The term empire derives from the Latin *imperium*. It refers to power or/and authority. It denotes territorial authority over extensive lands such as in the case of the Spanish Empire (16th c.), the British Empire, or the Holy Roman Empire (8th c.–19th c.). Ecclesiastically, it can also be seen as the ability of missionary societies from Europe to spread their western civilization and Christianity over vast regions of Africa thereby creating their spheres of influence. In this article, the birth of Anglican Christianity is traced from 1844 when the first European missionary, the Rev. Dr. Ludwig Krapf, from the Church Missionary Society of Britain, arrived at the East African coast and inaugurated the Christian empire in the region under difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, by 1884 the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa had been formed and by 1930, the missionaries had managed to reach the remotest parts of eastern Africa. By 1970, an Anglican province had been born in Kenya under Festo Olang as the first African Archbishop. The missionaries worked to strengthen their new empire, which was born under pain, using their three-fold ministerial approach: they established schools, hospitals and, converted people to Christianity – including the introduction to western civilisation across the region. By 2010 the area had 31 Anglican dioceses, the empire was considered complete as it was now able to influence the social dynamics of the populace in the area.

**Key words:** Faith and ethnicity, history of East Africa, Christian empire, birth of Christianity, Anglican Church in Kenya.

**INTRODUCTION**

While the phrase “Christianity in Africa” does not necessarily mean “African Christianity,” it is critical to appreciate that birth of the Christian Empire within the then British East Africa Protectorate (1895-1920) underwent various stages till it matured. Certainly, Kenya which was then called British East Africa became a British Protectorate from 1895 to 1919. In 1920, it became a British colony till 1963 when it got independence. As we reflect on the re-birth of the church in the 19th and 20th centuries in Eastern Africa, we need to appreciate that the early Church fathers and the Apologists before the fourth century were the first group to introduce Christianity in Africa. To this end, Zablon Nthamburi, the Church historian, recalls the tradition which has it that St. Mark established the church in Egypt in 42 CE [1 p49]. In the first five centuries CE, North Africa was the home of Christianity. It is noted however that the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE changed the whole image as Islam from North Africa overrun Christianity.

In general, nineteenth and twentieth-century missionaries to Africa brought the Christian gospel in Western attire. Consequently, African theologians have grappled with this issue since the early 1960s. It is not an overstatement to observe that these missionaries “exercised exclusive authority on matters of faith. The foreign missionaries alone had the full access to the word of God, and their interpretation was final” [2 p153]. However, this trend underwent a paradigm shift when the Bible was translated into the indigenous languages of the various African communities. Consequently, a yardstick of reference emerged which was outside of missionary control. By loosening the missionary interpretive control of the Bible, some African Christians adopted a new hermeneutical technique to exegate the biblical texts within their notion of authenticity [3 p26].
Christianity began to address contemporary issues such as racism, oppression, colonialism among others. This gave Christianity credibility as Africans could see a ‘concerned God’ who cared. Today, Christianity is concerned about neo-colonialism, the advent of a free post-colonial African worldview, afro-pessimism and defeatism. It is concerned about a just society where millennium development goals (MDG) can be realistically considered and achieved. It is concerned about the birth of a new society where all are equal regardless of the colour, background, parentage, status, gender or other prejudices.

**Krapf Sets Pace from 1844 Onwards**

The Anglican Christianity began in Eastern Africa in 1844 with the arrival of the first worker of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Rev. Dr. Ludwig Krapf, at Mombasa port. In 1846, he was joined by Rev. John Rebmann, and later by Rev. J. J. Erhardt Krapf like Rebmann, was a German Lutheran priest who had chosen to work with the evangelical Anglicans, the CMS. In these expansionist development trends, Ludwig Krapf prayed for the realization of a vibrant African Christian church. On one occasion, he wrote:

> My Spirit often urged me to look upon the high mountains around me, to weep and pray that the Redeemer’s Kingdom might soon be established in these heights, and that His songs might be heard in these lofty hills, and in full reliance on the promises of God, I took possession of the pagan land for the militant Church of Christ” [4 p1]. In his missionary exploratory journeys where he saw Mount Kenya and became the first European to see it; he wrote:

> It happened that on leaving Kitui on December 3, 1849, I could see the “Kegnia” (Kenya) most distinctly, and observed two large horns or pillars, as it were, rising over an enormous mountain to the North-West of Kilimanjaro, covered with a white substance (referring to snow)” [4].

