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# WEALTH CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

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## Christian Spirituality of Work: A Survey of Workers in Ndola City, Zambia

Chisanga, Jude Mulenga

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### Introduction

Zambia is a land-locked country surrounded by eight other countries: Botswana and Zimbabwe to the south; Namibia to the south-west; Angola to the west; Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to the north; Malawi to the east and Mozambique on the south-east. Consequently, Zambia has no outlet to the sea, but has rivers like the Zambezi, Kafue, Kafubu, Luapula, Chambeshi and Luangwa. Equally, it has lakes such as Mweru, Tanganyika, Bangweulu and Kariba, which is a man-made lake. Much of the country is a plateau, and is wholly part of the tropical savannah grassland.<sup>11</sup> The climate is tropical and mostly characterized by hot dry and wet rainy seasons, with intermediate cold seasons.<sup>12</sup> Zambia's population is concentrated along the line of the rail and the industrial area. This is because of the ever-present rural-urban drift.

11 Cf. <http://www.zambia-advisor.com/Zambian-Map.html> (Accessed on 28 July 2017).

12 Cf. *Ibid.*

Among the major cities in Zambia are Kitwe, Lusaka, Ndola, Chipata and Livingstone. The country covers 753,000 square kilometres of land. It is larger than countries such as Switzerland and Denmark.<sup>13</sup>

### The city of Ndola

Ndola city was founded in 1904 by John Edward *Chiripula* Stephenson, six months after Livingstone town was established. As such, Ndola is the second oldest colonial era town in Zambia. The name *Ndola* was derived from a tributary of the Kafubu River known as *Kandola*. It is the only town in Zambia that sits on a river which cuts through the centre of the district.<sup>14</sup> It earned city status in 1967, and on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2004, it marked 100 years of its existence. By the year 2010, Ndola city had a population of 455,194. It is the third largest city in Zambia after Lusaka and Kitwe. Ndola city is at the centre of Zambia's economic development. It is located at the junction of roads leading to several other cities and towns in the Copper-belt and beyond.<sup>15</sup> The city started as a British Overseas Management Area (BOMA) and a trading post during the colonial era.<sup>16</sup>

From Ndola city, one can easily cross over to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the north and Angola to the west. Congo is just 10 kilometres away from Ndola, which is about 320 kilometres north of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia.<sup>17</sup> The weather in Ndola generally ranges from cool to warm, which is conducive for outdoor and sporting activities. Indeed, there are many sporting grounds around the city, like the Levy Patrick Mwanawasa Football Stadium named after one of the late presidents of Zambia, who died while on duty outside the country. The city of Ndola also experiences high levels of rainfall due to its proximity to the rain forests of Congo DRC.<sup>18</sup>

Ndola is serviced by regular flights from Lusaka and neighbouring countries. The railway systems of Zambia run passenger and freight services between the cities of Kitwe and Livingstone. The railway line goes all the

13 Cf. *Ibid.*

14 Cf. <http://www.zambia-advisor.com/Ndola.html> (Accessed on 28 July 2017).

15 Cf. *Ibid.*

16 Cf. *Ibid.*

17 Cf. *Ibid.*

18 Cf. <http://www.zambia-advisor.com/Ndola.html> (Accessed on 28 July 2017).

way to Lubumbashi in Congo DRC. The road network can take someone anywhere in Zambia. Ndola is also the headquarters of the Zambia Postal Services Corporation (*Zampost*) and the Workers' Compensation Control Board.

#### MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CITY OF NDOLA

In my long stay in Ndola city, I have observed keenly the many attitudes and dispositions towards work among its people, which I describe in this article. I grew up in the city of Ndola. Most of my family members still live there. My vocation started at Chiwala High School, matured and I became a diocesan priest at Ndola. I have frequently gone back to Ndola even as I serve the Church in East Africa. I currently serve as the Assistant Director of the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation and Leader of the Master of Arts in Spirituality and Religious Formation Programme in Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya. Our Lord Jesus Christ supported the idea of establishing oneself in one place when He gave instructions to His disciples thus:

As you enter his house, salute it, and if the house deserves it, may your peace come upon it; if it is not, may your peace come back to you. And if anyone does not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, as you walk out of the house or town shake the dust from your feet (*Mt 10:12-14*).

To date, I still have a personal connection to the city of Ndola. This connection has inspired me to make this reflection about Christian work ethics in its context. I have seen the people of Ndola smile, laugh, eat, marry, seek medical attention, go to vote, go to Church and hold family meetings. I have been with them as they mourn, celebrate, find employment, get declared redundant, retire from their jobs, set up their own businesses, get together to form companies and employ many other people in turn, go farming, go to work in mines, shops and socialize. The many years of my association with Ndola have enriched my life and given me a sense of authority to make a genuine exposition about it.

Over the years, I have also heard other people describe the different attitudes of some of the people of the city of Ndola towards work and other aspects of life. Some of the workers in Ndola are quite young, having come

straight from different levels of education. Some others are middle-aged while others still are heading towards retirement. The retirement age in Zambia is now 60 years; early retirement is 55 years. Some professionals opt for late retirement at 65 years.

From my observation, most of the people in Ndola are engaged in jobs that they really did not intend to get into. This is evident from the characteristic dragging of feet, reluctance and obvious lack of enthusiasm among those who work in the city. Many are involved in work just to get their daily bread and butter. Most of those who have graduated with university degrees have not been able to find employment befitting their areas of specialization. Consequently, they remain unhappy in the work they are currently engaged in and keep searching for better work. Out of these frustrations, some may even end up contemplating or committing suicide.

