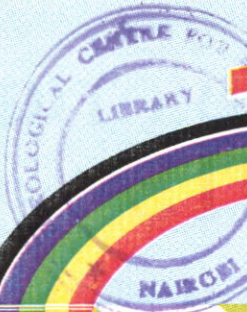
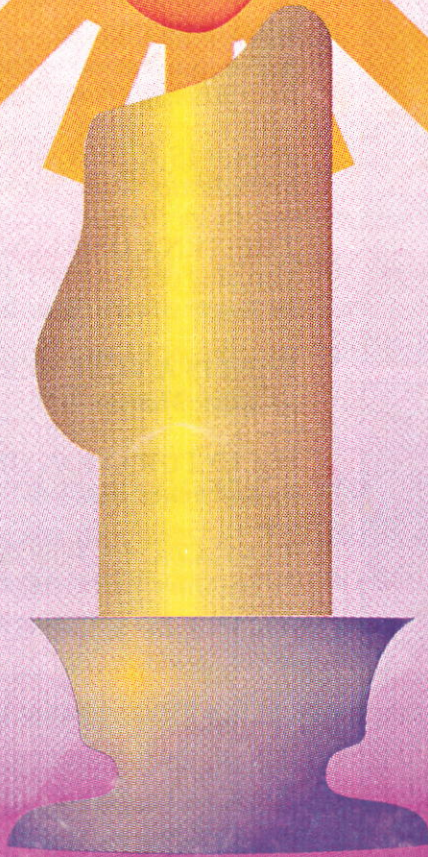
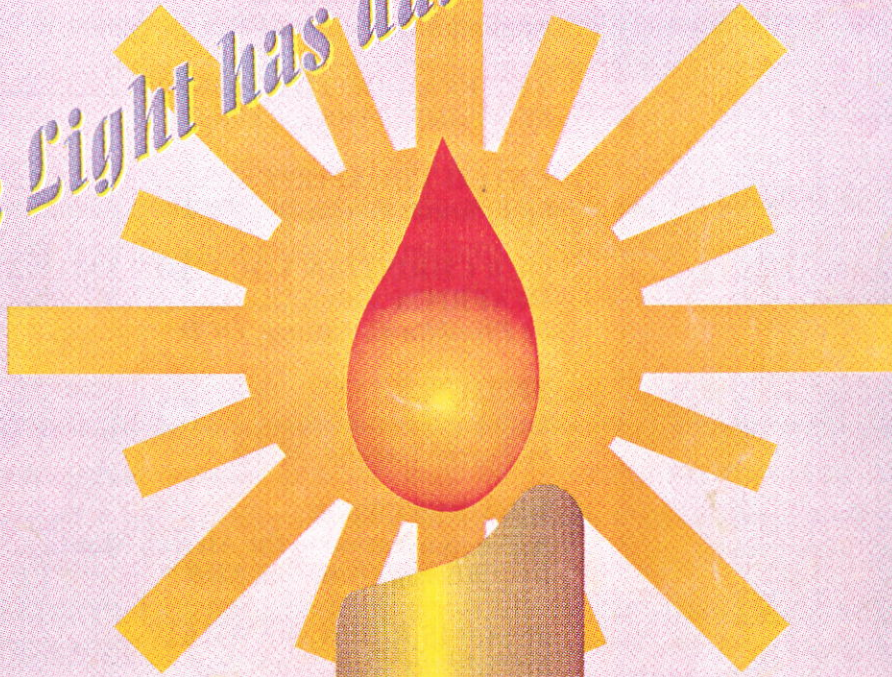


May 1998 No 4



# Tangaza VISION

*The Light has dawn!*



## Tangaza Vision

### Editor

Ephraim Chinedu Ojiekwe, OCD

### Editorial Board:

Elias Mokua, SJ

Vedastus Msilanga Babu, C.S.Sp.

Joseph Kuira, OFM Conv.

### Patrons:

Fr. Aelred Lacomara, C.P.

