earlier:

89. Right from the beginning, the synod fathers recognized that the church as family cannot reach her full potential as church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. The assembly described the characteristics of such communities as follows: Primarily they should be places engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the good news to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.

Ecclesia in Africa acknowledges SCCs but dilutes somewhat the Message of the Synod." [21] It does not present the SCCs as a "new way of being Church" or give them a prominent place in discussions.

I think it worthwhile here to note that a linguistic difference which may be significant. In Latin America the key adjective is *Basic*, in Africa, it is *Small*. There is a sense that the power of the Latin American model is that these provide a "bottom-up" model of the Church. In Africa these communities often seem "top-down", the result of the enthusiasm of some Bishops. If the Church-as-Family is to be an inculturated African ecclesiology then the "bottom-up" orientation must be followed. [22]

To talk about families necessarily includes the community of women and men. Please note that I am not suggesting that women are only to be considered in terms of families, but this seemed as convenient a way as any to bring in this area of debate into our discussion. Indeed there was significant debate around the Synod about the identity and role of the religious sister in Africa, a vision of women's independent activity which has the potential to be a challenge to some constructions of women's identity in Africa.

There is a paragraph in *Ecclesia in Africa* that mentions women particularly.

121. One of the characteristic signs of our times is the growing awareness of women's dignity and of their specific role in the church and in society at large. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn. 1:27).

I have repeatedly affirmed the fundamental equality and enriching complementarity that exist between man and woman. The synod applied these principles to the condition of women in Africa. Their rights and duties in building up the family and in taking full part in the development of the church and society were strongly affirmed. With specific regard to the church, women should be properly trained so that they can participate at appropriate levels in her apostolic activity.

The church deplores and condemns, to the extent that they are still found in some African societies, all "the customs and practices which deprive women of their rights and the respect due to them." It is recommended that episcopal conferences establish special commissions to study further women's problems, in cooperation with interested government agencies wherever this is possible."

I'm slightly concerned that by quoting this at length I am giving a false impression. Not that what is said here is contradicted elsewhere, nor that what is here is not meant sincerely and can be seen as a challenge to the Church and Society in Africa. Rather that this is ALL the document says on this subject. One paragraph on the dignity of women compared to seven on the means of social communication. In a response to the *Instrumentum Laboris* Renato Kizito Sesana reported the question of a non-Catholic colleague "Where in this document is the awakening giant that is the African woman?"[23] The answer from the Post-Synodal Exhortation would appear to be touched upon but largely ignored. Yet there were several interventions at the synod itself which would indicate a greater concern amongst the African Bishops.[24] Indeed the Message of the Synod had some five paragraphs (rather short ones) on the specific subject of women. In the discussions surrounding the synod, however, women's voices were prominent, not least Sr Teresa Okure SHCJ, who spoke to this seminar recently.[25]

Conclusions

There are several other issues which could, and perhaps should be discussed not least the various strands of dialogue both ecumenical and with Islam and African Traditional Religions, but I hope this has given you a flavour of the processes and issues on the table. We are left with the question: "What are the consequences of the African Synod?" I suggest that the most important consequence has been an affirmation of the African Church as a mature, responsible and important part of the Catholic Church. This is not something to be simply traced in texts and documents. It is a feeling of empowerment. That said, it must also be owned that the feeling of empowerment itself generated a feeling of disappointment amongst some that things did not go further. However, such proper and genuine questioning of the scope of the Synod should not overlook its achievements. There was publicly celebrated the vitality and importance of the African Church and the need for the African Church to be rooted in its contexts.

Various doors of possibility have been opened up for the Church in Africa since Vatican II. The African Synod continued that process. Maybe there were some attempts to prevent such doors of possibility being opened too wide, but this should not distract from the reality that even if they are only open by a crack, they are open. It is now up to African Catholics to take the opportunities afforded to them. The Synod has strongly encouraged the Church in Africa to be on the side of the poor and to intervene in promoting justice, peace and integral human development. The Synod has encouraged inculturation, including the inculturation of the liturgy. The Synod has encouraged debate on the meaning of Church-as-family. In these, and other areas, the African Church should seize the moment. The ball is now in the court of the people of Africa: theologians and others may help, but the lasting consequences of the Synod now must take place amongst the people, and perhaps particularly amongst the Small Christian Communities. The true consequence of the Synod will be with what Africa Catholics develop from this agenda.

