



**Jesuit Centre  
for  
Theological Reflection**  
*"Promoting Faith and Justice"*

**P. O. BOX 37774  
LUSAKA - ZAMBIA**

**JCTR OFFICES  
3813 MARTIN MWAMBA  
ROAD, OLYMPIA, LUSAKA**

**Tel.: +260-211-290410**

**Fax: +260-211-290759**

**E-mail:  
jctrbulletin@jesuits.org.zm  
jctr@jesuits.org.zm**

**Website:  
www.jctr.org.zm**

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**QUOTE**

"A basic norm of justice is that those who are to be affected by decisions should have a say in that decision-making process." (From "Justice and Africa" p.8)

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

The key event in the third quarter of 2010 at JCTR was the blessing of the new JCTR Offices and the installation of the new JCTR Director, Fr. Leonard Chiti, S.J., on 10 September. After working as JCTR Director for almost 20 years, Fr. Peter Henriot, S.J., handed over the directorship to Leonard. Two friends of JCTR that came for the event from Germany, Dr. Siegfried Grillmeyer and Archbishop Ludwig Schick, together with other colleagues from the UK, Zimbabwe, and Zambia had an informal session on Europe-Africa relations. The Archbishop opened the session stressing that in our relations, three major considerations are important, (i) objective knowledge of each other, (ii) prayer that leads to the recognition that we are equal as human beings and are brothers and sisters, and (iii) solidarity that transcends borders and continents.

Responses from the group in the session to the suggestion of the three considerations were that knowledge should go beyond what we read in books, or what we learn in the media, to the development of personal relationships or friendships. Knowledge of Africa should be developed by Africans themselves in sharing with Europe, not knowledge developed by Europeans for Africans. Reconciliation was cited as one way of recognising the other is as equal as oneself.

The promotion of globalisation was cited as one of the ways of fostering solidarity, a greater understanding that all humans are equal, and justice for all persons regardless of the continent they live in. This is despite a skewed view of globalisation that might be taken to mean Westernisation or Easternisation in terms of the globalisation of cultural, political, economic, religious ideologies. This kind of globalisation has already led to scepticism and caution about what globalisation can do to African cultures. Injustices are built in the very systems of such globalisation. Parties in globalisation between Europe and Africa remain on different levels and protect different interests in the rules of engagement so much that in most cases the poor and Africa remain disadvantaged in these global interactions. A good understanding of globalisation such as the Christian one can lead to solidarity and justice. Perceptions, prejudices, misunderstandings between people in Africa and Europe continue to weaken a good and balanced relationship between the two.

Earlier in the year, for example, Zambia's president told the donors that they could pack their bags and leave Zambia alone based on the concerns that donors were making at Zambia's lack of commitment to overcoming corruption. Despite such comments, Zambia still perceives itself as not surviving without the help of Europe. The Constitution-making process continued in the quarter with the Draft Constitution submitted to the Minister of Justice. What has not been clear has been the way forward after this submission. It is also not clear whether the National Constitutional Conference seriously considered the different submissions from Zambians following the short period given to the general public to make submissions to the June 2010 Draft Constitution (40 days only). The cost of living continued to increase nominally and in real terms despite consistent data from the Central Statistical Office suggesting reductions in inflation of prices in the past five months from March to September. New loans in grants, condition-tied-aid, and debt continued to be gotten mostly in commitments by foreign countries at meetings and events, suggesting lack of consultation of citizens and Parliament. The loan to purchase mobile hospitals was greatly questioned because it seemed a need to the lenders rather than to Zambians.

Articles in this *Bulletin* consider a wide range of social and faith issues that are connected to inter-human, inter-country, and inter-continent relations such as the European, African relations discussed above. A number of articles look at different ways of eradicating poverty and justice in Africa. Others look at politics and leadership, and care for the environment.

We at the JCTR, from our new offices and with a new Director, encourage you to continue interacting with us through your articles, commentaries, reviews, letters on any social, economic, political, theological, and faith issue especially in reviewing how such issues affect the human dignity of all and how justice can be brought about in our society. Even a small note on our work will be helpful in improving on how we do our work. Staying true to our vision, we remain committed to "promoting faith and justice." Until the next interesting issue of the *Bulletin* which is the fourth quarter, stay blessed.

We wish you a happy reading and reflection of the articles in this *Bulletin*.

Dominic Liche  
JCTR Bulletin Editor

# BOLDNESS IN MITIGATING AFRICA'S PROBLEMS

*Very often, we hear that there is no continent with so many problems as the African Continent. A major challenge is underdevelopment to an extent that some countries seem like non-viable countries that will never develop. Poverty is another challenge directly connected to underdevelopment. Disease, illiteracy, wars, corruption, tribalism, and the list goes on. One clearly highlighted cause and solution to these problems is leadership. Bad leadership perpetuates and causes these problems. Good leadership can be a solution to most of these problems. Wilfred Mfula suggests ways of improving leadership in Africa.*

## POWER CORRUPTS!

It is true that power is sweet when you are in authority, but it is also true that absolute power corrupts once it gets to someone's head and drowns his or her brain. Once leaders get corrupted by power, they stop following constitutional guidelines. They also stop thinking logically; instead, they start using emotions and personal ambitions to make important and sometimes, uninformed decisions that affect citizens.

In Africa, very few national leaders leave power out of their own will. The majority are forced out of office by age, a good Constitution, a free and fair election, coup d'état or by the people through revolutions. Most would cling on to power at all costs whether by hook or by crook and no matter how incompetent they are during their term of office. They think there is no other life for them outside the public office they hold. Hence, power politics and power corruption are at play and are being perpetuated mostly by those in authority.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF GOVERNANCE

We came from an era of chiefdoms and kingdoms where leaders normally ascended to power through ancestral heritage. They were born leaders whether intelligent, wise, dull, wit or even imbeciles, and in such a system a lot of pressure was put on the *indunas* who helped chiefs or kings govern their subjects well. They were revered, highly esteemed and feared. Their word was law and no one questioned their actions whether they committed corruption, murder or adultery. They were considered fathers of the tribes and their evil actions and weaknesses were supposed to be hidden from the public. Only death was supposed to remove them from their throne.

## A SWITCH TO DEMOCRACY

Despite the introduction of modern day democratic rule, African political and government leaders still want to be treated in the same manner as

traditional chiefs, save for a few exceptions. Some have been known to rule while being pushed on a wheel chair, too old to stand on their feet. Others want to continue ruling even if their health is very poor and does not allow them to do such strenuous activities like campaigns. Others want to continue in office despite being very unpopular. But minions and some lieutenants (I don't mean military please!) who benefit from their leadership want them to govern forever like gods.

Recently, one local government leader's retirement was extended for another year on the pretext that "his retirement would create a vacuum that would affect developmental programmes in the city and to allow for a comprehensive and smooth transition." What a lame excuse, does it mean that

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**Modern leaders are servants of the electorate and should earn respect through their hard work and delivering on their campaign promises.**

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this organisation's Human Resource Department did not have a Succession Plan in place to train or prepare someone to hand over to? Or there was no Recruitment Plan to employ someone qualified enough if there was no one suitable to take over? What a shame! Developmental programmes should not be personalised. Systems and not people should prevail.

Our people have inherited such attitudes from older generations and their minds are still set to hero-worship government leaders especially republican presidents in the same manner their ancestors did to traditional and religious leaders. They fall prostrate and dance before them at airports or even at funeral gatherings. They fail to distinguish between traditional leaders, religious leaders and modern democratically elected leaders; elected by the people, from the people and for the people. They fail to distinguish between good and bad governance. In a democratic system of government, citizens have equal rights to be involved in the running of their nation's affairs and

not divided by money, political affiliation or social class. Modern leaders are servants of the electorate and should earn respect through their hard work and delivering on their campaign promises.

It is true, leaders are supposed to be respected and obeyed (even the bible says so) but not to be feared. Even that obedience is supposed to be intelligently and not blindly done. It does not mean obeying anything or everything. For example, why obey a leader who is instructing you to steal, cause violence or any other wrongs in society? In Africa, most youths and political cadres are used as tools to cause violence, beatings and even killings. They are minions who follow orders from their masters without questioning their own morality or consequences of their actions as long as they selfishly gain something (e.g., plots of land and other favors) in return for their criminal activities. Of course, someone is taking advantage of them because of their poverty and vulnerability.

During campaigns for elections, we start witnessing abuse of power by our politicians. To some people, power is so sweet that they are prepared to do anything to keep it, even if it means killing their opponents or rigging an election. No matter how rich they have become or how useless they have been, they still want to cling on to offices. For some, it is because of mere greediness while

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### **For example, why obey a leader who is instructing you to steal, cause violence or any other wrongs in society?**

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others it is fear of becoming failures in life due to lack of confidence and proper credentials. These are the type who still linger on and beg for appointments from the new office-bearers soon after being rejected by people through an election. They hope to be recycled back into the system.

The same poor and illiterate people are the majority voters. These are the ones who queue up early in the morning and vote for people and political parties hoping their lives will be improved after that. A few months later, they always end up being disappointed by their once perceived champions. They are easily manipulated and taken advantage of. Some candidates give them cheap handouts which only last for a day or two. In doing so, the rich hope to be sustained on top even if they do not perform while the poor keep languishing in poverty. We need a radical change to break this vicious circle.

## **A CALL FOR BOLDNESS**

In Africa, we are mostly a generation of timid and docile people. We lack aggressiveness or boldness to fight for what is ours. A few people are trying to speak out against injustices and lack of fair play perpetuated

by those in authority. But these end up as loners and persecuted, the majority are cowards and ignorant of their human and civic rights. People who succeed are not those who do nothing. They are not like wall flowers that sit back and wait for others to do things for them. People who have achieved much are men and women who have thrived under pressure and taken risks and actions that other people are just too afraid to attempt

We need a pragmatic and aggressive approach to solve our national problems and change our lives for the better. At the rate we are going, I do not see any ray of hope for our economies to improve in the near future, not even by the year 2030. If anything, things might be getting worse. Doing the same things will always give us the same results. Something practical, different and urgent needs to be done apart from speaking well and theorising in our national conferences and seminars. God gives leaders who suit the character of people they lead. Sometimes, he gives them autocratic leaders or dictators for a period of time just to wake them up from slumber. Democracy has a limitation and sometimes we vote when the answer is obvious.

For example, if a building is on fire, we don't have to call for a consensus meeting to vote whether to quench the fire or not. But everybody around should rise to the occasion and put the fire out. A review meeting can be set up later to try and find out the cause of the fire and put measures in place to prevent similar occurrences in future. Some of our African countries are on fire and we are waiting for the World Bank, the donor communities, or the UN to come and quench it for us. Some economies are on their knees, we are losing the battle against HIV and AIDS, malaria, heart diseases and other non-communicable diseases which are spreading like bush fire.

Recently in Lusaka, it was reported by health authorities that 350 patients with heart complications are waiting to be operated on at one hospital and the number is growing each day. Not all dictatorial or autocratic type of leadership is bad but absolute autocracy is. Imagine using democracy in your private business company or applying democratic principles to underground mine workers or to soldiers during times of war; broad-based participation and consultation in these situations might not work that well. Nations are moved forward by tough and visionary leaders. Such leaders pave ways for others just like our former freedom fighters did. We need tough leaders to raise our economies up.

Most of us are born poor and having gotten used to living a poor life, we do not see anything wrong with our economies. We are content with the status quo. The continent is full of wealth in form of abundant natural resources like salt, lakes and rivers, precious minerals, fertile land, timber, and above all, idling and energetic human resources. Despite all

these, we are still poor and foreigners profit from the best of our land, they tour the best resorts of our countries. They see the beauty of our lands; they see riches and wealth where we see none. It does not pain us when we drive in roads full of pot holes. It does not hurt us when we live in residential areas without water and toilets (poor sanitation). We are not bothered with high levels of unemployment, diseases and poverty. We turn our faces away from facing reality straight into the face when we walk or drive through garbage or wade through waterlogged areas of our communities during the rainy seasons. It does not pain the few privileged ones who travel to developed countries and then come back and compare our lifestyles and infrastructure at home with what they see outside. We live as hopeless people, waiting for well-wishers to come and develop our communities.

We expect foreign investors and donors to come and build better houses and roads in our poverty stricken compounds and rural areas. Foreign investors can bring some projects in their preferred areas of our towns but only to a certain extent. We need to be involved as owners of the land for we cannot just stand aside and look while the riches of our land are being plundered and shared by some unscrupulous local and foreign scoundrels. The majority few who get jobs provide cheap manpower in the form of servants, security guards and laborers. They are paid "peanuts" even though they are made to work like donkeys. The majority of men and women remain unemployed. Some roam the streets selling simple merchandise like sweets, plastic bags and sowing needles just to raise something to buy food to keep them alive or just to buy clothes and pay rentals.

We see a waste of human resource, young men with big biceps and their energy not being utilized. In most cases, this energy is misdirected to criminal activities, political hooliganism, and drug or alcohol abuse. Young ladies with brilliant brains end up as drug pushers or patronise night clubs in frustrations and offer their bodies for illicit sex in exchange for money to buy themselves food, clothes, body lotions and do their hair. A poor man does not think beyond a meal of that day. He does not have enough to invest or invent something. His mind is preoccupied with basic needs for his survival. After so many decades of political independence, the majority of our people are still struggling to have basic needs like food, clean water, clothing and shelter. We have created a time bomb because a hungry person is an angry one. There is no peace when people are hungry.

More people in Africa die from hunger and diseases than during wars. Few countries are at war while the majority have their people surviving on less than US\$1.25 per day. A few rich individuals in the West are known to have more money than some of our poor nations of Africa. You cannot enjoy your

wealth when your next door neighbor is hungry. One day he or she might be forced to grab food from you by force since you refuse to share with him or her. Residents in good residential areas cannot enjoy absolute peace if their neighbors in shanty compounds are hungry. You would expect an escalation of thefts and robberies committed by hungry people who have to use survival instincts, whether legal or not.