Fr. Gerard McCarthy, SVD

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The Seed Studio

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Fotoform

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Inside photos: the Seed Magazine

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# EDITORIAL



## RECOGNIZING THE RISEN CHRIST!

One of life's most crucial question which has often been asked is: where do we find inner peace in the midst of a troubled and troubling world? Every time and everywhere we see wars, violence of all kinds and abandonment. Whenever we see pictures of refugee children on TV or even hear stories of their tragic loss of parents, We were moved with tears. Abandonment could as well be experienced in our countries in various ways and forms. Many a time in our daily bulletin either in the front, center or back page, local newscasters have never fail to tell of new born children being abandoned on doorsteps or elsewhere, their parents being nowhere to be found. Moreover, in the lives of many ordinary people, evidence is there of people being abandoned emotionally by families or friends. All of these lacks inner peace.

Preoccupied with the thoughts and worries about these traumatic experiences we are drowned in the big ocean of our thoughts. Such that, they blinds us to the immediate graces that fill our day, to the God who is always revealing himself in all creation. We therefore, lack that wisdom that should enable us see God where he may be found. Today, the only answer we have is Christ, who in his own humanity has tasted abandonment or hurt. He is like us in all things, but sin. Yet, in the faces of these, his response was not to despair. Instead, he showed and expressed his wonderful belief and self surrender in the Father's loving kindness. But he did not trust in vain, because he was raised to glory. Thus, becoming the consoler of all who have been abandoned in one way or the other. He is the "way" for the poor of this age who might feel neglected or isolated. By sending his Holy Spirit, he also invite us to reach through the darkness and grasp the life giving hand of God.

Hence, as a small sign of gratitude to God for his gift of the Holy Spirit to us, Tangaza Vision Magazine have decided in this issue to focus more on the aspect of moral and spiritual issues with special attention to the Ordinary situation in our world of today. Being the magazine of a theological, social, educational and Spiritual formation, that should not be neglected. We are called to be bearer and witness to God's Spirit in the world around us. We are not to be timid Christians or theologians nor are we to saunter in this great mystery of life. If we can in our daily prayerful relationship with God, grow confident of his everlasting presence and love for us, then, our gratefulness for his gifts of Holy Spirit becomes manifest.

Finally, our Special thanks to all our writers and to all who in one way or the other has contributed to the success of our past and present publications. We wish all, a happy and graceful year of the Holy Spirit.

**EPHRAIM CHINEDU OJIEKWE, Ocd.**

## WOMEN DIGNITY: Are we on the right track?

Is it surprising to hear of tremendous rise of women groups? Are books and articles left behind? Everyone keeps thinking of women rights, dignity and recognition.

This is surely a good beginning. Should we better call it a good continuation? I think so. Since the creation of man and woman, the human rights, women's included, have always been pursued. Why then is this talk becoming ever more pronounced? Has there been a new vision? In my opinion, this is happening because the persons methods have not been quite successful. Some of the methods used for pursuing human rights have resulted into their violation. This trend says something also. It tells us that we are living in more profoundly volatile social, political and religious worlds.

One thing practised today may turn into an anachronism tomorrow. Few examples are necessary. A woman should be actively in determining her marriage partner. In most of the African traditional societies, this would affect the dignity of the woman. She should not go round eyeing potential marriage partners. Some communities went as far as ever dictating, right from birth, the fate of their young ones. Needless to say, such practices had noticeable advantages.

Other activities have also based their claims on functionality. According to them, a woman should be able to any job. Why should we have more male pilots than females?, they ask. Why should we not have more female heads of states? These and many other

questions arise from those base their arguments on functions. While I agree with them in regard to women discrimination along functional lines, I would be hesitant to canonize this approach. This approach is immensely influenced by functionalism and pragmatism.

Where then should we begin? I would simply say: let us ask who a woman is. From here, we shall remember that a woman is a human being, created in God's image and likeness ( Gen 1:26 ). Does this therefore push us back to the issue of human rights? Is it enough to fight for women's rights within the umbrella of human rights? Does it appeal to all? The term human rights I think, dignifies women more than the term women's rights. The latter presupposes a distinction, a division of humankind. That, women are a separate group to be considered separately. This group is imbued with tremendous delicacy and fragility. However, women are certainly distinct from men and yet they belong to the same humanity. Indeed, each human being is unique.

Another point to consider is that women do suffer differently. A middle class lady in an urban center will have different problems from a rural peasant. Professionally, women doctors, teachers or accountants will experience suffering differently.

