



BULLETIN

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection
 “Promoting Faith and Justice”

(PICTURE OF SUNSET HERE!)

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QUOTE

“Truth never damages
 a cause that is just.”

(*Mohandas Gandhi*)

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our Dear Readers,

We have come to the end of 2011! This has been an eventful as well as a defining year for Africa's political landscape. The innate yearn for justice by peoples in their respective countries manifested itself in gallant feats of revolutionary activity that were before inconceivable. Three dictatorial regimes were overthrown in North Africa; in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Many innocent lives were lost in this significant period of North Africa's political transition, especially in Libya where the fighting was more intense and more protracted. Many people put their lives on the line in the quest for justice. One truth that this experience has revealed to us is that sometimes the love and longing and hope for eternal justice surmounts the fear of suffering immediate injustice. And one lesson that this experience teaches to leaders is that those who resist progress will always find themselves on the wrong side of history.

A similar situation ensued in Ivory Coast, where a civil war broke out as a result of the failure of an electoral system that was perceived to be unjust. Opponents of the incumbent resolved to bring about and dispense justice through pulling the trigger. Without setting to justify what occurred in Ivory Coast or indeed the similar occurrences in some countries, such situations often lead us to grapple with the old but pertinent question of the necessity of violence in the realisation of justice by a people trapped in an unjust political system that seems to offer no other way of escape. I leave the reader to tread on their own on this volatile moral and political path and hopefully arrive at a tenable conviction.

On 9th July, a new nation-state was born in Africa, the state of South Sudan. It was a long time coming for many of the South Sudanese who had endured years of conflict with the northern Sudanese, a conflict that left approximately 1.5 million people dead. The South Sudanese's desire for a dignified life which they deemed impossible to realise within the old Sudanese state compelled them to invoke their human right to self-determination; one they thought would be better achieved and secured through secession. It is the hope of many that peace will finally prevail in that troubled region of the continent.

Zambia had a similar but different political transitory experience; similar in that the country witnessed a change of government, but different in that the change was peaceful. This was a demonstration of political maturity by both the leaders and the citizens. It contrasts sharply with the experience of many African countries in which political absolutism and intolerance defines the political culture. The spirit that influenced the change in government was however fundamentally similar to that which drove Africans in the north to revolution. It was the desire for a better life, which the previous government could not facilitate. It was the aspiration for a leadership that genuinely identified with the needs of its citizens and that facilitated a development process that ensured that people did not just survive, but progressively attained fulfilment as their living conditions became more human. It is the hope of the majority of Zambians that the Patriotic Front government will honour its promises and improve the lives of all Zambians.

Towards the close of the year in November, Pope Benedict XVI visited Benin and on that occasion published and presented to the African Church his post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africae Munus (Africa's Commitment)*. The Exhortation's purpose was to consolidate the insights and promote the implementation of the 2009 African Synod whose overarching theme was reconciliation, justice and peace. Among other of its encouragements, the Exhortation continues to invite the Church in Africa to be at the forefront in the promotion of justice in the continent. This mission, "a mission of truth", the Church may not dispense with. Hopefully the insights given in the Apostolic Exhortation will inspire the Church in Africa to continue its Christ-given mission of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

All the articles contained in this issue of the *Bulletin* have at heart an expression of a desire for justice in its different manifestations. It is the hope of the JCTR that the *Bulletin* does not leave the palms of the reader without accomplishing its purpose, that of changing the world we live in, starting with the attitude of the reader. Have a pleasant and reflective read and feel obliged to pass the copy on to other people wherever they are. And do not forget to pray in gratitude for the contributors of the articles; they are indispensable.

Anold Moyo, S.J.
Editor

REMEMBERING ‘JUSTICE IN THE WORLD’

2011 marks the 40th anniversary of the publication of “Justice in the World”, a document resulting from the 1971 Synod of Bishops. In the following article, Fr Peter Henriot celebrates the significance of this document for the Church’s social teaching, but also laments the apparent deliberate marginalisation of the document by the Vatican for some reasons he postulates.

A seminarian I taught recently asked me to name the most influential document on Church social teaching since the Second Vatican Council. He was surprised by my unhesitating and vigorous response: “Justice in the World”, the statement from the world Synod of Bishops of 1971. Surprised, I suppose, because if it were really so influential, one would expect to hear more about it in this 40th anniversary year of its publication. But there seems to be no official Vatican celebration; the document is not on the Vatican Web site, nor is it included in the Vatican’s monumental *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.

“Justice in the World” appeared at a critical moment in Church and global history. As a consequence of ripples and rapids of changes in the Catholic Church stirred up by the winds blowing through the open windows of the Second Vatican Council, the Church was called to be ready for engagement with the political events of the day. The liberation theology of Latin America was one among many influences that shaped this engagement. The ethics of the social revolutions of the 1960s, the heightened tensions of the cold war, the increasing focus on the socio-economic challenges of the so-called third world and the expansion of the media were other global factors that a church in the modern world could hardly ignore.

The promotion of justice is a necessary feature in the task of evangelisation.

In the 2010s, we Catholics find ourselves in a similar ecclesiastical and global environment. Living with the recent experience of two powerful popes, grappling with scandals that raise questions about ecclesial integrity and accountability and facing declines in lay membership and in priestly and religious vocations, the Church is again called to examine its message and its structures. The challenges of the global economic crisis, the unpredictability of terrorism, mounting environmental problems and the emergence of new power centres in the developing world also call for effective responses from the Church. If “Justice in the World” is more relevant today than when it was first published, why has a pall of official forgetfulness fallen over the anniversary? I suggest two reasons: its source and its message.

It is appropriate to ask whether the evident sidelining of the statement in Vatican circles has as one of its causes the downgraded role of the synod of bishops in Church governance. The synod, established by Paul VI after Vatican II, was designed to implement the collegial character of the episcopacy. But as greater emphasis has come to be put on the papacy and centralised Vatican institutions, collegiality has been a subject of heated differences within the Church.

One consequence has been that periodic assemblies of the synod of bishops—called by the pope to discuss both topical and regional issues—have not been asked to produce magisterial statements. Their messages have been secondary to the post-synodal apostolic exhortation made by the pope. Of the twenty three synods held since 1967, only the third gathering, in October 1971, issued on its own a major teaching document, “Justice in the World”. Synods, even when meeting with the pope, have been denied any teaching authority of their own.

TOO CONTROVERSIAL?

There may be other reasons “Justice in the World” has not been accorded prominence in this anniversary year. Its principal message, some of its language and a number of its recommendations are controversial and have given rise to disputes in both ecclesial and political circles.

The document’s message can be summed up in one well-known sentence: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” (No. 6). The promotion of justice is a necessary feature in the task of evangelisation. There simply is no sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ if the commitment to justice is downplayed or eliminated.

“Justice in the World” offers a brief but powerful scriptural analysis emphasising God as liberator of the oppressed.

Use of the word *constitutive* has been a bone of contention. In two significant articles in Theological

Studies (June 1983 and June 2007), the theologian Msgr. Charles M. Murphy explored in depth how this word came to appear in the text and noted various interpretations given to it in subsequent discussions. Instead of understanding the word to mean “necessary” or “essential,” some have interpreted it to mean only “integral” (simply one part among many in the evangelical message) or merely “helpful” (assisting the work of spreading the Gospel). But when *constitutive* is taken to mean an absolute requirement, then work for justice cannot be ignored in any ecclesial project. This has been the widely accepted understanding of the term in the justice and peace work I have seen in the United States and in Africa. Is it fair to say that the official oblivion into which “Justice in the World” has fallen is due to the discomfort this understanding caused for some more conservative elements in the Church?

“Evangelii Nuntiandi” (the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI published the year after the 1974 Synod of Bishops) spoke of an evangelisation that includes messages “about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development - a message especially energetic today about liberation” (No. 29). But the discussion guidelines (*lineamenta*) for the 2012 Synod of Bishops, “The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith,” mentions the promotion of justice only in passing.

“Justice in the World” emphasises the need to listen to “the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures”.

“Justice in the World” offers a brief but powerful scriptural analysis emphasising God as liberator of the oppressed in the Old Testament and Jesus as preacher of justice for the poor in the New Testament (Nos. 30-33). But it is especially in describing the scriptural link of justice and love that the document makes one of its strongest points: “Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely recognition of the dignity and rights of one’s neighbour” (No. 34). If I say I love my neighbour, then I want my neighbours’ dignity respected, their rights recognized, their development promoted and effective community solidarity effected. These demands of love are essential elements of social justice enforced in the political context of today’s world.

Though the influence of “Justice in the World” on subsequent teaching is not always explicit, Pope Paul VI was especially strong about the unity of justice and love. He proposed building “a civilisation of love,” a programme that is echoed in subsequent papal teaching. Pope Benedict XVI has written two encyclicals on love, dedicating one of them, “Love in Truth” (*Caritas in Veritate*), to the memory of Pope

Paul VI and has developed the idea of political charity, a concept that Paul VI would have approved.

INDUCTIVE METHOD

In its discussion of pertinent issues of the day, “Justice in the World” uses a method that enjoys wide currency (although not always accepted in some ecclesial circles), the well-known triad “See, Judge, Act.” This method, articulated clearly in Blessed John XXIII’s 1961 encyclical “*Mater et Magistra*” (No. 236), calls for observing reality, analysing and evaluating it in light of Catholic social teaching and responding to it with effective action. Its wide use in Latin American pastoral work was sidelined by the 1992 meeting of Celam in Santo Domingo but reinstated in the 2007 meeting in Aparecida, Brazil.

This method emphasises an inductive, experiential approach to designing responses to social challenges rather than a deductive, top-down approach that relies on already stated positions in theories or instructions from hierarchical sources. Thus “Justice in the World” emphasises the need to listen to “the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures”, since the hopes moving in the world today “are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel” (No. 5).

In its analysis and recommendations, “Justice in the World” was able to take up, with a certain freshness and urgency, specific issues like world hunger, fair trade, migrants and refugees, abortion, human rights, religious liberty, environmental concerns, the role of media and promotion of the United Nations. That these issues were discussed in this forty-year old document demonstrates that “Justice in the World” remains relevant to the contemporary struggle for justice in the world.

Synods, even when meeting with the pope, have been denied any teaching authority of their own.

The “See, Judge, Act” method, or reading the signs of the times, as it was more often called, became widespread in the social-pastoral work of many bishops’ conferences and national and diocesan justice commissions. Religious communities adopted it especially in their work with the poor. In the United States, it lay behind the 1976 U.S. bishops’ convocation of the Call to Action Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Ultimately it resulted, in the 1980s, in the bishops’ two influential pastoral letters on peace and economic justice.

The method also contributed to the emphasis in “Justice in the World” on the relationship of social structures and the promotion of justice. While this element might earlier have been present in Catholic social teaching, it is made explicit in the synodal document. In speaking of a growing demand for the

right to development, it cautions, "This desire however will not satisfy the expectations of our time if it ignores the objective obstacles which social structures place in the way of conversion of hearts, or even of the realisation of the ideal of charity" (No. 16).

This appreciation of social structures accounts for the document's teaching about social sin and its recognition that "education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations" (No. 51). Indeed, pastoral attention to social sin is called for in the sacrament of penance (No. 58).

Eventually Pope John Paul II, generally regarded as an opponent of liberation theology, adopted the notion of structural sin, like that of liberation, into his own teaching ("On Social Concern"). Pope Benedict XVI made the analysis of sinful structures his own in "Love in Truth".

JUSTICE IN THE CHURCH

The 1971 Synod statement broke new and important ground - however controversial - in its call for an internal examination of conscience: "While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, it recognises that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence, we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church itself" (No. 40).

This was explicitly developed with mention of respect and promotion of rights within the Church, the need for administration of temporal goods in a way that does not diminish evangelical credibility and the call for a "sparingness" in lifestyle among all Christians, including bishops, priests and religious.

Regarding rights within the Church, for example, "Justice in the World" spoke of the wages of Church workers and the roles of laypeople in administrative positions. The Synod stated: "We also urge that women should have their own share of responsibility

and participation in the community life of society and likewise of the Church" (No. 42). To assure action on these calls, a special commission was proposed for serious study.