## **NO GUTS, NO GLORY!**

A call for boldness is needed. Some weaklings end up saying "if you can't beat them, join them." This is the spirit of surrender. Boldness is the act of responding to a situation in a manner that may be viewed as daring to some, but is essential to effectively address the issue at hand. It can also mean bravery. Even the Bible says that the cowardly

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### **We expect foreign investors and donors to come and build better houses and roads in our poverty stricken compounds and rural areas.**

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or fearful shall not enter the Kingdom of God (Revelation 21:8). By boldness, I do not mean being rude, reckless, insensitive, arrogant, or a bully. No! None of these attributes are acceptable to any of us. You do not have to have a big body to be bold. Often, most normal people suddenly achieve great heights. When David of the Bible faced Goliath, he was more than just the underdog but he acted boldly.

Talk without backing our words with action is cheap. We need action for "actions will speak louder than words" and we are judged by what we do, not by what we say.

We need to have revolutionary minds as Africans. We should say enough is enough and participate in the development of our national economy. We should shun procrastination and laziness and work very hard for our continent. We should shun hypocrisy, corruption, plunder of national resources, dishonesty and greediness. Otherwise our children, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren shall inherit our misery and shame. They shall blame us, as people who were very irresponsible, lazy and foolish. They will judge us for what we are. We shall reap what we are sowing today. We are responsible and have ourselves to blame for what is happening to our economies and to our younger generations. We are also responsible for the behavior of our traditional, political and religious leaders. We should ask ourselves why they are behaving the way they are. A call for boldness is indeed needed.

*Wilfred Chalwe Mfula  
Lusaka, Zambia*



# AFRICA AND JUSTICE: JUSTICE IN AND FOR AFRICA

*Given the many inequalities that exist in Africa, one major approach to address these inequalities is to ensure that there is justice in all aspects of the life of Africans. Based on a presentation at Africa Faith and Justice Network Conference delivered on 17 April 2010 in Washington, DC, Peter Henriot, S.J., asserts that justice is important in six main areas: development, protection of environment, holistic approach to AIDS, climate change adjustments, trade relationships, and power relationships.*

Surely, should we not really speak of “Africas” in the plural? Such a huge Continent, comprising over 700 million people living in over 50 countries. When one looks at the map of Africa, Africa is such a huge Continent – you could fit the mainland USA into it three times and still have some space left over!

And justice – what definition would be appropriate and helpful for us to focus on? So much has been written on the important topic of *Restorative Justice*. But justice takes many forms: economic, political, cultural, religious. To speak of “social justice” might cover it all. And so let it be *social justice* that I particularly focus on, even in general terms, in this article.

Understandably, I look at Africa through the lens of that part of the Continent that I know best, where I have lived for the past 20 years, Zambia. And you may know that it is one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of resources: land, water, agriculture, minerals, tourist sites, and peace. Yes, peace -- 46 years of Independence with 73 tribes living together without violent ethnic conflict.

We are the envy of our neighbours! Southern African neighbours like the Democratic Republic of Congo, where over four million people have died in

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the past decade in conflicts that are local but largely are international, fights over the DRC’s immensely rich minerals; or Zimbabwe, where a previously rich economy has suffered a melt-down because of the megalomaniac stance of its aged President; or South Africa, which hosted the World Cup in June 2010 – where real “football” was played – soccer!

Yes, Zambia, such a rich country. But with some of the poorest people in the world! The United Nations *Human Development Index* (HDI), ranks it 166 out of 177 countries, according to measures such as life expectancy (just over 40 years for Zambians), literacy (especially low among women), and meeting

basic needs (so unequally distributed in our rich country).

In the research, education and advocacy programmes of our Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), we speak of Zambia as a country of great potentials and great problems. But we seriously believe that *the potentials outweigh the problems!* The task, then, is to get those potentials applied to those problems. We call that equitable, integral and sustainable development!

I want to suggest that for Zambia, and indeed for all of Africa, justice is important if we are to attain that equitable, integral and sustainable development. Justice both *in* Africa and *for* Africa. Of the many things that could be said about this, I want now to briefly highlight three aspects under each heading. These aspects are not of themselves all-inclusive, but highlight for me, from my Zambian experience, dimensions that are absolutely necessary.

## JUSTICE IN AFRICA:

First and foremost, this would relate to how we understand, how we promote, how we implement development. For me, the definition given many years ago by Paul VI in *Progress of Peoples* is the clearest: *development is movement of people from less human conditions to fuller human conditions*. Or a description of development offered by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen (who often sounds to me like Paul VI!) when he speaks of the freedom necessary for persons to enhance their God-given *capacities*.

Such a holistic emphasis might appear to you to be all too obvious but sadly it is not always the guiding definition or governing orientation for development. All too often, standard and narrow economic indicators are used to measure development – GDP, inflation, investment – to the exclusion of social indicators. People and their social conditions are secondary in practice if not in rhetoric.

In Zambia, we sorely experienced the consequences of such a distorted emphasis when we passed through a decade of the *structural adjustment programme* (SAP) in the 1990s – the most rigid, most rapid, most radical structural adjustment programme

in Africa. SAP – my Zambian friends told me that this stood for Starve African People, Stop All Production, Send Away Profits, or, in the local language, *satana ali pano* – the devil is in our midst! As concern for people was left out of programmes of liberalisation, privatisation, retrenchments, budget cuts, opening of borders, the quality of life plummeted.

So justice requires that people are put first in any definition of development. Calls for new models of the economy, for new roles of government in the economy, for new priorities in the economy are calls for justice in Africa. Benedict XVI emphasised this in his recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*.

Second, justice in Africa requires much greater attention paid to ecological justice, the protection of the integrity of creation. This is a topic that really needs little elaboration since we all have become more accustomed to the demand for a respect for our common home, the earth. But this respect has different implications in different contexts.

I want to highlight here the justice implication of managing a trade-off between attracting investments and safeguarding the environment. Take Zambia for example, where a turn-around in the economy is much dependent on the revitalisation and expansion of our copper mines. As in many other parts of Africa, major new investment partners come from China. And Chinese investors have not always been keenly sensitive to environmental impact studies and demands.

Should the Zambian government enforce strict requirements regarding opening of new pits, disposal of wastes, pollution of air and water, and so forth? Or should the need for employment generation activities, with subsequent rising standards of living, take precedence over environmental concerns – concerns often viewed by investors as abstract, ideological or irrelevant?

The Zambian case is of course replicated in so many other parts of Africa today, where the extractive industries are increasingly influential. Our neighbours to the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo, face even greater challenges along this line.

My own sense is that justice in Africa demands a commitment to a long-term sustainability that is impossible with short term environmental damage.

Third, justice in Africa demands a holistic approach to the challenge of HIV and AIDS. Let me emphasise at the start an obvious but often neglected point that HIV and AIDS is not an African disease, not primarily an African concern. But it is a serious challenge to the future development of the Continent. In Zambia, over 15% of the sexually active (adult) population is *infected*, but fully 100% of the total population is *affected*. And so how do we respond to

that challenge in a way that is congruent with and promotive of social justice?

I was encouraged to note the approach emphasised during the Second African Synod last October, an approach taking a much wider overview of AIDS, its causes and consequences. Proposition #51 approved by the Synod delegates states clearly about AIDS:

“It is not to be looked at as either a medical-pharmaceutical problem or solely as an issue of a change in human behaviour. It is truly an issue of integral development and justice, which requires a holistic approach and response by the Church.”

Attention to issues of gender, education, environment, employment, poverty, and housing simply must come into the equations of responses to HIV and AIDS, not only distributing of ARVs, or shaking of fingers to encourage abstinence or condoms!

Justice and Africa? So there are three points for justice *in* Africa – true meaning of development, protection of environment and holistic approach to HIV and AIDS.

## **JUSTICE FOR AFRICA?**

Let me now mention three points about justice *for* Africa. First, I believe that climate change is a factor that simply must be paid attention to, no matter how painful an effective response to it may be. Much has been said about the topic of climate change but I wonder whether you realise what it means for Africa

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### **Attention to issues of gender, education, environment, employment, poverty, housing simply must come into the equations of responses to HIV and AIDS.**

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today and tomorrow. Let me quote from a report released in March 2010 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission. The report states:

Agricultural output is expected to decrease by 50 per cent in Africa, resulting in severe undernourishment as a result of unchecked climate changes. The health burden and conflicts will increase as populations fight over dwindling resources. The need for Africa to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies cannot be overemphasised. The costs of adaptation and mitigation are, however, extremely high and beyond the means of African countries. It is estimated that the cost of adaptation could be anywhere between 5 and 10 per cent of the continental GDP. It is therefore important for the international community to help in financing the

cost of climate change adaptation and mitigation in Africa.

But why, you might ask, should that be particularly a justice factor? For the simple fact that the climate change being experienced in Africa at this moment is not caused by the people of Africa. No, it is the lifestyles and industrial patterns of the people of North America, of Europe, and, increasingly of China. Unless peoples, governments and industries outside of Africa quickly and forcefully address that fact, the people of Africa will suffer because of them. I'm sorry to say that so bluntly, but it is the truth, a physical truth, an economic truth and a moral truth that must be acknowledged and responded to if justice is to be done.

Second, justice for Africa necessarily requires trade justice. The JCTR led the campaign in Zambia for cancellation of debt, the Jubilee campaign, and now champions a campaign for justice in trade relationships between Zambia and the countries in both the North and the South. Free trade is said to be a significant engine of development. But unless free trade is fair trade, there is no just trade for Africa. Let two examples illustrate my contention.

Cotton production is a vibrant agricultural industry in Africa, especially among the so-called "C-4": Mali, Chad, Benin and Burkina Faso. Zambia also grows very good cotton. But the world market price for cotton is obviously seriously depressed by the payment of USA cotton farmers over \$3 billion in subsidies each year. This has been a highly contentious issue in WTO negotiations, where such subsidies are considered unacceptable to free market

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negotiations. The USA has had bitter legal disputes with Brazil, in particular, and only recently was some mutually acceptable compromises at least temporarily realised, avoiding some mean trade retaliation measures. But what this Brazilian settlement will mean for justice for African cotton farmers, like my friends in eastern Zambia, is yet to be seen.

Dairy products are key to agricultural activities in Europe and in Africa. In the past few years, intense negotiations have been going on between African states and the European Union over Free Trade arrangements, the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Frankly, it looks and sounds good in documents and in speeches, but in truth the EPAs are not primarily development-oriented. Hence, a country like Zambia might find itself forced, under the terms of free trade, to open up to

subsidised European agricultural products at prices that wipe out local producers. Where is justice?

And third, justice for Africa must take account of the on-going struggle for more just power relationships in the international financial institutions (IFIs) that wield such influence in our globalised world. Voting power in two of the international

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**A basic norm of justice is that those who are to be affected by decisions should have a say in that decision-making process.**

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financial institutions, the World Bank and the IMF, is on a weighted vote basis, where the rich countries strongly outweigh poor countries such as in Africa. While WTO votes are on a one-country one vote basis, such votes are seldom taken and decisions are made in a consensus mode that has been shaped to favour the rich countries.

In the most significant organ of the United Nations, the Security Council, the five permanent members wield the strongest power, including the veto. The ten non-permanent seats rotate among the other UN members and occasionally have included Africans.

Proposals for reform of the voting power in the IFIs have been made and are a bit too complicated to elaborate here in this paper! And calls for expansion of the permanent seats at the Security Council are periodically made but periodically ignored. My only point in raising the issue here is that more just power relationships should always be on the agenda when speaking of justice for Africa. A basic norm of justice is that those who are to be affected by decisions should have a say in that decision-making process.

Justice and Africa? So there are three points for justice *for* Africa – climate change adjustments, trade relationships and power relationships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let me conclude by emphasising the need to pay attention to justice in and for Africa. This is because of the importance of Africa to the rest of the world.

About 20 years ago, after living in Africa only a short time, I was returning to the USA for a brief visit. The Jesuit who was driving me to the airport asked what I would be speaking about to various audiences. I told him Africa, its past, present and future. He simply and bluntly said to me: "Tell them that the future of the world depends on the future of Africa!" Well, I pondered and responded, what could such a sweeping statement possibly mean? "Think about it, pray about it, say about it!" was his answer. Well, I've done that over the years, and I have shared more



with you under the theme of “Africa and Justice.” For I do believe that my friend’s simple and blunt remark to me almost 20 years ago is still very true. I do genuinely believe the truth – and I try to live that truth in my social and educational and pastoral work in Zambia – that the future of the world does indeed depend on Africa.

It is a truth I thought of again in writing this article, as I was completing a very wonderful book. It’s a very large book, almost 600 pages, published last year, simply called *AFRICA*, with the subtitle, *Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. The author is Richard Dowden, a British journalist who has lived in and

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**Africa: the mother of us all. It is our past.  
Could it also be our future?**

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travelled around Africa for over thirty years. His has had a love-hate relationship with the Continent -- for example, he offers an extremely sharp critique of Zimbabwe’s Mugabe and Zaire’s Mobutu, along with a delightful praise of Botswana and Ghana. But I was very much struck by his opening paragraph in the very last chapter of his long book, entitled “The New Africa.” He writes: “Africa: where humans emerged some 4 million years ago. From where, some 100,000 years ago, Homo Sapiens spread all over the world. Africa: the mother of us all. It is our past. Could it also be our future?”

Dowden mentions a fact that I had heard repeated several times last October, when I participated in Rome in the Second African Synod – a gathering of some 200 Catholic bishops from throughout Africa, joined by another 50 persons, a mix of bishops, laity and religious. The meeting had as its theme, “The Church in Africa in Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.” The fact repeated was that civilisation began on the African Continent and Africa has a lot to contribute to that civilisation today. Remember that anthropologists tell us that Adam and Eve were probably South Africans! The final message of the Second African Synod called for a more positive perception of Africa. I quote:

Africa must not despair. The blessings of God are still abundant, waiting to be prudently and justly employed for the good of her children. Where the conditions are right, her children have proved that they can reach, and have indeed reached, the height of human endeavours and competence. There is much good news in many parts of Africa. (Message, #6)

Well, it’s my message, my work, my hope, my prayer, that this expression of the Synod is really true and that justice in and for Africa can be part of that good news.