Shortly after his arrival in May 1844, Dr J. L. Krapf, who had already lost his wife on 10th July 1844 and her little baby girl a few days later, wrote to the CMS in London:

> Tell our friends at home that there is now on the East African coast a lonely missionary grave. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle in this part of the world; and as the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be the more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its Eastern shore [4 p3].

Without his beloved wife, Krapf laboured on alone in the hot humid of East African coast for the next two years when Rebmann joined him. It is during his lonely moments that Krapf got three ideas that began to shape themselves up in his mind. First, he envisaged a chain of mission centres stretching from East to West Africa; second, he dreamt of a colony for freed slaves near Mombasa; and thirdly, he looked forward to the ordination of African clergy with an African bishop, as the chief steward of the diocese thereof.

Shortly after the arrival of Reverend John Rebmann, in 1846, both of whom had trained at the Basle Seminary, German, the two established the first mission centre on the mainland at Rabai, about ten Kilometres from the island of Mombasa. Shortly later, they were joined by a third German missionary who died shortly after arrival. This prompted Krapf to write:

> The first resident of the new mission ground is a dead person of the missionary circle. Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build a church, showing us by this lesson that the resurrection of East Africa must be effected by our own destruction [4 p3].

As Krapf and Rebmann made long journeys of exploration, from 1848 and 1850, the future of East Africa was getting re-defined. As a result, East Africa was opened for the Christianity, Commerce and the suppression of slave trade, which was rampant. While Rebman’s expeditions were concentrated around Mt. Kilimanjaro in the present day Tanzania, Krapf’s journeys were concentrated on the highlands of what is now Kenya. Subsequently, Krapf saw the snow-capped Mount Kenya (17, 058) on December 3, 1849; while Rebmann saw a magnificent snow-clad dome rising to the height of 19, 340 feet on May 11, 1848 (Mount Kilimanjaro) [3]. The purpose of these explorations was to identify sites for future mission stations linking East and West. As Rebmann later wrote:

> We came to Africa without a thought or wish of making geographical discoveries. Our grand aim was the spreading of the Kingdom of God [4 p4].

As fate would have it, the news of discoveries of the great mountains and the possibility of a great inland sea excited the interest of many curious people in England and the rest of Europe. It led to further explorations, hence the coming of explorers such as Burton and Speke who became the first Europeans to see Lake Tanganyika in 1858. Later Speke travelled further and saw Lake Nyanza (later Lake Victoria), which he maintained was the source of the river Nile. The latter development made Speke and Grant to make a journey back to the place, in 1860, in order to verify Speke’s contention about the source of river Nile. They arrived in the lake region in July 1862.

In Europe the increased interest in the work of the missionaries in Africa was further promoted by the publications that reported on the findings of the
missionary explorers, few inaccuracies notwithstanding. The case of The Daily Telegraph Newspaper, in particular, deserves a mention; in 1875, an explorer by name, Henry Morton Stanley, had written a letter that appeared in this newspaper. In his letter, Stanley challenged Christians in England to send a missionary to Uganda. This letter led to the formation of the Uganda Mission of 1876. Two days after Stanley’s letter was published in the Newspaper, CMS received an anonymous letter stating that if the committee was “prepared at once and with energy to organize a Mission to the Victoria Nyanza (as Uganda and Western Kenya was then described),” the writer would be prepared to give 5,000 British Pounds “as a nucleus for the expenses of the undertaking” [3 p29]. Subsequently, the Uganda Mission was formalized in 1877, this move laid firm foundation for a future strong church in Uganda, as we see it today. Such scenarios were experienced all over East Africa and the rest of the continent.

With time, the excitement created by the reports from explorers and the missionaries created by the “Scramble for Africa” where every European nation wanted a piece of this cake – Africa! In particular, reports from David Livingstone’s missionary journeys to the southern part of Africa, where he literary saw the horrors of the Arab slave trade, brought to the notice and pricked the conscience of the world. The report caused the British government to team up with CMS and other missionary agencies to take steps that were geared towards the abolition of slave trade [4 p4]. This was finally achieved in 1873, when Sir Bartle Frere, a British Agent, successfully negotiated with the Sultan of Zanzibar to do away with slave trade.