One need only think of the scandals that have rocked the Church in recent years to see how relevant this call is for an honest examination of conscience. While major strides still need to be taken, especially with regard to the bishops' accountability for sexual abuse by Catholic priests, some exemplary bishops have performed public and private acts of repentance and reconciliation with victims. Pope John Paul II, though he seems to some to have been blind to this crisis, made repentance for the Church's offenses a distinctive personal ministry. He made tens of apologies to offended groups, put corporate self-examination and repentance on the agenda of the Great Jubilee Year 2000 and personally led the Service of Pardon that opened that year.

Love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbour.

Some celebration of the 40th anniversary of "Justice in the World" is in order. Good theology, keen social analysis and relevant practical recommendations make it one of the most influential documents of the Catholic social tradition. It is taught in many formal and informal courses around the world. It has influenced the identification of the contemporary mission of Jesuits and other religious as "the service of faith and the promotion of justice". A commission of a Rome-based international group of major superiors of men's and women's religious orders is planning a seminar in November to explore the statement's implications for religious life. Now, more than ever, the world needs the good news, in which justice is a constitutive dimension.

*Peter Henriot, S.J.
Lilongwe*

"In the face of the present-day situation of the world, marked as it is by the grave sin of injustice, we recognise both our responsibility and our inability to overcome it by our own strength. Such a situation urges us to listen with a humble and open heart to the word of God, as he shows us new paths towards action in the cause of justice in the world. In the Old Testament God reveals himself to us as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from people faith in him and justice towards one's neighbour. It is only in the observance of the duties of justice that God is truly recognised as the liberator of the oppressed."

Extract from "Justice in the World"

THE ECONOMICS OF ELECTIONS – *DON'T KUBEBA!*

The threat of electoral sanction usually forces incumbent governments to devise ways of ensuring re-election. One of them is by convincing people about the economic development that the country would have experienced due to the tireless efforts of the incumbent government, empirically demonstrated by infrastructural development. Be that as it was in Zambia, the then incumbent government lost the elections. Geoffrey Chongo carries out an autopsy of why the election aftermath did not follow the former government's prognosis.

Is there a relationship between good economic conditions and re-election into office for an incumbent government? It is conventional wisdom that good economic conditions of a country and high government spending on development projects (expansionary fiscal policy) help incumbent governments get re-elected. A simple argument for this is that good economic conditions and high government spending show a highly able leadership that is concerned with addressing voters' economic and social needs. Opportunistic incumbents, therefore, tend to use good economic performance and expansionary fiscal policy, before elections, to increase the probability of their re-election.

However, an alternative view is that voters can be fiscal conservatives who punish rather than reward fiscal manipulation. That is; voters should realise that increased spending at any time of the year, especially in an election year, is costly – if not budgeted for, as governments are likely to explore the option of increasing taxes to fill the shortfalls in the following budget cycle. Voters can also tell whether they have benefited or not from the economic growth that the incumbent leadership may have initiated and sustained.

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

The Zambian economy, prior to the 2011 elections, was growing. Inflation came down to single digits. Interest rates, though high, assumed a downward trend. The country's foreign reserves increased to four months import cover. External debt, though on the increase, remained sustainable. Investment climate improved and above all, Zambia earned a lower middle income status. In the previous government's understanding, the country witnessed such an unprecedented economic growth and so re-election was apparent, albeit in theory. Practically, the result was different as conventional wisdom crumbled.

THE THIN LINE – IS IT STATE MONEY OR PARTY MONEY?

The spending was equally expansionary and according to the above conventional wisdom re-

election was in sight. The country saw a flurry of last minute projects and its commissioning activities by the then President Rupiah Banda. Some of these projects, especially in the road infrastructure, were not budgeted for and thus implied spending outside the budget. The public media remained a preserve of the ruling party. Opposing voices to such abuse of public resources were labelled unpatriotic and mere detractors. Huge billboards showing the president's portrait were planted across the country spreading different messages. (To rent a 10 by 8 metres billboard, for example, costs not less than \$1,000 per month).

Opportunistic incumbents, therefore, tend to use good economic performance and expansionary fiscal policy, before elections, to increase the probability of their re-election.

A thin line emerged between what was government expenditure and what was party expenditure. They ignored the budgetary constraints and just spent public resources liberally. Where were the advisors? Where were the learned economists and political scientists to advise the powers that be? What went wrong for the incumbent to lose the elections when both the economy and spending were pointing to a guaranteed re-election?

LESSONS TO LEARN

Results from the recently held general elections in Zambia suggest that the conventional wisdom regarding an apparent positive relationship between economic growth and high government expenditure on one hand and re-election on the other does not always hold.

GROWTH ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

The first lesson is that the pattern of economic growth matters to voters more than the growth itself. People are, rightfully so, more concerned about economic growth which they are able to experience at an individual level and not just at the macro or

national level (a truth that the current finance minister acknowledged in his recent public statement). While Zambia had experienced economic growth in the previous government, it can hardly be contested that the majority of Zambians did not substantially benefit from the growth. Poverty and unemployment levels remained stubbornly high. Access to good health remained a mirage despite a number of health infrastructure having been put in place. It is clear that voters are more interested in the translation of economic growth into tangible deliverables like jobs and social services and not economic growth on paper. A very important and timely lesson to our new government!

GROWING DEMOCRACY

The second lesson is that our democracy is growing. It is generally believed that in a young democracy, voters easily buy into the incumbent's election year increased spending and last minute development project. The Zambian people demonstrated that the right to vote for a candidate of one's choice must be respected and should not be traded at the altar of money.

Voters can be fiscal conservatives who punish rather than reward fiscal manipulation.

Zambians have integrity and the position they took in the face of all allurements is the mark of a growing democracy. The smooth transition and handover of power is another indicator of a growing democracy. We applaud our leaders for this. Never should we go back on this achievement; let us allow our democracy to flourish even further. Never should our leaders again engage in such levels of abuse of resources and desperate development projects; Zambians have grown beyond such.

PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

The 2011 Zambian general elections revealed just how entrenched the culture of abuse of state resources during elections is and the vulnerability of our public service to politicians. We should realise that abuse of state resources damages democracy, creates an uneven playing field that improves re-election chances of incumbents at the expense of other candidates and robs our people of much needed resources. Government should therefore strive to stamp out this culture among our politicians. Attention should also be given to the public administration system that supplies public resources. The civil service must be strengthened and held accountable. Public resources should be guarded from abuse and used only for the common good.

EPILOGUE

We hope our present and future politicians can learn that our voters will never again be misled by meaningless economic statistics. We hope voters will remain focused on economic growth that changes people's lives for the better. Therefore as the current government endeavours to sustain economic growth, the effort we applaud, we challenge it to translate that growth into meaningful development for the common good. After all, economic growth and development are not mutually exclusive. Zambians want jobs, Zambians want to actualise their potential; Zambians want to improve their lives. All that is needed is political will to create an environment of equal opportunities. Therefore, through elections, Zambians have signed with the current government a five year result-based contract.

Geoffrey Chongo
JCTR, Lusaka

JCTR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the JCTR is to foster, from a faith inspired perspective, a critical understanding of current issues. Guided by the Church's Social Teaching that emphasises human dignity in community, our mission is to generate activities for the promotion of the fullness of human life through research, education, advocacy and consultancy. 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.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND HIGH POVERTY LEVELS

In this article, Sosten Banda examines the paradox of Zambia's positive economic performance and the persistent high levels of poverty. He discusses the reasons for this situation that include poor governance and inefficiency in development management. He then suggests some fiscal and developmental policies and practices that may result in poverty-reductive economic growth.

The last few months has seen Zambia post positive economic growth with the annual growth rate averaging 6.1%, single digit inflation and the World Bank's reclassification of the country as a lower middle income economy. However, poverty levels have shown a different picture, with rural poverty remaining at a staggering high of 77.9%. The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection Rural Basket – a quarterly household survey which measures food security, social service and nutritional poverty in selected rural districts, has consistently shown that most rural households continue to be nutritionally poor and unable to meet the essential non-food items. The Urban Basic Needs Basket - a monthly market survey, continues to reflect increases in cost of living and income poverty as most household's incomes do not allow them to meet the cost of basic foods and essential non-food items.

Let us now look at the current poverty statistics, drivers of poverty and existing policy frameworks that makes the majority of Zambians poor, and the positive macro-economic indicators that the country has been positing in recent years.

CURRENT POVERTY STATISTICS

Latest statistics from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) shows a reduction of rural poverty from 80.3 per cent to 77.9 percent between 2006 and 2010. Further, levels of rural poverty were exceptionally high compared to urban poverty. Urban poverty had reduced from 29.7 percent in 2006 to 27.5 per cent in 2010. Rural provinces like Luapula, Western, Eastern and Northern provinces continue to rank high on the poverty grid.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

According to the 2010 African Outlook Report, Zambia's macroeconomic situation has changed in the last 10 years with GDP growth at an unprecedented average of 4.8% between 1999 and 2009. Growth continues to be driven by increased output in the construction, mining and agriculture sectors. Nonetheless, the growth process continues to be severely limited by energy bottlenecks; public-sector constraints, mainly in the civil service; infrastructural problems; and insufficient progress towards key institutional reforms. On a positive note,

GDP growth for 2009 was estimated at 6.1%, a relatively small dip from 6.3 in 2008, and the 2010 and 2011 GDP growth forecasts stand at 5.5% and 5.7%, respectively.

In addition, the country has improved its fiscal discipline since 2004. Overall fiscal discipline enabled the country to: i) bring domestic debt and interest rates down substantially; and ii) reach the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative completion point, resulting in the cancellation of most foreign debt. Multilateral debt stock fell from an average of 103.8% of GDP in 1995-2004 to 16.2% in 2005-08, while bilateral debt fell from an average of 85.8% of GDP to 3.6% respectively. Further, macroeconomic stability, growth in exports and overall improvements in the investment climate had a positive impact on economic growth. The improvements in the investment climate contributed to the increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), especially in the mining, construction and services sectors. Similar to other socio-economic issues, Zambia is not lacking in policies and strategies on poverty reduction.

The SNDP, the first plan in the line of plans to meet the Vision 2030, included agriculture as a sector to be seen as the anchor of the economy and one that could address poverty directly since the majority of Zambians, especially the rural poor, engage in agriculture and related activities. However, despite all these plans and strategies, poverty, especially in rural Zambia, has remained alarmingly high.

It should be emphasised that economic growth experienced during the last decade has not translated into significant reductions in poverty and improved general living conditions of the majority of the Zambians. Job creation was not commensurate with the gains registered from economic growth. Among the factors to which we can attribute this phenomenon were low labour productivity, low absorption capacity of the labour market for new entrants, particularly the youth, and the concentration of growth in highly capital-intensive and urban-based sectors like mining, construction and services.

DRIVERS OF POVERTY

Poverty is caused by a number of factors and some key factors include the ones following:

POOR NATIONAL PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION

Among the main factors that drive the high poverty levels in Zambia is poor governance. Good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Besides, it assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Similarly, good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. However, Zambia's system of governance remains trapped in institutional set-up, political and economic conditions that are incapable of addressing the development needs, especially poverty, that the majority of Zambians face.

INADEQUATE INSTITUTIONAL AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

The importance of adequate institutional and organisational frameworks in the realisation of poverty reduction strategic goals and objectives cannot be over emphasised. It is argued that effective institutional frameworks make organisations more effective, accountable and representative. Additionally, co-ordination and networking amongst different organs of the association remains a weak link.