*Peter Henriot, S.J.  
JCTR Staff  
Lusaka, Zambia*

## ARTICLES AND LETTERS

We would like to encourage you to contribute in articles to the *JCTR Bulletin*. These articles can be on any social, economic, political, educational, cultural, pastoral, theological and spiritual theme. A good issue of the *Bulletin* really depends on your lively analytical exchange of views. The length of your article should be between 1000 and 1500 words.

We also encourage comments on the articles in this or previous *Bulletins*. Views for the improvement of the *Bulletin* are also welcome.

The next issue of the *JCTR Bulletin* (fourth quarter) will be out in December 2010. So to contribute, please write articles or letters to the *Editor* either by regular mail to JCTR, P.O. Box 37774, Lusaka, Zambia; or by e-mail to [jctrbulletin@jesuits.org.zm](mailto:jctrbulletin@jesuits.org.zm). The deadline for submissions is 10 November 2010.

We look forward to hearing from you!

# THE ILLUSIVE NATURE OF POVERTY

*Poverty is as old as humanity itself. Factors that contribute to poverty include heritage and status at birth, lack of access to opportunities that ensure that a person has what he or she needs, disease without good access to good healthcare, lack of informal or/and formal education so that one has skills to live a good life, hopelessness in life, unfair global relations and relations between the rich and poor, national policies that only benefit the rich. The fight against poverty is as old as poverty itself where people are continuously working hard to come out of poverty and communities and institutions working to help people come out of poverty. Despite these individual and institutional efforts, the intensity of poverty continues to deepen even when figures suggest reductions in numbers of the poor. Dominic Liche asserts that because of its complexity, poverty is illusive and difficult to fight when looked at in a simplistic, mechanical way.*

## REALITY OF POVERTY

I often wonder what the world's agenda is in fighting poverty in the world especially in Africa. When organisations, individuals, governments say they are fighting poverty, what really are they fighting? Whose poverty are they fighting? What are the measurements in determining that any strategy in fighting poverty actually works? Does one agenda in fighting poverty work across the globe? Who should determine how poverty should be fought – the person fighting poverty or the person in poverty? This last question is a very crucial one, given that in most cases, it is the person with the means and ideas to fight poverty that determines first, what poverty is, and second, how to deal with that poverty as defined by him or her.

One of the current definitions of poverty as defined by those with the means to fight poverty is as follows: A person is described as poor if they live below an income of US\$1.25 a day (in 2005 prices). There is also a broader understanding of poverty that

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**Despite the fact that on the global scale, poverty has been reducing, in developing countries of Africa, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, poverty levels are on the increase.**

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is not limited to incomes but goes beyond to talk about failure to meet one's basic needs. Poverty is also about the failure to have control of one's life, to make decisions freely, to contribute to decisions that will affect a person's life, to feel secure in the environment one lives in, to be happy with what one has, to feel at home with one's life.

Despite the fact that on a global scale, poverty has been reducing, in developing countries of Africa, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, poverty levels are on the increase. According to the World Bank, it is estimated that world poverty has reduced from 1.9

billion in 1981 to 1.8 billion in 1990, and to about 1.4 billion in 2005. In sub-Saharan Africa poverty levels have remained high at 50% from 1981 to date.

In Zambia poverty levels have been reducing gradually on the national scale but when the data is disaggregated, it shows reduction in rural poverty but increase in urban poverty. Poverty levels in 2006 stood at 64% down from 70% in 1991. Rural poverty reduced from 88% in 1991 to 78% in 2006 whilst urban poverty increased from 49% in 1991 to 53% in 2006 (Central Statistics Office of Zambia).

Despite these numerical decreases of poverty in Zambia and the world over, the reality of poverty remains a daunting one, with people dying of hunger because of lack of access to food, people dying of curable and treatable diseases, people's voices not being taken seriously simply because they are poor. The reality of poverty goes deeper than mere figures. The intensity of poverty continues to deepen.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT EFFORTS AT POVERTY ERADICATION

The current efforts at poverty reduction have concentrated on raising national wealth in the hope that with more economic growth in the nation, poverty would eventually reduce. This hope for a "trickle-down effect" for many countries is showing that it is not automatic that with more economic growth, poverty reduces.

Another approach is to encourage donor countries to give to poor countries development aid so that it can help in developing the poor countries and eventually the people themselves would benefit from such development. Trillions of US dollars have been poured in this kind of aid with minimal reduction in poverty in developing countries. One has just to read the thoughts of Dambisa Moyo in her book *Dead Aid* to understand this view that aid has not significantly translated into more economic growth for poor countries. This shows that aid in itself cannot lead to poverty reduction.

A third approach is through commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that improvements be made in 8 broad areas by the year 2015. The first goal is to reduce by half extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.

Current efforts at reducing poverty have concentrated primarily on figures (statistics) rather than on the wellbeing of the poor people themselves. The concentration is therefore on finding theoretical frameworks, plans, indicators, monitoring and evaluation frameworks that could possibly work given the high poverty levels in the world. Some scholars like William Easterly have called this approach that of planners. Developing and implementing these plans in many cases costs huge amounts of resources that it can easily be said that it is wastage to invest in these plans especially that these plans are mainly developed by people in rich nations, the United Nations, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The efforts have also narrowed themselves to enabling people to have adequate incomes for them to take care of themselves but reality shows that poverty is not only about incomes. Some people with good incomes remain poor because of other social and spiritual factors.

### **HOW IS POVERTY SO ILLUSIVE THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIGHT?**

Despite many efforts to end world poverty ranging from the World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), encouraging more economic growth, to commitments to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty seems to be here to stay even in the so-called developed countries. Poverty continues to be a major problem in the world with the many social problems connected to it. This could be because poverty is so complex that it cannot easily be grasped. It is illusive.

What then, makes poverty illusive, I propose seven reasons why this could be the case (you might have more reasons).

**First, poverty is caused by many things and not only one thing:** If poverty were to be caused by one simple factor or a known set of factors, it would be easy for us to come up with ways of dealing with it. We could easily subject nations to similar efforts and poverty would begin to reduce considerably. But unfortunately poverty is caused by many factors and what causes poverty in one area is different to what causes poverty in another area.

Therefore, what has been known to work in a village in Cambodia, might not work in a village in Zambia. Sometimes this has been the problem with big global organisations that are committed to ending poverty, they want to apply wholesale solutions to

poverty problems across the globe as though poverty was caused by the same factors everywhere.

**Second, some people choose to be poor:** As strange as this might sound, some people refuse to come out of poverty. Even when there are specific and workable ways of ending poverty in their lives, they choose to continue to be poor. An example can help to illustrate this point – most street persons beg in the streets because they want to meet their basic needs, but when strategies are developed to remove them from the streets into more productive lives (e.g.,

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**Some people are poor because they fail to trust others, they fail to believe in life, they fail to trust that they can lift themselves up to become productive human beings.**

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engaging in agriculture or adopted in homes and schools), they still find ways of coming back to the streets. The choice for poverty is strongly connected to the fact that poverty is not only about physical deprivation of needs but other needs like socio-spiritual ones.

**Third, poverty is not only about lack of basic needs but about the wellbeing of the whole human persons:** Some people that are poor are so because they lack faith and hope in themselves as human persons but also they lack hope that life can always be better, things can always change for the better and that others in life are essential in making a good human life. Some people are poor because they fail to trust others, they fail to believe in life, they fail to trust that they can lift themselves up to become productive human beings. They are “spiritually” poor. As long as poverty eradication interventions remain concentrated on material wellbeing, poverty caused by spiritual deprivation will continue to be a problem.

**Fourth, poverty can be defined differently and some people are ignorant that they are poor:** The definition of poverty varies with each poor person that exists. As such, no two poor people consider themselves to be poor in the same ways. The needs that they consider important differ and as such providing the same needs to poor people might not always work.

Ironically, some people do not know they are poor. They might not care that they are considered to be poor. These kinds of people could be those that are born poor to poor parents and the whole family might have a long history of poverty. They also live in a poor community that has learned to live within its means. Some thinkers have called this kind of poverty “chronic poverty” in that it runs across generations. How then do you deal with poor people who do not know they are poor?

**Fifth, poverty raises a very important question of whose responsibility is it to eradicate poverty:** Indeed, is it the poor person himself or the parent, the neighbor, the government, or the rich West or more recently the East? The lack of clarity on responsibility here can lead to havoc in poverty reduction

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### How then do you deal with poor people who do not know they are poor?

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strategies. The poor think it is the rich who have to end their poverty; as such, they sit as receptors waiting for the rich to fulfill their obligation. On their part, the rich think it is really their moral obligation to help the poor and they are frantically planning and trying to do their part. This, in most cases, has caused the dependence syndrome of the poor, not just of persons, but even nations where the poor think the rich will always be with them to help them in the time of need.

Just listen to news about any documentary on poverty, natural disaster, or when heads of states make speeches in front of a government representative from the rich countries. Mostly, it is highlighting many problems that need solution if "enough resources were available." The poor and poor nations have turned into professional beggars for ways of ending their own poverty.

**Sixth, poverty is embedded in all structures of society:** Structural poverty is one that is deep hidden in the social and political, economic structures of society. It is difficult even to find what really causes poverty in these situations. Take for example, the minimum wage in Zambia that allows big businesses to pay very meager salaries to their employees (less than ZMK300,000 equivalent to less than US\$60 per month). Take some Church institutions that preach that to be poor is fine because of the great reward in heaven, as another example. As long as poverty remains structural it will be difficult to deal with it. This kind of poverty almost becomes a habit.

**Seventh, poverty is heavily related to wastage of resources:** Now and again, it is said that there are enough available resources to cater for every human being in the world. Yet these resources are not available for every person in the world. The gap between the very rich and the very poor is forever on

the increase, big NGOs continue to flourish in terms of their access to resources and use of them for their own activities. And governments continue to enjoy huge expenditure on even things that do not make logical sense – e.g., spending ZMK50 million on a dinner after the launch of an activity or to celebrate a World Water Day, when millions still lack access to clean water.

## CONCLUSION

Given the different ways that poverty is difficult to fight, it can almost create apathy in fighting it because it seems like something that will never end. Sometimes the words in the Bible, "The poor will always be with us" become a good consolation. Poverty is very illusive and cannot be reduced to a single concept that can easily be understood.

As such, poverty eradication strategies should take cognisance of this fact and use a multi-pronged approach. In the event that our efforts seem not to help that much, we could do with Peter Singer's

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### We have to be searchers working with the poor people themselves to find appropriate interventions to help them out of poverty.

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approach, that the single life that you save out of poverty is a human being that deserves to be saved and as such a help to alleviating poverty. Our approaches should be broadened to look at other factors that lead to poverty such as those of trust, hope, faith, and the spiritual world. For sometimes people that lack these are worse off than those that lack material things.

In the words of William Easterly, we have to be searchers working with the poor people themselves to find appropriate interventions to help them out of poverty. Big ambitions of ending world poverty by a certain fixed year and trying to find ways of doing it can turn out to be as illusive as poverty itself.

*Dominic Liche  
JCTR Staff  
Lusaka*

## JCTR'S NEW OFFICES

After operating from the premises of Luwisha House, JCTR officially opened their new offices on 10 September 2010. These offices are located at 3813 Martin Mwamba Road, Olympia Park, just off the Great East Road, opposite Show Grounds, near the grounds of the Zambian Parliament. Easy to find, and much easier and less crowded to base our activities. Our postal address, e-mail address, telephone number, and fax number have remained the same.



# MARKETS, INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

*There is often a belief that poverty can be reduced only when there is more economic growth. Liberal systems of markets are seen as the key engine to such economic growth. What is forgotten is that with more economic growth comes high inequalities. The poor remain poor or even worse off and in some developing countries, the levels of poverty continue to rise. Leonard Chiti explores this whole area, concluding that markets alone, without values, are inadequate to reduce poverty.*

The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 marked a significant watershed in the theoretical debates between pro-market advocates and their detractors. The demolition of the wall which physically separated East from West Germany marked the beginning of the end of communism. The downfall of communism in Eastern Europe marked the apparent triumph of capitalism. It led to the fall of planned economies and the dominance of market economies. Capitalism as an ideology and market-based economic policies emerged as the dominant approach to development. This approach stressed the goal of economic activity as maximising utility on an individual level and profit on a corporate level. The ascendancy of market systems flourished during the reign of right-wing political forces led by Ronald Reagan in the United States of America and Margaret Thatcher in the UK in the 1980s. The World Bank and the US Treasury at the time were avid promoters of market reforms. These forces espoused an ethic that placed a high premium on methodological individualism.

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

Proponents of the self-regulating market systems argue that when rational human beings act out of self-interest and seek to maximise profits without restraint, society benefits from their endeavours. They augment their arguments by referring to the failed economic theories, policies and practices of the now defunct Soviet system.

However, the capitalist system itself has experienced some challenges, notably the East Asia crisis in the late 1990s and more recently the Global Economic Crisis of 2008. Both events have raised questions about the efficacy of markets to deliver on

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**Inequalities then refer to the disparities that exist in society in terms of income and the distribution of wealth.**

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development, reduce poverty and eliminate inequalities. The supremacy of the market as a mechanism to enhance wealth, reduce poverty, eliminate inequalities and promote development is now in doubt. This has brought to the fore the debate between the supporters of the market who regard the market as the best tool to allocate scarce resources

and those who oppose them. In recent times it is a debate that has pitted the so-called “finance” advocates and the civil society advocates.

This article argues that markets are necessary to promote growth but not sufficient to eliminate inequalities and eradicate poverty.

## MARKETS, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

In this article, markets are defined as spaces, physical or otherwise that facilitate, the interaction of agents who are willing and able to exchange goods and services. They are institutions that bring about a redistribution of goods and services in an economy (Allen and Thomas, *Poverty and Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Oxford University Press, 2000).