In Ndola, there are also some who have gotten into jobs for which they are trained. In such people, one notices enthusiasm and general satisfaction and happiness. They feel they are serving a divine mandate from God and show commitment to and zest for their vocation. They value their work; general atmosphere and their workmates. One notices the characters and personalities of such people blossoming and maturing; simply, the best is seen coming out of them. However, not everyone who is trained has found formal employment in Ndola. In general, the situation of work in the entire nation of Zambia remains critical.

#### CURRENT WORK SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE OF NDOLA

As members of the Zambian society, the people of Ndola are constitutive of a history that has always given particular attention to work as a liberating factor of life. According to Z. Bauman, C. Giaccardi and M. Magatti, in fact, for people in general, work is a means to freedom.<sup>19</sup> Belletti and De Luca add that work also gives people a sense of identity, personal and communal growth, inclusion, and promotes individual responsibility in society.<sup>20</sup>

19 Cf. Bauman, Z., Giaccardi, C., and Magatti, M. *Il Destino della Libertà, Quale società dopo la crisi economica?, a cura di Andrea Possieri*. Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 2016, pp. 12-13.

20 Cf. Belletti, F. and De Luca, R. (Eds). *La Fatica nelle Mani, Lavoro, famiglia e futuro*. San Paolo: Milano, 2016, p. 5.

Ndola is the commercial and industrial centre of the Copper-belt province of Zambia.<sup>21</sup> It is also home to many industries that drive the country's economy. Some of the industries that provide work for the people of Ndola are food processing, manufacturing, copper mining and refining, bottling, finance and banking, transport, farming, schools, government offices, shopping malls, fishing, beer halls, restaurants, block making, construction; building, lime industry, tailoring, beer brewing, cement manufacturing, oil refining, tyre manufacturing, domestic working, street vending and many others. Also found in Ndola are provincial administration offices, hospitals and private clinics. Equally, the *Annual Zambia International Trade Fair* takes place in Ndola every first week of July. The trade fair attracts exhibitors from within the country and from all over the world.<sup>22</sup>

In Zambia, the quality of terms and conditions of service in the civil service far exceed those of the private sector. Some teachers earn extra income from private tuitions. Most of those who work in government have access to loans from banks or the government itself and are able to construct their houses and buy cars for their families. Other non-governmental and well established institutions from which the people of Ndola benefit include *Oxfam* and *Development Aid from People to People* (DAPP), a charity organization which provides reasonably priced clothes to people, especially the less privileged.

There is also a big and popular market in the city called "Masala", where many vendors go to sell all sorts of goods. At Masala market, one can find almost anything at negotiable prices. Alongside, and throughout the city, some people have put up some makeshift stalls called *Utuntemba* where they sell items in small quantities, e.g. salt, sugar, tea, coffee, matches, soap, biscuits, candle, paraffin, etc.

### Methodology

This article makes an exposition of the general disposition of workers using the theoretical principles propounded by the counselling psychologist John Holland regarding career choice, personality and interests. Equally,

21 Cf. <http://www.zambia-advisor.com/Ndola.html> (Accessed on 28 July 2017).

22 Cf. *Ibid.*

the article relies on the biblical teachings and the Social Teaching of the Church as well as other relevant literatures. It also uses the comparative and contextualizing method. To collect data, I used my personal experiences and interactions with some of the people who live and work in the city of Ndola.

### Lessons from my teaching experience and John Holland theory

For a while now, I have taught Psychology of Consecrated Vocations at the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation at Tangaza University College in Nairobi, Kenya. In my years as a teacher, I have taken time to reflect about the Christian Spirituality that ought to perforate any type of work or profession. My conclusion is that the postulations of John Holland offer the best ways for modelling the spirituality of work.

John Holland was a Psychologist, Theoretician, Scholar, Researcher and Counsellor. He was born in Omaha, Neb, and lived between 1919 and 2008. He began studying psychology at the Municipal University of Omaha, and, following his graduation in 1942, his interest in the discipline was further stoked during his three-year service in the US Army and subsequent matriculation at the University of Minnesota. For the next 60 years, Holland worked tirelessly at Western Reserve University, the Veteran's Administration Psychiatric Hospital (1953-56), the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (1957-63), the American College Testing Programme (1963-69) and the Johns Hopkins University (1969-80). In retirement, he continuously developed and refined his theory and associated assessment devices, instruments, and career development tools.

Holland made a career studying the world of work. He pioneered the theory that if people were aware of their personality type or combination of types, then they would be happy workers. Among the personality types he identified are: Realistic (sees self as practical, mechanical and realistic), investigative (sees self as precise, scientific and intellectual), artistic (sees self as expressive, original and independent), social (sees self as helpful, friendly and trustworthy), enterprising (sees self as energetic, ambitious

and sociable) or conventional (sees self as orderly and good at following a set plan).<sup>23</sup> Commenting on Holland's theory, Nauta asserts thus:

The theory's core idea is that most people resemble a combination of six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and is characterized by a constellation of interests, preferred activities, beliefs, Conventional (commonly abbreviated with the acronym RIASEC). Each type abilities, values, and characteristics.<sup>24</sup>

John Holland's studies laid the foundation for the field of career counselling. He applied his theory of vocational personality types to both people and the workplace. The theory formed the basis for his renowned self-directed search, an assessment theory designed to help people make educational and career decisions based on their interests. He was confident that workers could identify their strengths and weaknesses and use these self-evaluations to find the right careers.