Incidentally, the scramble for Africa, which is indeed the process by which unoccupied territories of tropical Africa were hastily appropriated in one form or another by rival European powers between 1884 and 1891 happened together with the creation of the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa [3]. The Diocese thus became a legal entity in 1884 when the Right Reverend James Hannington was consecrated, becoming the first official leader of an Anglican Diocese in East Africa. Interestingly, the adjoining Diocese of Zanzibar had been founded by the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), an Anglo-Catholic wing of the Anglican Church, in 1864. Nevertheless, the coming of Bishop Hannington to the ecclesiastical scene brought order into the East African Mission; shortly after taking over, Bishop Hannington ordained Semler and Jones to the diaconate. He then visited Sagalla (in the present day Kenya, Taita Taveta County) and Moshi (on the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro in the present day Tanzania) to open Mission Centres. He then started his journey to Uganda using the route through Kenya Highlands. This route had been explored by Joseph Thompson. Unfortunately, he was seized on orders from Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda Kingdom who feared European invasion from the East. On the 6th day (October 1885) of his incarceration he was put to death by the authorities under Kabaka Mwanga. As it turned out, his blood became the seed of the church. His successor, Bishop Henry P. Parker, who served for two years (1886-1888), also died on the way to Uganda, in 1888 [5 p3]. Bishop Parker’s major contribution is seen in his insistence that women too can make good missionaries. This was indeed an unusual development as patriarchal hold on the society appeared ‘not ready’ for women church ministry. Parker went on to write to the CMS urging them to send strong women representatives to work in East Africa. This bore fruit when a group of gifted young women were sent to East Africa after his death.

The third Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Alfred R. Tucker, is widely seen as the greatest leader of the Anglican Church in its formative stage. Upon his consecration in 1890, he returned to England to recruit more men and women for mission. As he recruited his missionary team, he got the ‘staggering’ news that the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA) had decided to withdraw from Uganda owing to economic reasons, as they had a deficit of about 40,000 British Pounds [4]. In his view, such a move, in those days, was disastrous to the young mission. Consequently, he initiated negotiations with the British Government, a move that saw the CMS raise the required 15,000 British Pounds, which was a reasonable fraction that could reverse IBEA’s decision to withdraw for at least one year. With Tucker at the helm, the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa grew at a phenomenal rate, making its subdivision imperative; a phenomenon that was accomplished on January 1, 1898. Tucker became the first Bishop of Uganda while W. G. Peel became the first Bishop of Mombasa.

After Krapf the Church Grows

Theologically speaking, Anglicanism in Kenya can be said to have started with an emergency baptism of a dying cripple, Mringe in 1851, by Rebmann. Mringe had been instructed by Krapf though he had not completed his catechetical teachings by the time he fell ill. Full of questions unlike others, Mringe, was able to learn more about Anglicanism faster. Perhaps he had more time than others who were physically strong enough to be absorbed by other activities. Mringe was buried at the mission centre instead of the traditional practice of the Kayas of the coast region of Kenya. At the same time, Abe Gunga, who accompanied Krapf on one of his expeditions south, was already learning to read. He and his son Nyondo were the next to be baptised in 1860.

Interestingly, father and son were given the names: Abraham and Isaac. They however had to wait till 1869 to be admitted to the Holy Eucharist. Reportedly, there was no formal confirmation for the two, as the Bishop of Mauritius never visited the coast of Kenya. By then, the Bishop of Mauritius, Rt. Rev. Vincent W. Ryan (1817-
1888) was technically in-charge of the so-called Equatorial Africa, where Kenya was apart. As a Bishop, Vincent W. Ryan's episcopacy started in 1862 and ended with his retirement in 1872. With time, more baptisms were conducted and the church grew numerically. For example, eight more baptisms were conducted in 1861. Unfortunately, no woman had been baptised by the time Rebmann retired in 1875. The wedding between Isaac Nyondo and Polly from Bombay, about 1865, was the first wedding Rebmann had ever celebrated; it served as a morale booster – providing a promise that the church will certainly grow: with or without Krapf and Rebmann. Both Krapf and Rebmann came from a wine-producing country, and had no difficulty in accepting palm wine, however, they warned against excessive consumption of wine which was an important trade commodity in the area at the time. They however protested against slavery which was rampant.