The logic of the market is that wealth can be allocated efficiently by impersonal market forces to members of any given community. Liberal economists assume that when the market is left to itself then its inherent self-direction will govern its operations efficiently and produce efficient outcomes. This implies that when self-interested individuals enter the market and pursue their own goals of maximising utility, then somehow an “invisible hand” will ensure that their combined efforts work to the general benefit of everyone. Markets are promoted as the best instrument in allocating resources efficiently and effectively.

This follows Adam Smith’s comment that the “hidden hand” of the market converts individual interests into the wealth of the nations (Allen and Thomas, 2000). It is frequently stated that getting “prices right” is the pathway to growth and prosperity. Actors in the market respond to prices in the market.

Inequality in this article is understood as the differences that exist in society in terms of income and consumption. Inequalities then refer to the disparities that exist in society in terms of income and the distribution of wealth (Prof. V. Seshamani, “Why and how should we be concerned about Equity in Zambia,” 2009). It may imply the gulf between the rich and the poor as well as differences in consumption levels

Four approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty have been developed. Poverty is defined in terms of income, capability, social exclusion and participatory approaches. A common method of defining poverty is the income method. It uses a given threshold in terms of US dollars that is required for a decent standard of living (Allen and Thomas, 2000). It defines poverty in terms of a shortfall in consumption.

The capability approach pioneered by Amartya Sen suggests that poverty is "...the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than the merely lowness of incomes ...". Sen suggests that the expansion of human capabilities should be employed to determine human well-being (Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

The social exclusion concept refers to a process through which people are excluded from full participation in the society to which they belong. The final approach developed by Robert Chambers gained widespread use in the poverty debates within the World Bank. It is an approach favoured by the European Union as well. The World Bank characterises this way of understanding poverty as "voicelessness and powerlessness." This refers to the inability of people to influence processes and development programmes to impact positively on their actual life situation.

The ascendancy of liberalisation following the collapse of planned economies has given rise to the neoliberal orthodoxy that posits markets as the best mechanism for achieving growth and reducing poverty. The free operation of the market will spur on entrepreneurs and private investors to enter the market, promote competition, improve efficiency and thereby raise incomes. Inequalities will disappear and poverty be eradicated. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister in England, used to say that "...the point is not to cut the cake more equally but to bake a bigger cake ...," implying that there was no need to attend to inequalities, rather the solution was to generate more wealth. For such a process to succeed, it requires little government intervention and neutral incentives to motivate individuals to interact freely in the market place.

Neoliberal economic policies derived from neoclassical economic theory hypothesise that establishing markets and providing a *laissez faire* environment leads to increased productivity. This increase will yield more incomes and raise the standard of living for all concerned. This implies that the solution to high levels of poverty and wide inequalities lies in increased economic growth. In the initial stages such growth may not be sufficient to wipe out inequalities per se but eventually with long term sustained growth such inequalities will disappear and poverty levels will fall (S. Kuznets, "Economic Growth and Income Inequality," 1955).

## APPLICATION TO ZAMBIA

Since 1991, Zambia has been implementing neoliberal economic policies following the election of a right wing leaning government. The introduction of market reforms followed an economic crisis in the 1980s, growing out of an inefficient economic system, decline in copper prices and a protracted drought. The Zambian government instituted market-oriented reforms that entailed reducing subsidies, privatising government owned firms and liberalising the trading environment. These reforms formed part of the so-called "Washington Consensus," a raft of economic reforms sponsored by the World Bank, the IMF and the US Treasury. The goal was to replace State intervention in the economy and allow markets through the private sector to drive the economy.

Zambia is one of the poorest countries in the world. 64% of its population lives below the poverty threshold while 51% live in extreme poverty (Central Statistics Office of Zambia, 2006). It is ranked 164 out of 182 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP, 2009). It is also

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### **The so-called "trickle down" effect has hardly trickled to the majority Zambians.**

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considered to have high inequalities amongst its population. Statistics show that Zambia has one of the highest Gini coefficients in the world, with the latest figure standing at 50.8 representing a reduction from 60 in 2006 (Midterm Review of the Fifth National Development Plan 2006-2010, 2009).

The transition to a market oriented economy took the form of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in 1991. SAPs were intended to arrest a declining economy that had been in free fall since the mid-1970s. Market reforms would restore efficiency, stimulate growth and ultimately improve the quality of life of Zambians. The introduction of market reforms was expected to lead to greater equity. At the time, up to 71% of the population was classified as poor.

In terms of poverty levels, a reduction from 71% to 64% was achieved between 1991 and 2009. However, in terms of inequality, Zambia remains a very unequal society. The 2006 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey shows that 50% of the population earns 15% of total national income while 10% of the population earns 48%.

The implementation of neoliberal economic policies through SAPs did not immediately yield the kind of economic growth that would reduce poverty levels significantly. Even though Zambia achieved some stability following the introduction of a market economy and scored growth rates of around 5% over several years, nonetheless, inequalities remain high as indicated by the Gini coefficient. The notion that growth will lead to poverty reduction and equity has

not been the **case** of Zambia. The so-called “trickle down” effect has hardly trickled to the majority Zambians.

The prediction of neoclassical economic theory that the action of self-interested individuals pursuing maximum utility in a market system would lead to the improvement of the general welfare of a population (F.A. Hayek, “The Use of Knowledge in Society” 1945) has yet to produce improvements in the quality of life of Zambians. The expectation that high and sustainable growth will automatically translate into poverty reduction has not occurred 20 years after neoliberal economic policies were introduced in Zambia.

This link between poverty reduction and increased productivity is the preferred approach of the neoclassical economists. Poverty can be eliminated if market forces are unleashed to do what

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**This kind of economics would go so far as to posit that those who are poor and unemployed have failed to take advantage of market opportunities to earn a living.**

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they do best, induce growth and the growth will culminate in more incomes for everyone concerned. This will translate into a more equitable society with equal access of the citizens of the country to the basic needs essential for survival. However, the evidence in Zambia does not fit the theory.

Surveys conducted by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) since 1996 show that the cost of living for the majority of Zambians has been on a steady rise while the corresponding income levels have not risen to match the cost of living (*The JCTR Basic Needs Basket: A comprehensive Overview*, 2009). This evidence supports the theory that neoclassical economic theory and its attendant neoliberal economic policies do not in all cases lead to sustainable development. Sustainable development in this sense is seen as enabling many more citizens of a country to enjoy a high quality of life. Neoliberal economic policies which further the free actions of market forces to spur on development have yet to show convincing evidence that growth leads to equity.

## **NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMIC THEORY AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

Neoclassical economic theory assumes that a given rate of growth of GDP translates into poverty reduction. Increases in GDP in any given country represent the best route towards lifting people out of poverty. Such growth may be accompanied by rapid rates of industrialisation giving rise to new jobs, increasing incomes and improving the living

standards of the poor (Allen and Thomas, 2000). According to this line of thinking, growth occurs when market forces are allowed to determine the prices of different products on the market to stimulate productivity and innovation. Consequently, a self-regulating market economy responding to price signals is able to stimulate economic activities driven by supply and demand forces so as to ensure that economic actors pursue self-interests that culminate in economic growth.

Neoliberal economic policies believe that the State is an inefficient and ineffective actor in allocating scarce resources. The assumption is that the market is a better instrument at allocating resources. Neoliberal economic models are predicated on the existence of free and perfect markets. These markets allow free entry and exit of economic actors into the market. This facilitates market forces to play the role of determining prices and consequently allocating resources according to the dictates of supply and demand.

The logic of markets embedded in neoclassical economics is predicated on the assumption that economic actors are motivated and solely preoccupied with maximising utility. An economy can only reach optimal efficiency when there is no attempt to regulate self-interested economic actors. This kind of economics would go so far as to posit that those who are poor and unemployed have failed to take advantage of market opportunities to earn a living.

In its purist form classical and neoclassical economic theory does not have a place for poverty alleviation programmes, particularly the type that are undertaken by the State. Neoclassical economists see poverty reduction efforts as slowing down growth. This in some ways explains the neoclassical economists’ antipathy towards the State’s intervention in the economy. For neoclassical economists the market is superior to the State in resource allocation and therefore the latter should be limited in its interventions in the economy.

Market fundamentalists are obsessed with growth. There is no questioning that growth is necessary for development and that markets can play an important role in facilitating this growth. However, growth for its own sake is not a sufficient condition for development and poverty reduction. What is crucial is to recognise the limitations of both the State and markets in development activities (Joseph Stiglitz, *Markets and Development*, 1989). The State, however, can play a meaningful role in limiting or even compensating for market failures.

Neoclassical economic theory fails to take into account the fact that markets can experience failures. Von Hayek, a doyen of market fundamentalism, while admitting that market failures can occur, believed that there is an inherent dynamism with the system that ensures that markets self-correct in the long run. The

message is “leave markets alone even when crises occur.”

However, for markets to work efficiently, several conditions need to occur such as perfect information, unhindered entry and exit into the market, perfect competition, just to mention a few. Seldom are many of these conditions met. Consequently, market failures are common, particularly in Low Developing Countries.

It has been frequently stated that the market is a good servant but a bad master (Gerry O’Hanlon, *The Recession and God*, 2009) Left to itself it cannot guarantee the integral development of every human being. What is required is to harness the good side of the market, as represented in its ability to generate wealth, and reject its bad side which is seen mostly in its unintended effects such as increase in inequalities. Neoclassic economic theory places a heavy premium on a rational actor pursuing self-interests in a bid to maximise material well-being. This displays a reductionist worldview where everything is reduced to economic interests.

## **A FLAWED VISION OF THE WORLD**

Neoliberalism’s worldview revolves around material concerns. The basic quest for rational beings is to achieve as much material success as possible. When human beings are given the freedom to pursue their private interests aided by the price mechanism, society benefits from increased growth of the economy. This vision of the world is flawed. It is purely a mechanistic worldview that gives too much responsibility to the market to address the society’s challenges. The goal of development from a neoliberal point of view is to increase the nations’ GDP. The higher the GDP the more prosperous the country is reckoned (Allen and Thomas, 2000). However, GDP misses many aspects of our existence. Besides, much of the progress in important areas of life is invisible to most people. The neoliberal paradigm simply promotes the materialistic motivations of individuals.

## **ETHICAL CONCERNS**

Apart from the promotion of individual achievement and protection of negative rights, social forces, such as solidarity and other non-market forces play crucial roles in improving the living standards of the people (Allen and Thomas, 2000). This is in a sharp contrast to the moral voice of the Church which encourages the promotion of social values. Commenting on the crisis that beset the capitalist world in 2008, Frank Turner wonders whether part of the problem of the Global Economic Crisis could not be ascribed to the presence of “a moral or systemic

crisis”. It surely can be argued that the absence of ethical and moral consideration did play a part in the

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## **The economy should serve the interest of those who are weak.**

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financial crisis that engulfed much of the Western World in 2008. The greed and irresponsibility exhibited by some economic actors in these financial markets played a critical role in its unravelling. Neoclassical economic theory would consider this normal as part of the motivating factor of “rational self-interested” economic actors.

Ethical and moral concerns are important in the approach to interactions in the market system. The Church Social Teaching (CST) is clear on the need to promote ethical values such as solidarity, the common good and a special concern for the poor. The economy and by extension the market should serve the interest of those who are weak and unable to actively take advantage of the market to advance their economic and material interests. The market cannot guarantee this. And free markets cannot work in a moral vacuum. The State whose primary responsibility is to promote the common good is expected to supplement the actions of the market.

Civil society groups who oppose the self-regulating market in development activities point to similar concerns. As a practical example, the JCTR has always advocated for a value-based approach to development. It employs the Church Social Teaching (CST) to call for the respect of human dignity and the promotion of human rights as a holistic approach to development. Such an approach recognises that the market on its own cannot deliver on development. The market is amoral and needs moral input to ensure that all benefit in society.

## **CONCLUSION**

Neoliberal models of development advocated by pro-market fundamentalists in the 1980s and 1990s failed to lift the vast majority of people out of poverty. Such policies promoted by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the IMF have done very little to significantly reduce poverty and narrow existing inequalities. CSOs including the church have been advocating a tempering of the push for market oriented reforms in order to lessen the adverse impact of neoliberal economic reforms.

*Leonard Chiti, S.J.  
JCTR Staff  
Lusaka, Zambia*

**“A society where faith promotes justice for all in all spheres of life, especially for the poor.”**



# INTERROGATING THE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY

*The question of what democracy is and what is an ideal kind of democracy remains complex especially because there are different ways of practicing democracy across the world. Interestingly, especially in Zambia, some religious groups think that leadership even when achieved through democratic elections, is divinely given by God. As such, decisions made by leaders should not be questioned even when such decisions are undemocratic or disrespectful of democratic principles. Privilege Haang'andu explores what could be a good understanding of democracy.*

One Saturday morning I was sitting in a hospital treatment room when one nurse engaged me in a biblical discussion as she recorded my blood pressure. According to her, priests and pastors should stay away from politics and leave that “dirty” business to politicians. Seemingly coming from the “prosperity gospel” background, she also told me that politicians had little to do with poverty levels in society but that God is the one that bestows riches. According to the “prosperity gospel”, one person might feel favored by God that things have turned out alright for them, even when the social, political, economic structures around them hinder others from similar progress, foster unemployment, and deny others good healthcare. For such believers, God is the God of prosperity and not of misfortune. What is the (mis)understanding of these people of structural injustice and the human’s use of free will?

It seems to me that people heavily influenced by the “prosperity gospel” can be a serious danger to a proper, participatory democracy, especially when (mis)placed in political leadership. They will either tell churches to desist from the political realm and stick to the pulpit or they will proclaim political leaders are

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**Some have even gone to the extent of accusing the Church of insinuating a Rwanda-like genocide because the Church has stood its ground against certain political positions.**

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“anointed” by God, and therefore should not be criticised by the rest of the citizens. We have heard such sentiments repeatedly from some of our political leaders here in Zambia. Some have even gone to the extent of accusing the Church of insinuating a Rwanda-like genocide because the Church has stood its ground against certain political positions. I would like to demonstrate in this article, that citizens’ freedoms of speech and action are fundamental for the practice of a genuine partnership democracy.