Holland's theory maintains that, in choosing a career, people prefer jobs where they can be around others who are like them. They search for environments that will let them use their skills and abilities and express their attitudes and values, while taking on enjoyable problems and roles. According to Nauta, "many ideas that are central to Holland's theory resulted from his graduate training and from frustrations he experienced when providing career counselling services."<sup>25</sup> Holland asserts that people of the same personality type, working together in a job, create an environment that fits and rewards their type. Within this theory, there are six basic types of work environments, which correlate directly to the personality types. Holland emphasizes that people who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be successful and satisfied. This idea is important as it shows that Holland's theory can be flexible, incorporating combination types.

23 Cf. <https://www.careerkey.org/choose-a-career/holland-personality-types.html#WXZSAOmXqB> (Accessed on 24 July 2017)

24 Nauta, M.M. "The Development, Evolution, and Status of Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities: Reflections and Future directions for Counselling Psychology." *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, Vol. 57, No. 1), 2010, p. 11.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

There is much research to support Holland's views. However, it is not without criticism, the most common being the prevalence of females to score in three personality types (artistic, social and conventional). According to Holland, this is because society channels women into female dominated occupations.

The central theme in Holland's theory concerning the choice of a vocation is the interaction of the person and environment, which gives birth to the vocational behaviour. Holland also hypothesized that the stability of the vocational behaviour should be in correlation with the degree of the integration reached by the individual in his or her vocational orientation. According to Rayman, "while other theories of career development have received similar acclaim, other classification systems have attained some acceptance, and other interventions have gained a degree of popularity, no other system has achieved the high level of integration of theory, research, and practice that distinguishes the Holland system."<sup>26</sup>

#### *Understanding work*

*The Cassell's Italian Dictionary, Italian-English, English-Italian* defines work as labour, toil, effort; job, occupation, employment; piece of work, or task.<sup>27</sup> According to the book of Genesis in the Bible, work also means sweat. God, while addressing Adam, says the following: "By the sweat of your face will you earn your food, until you return to the ground, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and dust you shall return" (*Gen 3:19*). However, God wanted work to be punctuated with rest: "On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested after all his work of creating" (*Gen 2:1-3*). Therefore, by reflecting about Christian work ethics in this article, we are specifically looking at the Christian spirituality of work. The Christian spirituality of work is an attitude and disposition towards work, which a follower of Jesus Christ is supposed to have.

26 Cf. Rayman, J.R. *A Tribute to John L. Holland: Psychologist, Theoretician, Scholar, Researcher, Counsellor, and Friend*. The Pennsylvania State University, 2008.

27 *Cassell's Italian Dictionary, Italian-English, English-Italian*. Macmillan Publishing Company: New York, 1977, p. 289.

## CHURCH TEACHING ON WORK

The interventions of the Church in favour of work have always had at heart the workers, especially the less privileged ones. In accordance with its social teachings, from *Rerum Novarum* to *Centesimus Annus*, the Church has always denounced the exploitation of workers; awkward time tables of workers and situation in factories.<sup>28</sup> It affirms that work is that activity in which humanity expresses and expands its dignity and life. Consequently, a just salary for workers is needed, as it allows adequate access to other necessities to support life.

According to the Italian Conference of Bishops, through work, people, especially the young, should be able to express their appropriate talents and dedicate the major part of their lives, express their rights and live out their human dignity.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, it is necessary for those who work to have a balance of values and solid spirituality. They also need to have healthy relationships in their places of work. A manifestation of faith, friendship and self-esteem by workers in their places of work is equally important.<sup>30</sup>

Work should also be a sign of Christian love in the world because of the salvation brought about by our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have been offered access to the Heavenly Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, work should be seen as a means to earn a living so that one can give life to their families; raise children and live in dignity. This understanding calls for a wholehearted dedication to work as a means to glorifying God. Work is a form of Christian witness. As Archbishop Banda of Lusaka Arch Diocese, Zambia, asserted when he was still the bishop of Ndola Diocese:

Today, perhaps more than ever before in our history, Christian witness is greatly needed. It means living out the faith we profess. If we the baptized Christians do not rise to the occasion, then we fail as Christians to shape society and mould it as God wishes it to be. This may demand making sacrifices, facing challenges and difficulties.

28 Cf. Le Encicliche Sociali. *Dalla Rerum Novarum alla Centesimus Annus* (Introduzione generale prefazioni di Franco Pierini, indici di Diego Brunetti-Berselli) (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Milano: Figlie di San Paolo di San Paolo, 2010, p. 3.

29 Cf. Comitato Scientifico. *Organizzatore delle Settimane Sociali dei Cattolici Italiani, Il Lavoro che vogliamo; libero, creativo, partecipativo, solidale, Linee di preparazione per la 48a Settimana Sociale dei Cattolici Italiani* (Cagliari, 26-29 Ottobre 2017. Tipografia Giammarioli: Frascati (RM), 2017, p. 7.