Thus, following the 'inauguration' of the Christian empire in Eastern Africa, by Krapf (1844) and the formation of the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa (1884), the ball was clearly set rolling. In the succession of events, other missionaries followed, Dioceses, Parishes and Congregations were created, as western education was widely introduced by missionaries through church-sponsored schools. The first ordination of black Africans, Ishmael Semler (carpenter) and William Jones (a blacksmith) (ex-slaves), was conducted in 1885. The spread of Anglican Christianity across Kenya can be seen against the background of time span in that from 1844 to 1930, the missionaries had managed to reach most remote part of Northern Kenya, and established stations there. These are; Mombasa station and Rabai station (both in 1844), Freretown station in 1875, Sagalla station in 1883, Jiloire station in 1890, Mbale and Kabete stations in 1900, Weithaga and Kaloleni stations in 1904, Wusi station in 1905, Kahuhia, Maseno and Nairobi stations in 1906, Kisumu station in 1909, Kabare and Kigari stations in 1910, Mutira station in 1912, Butere station between 1907-1912, Gathukeine station in 1913, N'giya station in 1921, Kacheliba station in 1929, and Marsabit station in 1930 [3 p32].

The Diocese of Mombasa (1899-1916)

Despite starting on a depressed note because the charismatic Bishop Tucker had left to join the Ugandan side of the former Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Mombasa Diocese under the episcopate of Bishop Peel expanded rapidly, completely shattering the expectations of its critics. The rapid growth could be attributed to a number of reasons including: first, the opening up of the highlands of Kenya by the Mombasa-Uganda railway (1895-1901) steered its growth, because the Diocese gained materially from the businesses conducted by large number of European settlers and Asian migrants, and drew membership from some its incoming groups. Second, the British administration brought under control the warring ethnic groups of Central and Western Kenya thereby making it possible to build a Diocese. Third, the Diocese grew during the episcopate of Bishop Peel because of the establishment of chaplaincies supported by Europeans in the towns and in the countryside. In particular, chaplaincy churches were built all over the episcopate. For example, the current St. Stephen's Cathedral (1904) of Nairobi Diocese was used for both European and African services. Others are Kisumu 1907, Parklands 1909, Kiambu 1910, Limuru 1913 and Naivasha 1915. The death of Bishop Peel in 1916 marked the end of an era “of the missionary invasion of the diocese” [4 p9]. Fourth, the Mombasa-Uganda (1895-1901) railway made it possible for the remote areas of the Diocese to be reached for evangelism. To this end, mission Centres/Stations were established, especially in areas where the railway passed through. As noted above, these areas included Kabete 1900, Weithaga 1904, Kahuhia 1906, Mutira 1907-1912, and Kabare 1910 among others.

Bishop Peel was succeeded by other dedicated Bishops such as Richard S. Heywood (1918-1936), Reginald P. Crabb (1936-1953), and Leonard J. Beecher (1953-1960). While Beecher is remembered as the fourth and last Bishop of Mombasa Diocese, comprising of Kenya and Tanganyika, Bishop Crabb is fondly remembered for steering successfully the first centenary celebration of Anglican Christianity in Eastern Africa (1844-1944). By 1944, the Anglican Church had 36 African clergy, 16 European clergy, 1535 African lay workers, 307 women workers and 70 missionaries. It also had about 20,000 communicant members and between 30,000 and 40,000 others under instruction [4 p13]. It is around this time that the Church experienced the renewal of the Revival Movement of the 1937, and which became a source of its strength during the Mau Mau liberation struggle of 1950s.

The Birth of the first Anglican “Province” of East Africa

To begin with, it is necessary to explain that by a “province” we mean “a federation of adjacent dioceses of the Anglican Church so that they become autonomous under their own Archbishop, at the same time maintaining to the full their spiritual kinship and doctrinal identity with all other Provinces of Canterbury and York” [6 p55]. Historically, the missionary work of the Church of England has borne fruit in the establishment of many younger churches in different parts of the world. Now, these churches have been organised into Dioceses, each with its own Bishop. Several of these Dioceses have gone further and joined together as Provinces. For example, there is a Province of Uganda, popularly called the Church of Uganda, several Provinces in Australia,
and the Province of Southern Africa among others. Until
a Province is established the overseas Dioceses of the
Anglican Church continue as “country members,” so to
speak, of the Province of Canterbury [6]. To this end, the
care of these many overseas churches becomes an
almost unbearable burden for the one Archbishop of
Canterbury. In turn, this makes it prudent for the church
to uphold the policy that Anglican Provinces be formed as
soon as possible when the need arises.

The Church Organization and the politics of sub-
division

The Church Province (under an Archbishop) is made up
of Dioceses, and each Diocese is usually under a
Diocesan Bishop is made of a number of Archdeaconries.
In turn, an Archdeaconry (under an Archdeacon) is
formed by Rural Deaneries. Rural Deaneries which are
each headed by a Rural Dean are made of Parishes
headed by a Parish Priest called Vicar) Parishes are
made of Congregations.