These, in a genuinely participatory democracy, are dues of every citizen and underline the core value of political participation of citizens in self-governance.

I deliberately make a distinction between simply a majoritarian democracy, which means government by the largest number of the people, and partnership democracy, which means government by all the people, acting together as full and equal partners in a collective enterprise of self-government.

Let us understand the partnership conception of democracy as a state where institutions are called democratic to the extent that they allow citizens to govern themselves collectively, procedurally through active speech, action, and enactment. How then do we assess the extent of individual and collective involvement in partnership democracy and how do speech and action influence this assessment? There are three main pillars against which we can test partnership democracy: popular sovereignty, citizen equality, and democratic discourse.

Popular sovereignty is determined by the relationship between the leaders and the public at large. In partnership democracy, the latter are the masters and the former only execute the deliberations and instructions of the latter. That is why people always complain when politicians usurp democratic processes such as the constitutional making process.

In the words of Ronald Dworkin, citizen equality means that, “in a democracy, citizens, though collectively sovereign, are also, as individuals, participants in the contests they collectively judge.” It demands that they participate as equals. Citizen equality is expressed, most commonly, through one’s voting power and the power to speak in various processes through which collective political decisions are made and public opinion and culture are formed.

Partnership democracy is put at risk when society is fragmented into pockets of citizens with varying powers to influence speech and its resultant enactments, which are supposed to bind every citizen’s actions. Examples of isolated pockets of citizens having more influence on processes that must have broader participation are overwhelming in Zambia today. The constitutional making process, which already faces public dissatisfaction, is one. The enactment of the NGO Act, not in itself, but its

content and motive, is another. The harassing and arrest of political opponents is another. This implies that some groups within larger society only have a diminished opportunity to appeal for their convictions and this deeply harms partnership democracy. Certainly, it is of no doubt that an individual (or a group) cannot possibly count themselves as a partner in an enterprise of self-government when they are effectively shut out from the political debate for whatever reason.

The third pillar by which we can judge and weigh partnership democracy is democratic discourse. It means that the political environment must be utterly enabling for free interaction through debate and deliberation. No form of self-governance is plausible if citizens are not able to speak to each other in an environment and structure that is free from censorship and intimidation. The fact that Zambia has not had war does not make it a peaceful country. The State upper-hand control of national television and the print media to suit the ruling party purposes, for instance, is a serious way of limiting access to credible information and can dangerously indoctrinate citizens with no alternative sources of information. It can also be an intimidation of some sort to those citizens who feel denied space for coverage.

It is critical at this point to note that these three pillars of partnership democracy are obsolete without the constitutional guarantee and protection of free speech and action. If the public is to rule, then it must be free from fear of punishment when it criticises its officials. If officials can, at whim, forbid the publication of critical information to them or forbid new parties, newspapers, civil society movements that expose the inability and ineffectiveness of government, then citizens are not free. In partnership democracy, citizens must be free to speak out their opinions whether these opinions are finally considered valid or not, or even unlikable. Otherwise, how can citizens make their views known and persuade their fellow citizens and representatives to adopt them unless they express themselves freely even when it concerns the conduct of the government? Without this liberty of speech and action, citizens would soon lose their capacity to influence the agenda of government decisions and this can no longer be called a partnership democracy. In a partnership democracy, citizens are at liberty even to act contrary to laws that do not genuinely depict their deliberations as collective actors.

Freedoms of speech and democratic discourse are important for another crucial democratic reason. These are the means through which citizens acquire civic competence through learning from one another, engaging in discussion, reading and hearing from political experts and candidates. Several years ago, our neighbouring country, Zimbabwe, enacted the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to prohibit public assembly without police permit. And by public

assembly is meant any gathering of more than two in a public place. The determination of which group did or did not violate this act is discretionary to the State security agencies. This is a typical incident of a government's desire to abort free action through silencing the popular views and criticisms. When public assembly is curtailed, speech and action are impeded too. POSA is a subtle way to shut down public free speech and assembly that necessitate deliberated action, especially from differing opinions.

It is true, therefore, that the regulations that a government promotes can either hinder or promote democratic discourse depending on whether it allows or denies the flow of information necessary for diverse formulations of opinions and debate. Restrictions on public association effectively restrict the flow of information, and subsequently reduce the quality of democratic discussion and decision. Independent associations are a fundamental opportunity for discussion, deliberation, acquisition of political skills, and action. Every partnership democracy is duty-bound and obligated to create institutions and structures through which citizens sufficiently run their public affairs through free deliberations, associations, and participation in processes that give birth to rules and laws that oblige them in return. If citizens are to acquire information

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**Citizens must be free to speak out their opinions whether these opinions are finally considered valid or not, or even unlikable.**

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they need in order to understand issues of self-governance and thus judge and act responsibly, they must get access to all important sources of information. The aim is to allow and stimulate free speech and interaction among citizens, through which citizens make their views known and persuade their fellow citizens, and are able to hear what others have to say to form policies that will govern them in action as a partnership democratic society.

This process reveals how central the human activity of speech is to deliberation in partnership democracy and how free and responsible political action is enhanced by such freedom. Laws and rules born of free deliberation and discussion will inevitably breed and inspire free action in a political society. And so free speech is cardinal to self-governance in a political community and it necessitates free action. Anything that censors and curtails these freedoms is dictatorial. This is sad especially when such censorship is heavily supported by misinterpreted religious beliefs about leaders being divinely anointed and unquestionable.

*Privilege Hang'andu, S.J.  
Marquette University  
USA*

# OUR TIME TO LIBERATE ZAMBIA

*The concept of liberation was very popular during the times of slave trade, colonisation, and apartheid. In postcolonial times especially with the introduction of democracy, the major concern is how to ensure that there is good leadership after elections and how such leadership ensures good governance. Trevor Simumba insightfully suggests that it is up to citizens themselves to have the power to “liberate” Zambia of its social and economic ills, especially through a good choice of good leaders.*

Politics in Zambia has for a long time been a dysfunctional system, from the racist colonialism, through to the Westminster style democratic system then onwards to the so-called One Party Participatory democracy and eventually to the hybrid system we have today, a multiparty system. A multi-party system is a system in which multiple political parties have the capacity to gain control of government separately or in coalition. The effective number of parties in a multi-party system is normally larger than two. Even though there is no specific, universally accepted definition of “democracy,” equality and freedom have been identified as important characteristics of democracy since ancient times. These principles are reflected in all citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to power. For example, in a representative democracy, every vote has equal weight, no restrictions can apply to anyone wanting to become a representative, and the freedom of its citizens is secured by legitimised rights and liberties which are generally protected by a constitution.

Unlike a single-party system (or a non-partisan democracy), a multiparty democracy encourages the general constituency to form multiple, distinct, officially recognised groups, generally called political parties. Each party *competes* for votes from the enfranchised constituents (those allowed to vote). A multi-party system prevents the leadership of a single party from controlling a single legislative chamber

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## **Equality and freedom have been identified as important characteristics of democracy since ancient times.**

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without challenge. The key phrase here is, “compete for votes.” Thus, all political parties in Zambia are supposed to be involved in a competition for votes from Zambian citizens. The question that one asks is what the reality is on the ground in terms of our political system. Do the various political parties truly understand their role within a multi-party system?

It is quite evident that Zambia has not truly moved away from the dominance of one political party system as we see the MMD maintain hegemony over power since 1991. Interestingly, the MMD has now become dominated by former UNIP leaders that were a key part of the 27 year rule of UNIP under the one party system. The major missing part of Zambia’s

transition in 1991 was that while we had a change of President, the fundamental centralised structure of the governance system was not changed. The Constitution of Zambia still gives the President excessive Executive powers which is not in balance within a multi-party system and, as such, our two other arms of Government, the Judiciary and Legislature are not able to provide effective checks and balances to the Executive.

What we have in Zambia today can be termed a “polarised pluralism.” It was originally described by political philosopher Giovanni Sartori and defines a system where moderate views are replaced by polarised views. If a country suffers from polarised pluralism, the extremist group with the most control eventually gains full control of the state, compromises other groups, eventually making them nonexistent, and tramples the opposition on all issues.

Polarised pluralism was visible immediately preceding the Nazi era in Germany. The country had a strong support for communism, but a slightly but significantly stronger support for the Nazi party. Communism lay on the far left, while the Nazi party lay on the far right, associated with fascism. In Zambia, today, we have a similar polarised situation but the polarisation is not based on any ideology, it is simply about power and which individual exercises that power. So the country is polarised along ethnic, regional and die-hard partisan lines with daily harsh criticisms of the party in power. In such a polarised environment, it is very difficult for new political voices to be heard but even more significantly it discourages many well intentioned and capable Zambians from stepping into the political arena. This becomes a vicious cycle as the mediocrity of the political system continues and only the loudest seem to get heard -- even though they might offer no solutions to the political, social and economic problems that face the people.

In Zambia’s situation where we have a hybrid of a Presidential and Westminster style, Parliamentary coalition building tends to be more problematic than in pure parliamentary systems like those in the United Kingdom because of differences in how executive power is formed and maintained. Presidential systems lack mechanisms for assuring that the executive has a majority in the legislature, and there is no way of replacing minority governments until the

next prescheduled elections. Consequently, presidential systems are simultaneously more prone to minority governments and to immobilism. We saw this situation in the first term of the late President Levy P. Mwanawasa and we are seeing it again with the current Government. This is why in Zambia it is very difficult for alliances or pacts to work without a significant change in our Constitution.

It would help Zambia immensely if we were able to fully meet three essential conditions for our system to truly become an effective multi-party democratic system. Robert Dahl in his book, *Democracy and its Critics* (1989), described three essential conditions for a multiparty democracy to function. These are:

- a) extensive competition by contestants including individuals, groups or parties for government;
- b) political participation that provides the choice for the electorate to select candidates in free and fair elections; and;
- c) civil and political liberties that enable citizens to express themselves without fear of punishment.

Problems arise when these conditions do not obtain in the social and economic world of political actors as we have today in Zambia. We can recognise “polarised pluralism” in Zambia through the following factors:

- Anti-systemic parties (e.g., some parties refusing to participate in constitution making process and lack of respect for the Government);
- Bilateral opposition (parties failure to recognise common views);
- Some parties being forced from their core position (e.g., parties that change their position to become loud in the hope of being popular);
- Ideological distance between parties (some pro-privatisation while others against it);
- Centrifugal drive (parties driven to adopt extreme positions on issues);
- Politics of over-promising (e.g., the miracle economic turnaround in 90 days if elected).

Polarised pluralism is a bane of democracy. It can contribute to democratic breakdown as we have recently seen in Venezuela (Hugo Chavez) and tragically in Kenya after the 2007 elections. Although in Kenya it has now been salvaged with the promulgation of a new Constitution on 27 August 2010 after much bloodshed. Is this what we want in Zambia before we find sense and sit down together as a nation and make for ourselves a good Constitution? If there is one legacy that the current government can leave behind would be to ensure that a good new Constitution is enacted based on fulfilling the above conditions fully.

Many of the senior politicians in Zambia have forgotten the oaths they took as servants of the people. It boggles the mind when you have sitting MP's being convicted of criminal felony but still not able, on principle, to resign their positions, let alone their political parties still allowing them to remain members of their parties. This rot goes right through

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**Let us develop our own solutions to the socio-economic issues we face and let us stop looking always to donors to solve problems we have created ourselves by remaining silent for too long.**

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the whole political establishment whether ruling or opposition party. As the country goes to the polls next year, it is important we understand the source of the current polarised status of Zambian politics in order to develop a strategy that fully incorporates this understanding while at the same time lays the foundation for ordinary citizens to participate fully in the creation of a truly multi-party democratic state in Zambia. It is hoped that many Zambians that have in the past been reluctant to join politics would seriously re-consider their position and support the various political parties, even the new ones. Let us develop our own solutions to the socio-economic issues we face in Zambia and let us stop looking always to donors to solve problems we have created ourselves by remaining silent for too long. It is time to stand up and be counted for Zambia.

*Trevor Simumba  
International Business Consultant  
United Kingdom*

### **JCTR'S NEW DIRECTOR**

Fr. Leonard Chiti, S.J., became JCTR's new Director on 10 September 2010. Fr. Chiti was JCTR's Deputy Director since June 2009. He has good social and pastoral experience, and holds a Master of Science degree in Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.



# ZAMBIA'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN LEGAL LIMBO

*The JCTR and other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have continued to advocate for the promotion of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) through constitutional measures but also through national plans and institutions. CSOs were key in suggesting changes in the Bill of Rights in the 2005 Mung'omba Constitutional Review Commission. In 2005, CSOs in Zambia presented a parallel report to the government state party report to the United Nations Committee on ESCR. In 2008, the JCTR presented clear arguments and advice on the justiciability of ESCR to the Human Rights Committee of the 2007 National Constitutional Conference (NCC). Against this background, Simson Mwale gives the importance of constitutional protection and promotion of ESCR.*

Five years ago, I remember sitting in the public gallery of Palais Wilson at the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva listening attentively to the good promises that the Zambian government was making to the international community on the implementation of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). ESCR relate to those conditions necessary to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, education, health care, adequate housing, and gainful employment. These rights are explicitly elaborated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which Zambia ratified in 1984. Prior to government's meeting with the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Matrine Chuulu (Regional Coordinator of Women and Law Southern Africa – WLSA) and I presented a paper before the Committee where we argued very strongly that Zambia's failure to live up to its ESCR obligations despite its commitment to United Nations covenants, to provide an adequate standard of living to all citizens, has been due to three factors: (i) poor

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## **The social and economic needs of the general population continue to compete with government extravagant expenditures.**

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prioritisation of available resources by the government; (ii) failure to include ESCR in the Constitution in an enforceable manner; and (iii) unjust and ineffective implementation of economic measures by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Based on these premises, we called for explicit inclusion of ESCR in the new Bill of Rights, more effective pro-poor budgeting and implementation, 100% debt cancellation and removal of restrictive and inequitable IFIs conditionalities.