Some among these classes of people may not even 'know' what women discrimination is. Does this show us how complex the gender issue is? Does it make us complacent?

we should all start from where we are. One speaker once said "when

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*"The term  
Human Rights  
... dignifies  
women more  
than the term  
women's  
rights".*

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## THE FEAR OF TOMORROW

The reality of the modern world can be painful. But it is important that we face this reality. When we name a fear and pin it down, it somehow becomes easier to cope with. Recently, a friend of mine asked me what is the greatest sickness of our society today. My clear-cut answer was AIDS. Later on after some reflection I came to realize that I was wrong. The facts about this sickness are numerous and comprehensive.

The man of today lives under threat of what to produce today and sell tomorrow. The fear is not so much about today, but tomorrow. The thirst for political, economic and social

security has led many people to be fearful. Often times we are confused and call these people hypocrites, but they are not, although at times, fearfulness and hypocrisy could be mixed up. A fearful person can be destructive not only to himself but to the society at large. It is shocking to note that this sickness which claims material security as its panacea has encroached on the life of the church and has found room in religious circles. The politicians and the religious often don't hold the same opinion but they are partners when facing the fear of tomorrow.

Our religious life today is difficult. We have today, a young religious generation that is probably the best fed, best housed and best educated. But while our appetite *to have* has been fed more and more, there are other appetites in our lives that are not being fed such as the appetite *to be*. It is alarming that the fear of tomorrow has exaggerated our appetite *to have* rather than the appetite *to be*. Our fear can be summed up in these words: work hard either in school or in the mission, save or accumulate some money and eventually move to a

*“The thirst for political, economic, and social security has led many people to be fearful”.*

(continued from the previous page)

we deny women their dignity, the former deny themselves their dignity instead”. Why should a man become a slave of his woman friend? Why should he become her sponsor in matters financial even when the lady is twice as able. I am sure many men have suffered trying to ‘please’ their women friends. I acknowledge that some women do suffer also in this regard. This affirms my conviction that unless we recognize and uphold human dignity as a whole, we may not be able to solve the “jigsaw puzzle of women dignity”.

**JOSEPH KUIRA OFM. CONV.**

better, permanent position. The few religious men/women I talked to, had this to say: "we promise according to our hopes and perform according to our fears."

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*'... we need to have clear goals about our adventure'.*

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These fears are necessary. In fact, they could better be called *concerns*. In this regard, they are part and parcel of our lives. Knowing how to be anxious about the right things and in the right way is crucial for personal growth and for the survival of religious men and women. Pitifully, we seek refuge from material-security but, Hellen Keller says in her book:

*Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of man as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing. (The Open Door, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957).*

My question here is, what is the purpose of our religious adventure? We need to have clear goals about our adventure. I don't say that ordinary goals such as staying in a good house or finding a more fulfilling job are wrong. But what end do these goals serve? If we envisage our goals in worldly limited ways, we remain constantly threatened by the fear of not achieving them. Goals are not the same as a life purpose. To find a deeper meaning, our goals must be connected and organized to serve a greater life purpose.

Our life purpose begins to take shape when we ask ourselves the most basic questions: Who am I? Why am I here? If material success were our purpose, then much of our religious adventure would be condemned to fail at fulfilling this purpose. The only life purpose that can take us beyond fear is a higher purpose, a sacred purpose: spiritual growth and integration. If we look at our life from a spiritual perspective, that our primary purpose is the evolution of our soul, then the most basic fear in us takes on new meanings and paradoxical dimensions.

**Nicodemus Mmasi, C.S.Sp.**

## CATCH THE SPIRIT!

In our lives as human beings, we often seek the Spirit without insight or blindly. But with experience, we have come to the bare facts that, the first step toward seeing is becoming aware of not seeing or at least of not seeing straight. We can be guided by the light at our feet only if we are paying attention to just the next step, looking within the light, seeing by it.

When I was a child, I discovered the fun of running down mountains. I was warned that this was dangerous. But I had discovered a secret. Even on a rugged trail it was possible to run safely if you simply focused on each next step and did not look farther ahead. There was always a landing place for one foot. At any moment I needed to see only one landing place for one foot. One step at a time. As a growing - up child of God, I am discovering that there is always enough guidance for the living of this moment. I am learning not to try to look beyond the light.