30 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

31 Cf. Banda, A., *Advent Message*, Ndola, 2015, p. 1.

It may also lead to suffering as our Lord suffered, be despised, be criticized, be written off, and have everything said against us. However, when all is said and done, we shall rise and reign with the Lord, who suffered, died and rose from the dead.<sup>32</sup>

In this case, not every type of work is human work or worthy work. A worthy and human work is that which respects the dignity of all persons, so that the worker is not dehumanized or made to harm others. The Italian Conference of Bishops also asserts that work needs to be a vocation that respects the dignity of the worker. It must be taken as a value that is based on justice and solidarity, the fundamental principles of the human community.<sup>33</sup> In sum, human work is an experience that includes dignified suffering and a realization of oneself, contract and self-giving, commitment and celebration. It requires passion and creativity, vitality and energy.<sup>34</sup>

**Attitude towards work among the people of Ndola**

Some of the people in Ndola city regard work merely as a means to earning their daily bread. They show no personal, social or even integral attachment with and to their work. For this reason, work is simply an activity that has nothing much to do with their beliefs or convictions. These types of workers generally do not put their whole hearts into their work. As such, they are mostly unhappy about what they do. They also never bring to their consciousness the fact that they are co-workers with God, and, as such, need to concentrate and give work a divine and human character. In his *2015 Advent Message*, His Grace Banda, the then bishop of Ndola Diocese spoke thus:

Some of our economic and political challenges we are facing at the moment are not only a result of natural causes, but are also of human design. Think of the high levels of corruption in our country; the wrong attitude towards work and public property; the lack of patriotism among our people; inadequate governing policies; the unwarranted expenses and the lack of planning for the future. These and many more are human mistakes which are perpetrated by ourselves, and in most cases due to greed. A sincere repentance and conversion of heart is needed henceforth from each and every one of us in order to be delivered from greed, that excessive appetite for non-essentials of life.<sup>35</sup>

32 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

33 Cf. Comitato Scientifico. *Organizzatore delle Settimane Sociali dei Cattolici Italiani*, p. 11.

34 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

35 Banda, A. *Advent Message*, Ndola, 2015, p. 2.

However, there are a lot more workers in the city of Ndola who exhibit strikingly healthy and appropriate attitudes towards work. They love and take what they are involved in as a vocation meant to edify them and others, all for the glory of God. These types of workers generally portray a happy demeanour because they enjoy associating with others in their workplaces; they also enjoy their work environment, maximize their productivity in their work and create more wealth for their employers and the entire country of Zambia. Possibly, these workers have found an appropriate combination of career personality types and interests in line with the postulations of Holland discussed above. Interestingly, I noticed that most of these workers are also God-fearing. They also tend to establish and maintain stable relationships. According to Hess, "ethical decisions about money or things are usually clearer and less difficult to make than those involving relationships."<sup>36</sup>

An important point to note is that it is possible for people to enjoy work but the remuneration, which can ultimately dampen their motivation. As such, employers need to provide their workers with different forms of monetary frequently. In his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber compared Catholic and Protestant work ethics. He concluded that Protestants value economic property than do Catholics.<sup>37</sup> The Catholic view holds that money is a means to making life bearable. On the other hand, some protestant Churches see money as an end in itself. To some extent, Protestants tend to work hard to earn, which is good; but it is still wrong to regard economic rewards as an end.

I have further observed that not everyone in Ndola city who works is formally employed. The best paying jobs are those in politics, which are usually available through nepotism and tribalism. In his *2015 Advent Message*, His Grace Banda, the then bishop of Ndola Diocese had this to say:

Our advent season this year comes at a time when our country is faced with economic challenges of a biting economy (where families cannot make ends meet), coupled with

36 Hess, J.D. *Ethics in Business and Labour* (Introduction by H. Ralph Hernley). Ontario: Herald Press, 1977, p. 7.

37 Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Protestant\\_Ethic\\_and\\_the\\_Spirit\\_of\\_Capitalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Protestant_Ethic_and_the_Spirit_of_Capitalism) (Accessed 15 February 2018).

energy crisis, job losses, political rivalry and the tribal tone that seem not to be quieter at any rate. Such an environment can bring about aching pain of a life without meaning or purpose; a fear of an unknown future and eventually death itself.<sup>38</sup>

Consequently, some principal changes need to happen on the social, political and economic fronts to ensure majority of the people have jobs. Meanwhile, Church agents are invited to accompany those who suffer for lack or loss of jobs. Aware of this fact, in his *2016 Lenten Message*, His Grace Banda urged those who have a means of earning decent life to:

Desire to feed those who hunger, not only for bread but also for love, for compassion to be somebody to someone. Those who are naked, not only for clothing but also for protection like the vulnerable and the abused. Those who are homeless, not only for shelter made of stone, but also that homelessness that comes from having no one to call your own, like the orphaned, aged, sick, widowed, widower and single parents. Those who are thirsty, not only for water, but also for job opportunities and just wages, clean water and proper housing, medical care and educational facilities and good road network. Those who are imprisoned, not only in physical prisons but also in mind because they lack educational opportunities to help them make informed decisions; as well as those who lack empowerment so as to make them lead independent lives.<sup>39</sup>

### Recommendations

In this article, I have attempted to make sense of the general state of employment and the disposition towards work among the residents of the city Ndola. A few of the city's residents have good jobs, which makes them happy and allows them to take care of their families. However, many, especially the young, are jobless. Moreover, different circumstances have pushed people into different works, some to jobs for which they never aspired or trained. Among this last category of workers, there is a clear sense of job dissatisfaction. In light of all these points, I proffer the following recommendations:

1. Christian work ethics invite every human being to live his or her life responsibly in the world. Therefore, every work we do should seek to preserve the social character of all human life. This ought to be a motivating factor for us to put all our hearts into whatever work we find.