### **KNOWN FAILURE RATES**

A quick review of these failure factors illustrates government's ambivalence. Firstly, the prioritisation of the available resources remains a major challenge

for Zambia. The social and economic needs of the general population continue to compete with government extravagant expenditures. Worse still, the Auditor General's reports reveal every year massive amounts of public resources that are abused and misapplied through sometimes corrupt means. It's regrettable that an endemic corruption continues to affect almost all government ministries. This raises serious concerns over the management of public funds.

Secondly, through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), a huge part of Zambia's external debt was written off by creditors. The debt that stood at US\$7.1 billion by the end of 2005 was reduced to US\$635 million by the end of 2006. But because of lack of an accountable external debt contraction and management procedures to avoid irresponsible borrowing, Zambia is gradually increasing its debt load. Preliminary estimates indicate that by the end of 2009, Zambia's foreign debt stock grew to US\$1,159.6 million (See 2010 Budget Address, October 2009). Given the rate at which Zambia is borrowing, there is a likelihood of falling back into another debt trap.

Thirdly, the influence of IFIs economic measures have generally minimised. However, IFIs conditionalities continue to be manifested in what are now termed as "necessary conditionalities" usually associated with programme assessment indicators. Moreover, Zambia faces a new challenge, the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), with potentially undesirable and unanticipated consequences.

### **COMMITTEE'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS**

Interestingly, the Committee raised a number of concerns for consideration by the Zambian government before the expected submission of the second state party report by 30 June 2010 (which has not happened since this report was not ready for consideration). The Committee, among other things, regretted that, although Zambia has adopted a

certain number of laws in the area of ESCR, the Covenant has not yet been fully incorporated in the domestic legal order. The Committee was further deeply concerned with the persistent inadequate representation of women at all levels of decision-making bodies; the high level of unemployment and the absence of details concerning national and local employment programmes or other clear strategies to address this problem; the large number of street children, especially in the capital city, who are particularly exposed to physical and sexual abuse, prostitution, and a high risk of being infected with HIV and AIDS.

The Committee was equally concerned with the extent of extreme poverty that has negatively affected the enjoyment of ESCR as enshrined in the Covenant, especially by the most disadvantaged and

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**“Everybody has the right to a standard of living, adequate for health and wellbeing... including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.”**

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marginalised groups, including girl children and those afflicted by HIV and AIDS; and about the living conditions of prisoners and detainees, particularly with regard to access to healthcare facilities, adequate food and safe drinking water.

These concerns still characterise the Zambian population. This is despite the fact that impressive assurances were made by government towards domestication of ESCR. Overall, five years after government promises, realisation of ESCR remains illusive, and in fact, in a legal limbo. Women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, and there has been an increase in unemployment levels, increase in children on the street, and the worsened conditions of prisoners. It is indisputable that some gains have been made in addressing some of the concerns raised by the Committee, but this does not suggest that Zambia is really addressing all the concerns. What then is blocking full domestication of ESCR?

## **BARRIERS TO INCLUSION OF ESCR**

Well, let me begin by reflecting on what I consider are the main barriers towards realisation of the intended goal, i.e., the incorporation of ESCR in the new Zambian Bill of Rights. The first barrier is *lack of political will*. As long as the Zambian government remains ambivalent and aloof to the demand for incorporation of ESCR, their realisation will continue to be quite illusive. There has been a tendency to mislead the general citizenry that ESCR cannot be practically justiciable. Statements to that effect have been made by some high government officials, relegating ESCR to “second class rights,” an old

argument that does not currently fit into any scheme of international human rights debate. Sadly, comments like “we can’t eat the Constitution”, “ESCR is utopia”, “it is laughable to include ESCR”, and that “Zambia has no money and ESCR will make us bankrupt” have been issued in public by some high government officials. And yet, the people of Zambia have consistently submitted through most of the review commissions that ESCR should be included in the Bill of Rights. Why should government deliberately choose to ignore people’s interests?

The second barrier is *poor prioritisation of the available resources*. This continues to be the major obstacle to Zambia’s realisation of ESCR. The majority of Zambians are sinking deeper and deeper into poverty every day. The cost of living is [increasingly] skyrocketing. For example, the cost of the *Basic Needs Basket* (BNB) for an average family of six in Lusaka, as measured by the JCTR in April 2010, reached ZMK2,778,680 (US\$595). Certainly, with such a high BNB and high unemployment levels, very few Zambians could afford three meals a day. It should be noted, however, that poverty is not inevitable. “Everybody has the right to a standard of living, adequate for health and wellbeing... including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services” (*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, Article 25). Hence, government action against poverty and/or lack of it has huge implications for the general population.

The third barrier is *lack of legal guarantees for the protection of ESCR*. Government’s reluctance to include ESCR has been evident in the introduction into the Draft Constitution of claw-back clauses (derogations) that deny and/or limit full realisation of ESCR. Against people’s will of having recourse to the courts of law when denied of ESCR, and consequently remedied, the Zambian government continues to shield itself from legal suits.

The current Constitution clearly illustrates government’s failure to offer legal protection when ESCR are violated. Article 111 denies any aggrieved person from seeking any legal redress. A similar approach was adopted in the Mung’omba Draft Constitution through clause 67(3)(b) to shield the state from any legal action. We can only hope that

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**There seems to be a dangerously undemocratic myth that Government has to be protected from any legal suits at all costs.**

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the final Draft Constitution by the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) shall not include such retrogressive limitations. Certainly, such claw-back clauses are a clear conflict of interests and defeat the very purpose for which these rights are included in the Constitution. As the JCTR in their

submission to the NCC rightly observed, claw-back clauses “in effect undermine the whole effort to make ESCR justiciable and legally enforceable”. In addition, there seems to be “a *dangerously undemocratic myth that Government has to be protected from any legal suits at all costs*”, that Government ought to be immune from legal suits especially in areas where such lawsuits involve governmental provision of services for their people, the JCTR further noted in their submission to the NCC. It can be argued quite reasonably that if there are no mechanisms for aggrieved individuals to seek legal redress when human rights are violated then their existence in the Constitution is meaningless.

## EXISTING IN THE LEGAL LIMBO

Against this backdrop, one could rightly ask: Is there a way out of this uncertain future? Of course, yes! It is important first of all to ensure that ESCR are justiciable and that their realisation does not conflict with any international obligations that Zambia has freely acceded to including the ICESCR. However, Zambians must constantly demand the inclusion of the following key issues into the new Constitution: (i) *justiciability* of ESCR, (ii) *progressive realisation* of ESCR, (iii) expansion of *locus standi* (public interest litigation), and (iv) the establishment of a *human rights court* (Constitutional Court). Such significant changes shall not be unique to Zambia, but have

already been demonstrated in other African countries like Ghana, South Africa, Namibia and Kenya.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, what would I say to the UN Committee on ESCR today if I were to give a fair, impartial and objective comment on Zambia’s failure to realise ESCR? Well, after five years of continuous struggle to convince government that justiciability of ESCR is achievable, feasible, and actually desirable, in my view, Zambia’s failure could be attributed to three main factors: (i) poor prioritisation of the available resources; (ii) lack of political will to change the *status quo*; and (iii) a deliberate ploy to frustrate enforceability of ESCR.

Given the current state of affairs, as one writer recently observed, we could only hope that Zambia shall soon achieve “a stable political and constitutional order that promotes development and good governance and guarantees citizens government under the rule of law regardless of their gender, color, sexual orientation, sex, or ethnic origin”. The fight for ESCR must continue!

Simson Mwale  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa

# “CARITAS IN VERITATE”: AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

*The environment is not only a good for human beings but also a good by itself. John Moore, S.J., offers some reflections on the environment from a faith perspective using Pope Benedict’s recent Encyclical on “Charity in Truth.”*

The Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change has come and gone. *Will it make any difference?* Most people would say, “No”. Even before the meeting, there was a fair amount of skepticism expressed. As Michael McCarthy put it in the *Tablet* of 5 December 2009 (p.8), “one ingredient is missing, i.e., strong public opinion which might force politicians to take action.” There were plenty of environmental activists present in Copenhagen, many of whom “suffered for the cause” when they encountered the “no-nonsense” tactics of the Danish Riot Police. But the ordinary citizens of the world did not seem to be deeply concerned.

*Why this general apathy?* As McCarthy puts it, “if there had been a message from the scientific experts that an asteroid, ‘a giant hurtling mass of space rock 10 km. across’, had been discovered with an orbit

that would coincide with our orbit here on earth at 16:32 hours GMT on 5 December 2009 and that its effect would be similar to what happened 65 million years ago when the Dinosaurs were rendered extinct, there would have been a spontaneous cry for the super-powers to take action immediately.” Why the difference? Presumably because the collision prediction would be based on “Good Science” whereas the “Global Warming” arguments seemed “so hazy, so indistinct”, and merely stirred up debates between the “experts”.

For this reason, I find that Pope Benedict’s treatment of ecology in his recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* and in his letter for 2010 World Peace Day (which appeared in the first quarter *JCTR Bulletin*), so satisfying. He avoids any reference to the currently “fashionable” demands for reduction in carbon

dioxide emissions and keeps clear of the “doomsday” predictions that are made about global warming and the future of our planet. He seems to realise that this issue of global warming is only one very small aspect of our present ecological problems and, besides, it is based on some disputed scientific arguments. Two years ago in his message for World Peace Day he expressed a certain reserve in regard to these “doomsday” predictions: “It is important for assessments in this regard to be carried out prudently, in dialogue with experts and people of wisdom, uninhibited by ideological pressure to draw hasty conclusions.”

## THE REAL PROBLEM

Benedict focuses on the real problem, what he calls the “Energy Problem”, the reckless and greedy consumption and hoarding not just of fossil energy-rich materials like petroleum, but of all scarce non-renewable resources by powerful, economically developed countries. The “Energy Problem” focuses on the fact that these countries are consuming far more than their fair share of both non-renewable and renewable resources. There is only a limited amount of energy coming in to this planet from the sun and there is only a limited amount of agriculturally productive land to transform this physical energy into food and other materials essential for human well-being. It has been calculated that, if the “developing countries” were to live the same life-style as the average citizen of the USA, we would need at least two planet earths to sustain us all.

These scientific facts have been known and publicised by ecologists for many years. Benedict is obviously aware of these facts and in his encyclical he provides motives which should be effective in helping Christians and all people of goodwill in their efforts to remedy the situation. The present stress on

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**If the “developing countries” were to live the same life-style as the average citizen of the USA, we would need at least two planet earths to sustain us all.**

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carbon emissions has transferred responsibility to governments and management of heavy industry, whereas what is needed is “personal conversion” and a change in life style as Pope John Paul II already pointed out in 1990, “a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behaviour.”

It may help to view Benedict’s effort at formulating a Christian environmental ethic against the background of the efforts made by the ecologists themselves. When ecologists began to realise the havoc that was being inflicted on ecosystems by modern industrial activities and extravagant life-styles in some countries, a basic problem arose for

concerned ecologists. How could they convince people that all of us have a moral responsibility to take some corrective action?

Two strategies were proposed: (1) Trying to foresee what would be the result if the present trends continued. In other words frighten people by a scientifically based “prophecy of doom”. Or (2) Trying to work out an ethic that would convince “persons of goodwill” to change their life-styles. The first solution is currently popular and enshrined in the fourth report of the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) and in a more simplified form by the media. However, despite the strong propaganda made by certain politicians for this approach, there is a growing realisation that the ordinary public is losing confidence in the predictions and are no longer frightened by them.

## HOW TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE

The basic problem in trying to formulate an environmental ethic is that most classical ethical systems are frankly human-centred. These systems argue more or less as follows: any decent person would avoid actions which inflict injury on a fellow human being and would favour actions which are to their benefit. Thus, we should choose the action which would result in the most benefit and the least harm for fellow humans. However, as ecologists began searching for a suitable environmental ethic, they soon realised that this approach, usually referred to as “anthropocentric”, is unsatisfactory for ecological motivation. This was clearly stated in 1967 by an American historian, Lynn White, who blamed this way of arguing for the woeful state of the environment. He labeled it “the Judeo-Christian Ethic” since it was mainly based on the biblical text in the book of Genesis 1:28 where human beings are given *dominion* over all living things. He accused people of taking this text as a license to cover up the human greed behind their unrestrained exploitation of the non-renewable resources of the earth, especially after the industrial revolution. The concluding words of White’s article are very interesting: “Since the roots of our trouble are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not.”

Arno Naess, a Norwegian philosopher turned ecologist, tried to develop an alternative environmental ethic which might act as a brake on the increasingly wasteful exploitation of earth’s resources. He rejected the classical human-centred approach to ethics and agreed with White that it was such a human-centred view that was responsible for all our environmental problems. He advocated an eco-centric approach, what he called “Deep Ecology” which recognise that all creatures, both the living and the non-living, had an intrinsic worth in themselves, and not merely because of their value to us. We humans were just another species deserving no more



respect than the humble *Amoeba* or mosquito. This was pushed very strongly by some of his followers and became a quasi-religion.

However this approach, especially in its exaggerated form, has its own problems. For most people it seems to be sheer nonsense. It is so obvious that a human being is different from an *Amoeba* or a mosquito, even more so from a rock or a waterfall. Stating dogmatically that they have an intrinsic value in themselves looks like mere juggling with words. It is we who assign different values to things – gold is more valuable than silver in our markets. But no one in their senses would claim that a mosquito has the same value as a human being. This common-sense view would also recognise that we are irretrievably self-centred in our evaluations. A forest may be very valuable to me as an area where I can walk and relax and observe with fascination the antics of the huge array of birds and insects interacting with one another. My next door neighbour might consider it very valuable as a source of high quality marketable timber. I want it to be conserved; my neighbour wants it clear-felled and the land sold to a commercial farmer for “development” as a tobacco growing enterprise. *Who is right?*

It gradually began to dawn on environmental ethicists that neither our classical ways of moral thinking nor the alternatives proposed by Naess and his followers would get us very far. That is why the words from White, “the remedy must also be essentially religious” – proved in a way to be prophetic. Twenty-five years after White wrote his article, a group of scientists, including 32 Nobel Prize-winners, formulated a petition which they sent to a meeting of spiritual leaders from 83 countries, pleading as follows:

The environmental crisis requires radical changes not only in public policy, but also in individual behaviour. The historical record makes clear that religious teaching, example and leadership are able to influence personal conduct and commitment powerfully. As scientists, many of us have had profound experiences of awe and reverence before the universe. We understand that what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect. Our planetary home should be so regarded. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred. At the same time, a much wider and deeper understanding of science and technology is needed. If we do not understand the problem, it is unlikely we will be able to fix it. Thus, there is a vital role for both religion and science.