Today, only two things are ever happening: the truth proving itself true, the false proving itself false. If I have a problem, the problem signifies either a mistaken belief or a lack of understanding. Sometimes there is something that can be done about it, sometimes not. But whether there is or isn't, "doing something" is never enough. There is always something that needs to be learned, to be seen. Sometimes this better seeing erases even the appearance of a problem, but whether it does or doesn't, we are always better off and in a high place when we have come to a clearer



understanding of truth. So the answer is never simply to do something about the problem, but to see better, replacing error or ignorance with truth.

Suppose you are working on an electronic computer. You push a lot of buttons to put in information and instructions, and wait for the machine to do the work. The display on the screen lights up and you see that the answer is wrong or a message lights up that says ERROR. You may be disappointed, but you do not get

angry at the display. You do not send the computer back to the factory because it doesn't work. Instead, you list the program. You retrace and re examine your entries. Thus, you are looking for an error or a

higher understanding. You say, "what could manifest itself in a display like that?" or "what can be learned here?". Upon all these, we have to note that, "without problems, we would never get to the truth, never find fulfillment and love". Whenever we meet problems, we can pray, "what do I need to see?" so that, new insight and inspiration might be looked for. This is actually how we live and walk on earth. I suppose too, in heaven as well. God always wants to show us more. And whenever we see it, life is always better.

Hence, O God of Truth, O God of Love, O Creator - Spirit see to it that we seek You ceaselessly! That we find You everywhere and in everything! That we love You in all and above all. O Jesus, show us the Father! That is enough. O Holy Spirit, show us but Jesus and that is enough! Open our eyes that we may see!

**EPHRAIM OJIEKWE, Ocd.**

*"We are always better off and in a high place when we have come to a clearer understanding of truth".*

### OUR CHRISTIAN VOCATION AND WARS IN AFRICA

Oh war! where is your strength? Oh Christian! where is your faith? Who can tell us what our fate will be in the next minute? Who can tell us how long it will last? Men have fought and destroyed one another since the world began yet they have not satisfied their desire to fight. Even in different parts of Africa today, the issue of war continues to be the order of the day. And one unfortunate fact about this issue is that, the war is not between two unknown groups of people. It is usually between two sister ethnic groups who share almost the same cultural backgrounds and heritage. They share the same faith whose demands of love and peace are well known to them.

*"It is the vocation of the Christians to help in fostering peace and unity wherever they find themselves".*

Yet they are not ready to fulfil these demands. It was this kind of infidelity to one's faith on the part of Christians that prompted Mahatma Gandhi to say that "he loves Jesus Christ but does not love Christians because they do not keep the injunctions of Christ. And if they were to observe the injunctions of Christ, the world would have been a better place." I suppose, Gandhi would say the same of other world's religions together with their members. Since it is not good to cry over a spilt milk, it is therefore very important to arrest a bad situation on time before it becomes worse. So, having seen the ravages and the devastations of wars and counterwars in different parts of the continent in the recent times, Christians therefore can take a leaf from their experience of these wars so as to render a practical assistance in arresting the warring situations and environments in Africa. This, therefore will help in bringing about a lasting peace and unity among the inhabitants of this blessed continent.

However, the assistance of Christians is highly needed in many ways especially in places which have not as yet experienced

wars and in places that are still experiencing and suffering from the ravages of wars. Whether their country is multi religio-cultural or not, it is the vocation of the Christians to help in fostering unity, justice and peace for all. This task has to be done individually and collectively. Most of the wars that were fought in the past could be a result of the fact that Christians were not bold enough to stand their ground against those who caused those wars out of their selfish motivations. Could you imagine what would have happened if the German Christians had opposed Hitler in his plans to conquer the whole world or rather the Christians in Burundi and Rwanda, if they had, at the outset, opposed their leaders who conscientized them and led them to war? Christians in Africa should know their rights as God's people and stand by them. They should not allow anybody whether the person is a fellow Christian or a member of their ethnic groups to delude them into fighting against one another for a purely selfish and unnecessary reason.