38 Banda, A., *Advent Message*, Ndola, 2015, p. 1.

39 Banda, A., *Lenten Message*, Ndola, 2016, pp. 2-3.

2. It is also important to understand that whatever comes from the work we do should be directed towards the common welfare of all. As such, young people need to be motivated and supported to initiate some economic ventures, love and exert their best effort in whatever work God has placed in their hands and share whatever they receive with the less fortunate around them.
3. Christian workers in Ndola should be the agents through which God establishes an ethical social character. In relation to this, Asslander and Grun observe that work, in the spiritual sense, should point to something bigger than just an individual.<sup>40</sup>
4. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si* urges us to make both believers and non-believers come to appreciate the fact that the world is essentially a common inheritance, in which what is produced from it must be for the benefit of everybody who lives in it.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, we need to love and appreciate our works and work hard to increase our productivity so to create more wealth for our families and our communities.
5. Principal changes are also needed on the personal, social, political and economic front to increase the productivity and capacity of every work engagement to create more wealth for individuals and communities.
6. The people of Ndola, especially the employed, should show sympathy and accompany those who suffer due to job losses or unemployment.
7. There is need to re-evaluate the meaning of human work or labour in Ndola, especially in respect to the rights and responsibilities of workers and how their role in worker motivation.

### Conclusion

Ndola is a very rich city, with plenty of economic and cultural resources. If these resources are tapped into appropriately, they could provide meaningful employment to many of the city's residents. Residents should take the initiative to start up useful ventures as individuals or groups to

40 Cf. Grun, A., and Asslander, F. *Spiritualità nel Lavoro, Dare senso alla professione*. Queriniana: Brescia, 2012, p. 11.

41 Cf. Papa Francesco. *Laudato Si'*, *Enciclica sulla cura della casa comune, Guida alla lettura di Carla Petrini, indici a cura di Giuliano Vignini*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Città del Vaticano, 2015, VI, 93.

help them sustain themselves in the urban environment as well as generate wealth for their families and communities. I urge young people to examine themselves and identify the unique talents they can use to find self-employment. According to Niebuhr, "the analysis of the self as responsive in its social character must, now, be taken a step further."<sup>42</sup> Those who are employed should also learn what they do, even if they feel they are in the wrong vocation.

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42 Niebuhr, H.R. *An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy, The Responsible Self*. Harper & Row: New York, 1978, p. 79.

**T**he 13th Theological Interdisciplinary Session was held in 2011 at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) to mark 50 years of the foundation of AMECEA (1961-2011), the regional body of Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa. The thrust of this Session was a critical assessment and sharing of experiences related to major areas of Church life in this period. This volume presents some of the papers delivered. They touch on the consolidation of Small Christian Communities, the political influence on the growth of the Church in Eastern Africa, the use of local languages in the Liturgy and in the biblical apostolate, interreligious dialogue, the formation of priests and new strategies for holistic development and self reliance. It is hoped that the lessons and insights shared in this collection will benefit the Church and Society in this diverse region – EDITOR.



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The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)

# The Faculty of Theology of CUEA Celebrates the Golden Jubilee of AMECEA



General Editor:  
John Lukwata

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# FORMATION AND TRAINING OF PRIESTS ACCORDING TO *PASTORES DABO VOBIS* IN AMECEA REGION: AN EVALUATION AND WAY FORWARD

Rev. Dr. Jude Mulenga Chisanga

## Introduction

In November 2008, a month's course was called in Rome, Italy for Major Seminary Spiritual Directors from English speaking countries all over the world. Some of the participants came from the Philippines, Canada, Ghana and Korea. Spiritual Directors who came from the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) countries were from Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. I particularly paid attention to the sharing of these colleagues as we were from the same background because it so happened that I was the Zambia Theological National Major Seminary Spiritual Director that time, and so I had also been invited to attend the course.

During the course, we had a good number of facilitators coming to talk to us on different topics relevant to the formation of future priests. Some of the speakers we had were experienced people like the Rector and Spiritual Director of the Urbanian International Major Seminary situated in the premises of the Urbanian Pontifical University, a priest in-charge of the Congregation for the Clergy and some officials from the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, including the cardinal prefect himself, who came to join us on the last evening of the course. We also got some remote instructions from Pope Benedict XVI as we were also taken for one of the Wednesday audiences with him at St. Peter's Square.

During that intensive course, we had a lot of sharing among ourselves as participants for the feed-backs to the lectures we were

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being given by those competent resource persons. Actually, the topics we were being coached in did not only concern the work of a spiritual director, but rather it incorporated the whole noble task of the formation and training of priests; it was rather the general work of a formator.

As I present this paper on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), I shall pay attention to the concerns of the content matter of the program of formation and training of priests that I heard being shared by those spiritual directors who came from the same environment with me, namely, the AMECEA region. It was clear that some worthwhile programs for the formation and training of priests had been put in place in the seminaries/formation houses around the AMECEA countries. But we are saying that these activities still have some room for improvement, and so in a way, we are going to give an evaluation of these training and formation processes already in existence, and then taking into consideration our local situations,<sup>1</sup> propose the way forward according to the document: *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II). Of paramount interest to us are the following areas: Human Formation, Spiritual Formation, Intellectual Formation and Pastoral Formation.