However, Zambia continues to face challenges of poor coordination and low funding in crucial ministries like agriculture that address poverty more directly. This is evidenced by heavy dependence on external financial and material support, poor performance of some poverty reduction programmes/projects, poor accountability as well as monitoring and evaluation systems. Furthermore, mobilisation of financial and other resources remains a big challenge.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change, coupled with a high level of environmental degradation in Zambia, is intensifying devastating effects especially among rural communities who are already faced with increased vulnerabilities. Additionally, the inhabitants of most rural communities are failing to either adapt or cope with the ever increasing intensity of livelihood

vulnerabilities brought about by climate change/environmental degradation, such as lack of water and food insecurity, resulting from poor precipitation and agricultural production due to loss of arable land. Consequently, the majority of rural households have now resorted to charcoal production as a source of livelihood. In terms of the environment, the changing climate is increasingly having disastrous effects on the vulnerable communities, particularly the poor and women. Rainfall variability is increasing, crops are failing, people are going hungry and thirsty and the very existence of some communities is imperilled, while others face growing barriers to their development.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Clearly, the Government has identified the high poverty levels as one of the greatest challenges Zambia currently faces. However, there are a number of policies that have to be developed, new ideas that have to be embraced and deliberate poverty reduction strategies that have to be operationalised at national, provincial and district level if there is to be sustained economic development which is coupled with significant poverty reduction.
2. Reliable statistics on poverty that guide effective and evidence based planning should be produced on a more consistent basis. It should also be noted that just like poverty has many definitions, it also has several strategies on how best it could be addressed.
3. Government's focus should be more on stimulating agriculture productivity and promotion of agro-businesses, improving the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, health, education and skills development. In addition, investments in key economic infrastructure such as feeder roads, water canals, tourist access roads and electricity access should be undertaken. In this regard, the major programmes like the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) should be targeted at the Real Vulnerable Households and Government should ensure crop diversification away from the traditional maize crop.
4. Rural financing to various developmental projects should be strengthened together with rapid roll-out of ICT services in rural areas to support the expansion and increased use of financial services. Rural industrialisation should be pursued in an effort to increase employment opportunities in rural areas.

**Sosten Banda
JCTR, Lusaka**

POPE BENEDICT'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE AFRICAN CHURCH: SOME THINGS THAT PLEASE ME AND SOME THAT DISAPPOINT ME

On 19th November 2011, during his visit to Benin, Pope Benedict XVI published and presented his post-Synod exhortation to the Church in Africa. Enriched by his own experience in the 2009 Synod in Rome, and well-versed in the deliberations of the Synod, Fr Peter Henriot engages in a critique of the exhortation letter, *Africae Munus*, and highlights what he considers to be its strengths as well as its weaknesses and betrayals. This article first appeared in the November issue of *The Tablet* (www.thetablet.co.uk).

A few days after returning to Rome from his mid-November visit to Benin, Pope Benedict XVI told a public audience: "In Africa I saw a freshness in the 'yes' to life, a freshness of religious meaning and hope, a holistic vision of reality where God is not confined to that positivist perspective which, in the final analysis, extinguishes all hope. This tells us that the continent contains reserves of life and vitality for the future, reserves upon which we can rely, upon which the Church can rely".

Such a positive perspective on a continent that all too often is portrayed as a land of disasters is one reason why Benedict's document on the Second African Synod can be of interest to non-Africans, both Catholics and others around the world. *Africae Munus* – "Africa's Commitment" – is the "Apostolic Exhortation" that the Pope signed and published on 19 November while in Benin. Its purpose is to promote implementation of the Synod's theme: "The Church in Africa in Service of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace".

"A charity which fails to respect justice and the rights of all is false."

As I read over this long (50-plus pages) document, I recalled the emotions I felt during the three weeks in October 2009 that I sat in the last row of the Synod Hall in the Vatican. Serving as an advisor to the Bishops of East Africa, I grew aware of the "joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties" of the African church of today, realising that something very important was happening that would affect not only the Church in Africa but the Church worldwide. For in so many ways of size and spirit, the Church in Africa truly is the Church of the future.

Africae Munus touches me in two ways. It pleases me as a document that offers pastoral directions that are challenging and encouraging. It disappoints me for its occasional minimisation of key pastoral issues raised during the Synod sessions and

contained in the *Message and Propositions* approved by the Bishops at the close of the Synod.

Of many things I could say, here are five things that please me about the document. First, Pope Benedict tells us that he publishes this document "to make available the encouraging fruits proposed by the Synod" (#13). In rich symbolic language, the Pope perceives Africa as a "spiritual 'lung' for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope" (#13). He emphasises that the Synod deliberations demonstrated a "Christian maturity" that is unafraid to face the truth of Africa's problems and address possible solutions (# 4). He sees the Church as a blessing for the continent and for the entire world (#177).

Second, in his discussion of economic and social challenges facing Africa, the Pope is not hesitant to sharply criticise the exploitation of Africa's resources by external business interests – often cooperating with African political and economic elites – which "ensure their own prosperity at the expense of the well-being of the local population" (#79). I would suggest his analysis of this exploitation can be enriched by reading the recently released and very hard-hitting document on reforming the international financial and monetary systems, from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

A third and very encouraging emphasis of *Africae Munus* is the strong link between love and justice. This of course is central in Pope Benedict's understanding of the Church's social teaching (CST). But at a time when some conservative voices would downplay the relevant political power of CST, it is good to read his strong statement that "A charity which fails to respect justice and the rights of all is false" (#18). This underpins the Pope's unequivocal call for the necessity of the Church to clearly and fearlessly speak out about economic injustices (#79-80).

Fourth, the document is filled with recommendations for better formation of Church members at every level in a faith that is mature and relevant. Formal education of youth is stressed as a matter of justice that the Church has promoted in the past throughout Africa and must continue to promote today (#74-78; 134-135). All members of the Church must be educated in the CST messages (#109, 128, 134, 137). Catechesis in the faith must move from memorisation to practice (#32 and 165).

Fifth, the issue of the role of woman and gender equity is strongly raised in *Africae Munus*, as it was in the deliberations of the October 2009 Synod. "The Church has the duty to contribute to the recognition and liberation of women, following the example of Christ's own esteem for them..." (#57). While the Pope may not use quite these words, yet it is clear that he believes that, "Without development of women, Africa will simply not develop!" Yet, as I will note later in this article, his application of this truth to the Church is not so clear. One positive point in this document's English translation is the use of more gender inclusive language, something not always experienced in Vatican statements!

No mention is made of the tragic and untenable situation that every Sunday in Africa, more and more Catholics are denied participation in the Eucharist because of the paucity of ordained priests.

As pleasing to me as are many parts of Pope Benedict's post-Synodal document, there are also many points that I find disappointing, such as the following five. The first is what I feel is an occasional abstraction from African realities – a failure to contextualise the lessons being offered. Perhaps the text is simply too long and thereby loses some of its possible "punch" to drive home relevant teachings with specific points. For example, in the treatment of youth, generalities are repeated, with citations from other papal presentations (#60-64). Environmental concerns in Africa are noted (#80), but an extremely pressing issue such as climate change is not mentioned. The serious issue of population is treated too lightly, remarking only that "Africa maintains its *joie de vivre*, celebrating God's gift of life by welcoming children for the increase of the family circle and the human community" (#9).

From my own pastoral experience in Africa during the past two decades, I would have expected more discussion of the role of Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and both local and national Justice and Peace Commissions. The SCCs are mentioned in passing in four places and Justice and Peace Commissions only once in relationship to civic education and electoral process (#23). Yet surely these two bodies are of critical importance to the

specific promotion of reconciliation, justice and peace.

Second, I could not help but contrast the strong language on public leadership in the *Message* written by the Synod Bishops with the more modest mention of selfish decision makers, both political and economic, who think only of themselves. Surprisingly, in his discussion of leaders, Pope Benedict refers to his own comments in *Caritas in Veritate* rather than to the Synod's *Message* (#82). Certainly many of us who follow closely the political culture in our countries know the importance of clear and pointed calls by the Church to leaders who are not serving the people.

Third, the Pope states that "The most effective means for building a reconciled, just and peaceful society is a life of profound communion with God and with others" and that this is most effectively promoted in the Eucharist. "Consequently, the community celebration of Sunday, the Lord's Day, and holydays of obligation is indispensable" (#152). But no mention is made of the tragic and untenable situation that every Sunday in Africa, more and more Catholics are denied participation in the Eucharist because of the paucity of ordained priests. In its explicit discussion of priests (#108-112), *Africae Munus* dwells on the necessary dedication and virtues of the priest but does not mention the growing inability of so few to serve so many.

Indeed, I would question the pastoral wisdom of encouraging that African Bishops should "respond generously to the request of their confreres in countries lacking vocations and assist the faithful deprived of priests" (#167). While the *Message* of the Synod Fathers does acknowledge that some priests do go outside Africa to serve, neither it nor the *Propositions* explicitly encourage this practice. I feel more evaluation is needed of where there is the greater need.

The discussion of HIV and AIDS in Africae Munus is not as pastorally complete as that offered during the Synod.

I have already mentioned above the positive emphasis on women's role in African society. But a fourth disappointment I have with *Africae Munus* is that it appears to ignore the strong emphasis of interventions during the October sessions and of the explicit discussion in the *Message* and *Propositions*. This emphasis is on addressing issues of women's role in the African Church itself. Repeatedly during the weeks of the Synod, the contribution that women were making to the mission of the Church in Africa was praised. But action was also called for to attend to the structures and attitudes that precluded fuller participation in apostolate and decision making by

women. Surely this should be addressed in the post-Synodal activities!

Fifth, the discussion of HIV and AIDS in *Africae Munus* is not as pastorally complete as that offered during the Synod. *Proposition* 51 approved by the Synod Bishops emphasised a holistic approach to dealing with AIDS (i.e., paying greater attention to the integral development and justice issues surrounding the rise of the pandemic). This critically important point is repeated, but less sharply in my opinion, in *Africae Munus* (#72). Moreover this same Synod *Proposition* also urged a more pastoral approach to assist discordant couples (one spouse being infected) to reach decisions that would be responsible “for the greater good of each other, their union and their family”. It is disappointing that Pope Benedict missed the chance to promote this pastoral approach to an

urgent issue touching the lives of so many in Africa (and elsewhere in the world).

At the close of Pope Benedict’s visit to Benin, SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar) brought together Church leaders, clergy and laity, to plan implementation of the directions of *Africae Munus*. My modest prayer is that this implementation pushes forward the many things about the document that please me, and works to overcome those things that disappoint me. I don’t think I am alone in making this prayer!

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AN ERROR OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Transitional justice is a concept that a nation has to grapple with when a change of government occurs in a country. Tough decisions have to be made with regard to the fate of those believed to have perpetrated acts of injustice while in power. What judicial and ethical principles should guide such a process? In the following article, Maxwell Lamyar reflects on this question within the Zambian political context.

It has become a fact that when a new regime comes into power, Zambia, in the name of urgent change, immediate need for reforms and expediency at the expense of justice, violates some of the fundamental human rights and expunges some principles of democracy. Since 1991, it has been a trend, a political subculture that chained first President Kaunda and allies, Chiluba and allies, Banda and allies. It seems unlikely that Sata and allies will avoid the pit-fall. Why would a nation always blame all of its former leaders of national plunder in its diverse forms? Perhaps the nation has fallen into a situation described in the words of Kant who says that “perhaps a revolution can overthrow autocratic despotism and profiteering or power-grabbing oppression, but it can never truly reform a manner of thinking; instead, new prejudice, just like the old one they replace, will serve as a leash for the great unthinking masses”. This will make true the words of Mackie that “there is more than one kind of exploitation, and the very means used to remove one can themselves turn into another”. These are facts which led to independence in 1964, to a landslide victory in 1991, to the election of 2001, and 2011.

In all these elections, one sees a reactionary electorate Zambian with a revolutionary appeal to another electorate. It is in a mood of desperation caused by impoverishment and unemployment, in which the challenge of another system becomes formidable. In that mood, people have looked to leadership for salvation, and in their despair have failed to examine and scrutinise the credentials of the leader. It has been a product of public opinion. Sadly though, the electorate has become like a man in a crowd who must go along with the crowd, and cannot stop to choose his own way. This man is not enlightened enough and he lives in “immaturity”, defined by Kant as “inability to use one’s understanding without guidance from another”, and it is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another.

One thing that Kant failed to see is what was latter added by Hanna Arendt (1978) when she made a fundamental difference between thinking - an epistemological process by which one comes to conceptual comprehension- and knowing- a metaphysical process by which one comes to apprehend, that is to accept as true or valid, that concept one has come to comprehend. This is a question of worldview, a comprehensive web of fundamental beliefs which inform one’s interpretation of life and the world. If a person is not enlightened in both situations they violate their rights as a human and flout democratic principles.

Whatever crime committed or alleged to have been by any normal human being shall not call for any punitive measures which violate one’s human dignity.

Human rights are not about corruption, governance or politics and economics; they are about this human who lives in the dimensions of human life. Whatever crime committed or alleged to have been by any normal human being shall not call for any punitive measures which violate one's human dignity, integrity and the value of human life itself. However great the crime or the need for change, the end alone cannot justify the means nor can the means alone justify the end. This is the major reason why justice and democracy are processes, not ends in themselves.