History has taught us that the words of a prophet are not always accepted by those to whom they are spoken. But this does not mean that the prophet should stop doing his work. The African church in her prophetic mission should not relent in criticizing any policy or action taken by the government that will not be for the good of the people. In so doing, church leaders together with their faithful should state openly and categorically their opposition towards any policy that may lead to war. Even if the people concerned do not want to listen to the opinion of the church, the church should not be

discouraged in airing her opinion. Since experience is the best teacher, the Church should learn from their past mistakes, especially those who think that war may be the best solution to the problems they are experiencing now. Again, our vocation as Christians demands that we should do our best to help warring nations in Africa to realize the need for a peace talk, which should gear towards bringing about forgiveness and reconciliation between the two ethnic groups or nations involved. Experience has shown that peace talk is a noble and effective step in bringing about a mutual co-existence between two warring parties. So, Christians should utilize this means so as to bring about peace and unity between these people. Furthermore, the love of Christ for us demands that we extend this love to others especially those in need of our assistance. We are called therefore, to assist in rendering medical assistance to the wounded ones, supplying food and shelter to the refugees who have been driven away from their homeland. Although we may not be able to give physical assistance such as sheltering these people in our homes, giving them medical assistance, yet we can donate generously to those Religious groups which are dedicated to caring for them.

Finally, we need to see the relevance of our vocation in relation to the experiences we are encountering in our continent today. We have to respond in love to the demands of these experiences. But if we fail to respond faithfully to these demands, what kind of account shall we give at the judgment throne of God?

**FRANKLIN C. UDENZE, OCD.**

## MARK ME FAIRLY

The dawn appears for the night is over,  
The sun follows, the "wet El Nino" is over  
One by one, Tangaza students get to school,  
Learning begins in classes ever cool.  
The days, though challenging, end soberly.

But Tangaza days also differ in their entirety,  
The days of exams, such are the days in their  
sobriety.

Lo, that is not all, for the fruit has a leakage.  
The leakage becomes a heavy blow for all.

Yes you ask, what leakage is this?  
A victim like you or me has no difficulties in  
this.  
For, do your Greek, get  
everything correct,  
The mark is "seventized"  
for the sake of your respect.  
Nothing leaks out but the  
thirty percent.



Every semester sounds a cry so loud,  
Every hardworking student becomes proud.  
This is because he mourns the leakage's  
immensity,  
For he surely has intellectual propensity.  
One contemplates on a possible academic  
Messiah.

That, standards must be maintained is obvious  
Will this justify a system so mysterious?  
For, get nine and your script reflects so,  
While raising is difficult, lowering is not so.  
Disagree with me, but my dirge is not a creation  
*ex nihilo*

**Joseph Kuira, OFM CONV.**

## Tied Up!

*(Reflections on Addiction)*

It is not uncommon within some of our religious congregations to hear that a particular member has been abruptly appointed for a sabbatical year or for a session as part of his/her so-called 'ongoing formation'. In some cases, it is simply a polite way to refer to a seriously addicted person in need of a special treatment. The aggressive modern trends of consumerism and materialism are at times upsetting the human and personal balance of the 'poor-obedient-celibates' that we try to be. I do not know if the phenomenon of addiction in religious communities is more widespread nowadays than it used to be in the past, but I do know that many of us are confronted with it, either personally or within the circle of our close relationships.

Addictions are very common indeed in our life: cigarettes, alcohol, sex and even drugs, but also more subtle ones like work, money, excessive eating habits, reading (for my case), TV, football etc. Without entering into the details of researches carried out by institutions such as Alcoholic Anonymous or others, it is significant to realise that addiction has its own laws and patterns.

### Healing: A Five Steps' Process

Such is the five steps' process summarised by the acronym 'D.A.B.D.A.', (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Despair and Acceptance); it is often used as a counselling tool to overcome the experience of loss. We enlarge here the application to the phenomenon of addiction as it represents a similar challenge in many respects.

In the initial stage, the addicted person denies. He or she is not aware of the unbalanced habit: 'I can stop whenever I want', 'It is not true' etc. It might be that the situation is too hard to accept. Our communities should play an essential role in the discernment of helpful or

damaging patterns of behaviour to our fellow-neighbours. Is the behaviour globally accepted by the community or not? It is a matter of genuine concern, of faithfulness to the love commanded by Christ. Passivity in this matter may be perceived as permissivity. It is our duty to restore 'sight to the blind'. An emotional shock is sometimes helpful, like the former smoker who realized the seriousness of the situation only after his wife had told him that 'she felt kissing an ashtray whenever she was kissing him!'

Then, there is anger, once the situation is recognize. But anger may be direct or misplaced and consequently difficult to unmask. In front of any trial or challenge, there is fear of weakness, and anger is the release of frustrations and tensions lived within. It can even be directed towards the addicted person him/herself through self-pity or false humility. 'That is the way I am: accept me or go!' etc. Anger should be released and not repressed (though through the right channels), as it opens the way towards the next step which is...