With Kenya having only one Diocese from 1897
(Mombasa) to 1961 when Nakuru, Fort Hall (later Mt.
Kenya), Maseno and Mombasa were formed to make
four Dioceses, the need for a Province was not given
much attention. As a matter of fact, the Synod of
Mombasa was first constituted in 1921. At that time, the
Diocese of Mombasa included parts of inland Tanganyika
Territory (as Tanzania before their Union with Zanzibar in
1964 was called) where the CMS had served, whilst
Nyanza region of Western Kenya was part of the Diocese
of Uganda, until 1921. Following the formation of the
Diocese of Central Tanganyika in 1927, the Diocese of
Mombasa occupied the territorial space of the present
day Kenya. During the first Synod meeting of the Diocese
of Mombasa in 1921, the emphasis was, “let us have an
Anglican Province as soon as possible” [6 p56].
Nevertheless, there was a strong opposition by a
substantial minority who argued that this step would be
premature. This forced a postponement of the meeting so
as to seek a consensus from all the representatives from
all the East African Dioceses. This postponement was
made after the discovery that there were peculiar
difficulties about the formation of a Province. One of the
key reasons for the postponement included the fact that
even by 1928 there were only five African priests, as the
rest were Europeans – a move that pointed to the
immaturity of the move. Some pragmatists felt that it
would be prudent to wait until Africans were in a position
to take “a real part in governing the church in their own
countries before contemplating Synods and Committees
drawn from the wider sphere of a Province” [6].

Another difficulty arose from the fact that there were
two groups of Anglican Dioceses in East Africa. For
instance, Mombasa, Uganda, Upper Nile and Central
Tanganyika were evangelicals in their version of Christianity
as they were evangelised by Church Missionary Society.
On the other hand, Masasi, Zanzibar, Nyasaland
(Malawi), and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) were begun
and built up by the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa
(UMCA), a Society whose membership was drawn from
Anglo-Catholic section of the Church of England [6]. In
the nature of things, there were fears that one or other
party might seek to make use of the provincial
organisation to cause its influence to reign all over. Of
interest to note is that a moderating voice for the two
extremes was badly lacking hence the formation of a
Province was a mere flight of fancy.

Poor infrastructures of the time compounded the quest
for a Province further. In the circumstances, the extent of
these Dioceses was such that it seemed doubtful if there
could ever be much contact between them. Lack of
easier means of travel, poor roads and infrequent
availability of air travel services compounded the matter
further. Additionally, Nyasaland (Malawi) and Rhodesia
(currently Zambia and Zimbabwe countries) were both
linked by rail with South Africa. This made it appear
obvious that the Churches of these territories were more
likely to look southward rather than to the north for their
affiliation and provincial headquarters.

Above all, the question of an Ecclesiastical Province
was linked in many minds with the political controversies
over the extent of European control in Kenya and the
closer union of the East African territories. For example,
Anglican Christians in Uganda did not want to hear any
idea that would force them into closer contact with Kenya.
These fears were unconsciously fuelled by the then Chief
Secretary to the Kenya Government, who was a member
of the Mombasa Synod of 1921, who said that the
formation of an Anglican Province might well have some
influence on the policy of the East African governments [6
p57]. The province was finally born in 1960 with Leonard
Beecher as the first Archbishop of the Anglican Province
of East Africa1.

As the previous Bishop of Mombasa, Leonard Beecher
later played a leading role in facilitating the Africanisation
process. His enthronement ceremony was held in Dar es
Salaam, Tanganyika (later Tanzania). He served as
Primate for ten years (1960-1970). As a result, Maseno
North was born in 1970, Maseno South in 1970, Mount
Kenya South in 1975 and Mount Kenya East in 1975.

The church politics of the 1970s

The initiative to divide the Church of the Province of East
Africa into two Provinces; namely: the Province of
Tanzania and the Province of Kenya, is said to have
come from Bishop Kariuki’s Diocese of Mount Kenya, as
early as 1967. Was it interference from Senior Kenyan
politicians in Jomo Kenyatta’s government who did not

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like Archbishop Beecher, a British National? Was Kariuki angling to become the first Archbishop of the proposed Church Province (Anglican) of Kenya? Did Kariuki and his handlers, (who in his 'manoeuvres' to become an Archbishop after 'dis-organising Beecher') underrate the influence of his 1955 consecration-mate, Festo Olang, on the sub-division of the Province? Or was it a genuine quest for an African Christianity, as envisaged by Krapf, with a Black Bishop and with a Black Archbishop? Such questions beg for answers, as the proposal for the division of the vast Province was received with suspicions. The post independent Tanzania adopted a Socialist political model of governance and development, as opposed to Kenya's, capitalist model of governance and development, "East African Communality/community" was clearly at the crossroads at all fronts – including the church and other segments of the society.