Justice lies in the 'right' process of treating a criminal, a murderer and terrorist as a human being because all these are just as human as any other human. Justice is "fairness" (Rawls, 2002). Any way or method that reduces them to subhuman levels is NOT RIGHT, and is not just. And when they are not legally proven so, never can we call them names or insinuate anything on them. They are innocent till proven guilty. In their wrongs we shall always treat them with respect, dignity and provide them with security if their lives are threatened by those who think it right to violate their humanity. Justice is not a question of a crime but of human treatment. If they treated us unjustly through the "crimes" committed against us we ought to treat them justly for their "crimes" to obtain justice. From us they shall learn how to positively treat and live with other humans whether in power or not.

The Post of October 8, 2011, carried an article entitled "Rupiah has to be prosecuted". The article brought out a critical question of what may be our justice and democracy. In one paragraph it writes, "We can't keep quiet and let such views go unchallenged. It is not correct to hear incorrect views on such important issues as the fight against corruption". The expressions of both correct and incorrect views are a human right supported by democratic principles. The reverse makes a correct view that is challenged by an incorrect view. Jane Tompkins put it challengingly that, "As long as you think that there are or should be facts that exist outside of any perspective ... But if you are convinced that the alternative does not exist, that there are no facts except as they are embedded in some particular way of seeing, then the argument that a set of facts derives from a particular worldview is no longer an argument against that set of facts".

Neither does this mean that we have to accept just anybody's facts nor that we cannot show that what one person asserts to be true is false but that, being aware that we operate inside some particular interpretive framework, reason, supported by evidence, authorities and analogies, must be given, though it does not give any one leverage over a particular case. This, sadly enough, is what democracy is to which Rev R. Holland gives an ethical definition of what the purest notion of it is, as "the religion of politics, for it means faith in man and

in his destiny ...; it means the supremacy of conscience over force and of reason over prejudice and passion".

If they treated us unjustly through the "crimes" committed against us we ought to treat them justly for their "crimes" to obtain justice. From us they shall learn how to positively treat and live with other humans whether in power or not.

Pope John Paul II also gave our democratic culture a new meaning when he wrote that "in the democratic culture of our time it is commonly held that the legal system of any society should limit itself to taking account of and accepting the conviction of the majority. Morality is to be based on what "the majority itself considers moral and actually practices, or immorality".

Democracy takes its judgment of right or wrong not from the majority, but from what is right. The challenge between an "incorrect" view and a "correct" view is not in the expression of emotions, fear, patriotism, force, ignorance, justice or habit, all of which modify responsibility, but in a profound understanding of human life in a said project, alternatives of a particular case.

We all know that the aim of justice in the conventional (juridical) approach is primarily a process to identify guilty and administer the punishment that the law requires with little attention to healing the bitterness and resentment that exist between the parties in the conflict. This is *retributive justice*. For many people this is right. But for a small minority this is not right. These few transcend the law to see human life above it. As the article articulates, there is no basis for forgiving Rupiah, but there also is no basis for *not* forgiving him. Can we start to forgive on allegations? What and who are we forgiving? To advance forgiveness or non forgiveness on allegations is to imply any of these three:

- It may be that the allegations are taken to be true, and so the accused are deemed guilty. But allegations are not truth until confirmed by the juridical process. To ask for forgiveness in this case is likely to be a partisan position, and also prejudicial.
- It may be a question of foregoing the juridical process for those accused to have committed crimes. This is the plausible reason to advance forgiveness on cases of allegations. It is not the "forgiveness" of alleged criminals, though it offers an advantage to those who committed them (similar to amnesty), and if it is seen so then it becomes the first. While to deny forgiveness is to ask for the juridical process to proceed. It is a question of justice, the establishing of the truth. To mention

names of the accused to be forgiven or not in this case is a dispositional conduct, another partisan position.

- It may be that the accused have been found guilty by a fair and just process. This is the deep meaning of forgiveness. Someone may be imprisoned for homicide though he or she is forgiven by the family of the deceased. To ask for forgiveness or non forgiveness for people not yet tried legally or by any available right means is to assume the same position: that someone is guilty, a prejudicial position.

From the above analysis, what then is the basis for forgiveness, in particular of the guilty? The basis for forgiveness is only based on the last account. First, there should be a crime or offense or sin for forgiveness to qualify and second, a lexicon of the first, is that the crime or offense or sin so committed should be by a normal human being who is legally proven so. Hence where there is no basis for forgiveness there shall be no basis for non forgiveness. For Christians forgiveness as given by Jesus gives no basis for why we should forgive so many times. Its basis is itself: humanness.

Democracy takes its judgment of right or wrong not from the majority, but from what is right.

Yes it can only be true that to “err is human but to forgive is divine”. However, the critical question is: who in the country should forgive cases against humanity? Is it the citizens or its leaders on behalf of the nation? Can a person forgive or not forgive for another? Nevertheless, one can not be blamed or condemned for forgiving or not forgiving. To do so is to deny forgiveness itself.

Forgiveness often goes with reconciliation. To feel that justice (usually meaning the punishment of the offenders) precedes reconciliation is a false dichotomy. There cannot be reconciliation without justice. The central question of reconciliation is not whether justice has been done, but rather how one goes about doing it in ways that can also promote future harmonious and positive relationships between parties that have to live together whether they like it or not. Reconciliation, which takes justice a step further, does not mean offenders are pardoned, but it means creating a process and an environment where offenders take responsibility to acknowledge their offenses and get motivated to change the situation and relationship in a positive and durable manner instead of keep denying their guilt until proven to them by the juridical process. Justice is necessary but is not sufficient condition for reconciliation.

There cannot be reconciliation without justice.

Yes, the idea of forgiveness and reconciliation seems illogical to the idea of legal justice and the reverse is true as is expressed by Rev M’bao. How can one think of one as illogical when legal justice and forgiveness- reconciliation are not logic of each other but of crime? If the anti-thesis of death is birth, the anti-thesis for both conventional justice, forgiveness-reconciliation is crime. The error here is to take one to be the opposite of the other.

Whence in Zambia does corruption come? It is a well known fact that what triggers a storm is one thing and what sustains it is another thing. Where in our nation lies the essence of corruption? In humans as Zambians or the political, economic or social institutions, all of which according to Galtung (1985) maybe a product of *structural violence*, an institutional social problem?

We have not at all as Zambians protected these institutions whether political, economic or social from abuse by leaders, and have not provided security to entrust men and women in high positions in these institutions to freely work toward their ultimate human dignity and integrity in advancing our nation through their social, economic and political intelligence. In the struggle for democracy, justice and corruption we should all know that political and economic problems are complicated.

In effecting constructive change, we need to deeply understand ourselves, our institutions and how they function. As mature as we are politically becoming, we ought to always effect change democratically and justly. Our history as a nation holds the truth; let us think critically and reflectively. We should correct the past failures by the state to bring about a change in a political culture which is grounded in a ‘winner takes all’ approach. In the conscious of our conscience, realities of democracy, we may forgive the errors in our democracy but posterity will not forgive us for our errors in their democracy. It is to the future that we hold the right to act “rightly”.

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ANSWERABLE TO THE TRUE OWNERS

Democracy is understood as a system of governance in which power and civic responsibility are justly exercised by the majority of citizens of a country, but with respect for and protection of the minority. In a democracy, the authority and legitimacy of government is derived from the people and based on their consent. Sadly, and needless to say, this is hardly the prevailing political practice in many African countries. Fr Oskar Wermter, a Jesuit working in Zimbabwe, offers insights on this subject in the context of Zimbabwe's political experience.

Before Independence, during the colonial period, Zimbabwe and its people were owned by a foreign power. When the British flag was hauled down during that memorable night from 17 to 18 April 1980, it signified the end of foreign ownership, when the land between the Limpopo and the Zambezi, between the Nyanga mountains and the Kalahari was in possession of a conqueror. By that I mean the colonial state, not individual citizens of foreign descent, some of whom earned their citizenship by the valuable contribution they made.

The essence of a free country is that the people own it and rule themselves. That makes them sovereign.

At that moment the ownership of the land should have been restored to the people of Zimbabwe as a whole; they should have been declared sovereign and in rightful possession of the land.

But in fact this did not happen. A new conquering class took over and claimed absolute sovereignty and indisputable ownership for itself, though that became clear only over a number of years. They went through the motions of elections, but they did not base their right to rule on the will of the people and the popular vote, but on military victory in the "war of liberation".

Professional politicians elsewhere in the world may also regard themselves as "owners" to be in control as a class, never seriously doubting their legitimacy. Elections are then merely an irritating interruption of the real business of politics. Going back to voters becomes a mere pretence, at best a public relations exercise. A democracy like that would be hollow, without a moral base.

Mere managers of politics do not feel duty-bound to give an account of themselves and their actions. They do not feel they need a mandate from the real "owners". As "professionals" they do not take political amateurs seriously. The "masses" just have to be "managed" so they mark their ballot papers in the "correct" spot. People are too "immature" or "volatile" to let them choose for themselves. They need "guidance".

The essence of a free country is that the people own it and rule themselves. That makes them sovereign. Rule by the people started in earnest when politics became a "public affair". The word "politics" is derived from the Greek "polis", a city state ruled by its citizens (which excluded the large slave population). The word used for a modern state - "republic" - is derived from the Latin expression "res publica" which means "a public matter". The rulers no longer form a class or clique deciding on matters of state by themselves in a smoky backroom, but face the assembled citizens.

We agree that an elected leader accepts great responsibility. But this does not mean that from now on he makes his own lonely decisions which he at best reveals to trusted friends, rarely even to the "masses".

Being responsible means responding to rightful authority, being answerable to the nation. Why? Because the citizens are the true owners, they are in possession and are the source and origin of all authority which the "responsible" leaders merely have on loan for a time.

At least that is the vision that inspires self-respecting citizens aware of their dignity and freedom. The conviction that they were born for self-determination, not for slavery, does not allow them to be mere pawns to be pushed around on a chessboard of power politics.

Mere managers of politics do not feel duty-bound to give an account of themselves and their actions.

They believe that they gave their leaders a mandate. Therefore they have a right to ask them questions and get answers. Leaders are not judges in their own case, but need to submit to the judgment of the real owners. An electoral system where every parliamentary candidate is directly dependent for his votes on a definite constituency, rather than on the voting public as a whole, forces members of parliament to go back to their voters, report back and answer their queries. It makes them truly answerable to the people who gave them their mandate.

The media may ask elected members questions on behalf of the people, and journalists can make sure that the people are not fobbed off with mere rhetoric, but get answers that bring the hidden truth to light.

Just recently a spokesperson announced that Government had spoken the last word on “Gukurahundi” (“a moment of madness”). How can that be? Can defendants be their own judges? In a free country no one can have all the powers at once. No authority is absolute, no power unlimited. That is at the centre of our dispute about the new constitution. Wisdom restricts time, balances power against power and makes institutions control, and check on, each other.

Cynically we may write off all attempts at ever checking power and restricting its abuse, “leaving

politics to politicians”. Some of us despair of justice as an idealistic pipedream.

The biblical prophets did not despair and did not leave the field to tyrants. Though harassed and persecuted, they never lost hope that justice will finally win the day. There will be a judgment. The victims of “Gukurahundi”, and all barbarities the world over, will see their killers answer for their unspeakable cruelty and inhumanity. In the name of justice citizens, and the media as their mouthpiece, will forever demand that the ones responsible actually respond and give an account of what they did. Truth, so often compromised by power, will have the last word.

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WE NEED JOBS, JOBS AND MORE JOBS!

The importance of employment in poverty reduction needs not be emphasised. Employment creation, in the case of Zambia, would bridge economic growth and the reduction of poverty levels in the country. In order for this to happen, deliberate policies have to be effected by government that will create an enabling environment for job-creation and security. Humphrey Mulemba offers his thoughts on this pertinent issue.

The economic census currently being undertaken by the Government will be helpful as it will inform the benchmark against which future policies regarding the economic development of the country will be measured. Important to all of this will be to first establish the demographics of our human capital and thereafter explore what potential there is to match it to the different development needs of the country. Even though there is some time before the actual economic census will be out there is no harm in developing a framework to redefine the path of economic development in the country.

advanced levels to educate the current and future labour force requirements of industry and the country’s development plans. For example, the National Council for Construction is already a good example of this not only as a regulating and accredited body but as a learning institution too. This initiative will need to be expanded across sectors and will further need to be developed by incentivising the initiative.