Notes

**Dr Philip Knights lectures at The Missionary Institute London. This paper was first presented at the Henry Martyn Seminar on 20 May 1999*

1. Instruction: Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy *Fourth Instruction for the right application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy* Issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on March 29, 1994.
2. Cf Archbishop Schotte's address to the Synod April 11th, *L'Osservatore Romano* (Weekly English edition 16-20 April 1994) p5.

3. See Mveng in *AFJN* p 27f. The 1983 Code of Canon Law does establish structures and procedures for many possible councils: for a general council of the whole Church, such as Vatican II; for a Pastoral Council for a particular Church, such as a diocese, even for a plenary council for an Episcopal Conference. However, there is no structure for a Council for the 34 Episcopal Conferences in Africa, Madagascar and the associated Islands. There's nothing wrong with the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) meeting and they have produced several powerful statements growing out of their discussions. But that Symposium is not a legislative, decision making Council; it is not part of the Canonical structures of the Church. To be sure the Code of Canon Law could be changed – there have been amendments since 1983, but it wasn't.
4. Can 342-348, esp Can 345.
5. *AFJN* (Brown) vii
6. See Nwaka Chris Egbulem *The Power of Africentric Celebrations: Inspirations form the Zairean Liturgy* Crossroad, New York 1996. Other inculturated liturgies may be approved soon.
7. presented by Cardinal Thiandoum of Senegal
8. When the SECAM Bishops addressed the horrific situation of war, violence and massacre in the Great Lakes region they chose to use this imagery as a conscious application of the Synodal discussions: "23. We take this opportunity to appeal to Catholics all over Africa, and all other well-meaning Africans and non-Africans to conform their lives with the imperatives of the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us all remember that in Jesus Christ we have become children of a family which embraces everybody, slave as well as freeman, African and non-African, friend as well as enemy. The weapon he has given us to fight evil, to which there can be no defence, is Love. And that Love is invincible." Archbishop Gabriel Gonsum Ganaka of Jos, Nigeria, President of SECAM, Message of the SECAM Bishops to the Churches of the Greta lakes Region and the Rest of Africa and Madagascar, found at [SEDOS](#)
9. *Ecclesia in Africa* 44
10. *Ecclesia in Africa* 41
11. Cf *Ecclesia in Africa* 45
12. *Ecclesia in Africa* 62
13. *Relatio ante disceptationem* , *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 20 April 1994 p 10.
14. Bp Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki from Nakuru, Kenya *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p10f.
15. Archbishop Vincenzo Fagiolo, President of the Pontifical Council of Legislative Texts, encouraged the Synod Bishops to use the the present Code of Canon Law and supported the setting up of faculties of Canon Law in Africa. *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* N.18 4 May 1994 p 14.
16. Passing references to this debate may be alluded to in *Ecclesia in Africa* 50 and 64.
17. *Ecclesia in Africa* 63
18. Cf The interventions of Bp Ansleme Titianma Sanon from Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 27 April 1994 p14, Bp Bernard Bududira from Bururi, Burundi *L'Osservatore Romano*