Suspictions were however allayed when the Mount Kenya Synod made clear the reasons for their proposals, and the Provincial Synod agreed to the division of the Province in three years after Mount Kenya Synod had brought her proposal (1967-1970). Curiously, Archbishop Beecher graciously offered to resign, in August 1970, in order to facilitate the appointment of the two new Archbishops of Kenya and Tanzania. It is noted that Archbishop did not continue serving as an Archbishop in either of the two Provinces that were created, as is the norm in such situations. Whatever may have characterized the dynamics behind the scenes to account for his non-continuation of service, is not clear, but is certainly beyond the scope of this article.

A section of members from Mt. Kenya Diocese felt short changed when the Most Revenend Festo Olang' was enthroned in 1970 as the first Archbishop of Kenya because they had expected that it would be Bishop Kariuki to take over from Archbishop Beecher. Generally, it was widely believed that a conspiracy in Archbishop Beecher's office had been hatched to block Kariuki from becoming the first Archbishop. It is however not clear who was involved in this scheme. This is a difficult line to pursue as the Archbishop must have been a neutral player; and if anything, he must have been pro-Kikuyu as he finally settled in their ancestral land, Limuru, upon his retirement, where his bones lie to date. In his graveyard, at the cemetery of All Saints Limuru church compound, an inscription says: "Leonard James Beecher / 1906 - 1987 / Archbishop of East Africa / (1960 - 1970) / together they worked for / the Lord in this their / beloved land." Generally, the phrase "their / beloved land" refers to the East African region, and in particular Kikuyu land where he finally settled.

Analysts and historians might want to find out whether Kariuki's loss to Festo Olang', on June 16, 1970, stressed him through to his death bed on May 6, 1978. Was he convinced deeply that the post of the first Anglican Archbishop of Kenya was eventually going his way? But this is not possible because he accepted the reality that Olang' was the duly elected leader of the Church. In fact, he saw it as God's will and faithfully supported Olang' until his retirement (1976) and subsequent death - two years later. Again, Kariuki was a balokole (brethren) in the strict sense of the word. How then could he have failed to see the grace of God in such scenarios? Likewise, Olang' was a 'brother' in every sense of the word who could not have compromised the Gospel for whatever benefit thereof. Thus, there was no problem for the Anglican Church leadership in Kenya, as it was properly constituted.

Interestingly, Venerable Sospeter Magua, of Mount Kenya Diocese, became the Provincial Secretary under the new Archbishop of Kenya, Festo Olang. Curiously, the outgoing Archbishop, Leonard James Beecher, requested his removal and subsequent transfer to another place. This irked Bishop Kariuki who explained: "both Archbishop and I knew that Magua could undertake whatever responsibilities he was being called to carry out..." [7 p89]. Magua brought wealth of experience to the Provincial office for he had the experience of a Rural Dean, Archdeacon, Vicar General and finally, a Provincial Secretary. Thus, Magua worked as a Clerical Secretary of the Synod and as a personal secretary to the Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Kenya from 1970 to 1976. When Bishop Kariuki of Mount Kenya South retired, Sospeter Magua was chosen unopposed as the Bishop and subsequently consecrated on 30th October 1976.

The retirement of Festo Olang, as Archbishop of Kenya was shrouded in controversy. The debate about his retirement was initiated by the Chancellor of Mount Kenya Diocese, John Gachuhi, during a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod at Imani House, Nairobi, on 14 November 1979 [8 p61-64]. According to an eye witness, Gachuhi, on a point of order brought to the attention of the meeting the fact that the Archbishop had attained the age of 65 the previous day. To that end, Gachuhi argued that since the Anglican constitution required that a person retires at 65, Olang' was no longer eligible to preside over the church meeting. And since the issue of retirement was not part of the agenda, the Archbishop was taken by surprise. He the proceedings, took his files and went to his office so as to pack up in readiness for retirement [9]. Previously, he had been accused of nepotism and negative ethnicity after employing his own son as a driver2. Although it is not unconstitutional to employ a qualified relative, such accusations were made in bad taste. When the Provincial Chancellor, James Hamilton, on November 20, 1979, finally advised the Archbishop to avoid asking for the extension of his term and retire, as the constitution demanded, the Archbishop humbly accepted to retire the following day (November 21, 1979) [8 p64]. Curiously, in the final Special Standing Committee Synod that he