IS THERE POTENTIAL FOR INDUSTRIAL GROWTH IN ZAMBIA TO CREATE JOBS?

This will require a basic competency based curriculum set against the benchmark of industry standards approved by employers and known to trainees and their supervisors which provide opportunities to workers to progress to intermediate and advanced levels. This will need to be supported by an active labour market strategy policy which would feature continuous skill formation/training to enable greater mobility across the different employment sectors.

The liberal system needs to be supported by adequate interventions, policies and regulating authorities to ensure that it does not have an undesired impact on the welfare of the people.

With the talks around restructuring the curriculum, the need for job creation, greater equity in the economy and need to achieve development; a basic but comprehensive policy can help cater for this. By creating an Industrial Education Programme (IEP) job creation, economic development and growth of local industry would all be achieved. The IEP would be a curriculum designed by accredited bodies in respective sectors of industry after consultation with government and private sector. The IEP would simply take three levels of basic, intermediate and

The IEP should also be tied into the national development programme through the various projects needed and expected to be undertaken by government. This will help boost local industry, improve planning, improve capability of industry to execute and undertake projects and provide employment. This will all reduce on the time and cost

of contracting international firms who will need time to understand the local labour market that will come at an extra cost of mobilisation and demobilization, and worse still, they do not have the interest of Zambia's development at the core of their business.

This will assist in reducing the likelihood of unemployment and increase the chances of greater innovation and entrepreneurial potential due to diverse levels of exposure. In addition, there is a great concern about the growing young population which is simply not being absorbed into the economy quickly enough. If this trend continues, this may cause a social problem that would manifest into a pool of youth turning to crime, drugs, alcohol and other social vices. The implications that this could have are detrimental to any potential future gains of economic growth or development that the country could have.

GREATER STATE REGULATION VS UNREGULATED LIBERALISM FOR CREATING EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

To achieve all this it will be important to maintain some of the fundamental components of the liberal economy with certain aspects simply needing improvement and policy interventions. Although the liberal system has resulted in an overall reduction of poverty for Zambia, inequality is embedded in the overall Zambian national economic system. A 2005 World Bank study concluded that during the 1990s countries with rapid economic growth and trade liberalisation achieved absolute poverty reduction, but increased inequality.

As can be seen, the liberal system is an important means to delivering development in Zambia. But given the extent society is polarised between the rich and poor, the liberal system needs to be supported by adequate interventions, policies and regulating authorities to ensure that it does not have an undesired impact on the welfare of the people.

The importance of addressing the underlying issue of inequality lies in the fact that some scholars discovered that countries that had a more equitable distribution of income and achieved greater equality

in literacy, political rights and civil liberties – were actually found to have better environmental quality.

Inequality, poor regulation of the private sector and greater liberalisation results in a recipe for disaster for the country to achieve sustainable economic development. It is the poor that primarily rely on natural resources for their livelihoods. The unregulated exploitation of resources will hence result in the possibility of greater food insecurity which can mean poor nutritional intake, thus affecting learning capacities of individuals. This is again disastrous as education is an important tool to enable people to benefit from the liberal economy. This raises the importance regulation plays in shaping wealth and poverty, more especially for Zambia.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE LIBERAL ECONOMY

The ideal role of the government is not to take away choice and restrict to local industry goods but to essentially promote local industry and goods by influencing choice. At any point in time, government is faced with the situation to make a decision that will affect the decisions individuals in society will make.

Therefore, positive interventions (much like positive discrimination) – promotes welfare benefits by rewarding actions that promote welfare without punishing/taking away anything from the other. Through internally driven concessions, there could be local economic stimulation and greater local economic integration of the economy.

CONCLUSION

The right incentives and policies will be needed to achieve the objectives of job creation, education, industrial development and sustainable economic development. A step in the right direction would be to use the national development plans to develop and empower local industry, further stimulating economic growth and employment. Focus will then be made on the appropriate incentives to complement the Industrial Education Programme (IEP) and the positive spill over effects.

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“A SOCIETY WHERE FAITH PROMOTES JUSTICE FOR ALL IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE, ESPECIALLY FOR THE POOR.”

THE ECONOMICS OF THE MINIMUM WAGE

In the employment sector, much debate surrounds the issue of the minimum wage. Is there wisdom in a government insisting on a uniform minimum wage for all labour sectors? In what ways could such a system be detrimental to business and to people's livelihoods? In what ways could it be beneficial? How may the conflict between the need to sustain the viability of business and the need to offer workers just wages for a decent livelihood be resolved? Oliver Kaonga suggests different minimum wages for different industries.

More jobs with low wages or a bit less jobs with a bit higher wages? Low cost of labour for employers vs. low salaries, too low to meet even the most basic needs? Which way would you go? In a nation with not only high unemployment level but also high poverty levels, this can be quite a delicate situation to handle. In efforts to get around this seemingly controversial issue, most governments have come up with the minimum wage aimed at protecting the interests of both the employees and employers.

WHAT IS A MINIMUM WAGE?

A minimum wage is the lowest hourly, daily or monthly remuneration that employers may legally pay to workers. In other words, it is the lowest wage at which workers may sell their labour. The minimum wage is in most cases aimed at protecting the most vulnerable in the labour force. In Zambia, the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act applies to *all employees* (including casual and part-time workers), but does not apply to those who fall under the categories including: employees of local authority, employees who undergo collective bargaining (unionised workers), employees in a sector for which the Minister, by statutory instrument, has prescribed the minimum wage, employees in management positions (as defined under the Industrial Relations Act), and employees of the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

BENEFITS OF A MINIMUM WAGE

One of the most important benefits of having a higher minimum wage is that it helps uplift the standard of living for the poorest and most vulnerable class in society. It is good for poor families. Minimum wage increases help a lot of people who work not only at the minimum wage but below it and just above it as well. While an increase of a few thousand Kwachas per year will rarely by itself lift a person or a family out of poverty, it does ease the struggle to pay for groceries, child care or rent, and it adds meaning and dignity to labour. A reasonable minimum wage is an indispensable step towards the goal of reducing poverty, along with other steps that include credits on taxes, better education, and broader health coverage. Though a fair minimum wage is not enough, it is essential.

Increased pay motivates and encourages employees to work harder (unlike welfare programmes and other transfer payments). When an employee is paid a high wage, they feel they are bound to put in their best in return; they actually find it easier to do their best as they concentrate on their work with all their effort and not worrying about where supplementary income will come from to make their ends meet. It further increases the work ethic of those who earn very little, as employers demand more in return from the higher cost of hiring these employees.

An upward adjustment in the minimum wage stimulates consumption, by putting more money in the hands of low-income people who spend their entire pay checks. And the higher the consumption, the higher the demand will be to which supply is expected to positively respond through increased production. This in turn creates more job opportunities.

Lastly, a higher minimum wage is one way of indirectly fighting crime. Some people who resort to stealing, selling illegal drugs and robbery feel that they wouldn't get enough pay even if they got a job. As such, a higher minimum wage will encourage people to join the workforce rather than pursuing money through illegal means.

COSTS OF A MINIMUM WAGE

Critics of minimum wage policy suggest that the minimum wage is a poor method of redistributing income and it also tends to hurt the very people it is intended to help. They suggest that hikes in the minimum wage inevitably lead to reductions in employment as the increased cost to business forces employers to either reduce the number of employees or at least cut the number of hours per employee.

We need to find a way of striking a balance and setting the equilibrium between cost of production and decent wages.

As a labour market analogue of political-economic protectionism, it excludes low cost competitors from labour markets, hampers firms in reducing wage costs during trade downturns, and generates various industrial-economic inefficiencies

as well as unemployment, poverty, and generally dysfunctions.

A higher minimum wage may cause price inflation as businesses try to compensate by raising the prices of the goods being sold. When the wages are high this basically raises the cost of production and with this high cost, holding the price level constant will eat into the profits of the firm. To shield themselves from the profit losses, the firms respond by increasing the prices of their output, but then this price increase in goods and services will again raise the cost of living forcing the employees to demand for a further upward adjustment in the minimum wage. The cycle continues and the end result is the persistent increase in the general price level of goods and services called inflation.

It is further argued that an increase in the minimum wage discourages further education among the poor by enticing people to enter the job market. For example, if you can pay a grade nine drop out a monthly wage of K1, 000, 000, why would they go back to school? They will see no point in that. Actually a lot more school going-age children are likely to abandon their school in search for jobs.

The idea of having different minimum wages per industry is not only a fair way of distributing resources but will also work to stimulate production in priority sectors such as agriculture and tourism.

Finally, a high minimum wage can result in the exclusion of certain groups from the labour force. Like one employer said, "If I'm going to pay K1, 000, 000 to a garden boy then I will demand that my next garden boy should have a diploma in gardening and flower tending". What this means is that those with low or no educational qualifications may not be able to find any work on the job market.

WHAT IS THE MODERN MINIMUM-WAGE CONTROVERSY ABOUT?

The modern minimum-wage controversy derives from a recent literature in empirical labour economics, which argues, foremost among several claims, that moderate increases in mandated minimum wages do not lead to adverse employment outcomes for low-wage workers. Card and Krueger (1995, 387) say that their "strongest and most important finding" is the absence of unemployment effects from moderate increases in the minimum wages. The current controversy arises because "the new economics of the minimum wage" is at odds with neoclassical price theory, which predicts unemployment, and with a generation of time-series econometric research, which consistently finds evidence of unemployment effects. But does the minimum-wage really increase

unemployment of low-wage workers, and do minimum-wage increases, on balance, help low wage workers?

WAY FORWARD: BALANCING DECENT WAGES WITH LOW COST OF PRODUCTION

Considering the delicate nature of the minimum wage and its effects, it is important to find cost minimising practical ways of setting the minimum wage. We need to find a way of striking a balance and setting the equilibrium between cost of production and decent wages. The question is how do you achieve these two conflicting objectives at once?

One problem which immediately comes up is identifying which employer can genuinely not afford to pay decent wages. Employees in most cases go on strike demanding for higher pay because they believe their employers are capable of paying them better. Considering the confidentiality which is attached to private companies' profitability levels, it is difficult to have information as to exactly how much a particular company is making in profits.

We can however roughly approximate and rank the profitability levels of companies based on the sector where they operate and set a sector specific minimum wage taking into account the perceived profit levels of each of the sectors. For example, if companies in the mining sector are perceived to be making supernormal profits and those in the agriculture sector are just breaking even, then it is only fair that we set two different minimum wages for the two sectors based on the ability to pay such wages. If a uniform minimum wage is set then we will simply kill the firms in the agriculture sector where most employers may not afford to pay such high wages.

The idea of having different minimum wages per industry is not only a fair way of distributing resources but will also work to stimulate production in priority sectors such as agriculture and tourism. I see a situation where we are going to attract investment in our priority sectors away from the mining industry as a result of low production cost. We must thus ensure that the cost of labour (a factor of production) in these sectors is cheaper as compared to the cost of labour in the mining sector. This can be achieved by setting two different minimum wages for the two sectors, with the mining industry having a higher minimum wage.

Let's guarantee our employees decent wages and our employers a fair cost of production by striking a balance through per sector variable minimum wage.

**Oliver Kaonga
Lusaka**

MIGRATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE

Trafficking in persons is a well documented issue although it remains mostly invisible to us. Situations of human trafficking compromise the core human value of human dignity, which forms the basis of human rights. Sr. Kayula Lesa gives an informative glimpse into the world of human trafficking, with particular reference to Zambia. She examines its various causes and the means that could be employed in mitigating this dehumanising phenomenon.

Migration is one of the notable features that characterise the 21st Century. Official reports from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimate that there are about 214 million international migrants today worldwide. This is a huge increase from 150 million in 2000. Reports also indicate that globally, one out of thirty three persons is a migrant. International migrants in Africa are estimated at 19.3 million with three countries hosting huge numbers of migrants; South Africa (1.9 million), Cote d'Ivoire (2.4 million) and Ghana (1.9 million).

Within Southern Africa, poverty, liberation struggles, wars and civil unrest have forced considerable migration of populations within and across borders. Zambia, for example, has been a major recipient of refugees from its neighbours such as the DR Congo and Angola and beyond since it is relatively peaceful and politically stable. It has also been an important destination for labour migrants from countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, China and India. It has also experienced rapid migration of Zambian nationals, mainly of skilled nationals who seek a better living abroad. Migration therefore is mainly for economic reasons especially in the region where many countries have the majority of their populations categorised as poor.