## CHURCH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This is a frank avowal that some sort of religious motivation is necessary if people are to change their

life-style. Pope Benedict is clearly aware of this and states clearly in his encyclical “The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.”

In 1990, a book was published entitled *The Greening of the Church* in which the author, Fr. Sean McDonagh, bemoaned the fact that the leadership of the Catholic Church had arrived at the problem of the environment “a little breathless and a little late”. Although he does praise Pope John Paul’s message for the World Day of Peace of 1990 [entitled *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all Creation*], he criticised very strongly the views expressed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in an interview given to the Italian newspaper *Il Sabato* in 1987. Ratzinger

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**“The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.”**

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had expressed strong opposition to the position held by the “deep ecologists” “whose synthesis was based on a somewhat anti-technical, somewhat anti-rational concept of man united to nature.” McDonagh unfairly suggests that Ratzinger intended his criticism to apply to all who are concerned about environmental problems. That was over ten years ago. But today we have that same Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, having focused on the most worrying scientific aspect of the problem (i.e., energy), giving a balanced treatment of the ethical and religious aspects of environmental problems both in the encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, and also in his Message for the World Day of Peace, 2010.

His main aim in the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* was not primarily ecological but to review the social encyclical of his predecessor Paul VI entitled “*Populorum Progressio*” (The Progress of Peoples) in view of changed world circumstances now, 42 years after Pope Paul’s basic contribution to integral human development. One of the big changes that has taken place is the almost universal awareness of environmental problems at the present time. In 1967, when Paul VI wrote *Populorum Progressio*, professional ecological scientists were well aware of the problems, but despite some brave efforts at publicising the fact of our destruction of the fine balance of ecological relationships, (e.g. The Club of Rome’s world model published in *Limits to Growth*, 1972), the general populace remained indifferent to the progressive degeneration of ecosystems going on around them. Now, it has become a hot political issue characterised by an exaggerated emphasis on carbon emissions and climate change.

In five short paragraphs (48-52), Pope Benedict gives a summary of the present situation in environmental ethics against the background of the Christian worldview. First of all, Pope Benedict

clearly rejects as unsatisfactory both the exaggerated position of the “deep ecologists” who take Arno Naess as their protagonist as well as the strong anthropocentric, technocratic but exploitative view so well described by Lynn White. “Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature” (48). Therefore, he favours a candidly theocentric ethic which focuses on God’s generous gift to us in his Creation. Even more, he claims that if this approach is absent and we view nature, including the human being, “as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes.”

## THE MORAL TENOR OF SOCIETY

Benedict’s most striking observation is where he casts doubt on whether economic incentives or deterrents, even when coupled with suitable environmentally oriented education, are enough to protect nature. “These are important steps, but the decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society.”

“The book of nature is one and indivisible.... Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person”. So he would consider the packet of attitudes going along with the recent advances in reproductive biology such as the killing of human embryos, legalisation of euthanasia, etc., as symptoms of a deep-lying attitudinal malady. Lack of respect for a human being, no matter how insignificant or tiny (as in a human embryo), inevitably means lack of respect for other creatures – for “the environment”.

## OUR DUTIES

He puts strong emphasis on our duties in regard to environmental problems. Readers may become rather impatient with the imperatives that appear regularly in the text. “Technologically advanced nations *can and must* lower their domestic energy consumption” (49); We have “*a grave duty* to future generations” (50); “we need a shift in mentality” (51).

A critical reader might consider this as a simplistic educative technique, suited to primary school children, forbid it often enough and people will change. Such a reader cannot see how the mere wish of the Pope or of the “climate change gurus” would be enough to change peoples’ behaviour. Admittedly, Benedict refers again and again in the encyclical to our duties but he clearly shows us whence these duties arise. He derives his idea of duties from his belief that the earth and its resources are pure gift, and that our response should therefore be one of deep gratitude. This feeling of reverence and thankfulness for God’s gift should be the core element in firing our sense of responsibility in caring for the earth and all its resources.

Thus, our environmental ethic should neither be exclusively ecocentric nor anthropocentric, but

“*theocentric*” – placing God and his goodness to us at the centre, and allowing Him to inspire us with a sense of urgency for halting the damage and disfigurement that our over-consumptive life-styles are causing to the delicately balanced systems of the planet.

## FLAWS IN CURRENT SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENTS

There are several basic flaws in the scientific arguments put forward to support the Global Warming *scenario* that may prevent us from being swayed by the rhetoric of the politicians or the Media. I mention briefly the ones which prevent me from going along with the political and Media line of argument.

First, climatic fluctuations are part and parcel of earth history. These are reflected in changes in vegetation as revealed by pollen analysis, in the analyses of bubbles of gas trapped in ice cores, in the analysis of insect and other remains in cores of sediment. Second, these fluctuations took place when the human populations were small and had a negligible effect on global climate changes. Third, Carbon dioxide concentrations have been increasing for the past century and estimates of mean annual surface temperature have been rising since 1980. But the mere coincidence of these two trends does not indicate which of the two is the causal factor. Fourth, the increase in carbon dioxide concentrations has been fairly constant since recording began in 1958. There is no trace of a sudden increase around 1980 when the recent “global warming” trend began. Fifth, there is a similar correlation between temperature and carbon dioxide fluctuations evident in ice cores going back more than half a million years. This cannot be attributed to human factors.

Sixth, Beer’s Law, used in spectroscopy, states that the relationship between the concentration of an absorbing substance (here carbon dioxide) and the amount of radiation absorbed is logarithmic. This means that a given increase in carbon dioxide concentration will produce less and less effect on the absorption of the infra-red (warm) radiation moving out from earth’s surface.

Seventh, emphasis is often placed on “near consensus” among climatologists that further increase in carbon dioxide concentrations will lead to catastrophic effects. Such reporting suggests that Science works like a democracy, a majority vote among experts deciding the day. Even in the IPCC report the quoted probability of future events relating to climate change refers not to statistical probability but to “assessed likelihood, using expert judgment”. Science does not work like that!

John J. Moore, S.J.  
Lusaka, Zambia

# JCTR'S EXPERIENCE AT THE AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL SHOW OF ZAMBIA

*For a number of years now, the JCTR has been participating actively with a dedicated stand at the Agricultural and Commercial Show (ACSZ) in Lusaka. Sonia Simumba offers a brief report of JCTR's participation in this year's Show by providing a summary of the major issues raised by the visitors to the JCTR booth, the number of people that visited the booth as well as JCTR's response to the 2010 theme for the show, and finally highlighting some lessons and challenges.*

The 84th ACSZ took place from Thursday 29 July to Monday 02 August 2010. The theme of the 2010 Show was "Sustainable Development." Each Programme of the JCTR worked on short responses in relation to the theme.

The Church Social Teaching Programme stressed that by promoting human dignity and justice, the church must have a voice on issues of social justice and suggest principles that should guide behavior in political, economic and social issues, and the promotion of human rights and freedoms.

The Social Conditions Programme asserted that by promoting living conditions and rural development inspired by just attitudes and policies, both urban and rural areas must enjoy adequate food security and have access to quality social service delivery if poverty levels are to be reduced to sustainable levels.

The Debt Aid and Trade Programme highlighted the fact that by promoting a future with less debt, no aid and better trade, development and poverty eradication is possible.

The JCTR Outreach Programme shared that by involving citizens in national issues, citizens will assert their right to know the development agenda of their leaders, and by participating in national processes, they contribute to national development and will be empowered to hold their leaders accountable.

The JCTR booth at the Show was situated in the Jubilee Hall. The exhibition included most of JCTR recent works, i.e., study reports, policy briefs and brochures. These were both for display and hand-out to Show goers. The exhibition was actively serviced by 8 members of the JCTR staff who had allocated specific rotational time – a very impressive contribution indeed!

This year's Show was good for us both in terms of attendance and the quality of the conversations we had with the Show goers. Our booth was visited by

many who learnt about the activities of the JCTR, asked questions as well as challenged and encouraged us in our work. The stand was visited by 908 females and 1,812 males giving a total of 2,720 visitors which is far much more than we have had in previous years, e.g., 849 in 2006, 1, 029 in 2007, and 2,200 in 2010.

The location of our booth in Jubilee Hall was near the door and main walk ways making it easily noticeable and this gave us chance to respond to questions and have some discussions with a lot of people who had views to share. The Agriculture and Commercial Society of Zambia awarded a certificate of attendance to the JCTR under the category of "Religious Books."

## SOME PROMINENT COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

People asked several questions about the work of JCTR, and made some comments on how JCTR can improve its work. Below are some of these concerns.

- What is the JCTR saying about Zambia's Draft Constitution?
- Does JCTR look at the Zambian labour laws?
- Does JCTR give out handouts of the food items stipulated in the Basic Needs Basket?
- What is JCTR saying about corruption?
- Is JCTR a theological training college for Catholic Priests?
- Is Caritas Zambia and JCTR the same organisation?
- Does JCTR share their findings with other Catholic organisations because some Catholic Church based institutions pay very low wages, stressing the spirit of volunteerism amongst their employees?
- JCTR should advocate for good corporate social responsibility for investors that operate in Zambia, especially in poor areas.
- The Basic Needs Basket (BNB) is helpful, but it will be more helpful to provide information

on the number of men and women who are poor according to the survey.

- JCTR talks too much on many issues but we don't see tangible results.
- If the BNB was a project it has failed as it has been done for so many years and the larger majority of Zambians are still getting very low wages.
- The wages for teachers and nurses that are reflected on the BNB lowers the integrity and pride of the workers.
- Another debt crisis for Zambia is coming, so JCTR must be ready for another debt campaign.
- The JCTR has not been seen to shout loud enough on corruption and bad governance that are cited by many as the root of most of Zambia's problems.

These and many other critical comments were shared with the JCTR staff who were at the stand sharing about JCTR's work and distributing JCTR materials.

## LESSONS AND OUTCOME

The comments and interaction with the Show goers taught us many lessons in our work and possible areas for improving. These included the following.

- JCTR's work is greatly appreciated by many Zambians and JCTR should continue with the good work.
- There is need for JCTR to embark on massive sensitisation of its works and programmes to ensure that everyone understands the goals and objectives of JCTR as there is still confusion on the difference between Caritas Zambia, the Catholic Church, and JCTR.
- The number of women was less than half the number of men that visited the JCTR stand.
- The Show was attended by people from many parts of the country. This gave us the opportunity to share with people from places other than Lusaka, notable ones being Chavuma, Lumwana, and Mwinilunga.

- Most people that passed through our stand requested to be added to our mailing list so that they can be receiving updates and information from JCTR.

## CHALLENGES

In our participation in the Show, we faced a number of challenges and most of these were logistical. These included the following.

- A number of children showed a lot of interest in JCTR publication. It is therefore important to take children on board by simplifying the JCTR materials so that they carry on with advocacy when they grow up. This can be done by setting up clubs in schools and reaching out to institutions of higher learning.
- Lack of materials in Zambian vernacular language to distribute to non-English readers limits our reading audience.
- Lack of JCTR materials in braille or audio visual was a limitation to visually challenged visitors to the stand in accessing JCTR publications.
- The use of Zambian local languages to explain issues was in some cases difficult but generally good as it allowed some non-English speakers to get informed, though some concepts were very difficult to translate and explain in local languages.
- There was still a lot of confusion in a few of the people's minds about the difference between Caritas Zambia, the Catholic Church and JCTR, thus questions about the Pope and others were asked.
- In general, very few women that actually passed through the stand showed interest in knowing more.

It is our hope that our yearly experience in sharing information at the Show will contribute towards effectively doing our work of social justice, using the values of the Church Social Teaching.

*Sonia Simumba  
JCTR Staff  
Lusaka, Zambia*

## JCTR MISSION STATEMENT

To foster, from a faith-inspired perspective, a critical understanding of current issues. Guided by the Church's Social Teaching that emphasises dignity in community, our mission is to generate activities for the promotion of the fullness of human life through research, education, advocacy and consultation. Cooperating widely with other groups, our Jesuit sponsorship directs us to a special concern for the poor and assures an international linkage to our efforts. We aim to promote an inculturated faith, gender equality and empowerment of local communities in the work of justice and peace and the integrity of creation.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have been reading *JCTR Bulletin* for over ten years and find myself enjoying the articles more and more. The editorial and the first five articles in the First Quarter 2010 are just the most recent examples. The quotable statistics in the article by Dominic Liche, and the article by Trevor Simumba with the extract of the speech by Martin Luther King reminding us of the power of eloquence, I found especially memorable.

There is, however, one subject that does not get space in the *Bulletin*, which is of extreme importance not only for Zambia and Malawi, but also for Africa, and the world in general: the rapid redoubling of populations. In the last ten years I can remember only one article that dealt with this. This was by Roland Lesseps, S.J., in 2006. It was in this article, I believe, that Lesseps inserted a quote from UNESCO: "An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems."

This population increase is one of the most important non-religious, undoubtedly human-made events in recorded human history. The figures are staggering. In the century 1950-2050, Zambia and Malawi are each expected to increase their populations ten times, and sub-Saharan Africa nine times. Indeed, Africa and the Middle East to Pakistan, the one large region of the world where family planning is – in most countries – not easily available, is expected to increase its population eight times, from 300 million in 1950, to 600 million 1976, to 1,200 million in 2002, to an estimated 2,400 million in 2050. The United Nations latest (2008) low, medium, and high estimates for the 2050 population of this region are 2413 million, 2760 million, and 3132 million respectively. The more exact figure for 1950 is 308 million. The numbers do not include Turkey (*World Population Prospects. The 2008 Revision*. United Nations Population Division).