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2 Despite his age, he had been known to challenge the ecclesiastical authorities with his own ideas and policies.
called on Saturday, November 1979, to deliberate on the issue on his retirement, there were no representatives from either Dioceses from the Diocese of Nakuru, Mt. Kenya East and Mt. Kenya South. Certainly, their failure to attend the Committee was attributed to the fact that the notice given had been insufficient; even though it could be argued that Mount Kenya Dioceses offices are next door to Imani House, Nairobi, where the meeting was held. Was it a revenge mission Were the “Mount Kenya Dioceses” (read Kikuyu dominated Dioceses) working to prevent “another coup d’état”? Was the church turning into an ethnic-ghetto? Whatever the case, the Church Province of Kenya was handed over to the then Dean of the Province, Bishop Peter Mwang’ombe, who acted as the Archbishop until Masses Kuria was elected and subsequently took up the leadership mantle in June 1980. By 2010 the Anglican Province of Kenya had grown from seven Dioceses in 1980 to over 30 Dioceses (Table 1).

By 2012, the 31 Anglican dioceses in Kenya were: All Saints Cathedral; Bondo; Bungoma; Butere; Eldoret; Embu; Kajiado; Katakwa; Kericho; Kirinyaga; Kitale; Kitui; Machakos; Marsabit (created 2011, Bishop Robert Martin); Maseno North; Maseno South; Maseno West; Mbeere; Muru; Mombasa; Mount Kenya Central; Mount Kenya South; Mount Kenya West; Mumias; Nairobi; Nakuru; Nambale; Nyahururu; Southern Nyanza; Taita-Taveta; and Thika. Plans were underway to create Malindi as the 32nd diocese by the end of 2013.

The Missionaries’ 3-fold ministry in empire building

With regard to their three-fold ministry, the 19th and 20th European missionaries established Schools, dispensaries and Hospitals across Kenya. By 1980, Kenya had 11,000 government schools and 200 hospitals, most of whom were begun by keen practising Christians who saw service to their fellow human beings as service to Christ [5]. To this end, the Anglican role is critical as names such as Buxton High School (Mombasa) and Maseno School attests to this. By 1980, the Anglican Church of Kenya was sponsoring 1,100 primary schools, and was linked with some 110 secondary schools; it was also managing about 190 "harambee" (non-government) secondary schools. The documented number of lepers in 1980 was estimated to be about 67,000; the blind stood at 65,000; while 110,000 were psychotics [5]. Obviously these figures have shot up ten-fold by 2010 due to factors such as poverty and HIV and AIDS among other factors, some of which are natural. Nevertheless, the church of the twenty-first century has a moral mandate to offer dedicated service to such unfortunate cases.

Thirty-One Kenyan Anglican Dioceses in 2010

The fact that Kenya by 2010 had 31 Anglican Dioceses and at least 31 Bishops who were in-charge is in itself a success story. This shows that one hundred and twenty six years after the first Diocese (of Eastern Equatorial Africa) was created (1884-2010), more people had joined the Church of Christ in Kenya, culminating in the need for the 31st Kenyan Diocese. By 2010, there were plans to curve out the Diocese of Malindi from Mombasa Diocese. Other proposed Dioceses were still in the pipeline. This therefore shows that the average growth for Anglican

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**Table 1. African Archbishops since 1970.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period of service as Archbishop</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festo Olang’</td>
<td>1970-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasses Kuria</td>
<td>1980-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Mukuba Gitari</td>
<td>1996-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin M. Nzimbi</td>
<td>2006-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliud Wabukala</td>
<td>2009-present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dioeceses in Kenya has been one Diocese after every four years. From this, we can deduce that there will be 40 Anglican Dioeceses with about 50 Bishops, who will include Assistant Bishops, Suffragan Bishops and so forth, by 2040. This calls for an examination of the future prospects in the growth of the church in Kenya and the need to strategically plan for the possibilities of forming a second Province of the Anglican Church of Kenya if the continued growth warrants it.

Conclusion: The Pains and Successes

From the start, the birth of a Christian Empire in East Africa and the rest of Africa, was painful as the early missionaries ventured into the unknown. In particular, Krapf and his team had to encounter the tropical diseases which claimed his beloved wife and child, language barriers, hostile African communities, wild animals such as the man eaters of Tsavo. Bishop Hannington was, for instance, killed in the course of duty. Even the Africans who had abandoned their African Religion to join the "religion of the White missionaries," in order to propagate the God of Christendom, were seen as sell-outs or traitors by their fellow Africans. Some were killed; others ostracized while others were scandalized. It was indeed a painful birth.