It is the poverty that forces many people to jump at every available opportunity and puts many at risk of being trafficked.

A huge link exists between migration and human trafficking. Traffickers take advantage of the vulnerability of the women, men and children who wish to leave their present circumstances, such as situations of poverty. There are two categories; there are those that want to leave their present circumstances and there are those who want to leave their present circumstances as well as move elsewhere. Sometimes those who just want to move out of their poverty have no idea about travelling out but because of their desperation, they buy into the notion of moving elsewhere and are tricked into this. Migration as an aspect of social experience is both a right and a need but often migrants ignore the challenges such as human trafficking that come with it.

In addition, as more people move, countries that are popular destinations have put in place laws that restrict entry. The situation forces many who are seeking a good life to find other means of getting to their desired destinations. These alternatives often mean getting into the hands of traffickers or smugglers who have clever ways of making migration for their victims or clients easy. With smuggling you know you are being taken illegally into a country; you pay the smuggler but once you reach your destination, you are free and can work or do whatever you wish freely- like the people we hear that go in boats from North Africa to Europe, some of whom end up dying or being transported in containers. Of course there have been cases where a smuggling situation has ended up being a trafficking situation as the smuggler might change his mind once their client reaches the desired destination and keep their victim in bondage.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ZAMBIA

The 2000 United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, the Palermo Protocol, defines trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”.

The issue of human trafficking is relatively new in Zambia. The first case to be reported was that of an Australian man who was caught at the Zambia/Zimbabwe border in the process of taking girls aged between 14 and 15 between 1999 and 2000. The second case involved a Congolese woman who was also caught taking about 14 children to South Africa. In the recent past, the media reports have shown intercepted trucks carrying people into Zambia from neighbouring countries such as Malawi heading for South Africa. The Zambian public is therefore now awakening to this reality.

The problem of human trafficking is recognised as serious although its nature and extent remains

largely unknown especially given the limited statistics. What is clear, however, is that Zambia is a source and destination for trafficking victims as well as a transit point for victims destined for other locations within and outside Africa. Zambian women and children for, example, are trafficked to Malawi through Mchinji (Mchinji is the border post into Malawi), then onto Europe with the Netherlands being a popular destination. Those who traffic people through Malawi are reported to be mainly Nigerians who provide victims with fake Malawian passports. Other destinations include Angola, Botswana, South Africa and the Far and Middle East. As a transit point, Zambia is also used for the onward trafficking of refugees and other vulnerable groups from Angola, the Great Lakes Region and from the Democratic Republic of Congo to South Africa and from South Africa on to third countries such as USA, Israel and Russia. There are also reports of Chinese and Indian men who are trafficked into Zambia and are subjected to work in Chinese and Indian owned mines respectively where they are exploited. Generally, the forms on exploitation for many victims tend to be forced labour and forced prostitution.

Trafficking in persons is worth internationally beyond ten billion US Dollars in a given year.

Although cross border trafficking is a great source of concern, most trafficking happens within Zambia itself and victims tend to be women and children who often work as domestic labourers and forced prostitutes. Girls tend to be the majority and traffickers include friends, Church Organisations, older prostitutes and foreigners mostly from Asia, America and Europe.

WHY IS THIS PROBLEM PERPETUATED?

Notable factors that drive human trafficking include:

POVERTY THAT CHARACTERISES MANY HOUSEHOLDS

In Zambia, 64% of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$1.25. This in reality means that the majority of Zambians have limited opportunities to access quality education, health care, food of the right quality and amount, etc. It is the poverty that forces many people to jump at every available opportunity and puts many at risk of being trafficked. In Zambia, reports on human trafficking indicate that some children are trafficked by their own relatives since poor families desire to place their children in more affluent homes in the city with the hope that their lives will be improved. In addition, poor families are less likely to know about human trafficking and it is well documented that most trafficking victims are those who do not have the information about it.

DEMAND FOR PURCHASED SEX

It has been recognised that most trafficking victims in Southern Africa are used for sexual exploitation. Zambia is one of the countries in which this reality is the case. This is one of the reasons many victims tend to be women and girls. Despite this recognition, Zambia like other countries in Southern Africa has turned a blind eye to people who buy sex, mostly men. I cannot agree more with Stellan Hermansson, who in his essay *The Swedish Initiative* (which appeared in the booklet *Human Trafficking, Prostitution and Sexuality*, 2010) argues that men demanding to purchase sex are the main problem with regard to trafficking and prostitution. These men, he further argues, see the purchasing of sex as their right and never question why these women sell sex and the living conditions victims are subjected to. It is also the demand in Europe or the countries where these people go to that drives trafficking in persons.

GREED

Human trafficking is a product of human greed; which is the excessive and selfish desire for wealth, power, etc. Traffickers realise huge amounts of money from exploiting others and they are in full control of their victims. Trafficking in persons is worth internationally beyond ten billion US Dollars in a given year.

ZAMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

It is important to note that government's commitment to addressing human trafficking has been shown in the enactment of the law that criminalises all forms of human trafficking. The Anti-Trafficking Act No.11 Act of 2008 provides, for instance, for stiff penalties ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment, establishment of the human trafficking fund for the material support of victims and their training as well as tracing families and indeed any other matter connected with the rehabilitation of victims and a Committee to deal with this issue. Government efforts are backed by efforts by the UN Bodies such as the ILO and UNICEF, IOM and civil society organisations like Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) and Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) who do research and education on human trafficking.

CHALLENGES INVOLVED

The implementation of the law is often a challenge as law enforcement officers such as the police, prosecutors, judges and immigration officers are not adequately equipped to conduct investigation and prosecutions effectively. Furthermore, there is no unified system for collecting data on human trafficking cases and documenting it for use by social welfare officials, immigration and law enforcement officials. In addition, government-provided protection for victims remains inadequate. For example, the continued lack

of shelter sometimes forces government to place victims in prisons alongside trafficking offenders.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime. It is a relatively unknown concept in Zambia and few communities have any understanding of it. Even people in jobs that ultimately are required to deal with the problem show very little knowledge about it. Even those who were near victims and as victims are secluded and their shelters not accessible to the public. There is often disbelief about how serious this problem is among the general public. With limited statistics, it sounds so remote to many people until they have had experiences of someone they know who would have fallen prey to trafficking. The situation is perceived as migration, and in the eyes of individuals and groups there is nothing wrong with it.

Addressing human trafficking appears not a priority in Zambia. Few organisations are involved in directly addressing human trafficking. The Church, for example, does not take enough action to address this problem. Only few Church organisations like JCTR, Zambia Association of Sisterhood (ZAS) and some organisation in the Anglican Church are doing a bit in terms of sensitisation. Influential bodies like Caritas-Zambia with structures in the 10 diocese do not raise a voice on this issue. This for me is very worrying because the Church in Zambia enjoys legitimacy among the people and its voice is often heard, as we have seen it contribute to the changing of governments. If it is silent, the perception people get is that then trafficking is not a big deal. Thus, many people have little or no knowledge about human trafficking.

ESSENTIAL STEPS IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

1. Public awareness raising is very important as those trafficked are normally people who do not know about human trafficking. It however must be aggressive. Since many people do not have hands-on experience, it is important

that everyone takes part in the dissemination of messages that highlight the experiences of trafficking.

2. It is also important to fight poverty as income poverty is especially at the heart of human trafficking as it makes people vulnerable. For Zambia, one way to fight poverty is to include in the Bill of rights of the Zambia Constitution, economic, social and cultural rights, the rights that assure access to basic human rights such as employment, education, food, water and sanitation etc. When these are included in the Bill of Rights, government will be pressurised to commit itself to the progressive realisation of these rights, and when these rights are denied, government can be taken to court. The enjoyment of these rights will reduce vulnerability to trafficking. This is a long term strategy.
3. What is most crucial, however, is to address the demand side of the problem. With regard to sexual exploitation, if there is no market created for the sale of sex, sex trafficking will not exist. And if nobody bought products that come from forced labour, forced labour will not survive. When we refuse to provide an environment that allows for human trafficking, we stand in solidarity with the victims and the would-be victims who are mostly the already marginalised. The Church has a huge role to play in championing such values as solidarity and equality.
4. It must also be noted that human trafficking cannot be fought easily by an individual country. It needs concerted efforts by countries involved in being a source, a transit or a destination point or all of these. An example of working together to prevent this crime is the criminalisation of the buying of sex. A global campaign is needed in this regard.

**Sr Kayula Lesa, RSC
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ARTICLES AND LETTERS

We would like to encourage you to contribute 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* depends on your lively analytical exchange of views. The length of your article should be between 1000 and 2500 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* (first quarter) will be out in March 2012. 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. The deadline for submissions is 29 February 2012.

We look forward to hearing from you!

PARENTS, YOUTH MINISTERS AND YOUTH

In the following article, Brian Banda suggests ways in which the youth can be made to find meaning and fulfilment in their lives as young persons. He delineates the role that parents and youth ministers should play in this, as well as the attitudes they should embrace in their dealings with young persons.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, I came across the statement: *Our job as parents is to get our children ready for the adult world.* Is that all? What would this mean for youth ministry for both parents and youth ministers? Parents and youth ministers are significant in the shaping of the lives of youths. Many people grow up in a context that does not see youth as a stage with its own meaning. Instead, youth is perceived as a stage towards adulthood. As opposed to that, I set to propose that the stage of youth can be embraced and lived meaningfully if (1) parents and youth ministers understood the youths, (2) youths were helped to understand themselves and (3) youths find, embrace and enjoy the meaning of being adolescent and youth. Through this sense of identity and meaning making, then they will discover their identity and sense of mission in the Church and society.

Many people grow up in a context that does not see youth as a stage with its own meaning.

I propose one gospel story (Luke 24:13-24) as a paradigm, for theological significance, from which to understand and help youths make meaning of their mission. The story stresses the importance of meeting youths where they are and challenging them to articulate what they are searching for by guiding them into finding answers to their own questions. This implies staying with them in their search and leaving them when they feel the sense of mission derived from a deeper understanding of who they are and who Jesus means for their lives and the implications for that meaning for their mission.

UNDERSTANDING THE YOUTHS

What should parents and youth ministers do to understand the youth? Parents and youth ministers can understand youths through many ways: (1) through bounds of social awareness, (2) locus of authority and (3) Forms of world coherence and symbolic functions (Fowler, 1995).

BOUNDS OF SOCIAL AWARENESS

Bounds of social awareness refer to relationships built on familiarity with those who you share interpersonal relationships with. This is where family, friends and church groups play an important role (Fowler, 1995). Therefore, parents and youth ministers, in order to understand the youths, need to be aware of the significance of these relationships. For the young people, this is significant because they are in “the process of finding their place in a complex world and seek satisfying ways of ordering a sense of meaning and belonging” (Parks, 2000). The second way is the locus of authority.

LOCUS OF AUTHORITY

Parents and youth ministers play a major role in shaping the lives of youths. Thus parents and ministers are symbols of authority. Youths may or may not want to identify with these symbols of authority. They will identify with authority roles that they can easily relate with and those who matter. This means they will want to relate at a personal level with a person they can depend on but also seek groups that represent their values as well as their belief and traditions (Fowler, 1995). Hence, it is important for parents and youths to understand what youths could be looking for as their locus of authority. What about coherence and symbolic functions?

COHERENCE AND SYMBOLIC FUNCTIONS

Why do parents and youth ministers sometimes misunderstand youths? One of the common reasons is that the former are often strangers to the latter's ways of understanding the world. If so, what can they do? One way to reach out to their (youth) world or to know their world is through narrative and drama or through felt meanings expressed symbolically (Fowler, 1995). If parents and youth ministers first listen to the narratives of the youths they would recognise the potentialities of these young people and then find a right response to give. It is through such narratives that youths learn to ask questions and express symbols that speak to their situation. Symbols will most often than not express the worldview of the youths. Hence, parents and youth ministers ought to be open-minded and be ready to

be surprised. The surprises may include moments when the young person begins to question why they should do what the parents ask them to do. Such behaviour is normal because it shows that youths have reached the stage at which they begin to argue even just for the sake of arguing (Elkind, 1998). Therefore, through the youthful desire for answers and the parents' and youth ministers' wonder and amazement at what is revealed, a mutual understanding would develop between youths and parents and youth ministers. How can parents and youth ministers help young people find meaning?