### A. Human Formation

#### 1. *The ideal as presented by the document Pastores Dabo Vobis*

According to the document: *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Human formation is the basis of all priestly formation.<sup>2</sup> This is because every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God (Cf. Hebrews 5:1). Therefore, future priests need to cultivate a line of human qualities with a view of their future ministry. These qualities will make them balanced, strong, free, and capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to

be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behavior.<sup>3</sup>

It is paramount for a future priest to be able to relate with others as he is a person called to be responsible for a community and to be a 'man of communion.' This entails the future priest not to be arrogant, or quarrelsome, but hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others, and quick to understand, forgive and console (Cf. 1 Timothy 3: 1-5; Titus 1:7-9). As a result, affective maturity, which is the result of an education in true and responsible love, is a significant and decisive factor in the formation of candidates for the priesthood.<sup>4</sup>

Affective maturity presupposes an awareness that love has a central role in human life. In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity brings to human relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ. So, a candidate who is called to celibacy will find in affective maturity a firm support to live chastity in faithfulness and joy.<sup>5</sup>

Human maturity requires a clear and strong training in freedom which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the truth of one's own being, to the meaning of one's own existence, that is to the sincere gift of self as the way and fundamental content of the authentic realization of self.

Closely connected with formation of responsible freedom is education of moral conscience. This is a conscious and free response, and therefore, a loving response, to God's demands, to God's love.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. An Evaluation of Human Formation in the Major Seminaries of AMECEA Countries and the Way Forward

During our sharing in the spiritual directors' intensive course of November 2008 in Rome, it was obvious that the AMECEA Major Seminaries had put in place some acceptable formation and training programs for candidates for the priesthood going by the proposed ideals of the document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. But, because in this area

of human formation, it entails a candidate coming to grips with himself, we feel that a deliberate program of some psychological vocational growth sessions and group dynamics<sup>7</sup> should be incorporated in the regular schedule of our seminaries in order to ensure the proper self-knowledge of the candidates. In this regard, a candidate would be helped to discover his personal vocation at the center of his heart, the heart not as an organ, but as the center of the candidate's personality. The candidate will also grow in his freedom for God and his brothers and sisters because he is going to be free from some obstacles that would have been preventing him from becoming truly himself.

Apart from the self-knowledge that could be attained through these vocational growth sessions, the candidate would reach the level of self-acceptance which is so much desired for a mature person. Basically, this requires the presence of a trained counselor who could as well be a trained spiritual director or psychologist. Unfortunately, many of our Major Seminaries do not have such specialized people. It will be important to equip all our formation houses with such important personnel. In fact, these well-trained personnel would educate candidates to the priesthood in their affectivity, a fact which would cut down on some sexual disorders, alcoholism and other inconsistencies.

We are also proposing that a psychological procedure be made compulsory at different levels of formation and training in all AMECEA Major Seminaries.

## B. Spiritual Formation

### 1. The ideal as presented by the document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*

When human formation is done properly, it finds its completion in spiritual formation. Every human being who has been redeemed by Christ's blood, is called to be reborn 'of water and the Spirit' (John 3:5) and to become a 'son in the Son.' Moreover, like St. Augustine said, a person has a heart which is restless until it rests in the Lord. Basically, spiritual formation is the work of the Holy Spirit and engages a person in his totality; it introduces him to a

deep communion with Jesus Christ, and leads to the total submission of one's life to the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> For every candidate to the priesthood, spiritual formation is the core which unifies and gives life to his being. In this context, without spiritual formation, pastoral formation would be left without foundation. Spiritual formation should therefore, be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

Candidates to the priesthood should seek Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God<sup>9</sup> and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office, to seek him in the bishop<sup>10</sup> by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they would later be assigned, especially the poor, little children, the weak, sinners and unbelievers. They should love and respect the most Blessed Virgin Mary, who was given to us as our mother by Jesus Christ as he was dying on the cross.<sup>11</sup>

An essential element of spiritual formation is the prayerful and meditated reading of the word of God (*Lectio Divina*), a humble and loving listening of him who speaks. It is actually by the light and with the strength of the word of God that one's own vocation can be discovered and understood, loved and followed, and one's own mission carried out.<sup>12</sup>

The candidate for priesthood must understand that the highest point of Christian prayer is the Eucharist.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, it is urgent and necessary for the candidate for the priesthood to discover the beauty and joy of the Sacrament of Penance and of meeting God who is rich in mercy (Cf. Ephesians 2:4). From this flows the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the cross.

The future priest must be educated in obedience, celibacy and poverty in order to devote themselves completely to the service of God and the pastoral ministry.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. An Evaluation of Spiritual Formation in the Major Seminaries of AMECEA countries and the Way Forward

Our observation is that a good spiritual formation of candidates to the priesthood depends very much on the good example and capability of the spiritual director. In most of the AMECEA Major Seminaries, some inexperienced priests have been appointed as spiritual directors; these have lacked sufficient human experience which is not the best way to go. This has resulted in the putting up of some defective spiritual formation programs in some of our Major Seminaries. Therefore, a careful consideration should be made in the nomination of spiritual directors. Those who should be appointed spiritual directors should have been sent for further studies in the appropriate field; they should therefore be knowledgeable in both human and spiritual experience. In addition, spiritual directors need to love the task they are charged with so that they may always be available in the execution of this noble task.<sup>15</sup>

It has to be made clear that the most important requirement in the formation of a future priest is a deep life of prayer centered on the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Mass should be the centre of the seminary way of life which should be coupled with the practice of some public and private prayers as a way of preparation and continuation of the life deep rooted in Jesus Christ. In this line, all Masses on Saturday should be dedicated to our Lady, Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Mary, Mother of the Word of God, is the model par excellence for the life of witness expected of Christ's disciples in Africa."<sup>16</sup>

Every seminarian must choose a personal spiritual director.<sup>17</sup> But the general spiritual director should also make sure that he meets each one of the students for a sharing once a month. Whilst it has many advantages to continue with the same spiritual director during the whole period of formation in the seminary, it is not impossible for a good reason to change, either from the side of the seminarian or as recommended by the spiritual director himself.