Apart from diseases, crossing slippery logs, wild animals, savage tribes etc, E. M. Crawford adds superstitions to the part of the African people as a major impediment to the missionary work. Writing in 1913, Mrs Crawford, who lived in Embu with her husband - Dr Crawford, a medical missionary, writes:

Our (African) patients were, of course terribly superstitious. When the first death occurred in the hospital we were dismayed to find that there was a general stampede, and quite half of them returned to their homes! This was because they feared that the ghost of the dead man would haunt the ward in which he died, and possibly bring some calamity upon all the inmates. It was, however, cheering to notice that it was chiefly the older ones had more or less profited from the teaching [10 pp146-7].

She goes on to say:

Cases of injury from wild beasts are not at all uncommon. A native came to us one day in a terrible plight, having been severely mauled by a man-eating lion. It seems that it had attacked the homestead at night and was in the act of carrying off a warrior whom it had killed, when this man rushed in and after a fearful struggle, which nearly cost him his life, succeeded in dispatching the ferocious beast with his spear [10 p154].

Describing Chuka sub-group of the Meru community, in 1913, as unfriendly to their mission work, Mrs Crawford wrote:

The Chukas are exclusive tribe (sic).... They have a reputation for being very wild and dangerous. Even quite recently the officials (of the British Protectorate) have had poisoned arrows shot at them from ambush while riding through the country for the purpose of collecting hut tax [10 p142].

While some missionaries, at times, misunderstood their African counterparts, especially with regard to Chuka, it is critical to appreciate that they generally got resistance even from the local chiefs and from the conservative societies in general. Their pains prepared a room for African leadership, which had to learn the virtue of perseverance from these precedents.

In leading the Diocese in celebrating ten years of the birth of the Diocese of Mount Kenya East (1975-1985), the erstwhile Bishop, David Gitari, listed the various breakthroughs and the early pains that needed to be recalled. In his 'Bishop’s Charge' in the Sixth Ordinary Session of Synod, of the Diocese of Mt. Kenya East, Kabare, 7-11 April 1986, Gitari explained:

Like a Mustard seed, the Diocese began in a very small way Ten Years ago. Negatively, there was virtually nothing – no Cathedral, no Bible School, no Diocesan office, no Typewriter, no desk, no filing cabinet, no Bishop’s house and no money. Positively, however, there was the Mustard seed – the Bishop, Twenty five Priests and five Deacons, 150 congregations, 19 parishes and committed lay people with a vision. There was also Ksh 28, 000/= ($350) collected on consecration day but most of it paid the expenses of consecration. In the last Ten years, the Mustard seed, though the Smallest of all seeds have grown into a tree, where birds of the air can come and make nests in its branches. Ten years later we can say we have a Cathedral, a training Institute, Diocesan Offices, valuable office equipments and a large team of committed and devoted servants of the Living God.

Gitari went on to say:

If I were to choose one word which has helped the Mustard seed to grow over the last TEN YEARS, I would choose the word “FAITH.” We could easily have become discouraged by the small beginning and doubts about the future. But we became Men and Women of faith. Jesus said “If you have faith as a grain of Mustard seed... nothing will be impossible to you" (Matthew 17:20) [11].

Thus, despite the many painful moments where the buoyancy of hope turned into a nightmare, African Church had to be born, for with faith, nothing is impossible. With Christianity reaching Mutira, over 700 Kilometres from the birth place of Christianity in East
Africa, 64 years after Krapf introduced Christianity in the Coastal city of Mombasa (1844-1908), the Mustard Seed had grown into a huge tree. The question is: Is the growth of the church authentic? Perhaps the best acknowledgement of the early missionaries came in 1994 during the marking of 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Church Missionary Society in Kenya. During the commemoration, Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury, UK, visited Kenya to participate in these celebrations. He encouraged and challenged African Christians to make Christianity authentically African, within the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Indeed, the Christian empire had manifested itself by 1970 when an African Archbishop (Festo Olang') was installed in Kenya, thereby making Ludwig Krapf’s dream of the church in East Africa come true. This ecclesial growth has also been accompanied by socio-economic growth. Certainly, a Christian empire whose influence cuts across the socio-political divides in East Africa is evident in the 21st century despite the challenges thus undergone.

REFERENCES