FINDING MEANING

Meaning making can be very challenging and complex because of the different challenges that experiences present to one's life. As we have seen above, the challenge for parents and youth ministers is to find conditions that make experience worth meaning. This search for meaning ought to be found in the present experiences and one has to experience that for themselves. One cannot postulate meaning for another. Meaning has to be discovered by the one searching for it (Frankl, 2000). Here, parents and youth ministers would help young people find meaning first by knowing the deepest needs of the youths.

For that meaning to be authentic, parents and youth ministers need to avoid presuming that they know the needs of the youths. The pitfalls of presumption result in the imposition of what is outside the subject's real needs for meaning making. Therefore, a concern for the deep needs of youths and openness to asking them what they really desire is one way towards finding personal meaning.

If parents and youth ministers are to help youths search for authentic meaning, the former need to avoid presumptions to knowledge.

It is normal and common that young people expect parents, youth ministers and adults to have some knowledge about the youths. That, from my observation and experience, seems to come from the natural fact that adults are expected to be adults to young people and that through their own experience they would have gained some ideas about what it means to be young. Therefore, enough knowledge about youths and life in general is a great help to youths' meaning making.

One other significant aspect for youths in their meaning making is the accompaniment that parents and youth ministers provide to the young people. Some youths find more personal meaning through mentorship than from parental care. Hence, this is where youth ministers play a significant role by being present to the lives of the youths. So staying with the

youth along their Christian journey can add something to the young peoples' meaning making.

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

What could be a theological significance of this three-fold approach to preparing youths for meaning making in their lives?

THE WALK TO EMMAUS: LUKE 24:13-24

The story of the Walk to Emmaus is one perspective from which parents and youth ministers can help youth make meaning of their personal life. Central to this perspective is the idea of finding and meeting the youths where they are in their own journey. Parents and youth ministers come into the lives of the youths at different stages. The youths have an independent journey to traverse, yet one which can be supported by parents and youth ministers.

In the section on finding meaning, we have seen the significance of parents and youths ministers in knowing the needs of youths. There, parents and youth ministers are like knowledgeable facilitators as opposed to ignorant strangers. Therefore, in the text we see that Jesus comes near the two disciples walking to Emmaus. They do not recognise him and so he asks them what they are discussing (v17). As if to point out that Jesus should know why and what their discussion is about, they ask him if he is the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know what has been happening (v18). In short, it is important for parents and youth ministers to know the needs of youths.

We have seen too that if parents and youth ministers are to help youths search for authentic meaning, the former need to avoid presumptions to knowledge. It is important to ask what the youths see to be their specific needs. Here Jesus gives us a good example when he does not presume to know what the two are talking about. He asks them, "What things?" (v19). Jesus allows them to share what they know, and at the end challenges them, and explains the significance of what they know (vv19b-24). So first Jesus allows them to answer their own questions then he contributes to their understanding.

As primary subjects of the process of growth, the youth are to judge for themselves that they are ready to take up responsibilities for their own lives.

Another significant aspect of meaning making for youths is accompaniment or mentorship. The two disciples show the interest in having someone stay with them. When Jesus decides to move on, they ask him to stay with them (v29). It is during this period that the two realise how much their hearts have burnt with the desire to know the word of God

and how they eventually come to recognise the identity of Jesus. The most significant point in this scene is when their eyes are opened and Jesus vanishes from their sight (v31). This is important because it points us to when and where parents and youth ministers' active role ends. When youths are able to see with their own eyes and not through the eyes of the mentor, that is the point at which to leave them. When the youths speak from their experience of the meaning of life, that is the point at which to leave them. When youths feel empowered by their experience and they take up the initiative to share their own experience, that is the point at which to leave them. In other words, it is their own experience, which validates their identity as adults. As primary subjects of the process of growth, the

youth are to judge for themselves that they are ready to take up responsibilities for their own lives.

CONCLUSION

Parents and youth ministers can play a three-fold mission in helping the youths know, find and embrace meaning in their own life experiences. Through their own sense of identity, youths can discover their sense of mission in the Church and society. The youths need to be met where they are in life.

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THOUGHTS FROM THE POST-AFRICAN SYNODAL EXHORTATION

“Be Reconciled with God”

Reconciliation is a pre-political concept and a pre-political reality, and for this very reason it is of the greatest importance for the task of politics itself. Unless the power of reconciliation is created in people's hearts, political commitment to peace lacks its inner premise. At the Synod, the Pastors of the Church strove for that inner purification of man which is the essential prior condition for building justice and peace. But this purification and inner development towards true humanity cannot exist without God.

Indeed, only authentic reconciliation can achieve lasting peace in society. This is a task incumbent on government authorities and traditional chiefs, but also on ordinary citizens. In the wake of a conflict, reconciliation – often pursued and achieved quietly and without fanfare – restores a union of hearts and serene coexistence. As a result, after long periods of war nations are able to rediscover peace, and societies deeply rent by civil war or genocide are able to rebuild their unity. It is by granting and receiving forgiveness that the traumatised memories of individuals and communities have found healing and families formerly divided have rediscovered harmony.

Becoming Just and Building a Just Social Order

There is no doubt that the building of a just social order is part of the competence of the political sphere. Yet one of the tasks of the Church in Africa consists in forming upright consciences receptive to the demands of justice, so as to produce men and women willing and able to build this just social order by their responsible conduct. The model par excellence underlying the Church's thinking and reasoning, which she proposes to all, is Christ. According to her social teaching, the Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim to interfere in any way in the politics of the state. She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, one that the Church can never renounce. Her social doctrine is a particular dimension of this proclamation: it is a service to the truth which sets us free.

Africae Munus

RELIGION: A BLESSING OR A CURSE!

Various atrocities have been committed under the influence of religion, but so has a lot of good been done. Does the value of religion rest in religion itself or is it interpreted by its practitioners? Shouldn't persons as free moral agents be held fully responsible for their actions instead of attributing them to their religions? Dominic Liche offers his insights on this important subject.

THE CASE AGAINST RELIGION AND ITS BELIEFS

As I stepped onto a bus en route to Lusaka, back home from Mansa, there arose a preacher clad in a black suit with *The Holy Bible* in hand greeting me and wishing me a safe trip. After comfortably taking my seat on the luxury coach bus, I took out my favourite philosophy book to catch up a bit on moral philosophy. Just when I began digging into the major arguments against one ethical theory, the preacher began a sermon citing this verse, then that verse, then that verse from the Bible. Most of the verses he cited were about sin, the end of the world, and the kinds of punishments for sinners. The preacher then began shouting loud, almost like we had done something wrong. I tried to block his voice by digging deeper into my book, but his voice was just too powerful for me to shut off. I decided to listen but I could not get anything consistent with my own religious beliefs. He almost scared the hell out of me when he said all of the people that do not believe in his kind of God will be punished and sent to hell. I could not handle his sermon anymore.

The major problem with religious beliefs is that they are often many and pull believers in different directions.

So, I stood up so that I could wait for the bus to start off from outside the bus, but at this point, the bus began moving forcing me to take my seat and endure the preacher's "shouting". After the preacher was done with his sermons and prayers for us to have a safe trip, he asked for a tithe or offering from us passengers. When he came to my row, I simply ignored him without giving him anything. He kept standing there, saying, "blessed is the hand that giveth". I did nothing. After seeing that he would not get a ngwee from me, he moved on making a face. After collecting some money from generous passengers, he got off the bus. Apparently in Zambia today, there are many "men of God" who are making a living preaching in buses without caring about the religious beliefs of the passengers. They are not even sensitive enough to ask first before preaching and praying for the people. And sometimes what they preach about is of no relevance to many of the passengers. Why are these preachers increasingly preaching in the buses and now even in minibuses? Which religion are they representing? Which church do they come from? Who are their followers, if any?

Just after reaching home from a tedious trip, I switched on the television set to a news channel where it was reported that an extremist Muslim terrorist had suicide-bombed some building killing some people. Listening to the story, I almost got the impression that terrorism is synonymous with Muslim extremist. Thinking seriously about these two accounts and the untold suffering and horrific acts that have been done in the name of religion, it almost makes me believe that religion is nothing but a curse to human beings. Religion refers to the a set of beliefs in a supernatural power or powers (deity) that define how worship is done, how human beings ought to live and act, and explain the existence of this world. People have committed suicide, killed one another, suffered in poverty, remained unmarried without children, participated in rituals they will never dream of participating in, held beliefs that make no sense, all in the name of religion.

But if religion is nothing but a curse, then, how come we have a proliferation of new religions, better still a mushrooming (at light speed) of new religious denominations? How come when we are faced with major problems of sickness, death, failure, extreme and uncontrolled success, we turn to religion in a manner that even ourselves cannot understand? There must be something good in religion that a cynic is quick to ignore because of either misunderstanding of what religion is, or simply ignorance of the value of religion.

The major problem with religious beliefs is that they are often many and pull believers in different directions. What a Christian believes in is different to what a Muslim, a Hindi, a Buddhist believes in. The God that a Christian believes in is different from the God or gods of other religions. Some religions do not even believe in God. They might believe in the earth, spirits, or ancestors. This raises the questions of who determines which religion is the authentic one and which is not, and why believe in any one particular religion than another. Is development, poverty, personal fulfilment, human flourishing, life after death, the wellbeing of future generations have anything to benefit from religion? Can we use religion to develop, conquer material poverty, enhance personal and communal wellbeing, and give life a meaning in a way that no social science can offer?

RELIGION IS A CURSE TO HUMAN FLOURISHING AND AUTONOMY

Let us understand how and why some people have not hesitated to assert that religion is a curse to human flourishing and personal self determination in life. The concept of human flourishing is the belief that human life has value and dignity that is inbuilt and no one (maybe only God if you are a believer!) gives or can take away this value and dignity. As such, human beings ought to find meaning in their own lives and live to the full. Human flourishing has to do with the capacity of persons to meet their basic needs, to entertain and be entertained, to make friends and healthy relationships, to develop as persons and family, and to live a good and happy life. Unfortunately, then, human flourishing is heavily, but not solely, dependent on money and other material resources in life. To be poor, not to meet one's basic needs, not to have meaning in one's life, to lack capacity for friends and family, to feel rejected or be rejected, are all threats to human flourishing. But for one to truly flourish, they must have a say on their own lives and decisions that affect them. They must determine how their lives will be, make choices for their own good, have enough information to make such choices. This is what autonomy is all about – having the freedom to make decisions for the benefit of one's life without undue interference.

In many ways, religion or some forms of religious beliefs go against these two very important aspects of human life. Some historical figures (like Karl Marx) stressed without reserve that religion is nothing but an "opium for the people" or that even when people believe in some sort of God or gods, such a God is dead (like Friedrich Nietzsche). But could this be true? Let us look at two ways in which religion might be seen as a curse to human beings.

First, most religious beliefs have no scientific or even social evidence rendering such beliefs either to the whims of founders of particular religions or the developers of such religions. For example, the difference in the kinds of God that different religions believe in is attributed to the foundations of such religions. There is no scientific or social evidence that such types of gods exist in the form and manner that they are believed to exist. This is not to say that God or some kinds of gods do not exist, but that it is problematic to use religion as a basis for human flourishing when the existence of such supernatural being/s is largely unfounded and there is no consensus of such a being. But most religious moral codes cite God or some other supernatural beings as the foundation of morality and what he (unfortunately no she!) dictates is what the followers (actually every person in the world) should do. Yet these dictates differ from religion to religion with some conflicting conclusions. The interpretation of these dictates makes the situation even more confusing. Some religions would largely align themselves with riches, and some of them align themselves with poverty. To

be rich is seen as a blessing by some, to be poor as a blessing by others. As an individual, then, which religion should one take as a personal guide? Suppose I chose one religion for five years, then changed to another religion for the next five years, am I doing anything significantly wrong or immoral if my acts are considered differently by the two religions?

Some of these dictates actually go against human flourishing. These include intentional killing of human beings, forcing persons to do things against their conscience, suicide, lies and deception (like the dates on the ends of the world), physical and psychological abuse, indoctrination, false hope (like the promise of miracles and healing that seldom happens), and siphoning of people's moneys. If persons can continue to believe in religions that promote such practices that are against the dignity and autonomy of persons, then certain religions and beliefs are indeed a curse to humanity!