...Bargaining, 'Yes I know, but next week I will give up and stop it'. Bargaining might again be directed towards oneself or others, but it can also be addressed to God: 'if you help me get rid of it, I will offer this or that'. An experience that is common in situations of crisis.

Depression follows when the addicted person realizes that nothing really works. It is a confrontation against helplessness which has various degrees: discouragement, despair, (the 'big d's' as a preacher used to name them). Christians have particular resources to overcome those 'd's': the life of Christ, the cross, the Pauline's 'power in weakness', the unconditional love and acceptance of God in Jesus Christ etc. It is not a waste of time to deepen these spiritual themes in our lives, remembering what they are: helpful, not necessarily sufficient. Proper counselling is sometimes needed

*"Constant introspection, reading our lives, together with appropriate corrective action is also helpful".*

and it is indeed good to have recourse to it.

The last step is **acceptance**. To accept oneself just as God does is the final step empowering the individual to take proper action towards healing and recovering. Some say that a former alcoholic is never really cured, but bears in his/herself the scars of what he/she has been living through. But this awareness enables to take measures of prudence to avoid lapses.

Some believe that the cure of an addicted person can not occur without the '**low-pitch experience**'. It is a particular moment within the process itself in which the addicted finds him/herself radically and totally helpless. It seems that before this point, there is not yet the power or energy necessary for the individual to correct him/herself, precisely because he/she still relies on his/her power alone. The 'low-pitch experience', is an experience of truth, of realization of oneself being in a state of slavery, overpowered or dominated by an object, a person or a process. It is a sudden realization of a loss in human dignity, self-respect. Often, addicted people refuse any help whatsoever before they have reached this point of awareness in the process.

#### **Back to Life**

I am amazed by the parable of Jesus on the return of the unclean spirit who "finding the house unoccupied, swept and tidied, goes off and collects seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and set up house there, and so that person ends up worse off than before." (Mt. 12:44-45). A strong warning indeed and a reminder that emptiness renders vulnerable to addiction. With what do we replace the chased spirits? How do we fill up our days? Healthy activities have to be developed (i.e.: writing articles for Tangaza Vision!) so that the place may remain clean and healthy. As a missionary, I am often struck by the consequences that human instability, journeys

and transitions periods bring to me. These are precisely periods in which the 'house is empty'. Watch out! In case something or somebody has to take the place of the house left empty, let it be God! He will act as a sure criterion of appreciation of the worldly realities.

Constant introspection, reading our lives together with appropriate corrective action is also helpful. Origen used to apply the imprecatory verse of the psalm 137 'a blessing on anyone who seizes your babies and shatters them against a rock!' on bad habits (or addictions), which are very inoffensive at their beginnings but get dangerous as they grow. Indeed, it is easier to pull out a tree when it is a few months old than when it has reached the fully mature stage, but still a minimum of observation is needed to see that there is a tree growing!

Addictions are hindrances to the spiritual journey. But let us be aware of the responsibility each one of us bears in this respect. It is of no use to judge or condemn, but rather our role is to help and encourage. A friend of mine to whom I reproached his smoking habit (of which he was unhappy himself) simply replied: 'but have you ever prayed for me about it?'

**Pascal Durand, M. Afr.**



*"It is of no use to judge or condemn, but rather our role is to help and encourage".*

## RESURRECTION: A FOREIGN NOTION TO THE AFRICAN MIND?

We have just finished the Lenten season, which points to and calls us to focus our lives on Easter. The Resurrection of Christ, says Paul, is the fundamental justification of our faith (1Cor 15:13-17). As Africans or missionaries in Africa, we know that in traditional African religions, there was a strong link between life on earth and the life "beyond". There is communion between the living and the "living-dead". What novelty does the Christian message bring, if our ancestors already believed in life after death?