Spiritual Conferences should be given on weekly basis by the general spiritual director, other staff members or invited speakers. These should hold a primary place in the seminary schedule.

An opportunity for private confession should be given monthly during days of recollections. Of course, priests in the formation house should be available at any time for the administration of this Sacrament of Reconciliation. Monthly days of recollections and annual retreats should likewise be considered as means of great importance in the seminarian's spiritual growth.

### C. Intellectual Formation

#### 1. *The ideal as presented by the document Pastores Dabo Vobis*

According to the Document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, intellectual formation is a necessary expression of both human and spiritual formation, but it is meant for the understanding of the faith.<sup>18</sup> A crucial stage of intellectual formation is the study of philosophy, which leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, and of the person's freedom and relationships with the world and with God.<sup>19</sup> Only a sound philosophy can help candidates for the priesthood to develop a reflective awareness of the fundamental relationship that exists between the human spirit and truth, that truth which is revealed to us fully in Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup>

The intellectual formation of the future priest is also based and built on the study of the sacred doctrine, of theology, and true theology proceeds from the faith and aims at leading to the faith. The theologian is therefore a believer; a person of faith. But the theologian is a believer who asks himself questions about his own faith with the aim of reaching a deeper understanding of the faith itself. Theological reflection is centered on adherence to Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and a mature reflection has to be described as a sharing in the thinking of Christ (Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16) in the human form of a science. On the other hand, theology helps candidates for the priesthood to develop a great and living love for Jesus Christ and His Church.<sup>21</sup>

Theological formation is both complex and demanding. The candidate needs to be helped to build a synthesis which will be the result of the contributions of the different theological disciplines,<sup>22</sup> the specific nature of which acquires genuine value only in their

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 profound coordination. However, sacred scripture is the soul of all theology.<sup>23</sup>

#### 2. *An Evaluation of Intellectual Formation in the Major Seminaries of AMECEA Countries and the Way Forward*

In order to achieve a well balanced intellectual formation, the Church leaders in the AMECEA region have done all that it takes to train lecturers in both philosophy and theology related courses. They have also tried to always appoint a member of staff who can co-ordinate well all the academic activities with a few exceptional cases. However, care must be taken in assigning the position of Dean of Studies. We propose that such a one be a person of knowledge,<sup>24</sup> human experience, spiritual experience, but not necessarily a priest.

Basically, all our major seminaries have enough qualified lecturers in theology, but there is need to train more lecturers for philosophy who are not so many.

Some of our major seminaries tend to under value the academic part of their formation and training program that is wrong because intellectual formation enables a candidate to know how to think, feel, and open up much more to charity and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, there have been some cases where candidates to the priesthood have learnt some logic in Philosophy and thereafter, they have become big-headed; they have tended to look down on some apparent ignorant people. Students in our philosophical institutions should be led into the humility of a true Christian even after they have learnt some logic; they should become more generous in helping others who need to know how to perceive their lives.

In our major seminaries, every student should have a pass mark in all subjects studied. A basic knowledge of philosophy, theology and the teaching of the Church are necessary for a candidate for the priesthood. If a student displays a pattern of failing courses over several times, he should be asked to leave the seminary for academic reasons. Consistent poor results must call to question a seminarian's suitability for the priestly ministry. A priest cannot

fulfill his task as teacher without a sound and adequate grasp of the Christian Doctrine.<sup>25</sup> Failure to see the relevance of biblical and theological studies, lack of interest and effort to grasp them in depth would be an indication of a lack of vocation.

Each student, in consultation with his spiritual director, must determine his own pattern of study, prayer and breaks. Likewise, it should not be considered abnormal by seminarians to use part of their free days during the semester for study. An awareness of the serious demands of one's vocation and concern for fellow students suppose that seminarians will take every care to avoid disturbing others during lectures and study periods by unnecessary and disturbing noise or by unnecessary visits to one another's rooms.

#### D. Pastoral Formation

##### 1. *The ideal as presented by the document Pastores Dabo Vobis*

Pastoral formation develops by means of mature reflection and practical application, and it is rooted in a spirit, which is the hinge of all and the force which stimulates it and makes it develop. It needs to be studied therefore as a true and genuine theological discipline that it is: pastoral or practical theology.<sup>26</sup> Pastoral theology is theological in its own right because it receives from the faith the principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history.