Most of the world outside this large region has realised that family planning is necessary in order to become prosperous and in most countries of the Far East and, belatedly, in Latin America effective family planning is used by most couples. In China, family planning is used by 90% of couples; in Latin America by almost 70% of couples; but in sub-Saharan Africa by only 21% of couples (*UN World Contraceptive Use 2009*). Where effective family planning is controlling population, prosperity is arriving. Where there is little family planning, poverty remains.

If we measure wealth as GDP per head, we find that in 1960 Zambia had \$222 per head, Brazil \$208, South Korea \$155. China \$92 (Economic Statistics GDP per capita by country, 1960). These dry figures

can be put more graphically. Aloysius Schwartz, a Maryknoll missionary, describes the horrendous slums in South Korea in the early 1960's where "on the rubbish dumps women and children with blackened and scarred hands scraped in the refuse for morsels of food" (*The Starved and the Silent*. Aloysius Schwartz. Published in 1966).

Schwartz was worried that "Korea's rapid population growth (3% per year) will have all but cancelled out its economic advance." Happily, the South Koreans saw the danger and governmental enthusiasm for family planning soon controlled the population and they became prosperous.

One reason some countries with plenty of space did not follow South Korea's example was that the "green revolution" appeared to give promise of endless improvements in food production. This is what Norman Borlaug, the "father" of the green revolution had to say about that in his speech on accepting the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize:

The green revolution has won a temporary success in man's war against hunger and deprivation; it has given man a breathing space. If fully implemented, the revolution can provide sufficient food for sustenance during the next three decades. But the frightening power of human reproduction must also be curbed; otherwise the success of the green revolution will be ephemeral only.

How can we get governments to comprehend the magnitude of these population changes so that they develop enthusiasm for family planning? I do not know, but it can be done. Iran is the best modern example. With the availability of clinics in every village and teaching in schools, the birth rate in Iran has dropped from 45.5 per 1000 in 1980-85 to 18 per 1000 in 2005-2010. In the same period Zambia's birth rate has hardly changed: 45.1 per 1000 in 1980-85 to 43.2 per 1000 in 2005-2010 (*World Population Prospects. The 2008 Revision*. United Nations Population Division).

Population is going to be controlled either by family planning, or by the age-old methods of disease, famine, and war. I hope that Zambia will choose family planning guided by the teaching of Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (#37).

Gerry Danaher  
Retired Medical Practitioner  
Leicestershire, UK  
jgd@gerrydanaher.com  
www.gerrydanaher.com

## ELIMINATING GLOBAL POVERTY

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest, articles written on ending global poverty in the First Quarter of the *JCTR Bulletin*, 2010. The authors note that every year 180 million people, including ten million children, die from poverty-related causes. I believe we have the means to end global poverty, but the question remains – Do we have the political will to accomplish that goal? Mahatma Gandhi once said: “We have enough for everyone’s need but we do not have enough for everyone’s greed.”

This discussion of poverty brought back many memories for me. 25 years ago, I attended a conference in India, on global poverty organised by the United Nations and Institute of Cultural Affairs. It was attended by 650 people from 55 nations around the world to look at approaches that work in eliminating poverty. Another experience was working with refugees to prepare them for life after their time in the camp in Thailand ended.

First, I believe we need to look at the causes of poverty. They include the following:

- We have made power and wealth into false gods that are maintained at the expense of millions who are struggling to survive.
- Racism and classism are rampant across the globe and they create tiers of power and privilege that dominate and leave millions without power to live decent lives.
- People from all backgrounds are searching for new definitions to reflect their experience and not just the colour of their skin.
- The billions spent on wars and violence diverts needed resources from human needs and only bring on more violence. People and lands devastated by current and past wars leave scars that can never be fully erased and leave people without hope of a viable future.
- The global marketplace that is aimed at maximising profits for a few deprives millions of needed resources and a future for the next generations.
- Lack of good and ethical governance leaves people powerless and without the necessary skills and education to provide for themselves and their families and communities.
- Lack of moral guidance that leaves people without any vision of the reign of God, the connectedness of all people across the globe, the moral responsibility to care for all of creation and to make moral choices for the benefit of all, especially the most abandoned and neglected on our planet. This moral guidance is well stipulated in principles of the Church Social Teaching.

Second, I strongly believe that poverty can be eradicated in the world. Solutions to free the world from poverty include the following:

- We need to name the false gods in our lives (power, wealth, greed) and move toward a simplified lifestyle. Replace the false gods with compassion, care for people across lines of colour, and creed. This would result in people claiming their spiritual heritage without which people will wander without any concern for the millions who daily die of hunger, lack of healthcare or lack of basic resources for themselves and their families.
- Convince national and global leaders to give up wars as a means of solving problems. War and violence only lead to more violence and leave lands and people devastated. Some of the money used for war could be used for small-scale local development efforts, with local control to help people get an education and development skills to get resources for the maintenance of themselves and their families.
- Create a system where capital can be shared so that the majority of people on the planet can live decent human lives. Allowing people to have local control and developing programmes where they can earn a living and keep the profits within their own communities can help people regain confidence that they can have a viable future.
- Restore ethics to government, business and all areas of life. We are all spiritual beings and cannot live a full human life without fulfilling and living that aspect of our lives.
- Create inclusive, pluralistic societies for the good of all. Recognise that laws, rules and goals have been created by the dominant culture and need to be changed to include input from all levels of people in society including women. We also need to walk with those who are impoverished – the lepers, people dying of AIDS, those dying of hunger and disease, and those devastated by wars. We can learn from them and hold out some hope for a better future.
- The common good must be the measuring rod in all decisions made at a political and economic, and any other level. None are beyond moral scrutiny.
- Preserving our natural resources and care of all creation is a moral imperative for all.

All of the problems we now experience were created by humans and can be remedied by humans. The responsibility falls on all of us. There is no effort too small to make a difference. Let us begin today with courage and hope to create a new and renewed moral foundation for the benefit of all.

Sr. Brenda Walsh, O.P.  
Racine Dominican  
USA

# THE JCTR *BASIC NEEDS BASKET*

The Social Conditions Programme of the JCTR conducts monthly research on the cost of basic needs within a number of urban areas across Zambia, including Lusaka, Ndola, Kitwe, Luanshya, Kabwe, Livingstone, Mongu, Kasama, Chipata, and Monze. For the month of August 2010, the cost of Basic Needs Basket stood at ZMK2, 809,480 in Lusaka.

## (A) COST OF BASIC FOOD ITEMS FOR A FAMILY OF SIX IN LUSAKA

Commodity	Kwacha	Quantity	Total
Mealie meal (breakfast)	55,600	3 x 25 Kg bags	166,800
Beans	12,100	2 Kgs	24,200
Kapenta (Siavonga)	72,400	2 Kgs	144,800
Dry Fish	84,000	1 Kg	84,000
Meat (mixed cut)	19,700	4 Kgs	78,800
Eggs	7,600	2 Units	15,200
Vegetables (greens)	4,500	7.5 Kgs	33,750
Tomato	5,600	4 Kgs	22,400
Onion	7,000	4Kgs	28,000
Milk (fresh)	12,500	1 x 2 litres	12,500
Cooking oil	29,900	2 x 2 litres	59,800
Bread	3,800	1 loaf/day	114,000
Sugar	6,500	8 Kgs	52,000
Salt	3,300	1 Kg	3,300
Tea (leaves)	9,800	1 x 500 g	9,800
<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>K849, 350</b>

## (B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

Charcoal	91,200	2 x 90 Kg bags	182, 400
Soap (lifebuoy)	2,900	10 tablets	29,000
Wash soap (Boom)	4,100	4 x 400 g	16,400
Jelly (e.g., Vaseline)	7,100	1 x 500 ml	7,100
Electricity (medium density)	130,000	300 units	130,000
Water & Sanitation (med - fixed)	114,530		114,530
Housing (medium density)	1,500,000		1,500,000
<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>K1, 871,230</b>

## Total for *Basic Needs Basket*

**K2, 809,480**

Totals from previous months	Aug 09	Sep 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10	Apr 10	May 10	Jun 10	Jul 10
<b>Totals Amount</b>	2,235,730	2,260,680	2,200,630	2,254,630	2,276,730	2,696,030	2,713,580	2,771,930	2,778,680	2,798,580	2,799,280	2,828,780

## (C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

Item	Kwacha	Item	Kwacha
<b>Education</b>		<b>Transport (bus fare round trip):</b>	
Grades 8-9 (User+PTA/year)	K300, 000 – K420, 000	Chilenje-Town	K6, 000
Grades 10-12 (User+PTA/year)	K600, 000 – K900, 000	Chelston-Town	K7, 000
School Uniform (grades 8-12)	K90, 000 – K180, 000	Matero-Town	K5, 400
<b>Health (clinic)</b>		<b>Fuel (cost at the pump)</b>	
3 Month Scheme (per person)	K5, 000	Petrol (per litre)	K7, 750
No Scheme Emergency	K5, 500	Diesel (per litre)	K7, 250
Mosquito Net (private)	K15, 000 – K20, 000	Paraffin (per litre)	

## (D) SOME COMPARATIVE FIGURES OF WAGES--"TAKE HOME PAY"

	Teacher	Nurse	Guard with Security Firm	Secretary in Civil Service	Average Monthly Income in Urban Low-Cost Area - CSO	Piecoworker on a Farm
<b>Pay Slip</b>	K1,300,300 to K2,200,600	K1,300,000 to K3,450,000	K250,000 to K850,000	K1,390,500 to K1,900,000	645,326 (between October 2004 and January 2005)	K5,000 to K15,000 per day

The August Basic Needs Basket was approximately **US\$576** based upon an average middle exchange rate of ZMK4875 per US\$ at the end of August.

# THE JCTR UPDATE: PEOPLE AND ACTIVITIES

WHAT KEEPS US BUSY AT THE JCTR? HERE ARE SOME RECENT ITEMS OF INTEREST

## CHURCH SOCIAL TEACHING PROGRAMME

The 2011 Church Social Teaching Liturgical Calendar was produced on "Elections and Good Leadership." Monthly themes included those on human dignity, women and politics, Church and State. The CST Calendar has become a popular tool of sharing information on the principles of the Church Social Teaching and the calendar messages have been widely used even as ideas forming editorials of some daily newspapers in Zambia.

Peter Zawi and Felix Tembo from Silveira House in Harare, Zimbabwe, visited and participated in the activities of the JCTR including the public forum given in Ndola by the Programme on "Values and Elections" in August 2010.

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS PROGRAMME

The Programme launched the Chipata Basic Needs Basket in September where representatives from government, churches, civil society, and the private sector engaged in constructive exchange on how to improve accessibility to basic needs in the Province.

A BNB training workshop was held for the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, an NGO in Harare, Zimbabwe. The organisation hopes to commence the BNB survey in Zimbabwe. This is in the Programme's continued effort to train as many partners in African countries as need and demand require.

## OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The Programme attended a workshop in Kasama in August 2010 to monitor how well the Outreach teams conduct their workshops. Presentations were shared on the BNB, issues on the constitution making in Zambia, human trafficking, and debt resources monitoring at the workshop. Local workshops on different works of JCTR took place in all the six Outreach areas in Monze, Mongu, Kabwe, Kasama, Ndola, and Livingstone.

## DEBT, AID AND TRADE PROGRAMME

The Debt Resource Monitoring was conducted in Central Province on the AfDB/GRZ water and sanitation project with data collection and monitoring completed. The other activity was the monitoring of the Copperbelt BADEA/OPEC/GRZ feeder roads project. Other activities include the ongoing tax study whose draft is currently being reviewed; "Our Money Our Right" research which is also ongoing with data being compiled and analysed; and the analyses of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the 2011 budget with CSPR and Caritas Zambia.

## INFORMATION OFFICE

The JCTR media workshop took place on 27 and 28 July 2010 in Lusaka. 30 media houses were represented from 15 community radio stations and 15 media organisation in Lusaka. The objectives of the workshop were, (i) to raise awareness on the different advocacy activities of JCTR and social justice in Zambia, (ii) to forge collaborative links to take the social justice information and messages further to the people in communities in and outside Lusaka, and (iii) to further and strengthen relations with the media.

The JCTR also actively displayed materials and explained JCTR's work at the 84<sup>th</sup> Agricultural and Commercial Show in Lusaka from 29 July to 02 August 2010. Radio Christian Voice programme on each Friday from 09 hours to 11 hours has continued. Some of the particular issues discussed included, human trafficking, and elections and democracy in Africa. JCTR's active use of the media especially through press statements, press interviews with members of staff, and coverage of some of our events continue to be one of our strengths in knowledge management and sharing.

## A WARM WELCOME

JCTR welcomes **Leonard Chiti, S.J.**, who became JCTR's Director on 10 September 2010. Prior to becoming Director, Fr. Chiti was the Deputy Director of JCTR. JCTR also welcomes Mr. Anold Moyo, S.J., who joined the Church Social Teaching Programme as a Programme Officer for Faith and Justice.

## THANK YOU

JCTR thanks **Peter Paul Musekiwa, S.J.**, for working with us for 2 months as an intern in the Church Social Teaching Programme. His main activity in the Programme was working on the 2011 JCTR CST Calendar on "Politics and Servant Leadership." Peter Paul is studying theology at Hekima College in Nairobi.

JCTR sincerely thanks **Fr. Peter Henriot, S.J.**, for having worked as Director at JCTR since 1991 (19 years). His contribution towards the growth and recognition of the Centre is very much valued. Fr. Henriot, S.J., continues to work in the Church Social Teaching Programme of the JCTR as Programme Adjunct till the end of the year.

## JCTR'S NEW OFFICES

JCTR has shifted to new offices from where we operated at Luwisha House. The new offices are located at 3813, Martin Mwamba Road, in Olympia Park, next to MISA Zambia offices, opposite the Show Grounds. You are welcome to visit us!

Views expressed in the JCTR *Bulletin* do not necessarily reflect the views of the JCTR.



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General Articles on Different Topics

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