- (*English Weekly edition*) 4 May 1994 p7 Bp Jean-Baptiste Somé from Diébougou, Burkina Faso *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p 7.
19. Abp Joseph Henry Ganda from Freetown and Bo, Sierra Leone *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p 10, Bp Cornelius Kipng'eno Arap Korir from Eldoret, Kenya *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p16
 20. Message of the African Synod *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 11 May 1994 p 7
 21. *Ecclesia in Africa* 89
 22. See Azevdo "Basic Ecclesial Communities" in Ellacuría and Sobrino *Mysterium Liberationis* 636-653, Boff *Ecclesiogenesis*, Marins, Trevisan and Chanona *The Church from the Roots*, Healey *A Fifth Gospel* esp Ch 4 98-153, Healey "Basic Christian Communities in Africa and Latin America *AFER* 26 (1984) 222-232, Healey "An analysis of References to Small Christian Communities in the *Instrumentum Laboris (Working Paper)* of the 1994 African Synod" *AFER* 35 (1993) 192-195 and Healey, Musimba, Nzeki, Shorter and Waliggo "Our Five year Journey of SCCs From Dec 1991 to Oct 1996: the Evolving Sociology of Church As Family In East Africa" *AFER* 39 (1997) 287-311. See also O'Halloran *Small Christian Communities*.
 23. Fr Renato Kizito Sesana MCCJ "An African Synod in Rome (Open Letter to Pope John Paul II)" *SEDOS Bulletin* 1993 p99 and in *AF&JN* p66
 24. E.g. Bp John Njue from Embu, Kenya *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p 11f. Bp Youssef Ibrahim Sarraf, Cairo for Chaldeans Egypt *L'Osservatore Romano (English Weekly edition)* 4 May 1994 p 13
 25. E.g. Teresa Okure SHCJ "The Role of Women in the African Church" *SEDOS Bulletin* 1993 167-172. See also in the *SEDOS Symposium* Von Holzen and Fagan (eds) 1994 Dr Judith Mbula Bahemuka "Status and role of women in African societies: suffering and hope" 34-40 , Marie Baernadette Mbuy Beya "La femme dans l'Église: possibilités d'une présence et promesses" 41-61, See also the contributions to the same Symposium from Patricia McMenamin OLA and Celine Namalmba HBVM in *SEDOS Bulletin* May 1994 97-99

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Appendix

The African Synod

Jan 1989 Announcement and Calling of Synod by Pope

July 1990 *Lineamenta* - outline document Questions for discussion attached to *Lineamenta*
 Responses

Feb 1993 *Instrumentum Laboris* - Working document

April-May Synod

1994 *Relatio ante disceptationem* - opening statement
 Interventions from Synod Members (8 minutes per Bishop)
Relatio post disceptationem - summary of interventions
Circuli minores - discussion in groups arranged according to language
Propositiones - Proposals to Pontiff
 Message of the Synod - Open statement to Church and World.

Sept 1995 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*

Membership of the synod

Ex Officio
 All African Cardinals
 Patriarch of Alexandria
 All heads of Roman dicasteries
 General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops
 Presidents of national and international Episcopal Conferences

Presidents of regional Associations of Episcopal Conferences in Africa
(77)

By Papal Appointment

3 Cardinals

20 Bishops

1 Prelate

4 diocesan priests

7 religious priests

(37)

By Election

1 for every 4 African Bishops

At least 1 Bishop for every nation

Members of the Catholic Hierarchy of Egypt

8 Members from Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

(2 Superiors General + 6 Major Superiors from Africa)

(130)

Auditors and Auditrices

5 diocesan priests, 3 religious priests, 5 brothers, 12 sisters

13 lay men, 8 lay women

(46)

Experts

(20)

Fraternal Delegates from Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Ethiopian

Orthodox, Anglican Communion, Lutheran World Federation and All-Africa

Conference of Churches. (7)

(7)

Major Themes of Post-Synodal Exhortation

(Paragraph Numbers *Ecclesia in Africa*)

- Maturity of African Church: from Mission Church to Missionary Church 2-6, 8, 9-11, 30-39
- Inculturation 19, 48, 55-62, 64, 78, 87, 127
- Justice and Peace: War, displaced persons and debt, integral development 40, 44-45, 51, 68-70, 105-114, 117-120, 138-139
- Church-as-family 63, 85, 89; Family 43, 50, 80-85, 92

- Dialogue (Ecumenical, Inter-faith) 65-67, 79, 137
- Means of Social Communication 52, 71, 122-126
- Formation and Christian training (Clergy, religious and laity) 53-54, 75-77, 88-98, 99-104, 129-137
- AIDS 116
- Youth 115
- Women 120