Religion offers a set of values that can be use to promote full human development and protect and promote the dignity of human life.

Second, most religious beliefs are based on fear of punishment or Satan. The fear of going to hell, the fear that Satan or the evil one will ultimately win the soul of a person, the fear of death, the fear and uncertainty of what happens after death, are largely reasons and inner motivations of many people to believe in some religion or religious denominations. People flock to preachers or religions that promise riches and no poverty; people flock to a religion that promises gifts to their followers (clothes, food, shelter, education); people flock to religions that offer miracles and deep religious powers (such as speaking in tongues or healing the sick); people are glued to tele-evangelical programmes auditing for who is the most popular and powerful of religious groups that they should begin emulating as local preachers or believers.

Certainly, if these are reasons for most religious beliefs, then humanity is cursed. Human flourishing and autonomy of persons is compromised because of the fear and apparent benefits offered to the believer. A few years ago, I was boasting to one of my friends that I had just bought a second or third hand car (on credit of course!) as we were sharing a drink at one of the eating places in Lusaka. After the drink, I went out to get in the "new" ride only to be intercepted by a smartly dressed man but with finished heeled shoes. He greeted me with a broad smile. I laboured to remember if I knew the man (of course I have a bad memory for names or faces!). He kindly offered that he was a prophet and he had a dream about my "new" car. That it was haunted by evil spirits or the devil. That he needed to pray over the car and cast off the evil spirits (devil) out. That the car was of no

good without his powerful prayers and casting off of the demons. I stood there in astonishment. I needed to make a decision, either to let the man cast off the evil one out of my car or risk driving around in a haunted car. I decided it was better I kindly refuse the man's requests. He insisted. I gently declined. He insisted. I got angry and drove off. Every now and then, I think about this incident. The man used fear to get me to believe his powers and revelations. Of course, he would have wanted a tithe at the end of it. In any case, after I got into the car, he even asked for some money for transport back home.

I know friends who have gone an extra mile in their religious beliefs to seek the counsel of these prophets, pastors, or priests, for personal wealth, to be protected from the evil one, to have a child. Whether or not I am a believer in such beliefs, there is something fishy about these, often increasing, occurrences especially in Zambia. After the prayers, most of these persons seek some tithe or gift. What I am not sure is whether they offer these services for personal survival or honestly to contribute to the human flourishing of unsuspecting passers-by. I know persons who are slaves of continuous appointments with these spiritual counsellors for continued good existence. Not that it is wrong, but I think if these things and the threats offered to us on a daily basis are true, then religion is a curse that we will not escape from.

RELIGION IS A BLESSING TO HUMANITY

Not to drive you further into scepticism and cynicism, if carefully looked at and good and mature choices are made on what to believe and what not to believe, religion can be a blessing to all of us in a way no economics, politics, psychology, or science can offer. The linchpin of this benefit that religion brings in us is faith. Life can be meaningless in many aspects. There are enough sources of suffering and hopelessness all around us each and every day and night. They range from riches, poverty, breakups in relationships and family, hate and malice, sickness and incurable diseases, meaningless accidents, natural evils (earthquakes, floods, falling trees when you are under it enjoying the shade), hunger, not meeting your goals, to horrendous evils of mass murder, suicide, bombings, wars, racism and slavery. Every day or week presents us with new challenges that without some form of faith, a recurring list of challenges can drive us into depression and even insanity. Religion, at least many good religions, offers us some reason to believe. To believe not only in the supernatural being (often called God), but in many good things around us. To believe in love, mercy, charity, forgiveness, perseverance, dying for others, life, life after death, goodness of humanity, and life. No science or social science can offer such an array of reasons to continue living a good life. Even when these beliefs have no scientific basis, the benefits to human flourishing are great that whether such beliefs are true or false does not make any negative difference.

Religion also offers a set of values or principles that human beings, communities, governments, businesses can use to promote full human development and at the same time protect and promote the dignity of human life. These values tend to be similar from one religion to another, from one denomination to another. For example, in the Roman Catholic Church, such values and principles are often referred to as the Social Teaching of the Church. These values that include human dignity, common good, subsidiarity, option for the most vulnerable in society, and justice, offer a unique help to persons, groups and governments to use the wisdom derived from religious beliefs for their benefit in the day to day decisions, plans, choices, and actions. Although religion is mostly about spiritual development, such spiritual development is incomplete when it forgets the social development of a human being. No matter how religion can be useful to a person spiritually, if they are hungry, if they are poor and cannot meet their minimum basic needs, if they are sick without any access to remedy, such religion fails in its true aims – to give meaning to human life whatever that meaning might be.

MARCHING ON IN LIFE

When all is said, written and done, we have to weed out bad religious beliefs or whole religions (despite our basic human right to conscience and religion), and continue promoting and enjoying good religious beliefs and practices. As with the case with culture, some religious practices and beliefs are even a threat to the dignity and meaning of life in a way that takes out and destroys life and lives. These practices and beliefs (rights or no rights) should not be tolerated or chosen. Religion has a lot to offer and despite some of its weaknesses, it should not be thrown out all together. A lot of bad things associated with religion are because of misinterpretation of the basic beliefs (doctrines) of those religions, ignorance of such doctrines, and the selfish use of religion by individuals who seek power, wealth, and recognition. Such individuals continue to taint the benefits of religion and sometimes continue to give us the impression that religion is a curse without which we are doomed forever. What is interesting though about such individuals is that they tend to see themselves first as servants of God, then blessed and chosen by God, then empowered with God's powers, and lastly the owners of God's powers. They end up confusing followers to a stage where the follower cannot distinguish whether it is God's power they are using or their own powers.

This is even more reason why human beings with dignity and autonomy should have the power and freedom to choose which religious beliefs to embrace and which ones to reject so that religion is truly a blessing in their lives.

Dominic Liche
University of Zambia

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 and rural areas across Zambia that include Lusaka, Ndola, Kitwe, Luanshya, Kabwe, Livingstone, Mongu, Kasama, Chipata, and Monze. For the month of November 2011, the cost of the Basic Needs Basket in Lusaka stood at K2 904 550, just slightly less than October's K2 917 150.

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

Commodity	Kwacha	Quantity	Total
Mealie Meal (breakfast)	45,700	3 x 25 Kg bags	137,100
Beans	15,400	2 Kgs	30,800
Kapenta (Siavonga)	66,300	2 Kgs	132,600
Dry Fish	57,500	1 Kg	57,500
Meat (mixed cut)	24,100	4 Kgs	96,400
Eggs	8,000	2 Units	16,000
Vegetables (greens)	3,700	7.5 Kgs	27,750
Tomato	4,900	4 Kgs	19,600
Onion	10,000	4 Kgs	40,000
Milk (fresh)	14,500	1 x 2 litres	14,500
Cooking oil	27,100	2 x 2 litres	54,200
Bread	4,400	1 loaf/day	132,000
Sugar	7,000	8 Kgs	56,000
Salt	3,500	1 Kg	3,500
Tea (leaves)	3,800	1 x 500 g	3,800
Sub-total			K821, 750

(B) COST OF ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS

Charcoal	97, 500	2 x 90 Kg bags	195,000
Soap (Lifebuoy)	2,400	10 tablets	24,000
Wash soap (Boom)	4,000	4 x 400 g	16,000
Jelly	7,800	1 x 500 ml	7,800
Electricity (medium - fixed)	130,000		130,000
Water & Sanitation (med - fixed)	210,000		210,000
Housing (3 bedroom)	1,500,000		1,500,000
Sub-total			K2, 082,800

Total for Basic Needs Basket

K2, 904,550

*Note that the cost of housing has not been adjusted because research and consultations are still ongoing

Totals from previous months	Nov 10	Dec 10	Jan 11	Feb 11	Mar 11	Apr 11	May 11	Jun 11	Jul 11	Aug 11	Sep 11	Oct 11
Amount	K2,861,480	K2,879,430	K3,019,100	K2,982,350	K3,008,800	K3,003,550	K2,917,350	K2,928,750	K2,922,800	K2,922,950	K2,915,200	K2,917,150

(C) SOME OTHER ADDITIONAL COSTS

Item	Kwacha	Item	Kwacha
Education		Transport (bus fare round trip):	
Grades 8-9 (User+PTA/year)	K350, 000 – K470, 000	Chilenje-Town	K7, 200
Grades 10-12 (User+PTA/year)	K600, 000 – K900, 000	Chelston-Town	K7, 800
School Uniform (grades 8-12)	K90, 000 – K200, 000	Matero-Town	K7, 000
Health (clinic)		Fuel (cost at the pump)	
3 Month Scheme (per person)	K5, 000	Petrol (per litre)	K8, 155
No Scheme Emergency Fee	K5, 500	Diesel (per litre)	K7, 566
Mosquito Net (private)	K30, 000 – K120, 000	Paraffin (per litre)	K5, 154

(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	Piecemaker on a Farm
Pay Slip	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 November Basic Needs Basket is approximately US\$573 based upon an average middle exchange rate of 4980 Kwacha per US\$ at the end of November

THE JCTR UPDATE: PEOPLE AND ACTIVITIES

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

Faith and Justice Programme

In the fourth quarter, the Faith and Justice Programme's focus was the campaign on Freedom of Information Legislation (FOI) in Zambia and public education on active citizenship given that the change of government from the MMD to PF following the 20 September tripartite elections has provided new opportunities for public engagement in issues of governance.

The renewed campaign for Freedom of Information began with the sensitisation event at the World Bank offices for Members of Parliament, the Media and other Civil Society Organisations as well as government. The Coalition on FOI campaign now comprises the Media and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), with JCTR as Chair and Secretariat. Since its formation in April, 2011, the CSO Coalition on FOI has conducted publication education through radio and TV programmes, public debate and a stakeholder consultative meeting, which focused on analysing the 2007 FOI Bill in order to prepare for effective participation in the enactment process.

With regard to active citizenship, the Programme held public forums in Luanshya, Ndola, Kabwe, Monze and Livingstone. The idea was to encourage citizens' active and continuous participation in government processes, given that a significant number of citizens' participation in governance is mostly limited to election period.

Economic Equity and Development Programme

The EED Programme facilitated a series of four radio programmes which were held following the general elections on which a number of opposition political party presidents featured. The radio programmes, whose theme was "Sustaining Economic Growth and Development", were meant to keep political parties active in national issues and influence public policies and processes such as the national budget.

The Programme appeared jointly with Caritas and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) before the Parliament's Expanded Committee on Estimates to make an oral submission on the 2012 budget. This submission was followed by an appearance on a live ZNBC programme to discuss the 2012 budget. The EED also made a presentation on the 2012 budget at the workshop for Members of Parliament.

The Programme also engaged the Minister of Finance on the number of Public Finance Management issues that JCTR has been advocating

by way of submitting a copy of the Debt Management Bill and a copy of Our Money Our Right study report that JCTR and Caritas jointly conducted. It also made an appeal to the Minister of Finance in its submission to speed up Public Finance Management reforms including reforms regarding legal framework governing loan contraction and utilisation processes.

Social Conditions

The Social Conditions Programme provided technical support in the area of Rural Development to its pool of rural basket researchers during the Annual Researchers meeting held in November in Lusaka. A key outcome of this workshop was a team building product by way of a consolidated action plan for each district that explicitly charts the way forward for implementation of activities in 2012.

The Social Conditions programme also participated in the Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 17) held in Durban South Africa. Social Conditions made presentations on the negative impact of climate change and highlighted policy options for the consortium of organisations that attended the conference.

In September, the Programme was engaged by Irish Aid to conduct a Poverty and Vulnerability study in the Northern Province of Zambia. This is an on-going research that is expected to be completed in March 2012 with the aim of unearthing the root drivers of poverty in selected districts of the province.

Outreach Support Programme

The Ndola, Mongu and Livingstone Outreach teams, in partnership with the National Office, held different meetings with members of local Associations and Resident Development Committees, newly elected Councillors from different political parties, and with associations of women, youth and people with disabilities. These meetings were meant to popularise the Basic Needs Basket concept among the different stakeholders.

The Outreach Support Programme also held its annual review meeting from November 29 to December 1. The meeting was meant to review operations of the Programme from January to November 2011 and also reflect on how the Programme should approach 2012 activity implementation. Among the strategies from the review meeting was one on strengthening advocacy on area specific issues by respective Outreach teams.

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