The study of pastoral theology should throw some light upon its practical application through involvement in certain pastoral services which the candidates to the priesthood should carry out, with a necessary progression and always in harmony with their other educational commitments. It is a question of pastoral experiences which come together in a real program of 'pastoral training'.<sup>27</sup>

The seminary must seek to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work.<sup>28</sup>

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When it comes to choosing places and services in which candidates can obtain their pastoral experience, the parish should be given particular importance for it is a living cell of local and specialized pastoral work in which they will find themselves faced with the kind of problems they will meet in their future ministry. Seminarians should be given chance to visit the sick; care for immigrants, refugees and nomads, and various social works, which can be expressions of charitable zeal. These and other pastoral activities will teach the future priest to live out and offer service to his own mission of authority in the community, setting aside all attitudes of superiority or of exercising power if it is not simply that which is justified by pastoral charity.<sup>29</sup>

The different experiences which candidates for the priesthood have should assume a clear ministerial character and should be intimately linked with all the demands that befit preparation to the priesthood and not neglecting their studies, in relation to the services of the proclamation of the word, of worship and of leadership.<sup>30</sup> These services can become a specific way of experiencing the ministries of lector, acolyte and deacon.<sup>31</sup>

Awareness of the Church as 'communion' will prepare the candidate for the priesthood to carry out his pastoral work with a community spirit, in cooperation with the different members of the Church.<sup>32</sup>

##### 2. *An Evaluation of Pastoral Formation in the Major Seminaries of AMECEA Countries and the Way Forward*

Some pastoral coordinators have been appointed in the AMECEA major seminaries to supervise some pastoral formation and training programs, and they have really done well. These pastoral activities have provided opportunities for the seminarians to practice the various studies they have under-taken. However, some areas in this regard have been badly done because of lack of appropriate knowledge by some of the appointed pastoral coordinators. Some of them have even lacked some proper human and spiritual experience.

Under pastoral formation, we need to stress the fact that seminarians need to learn the art of exercising the apostolate not

only in theory, but in practice.<sup>33</sup> Hence, even during their course of studies, and also during holidays, they should be introduced into pastoral practice.<sup>34</sup> In consultation with some local pastors, seminarians should be given the opportunity to be involved in some form of pastoral work.

The seminarians' dress, conversation, conduct, zeal, and their sharing in the prayer of the parish community should reflect the ideal of the vocation to which they are called.

Seminarians should also give talks on the priestly vocation in secondary schools and colleges if the school authorities agree to this. They can also assist the chaplain of a near-by hospital. Some seminarians could also make some contributions to some religious programs on radio and television.

### Conclusion

By our formation houses' much more closely adapting to the document *Pastores Dabo Vobis*' proposed guidelines, we shall provide an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of authentic formation and training, so that the person who is called to the priesthood may become a living image of Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the success of the formation and training of candidates to the priesthood firstly, depends on a good human formation. It is human formation that helps the person under formation to become an active recipient of spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. Despite how good the content matter of the different types of formations, if the person being trained is not integrated, everything will just be falling on rocky ground and there will be no positive response from the person. Through human formation, the candidate to the priesthood is brought to his self-knowledge, self acceptance and self-opening to the Holy Spirit. Consequently, the candidate is free to love his brothers and sisters in his pastoral work. He also becomes a fertile ground for the retention of the so much needed intellectual formation.

Human formation provides an education into the affectivity of the candidate right at the center of his personality which is the heart, where the candidate is truly himself. We are using the word

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'heart' in the biblical sense, and not merely the physical organ, but the 'heart' as the center of the human personality; where the being is profoundly itself; where the being is capable of giving itself or refusing itself; where people make their fundamental basic options of life for or against God. This is so because no transformation takes place unless the truth reaches the heart, and the truth does not reach the heart except by slow assimilation, that is what even justifies the many years we give to the formation and training of our priestly candidates. The candidate gets balanced in his Christian life with the education of his human affectivity which is the core of his being. With the education of his affectivity the candidate concentrates on only one thing becomes single minded and discovers his personal vocation and adheres to it.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, we must say that the people who are put in-charge of the organization of the formation and training processes play a paramount role. Therefore, they should have the required knowledge, human experience and spiritual experience.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Cf. *Vatican II Documents, Optatam Totius*, Number 1.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo vobis*, Number 43, paragraph 1, 84.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 43, paragraph 2, 85.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 43, paragraph 3, 85.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 44, paragraph 4, 86.
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 44, paragraph 7, 87.
- <sup>7</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 7: "In large seminaries, the students should be suitably organized in smaller groups, to enable more personal attention

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to be given to each student, while retaining unity of discipline and scientific training."

- <sup>8</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 45, paragraph 2, 88.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 4.
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 4.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 45, paragraph 4, 89.
- <sup>12</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 47, paragraph 1, 92.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 48, paragraph 3, 95.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 49, paragraph 4, 97.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 8.
- <sup>16</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris, The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace* (Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2009), 50.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. *Guidelines for Priestly Formation in Zambia* (Ndola: Mission Press, 2000), 48.
- <sup>18</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 14.
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. Canon 251.
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 52, paragraph 1, 101.
- <sup>21</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 53, paragraph 3, 103.
- <sup>22</sup> Cf. Canon 252, paragraph 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 54, paragraph 1, 104.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. Canon 253, paragraph 1.
- <sup>25</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 6.
- <sup>26</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 57, paragraph 2, 109.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 57, paragraph 4, 110.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 58, paragraph 1, 110.
- <sup>29</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 58, paragraph 3, 111.
- <sup>30</sup> Cf. *Instrumentum Laboris, The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, 49.
- <sup>31</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 59, paragraph 4, 112.
- <sup>32</sup> Cf. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Number 59, paragraph 3, 112.
- <sup>33</sup> Cf. *Guidelines for Priestly Formation in Zambia*, 42.
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. *Optatam Totius*, Number 21.
- <sup>35</sup> Cf. *The Church in Africa, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy father John Paul II* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2009), number 95, 73.