*"For the African, times to make sense must be lived".*

### THE AFRICAN NOTION OF TIME AND HISTORY

As John Mbiti shows in many of his writings, there is no such a thing as a linear conception of time in African thought, ranging from infinite to infinite. It is rather as if there were no future. The reason for this is that time is measured and made up of events. "For the Africans, time, to make sense, must be lived", says Mbiti (*L'Eschatologie, In Kwesi Dickson & Co. Eds., Pour une Théologie Africaine, Yaoundé, Clé, 1969, 220*). As a result, African time comprehends exclusively the past (*zamani*, in Kiswahili) and the present (*sasa*). The events that constitute time must go through the '*sasa*' - which also includes an unavoidable, proleptic, close and potential future - before being incorporated into the '*zamani*'. The '*zamani*' is kept present in mind, recounted and related to the *sasa* events that it determines and illuminates. Given that all events thus slide from '*sasa*' to '*zamani*', it is as if history, in African traditional thought, goes backwards. This implies, and Mbiti agrees with it, that there is no expectation of an up-coming golden age,



because the center of every human activity is in the '*zamani*'. Human beings are inescapably caught in the birth-initiation-procreation-death cycle. That may be the reason why in many African languages, the future is expressed with the same word as the past. The West-African Ewe/Mina (Togo, Ghana and Benin) use "Eso" for yesterday and for tomorrow. In Congo, the Lingala word "lobi" also expresses the future and the past. It is only the verb that shows the difference : Nakendaki lobi, I went yesterday; Nakokende lobi, I will go tomorrow. The Bemba also fall under the same case with the term "mailo" ( Inkala mailo, I will go tomorrow; Naliya mailo, I went yesterday). Here is one of the areas where Christian eschatology has a lot to contribute in our inculturation of the history of salvation. However, there is already some kind of eternity, of permanence in life's on-going cycle, but one unavoidably wonders what about "eternal life"?

### AFRICAN ESCHATOLOGY?

Mbiti names only one case where an African tribe refers to an eschatology. The Sondjo in Tanzania have an apocalyptic myth in which there is clash between two suns. Then the god (Khambageu) will come down and redeem the Sondjo and reduce to nothing the rest of humanity. The origin of the myth is unknown, but it is certainly not to be found in Christian influence. However, almost all Traditional religions hold that there is life after death. With the Christian teaching about heaven, hell and judgement in the back of our mind, we can now look closer and see whether one could talk of "salvation" or paradise in African Traditional Religions. In African Traditional Religions, death is not an end. It is a door between earthly life and the life "beyond". As a result,

there is no surprising promotion to be expected, because the life "beyond" is simply an echo of one's earthly life. Being deified or promoted to a certain rank after death depends on the living, who pass a judgement on the dead. Over there, as Mbiti says, thieves remain thieves, good people remain good people, indefinitely. Rarely does one hear talk of a paradise or something like a judgement followed by a gratification. Mbiti names three examples. The Batchwa Pygmies of the equatorial Congo-Kinshasa believe that after death one goes to God's village, where sadness and suffering are abolished. One will live in comfort and get much game. As for the Yoruba in Nigeria, they believed that we shall be accountable before God (Olodumare) for everything we do on earth. Finally, for the LoDagaa of Ghana and Burkina Faso, one has to cross a great river after death, in order to reach the land of the spirits. If one has been good on earth, one's crossing would be facilitated, unlike the thieves and the sorcerers. As we can see, there is some kind of judgement, but it is always personal and never upon humankind as a Christian and modern mind would expect.

As far as the recompense is concerned, the most widely spread belief in African Traditional Religions is that gratification and punishment are granted here on earth. For generations Africans have recounted myths of paradise lost, how death came about and how God and man parted company. But, as Josiah U. Young notices, "absent in traditional life, however, was a notion of paradise regained" (Black and African Theologies - Siblings or distant cousins?, NY, Orbis, 1986, 74). Sin is always against the neighbour, living or living-dead, and must therefore be sanctioned here on earth. What happens after death, namely becoming an ancestor etc., is no reward as such. It is something that 'happens' to the individual, just as growing old or dying comes about.

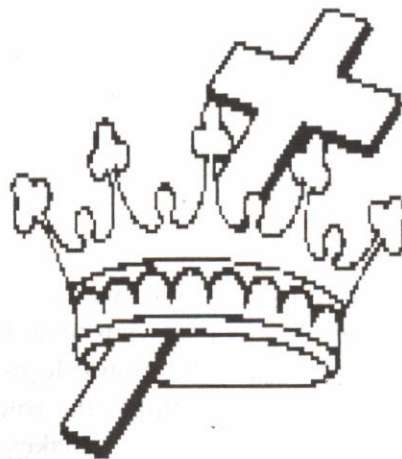
#### A NEW RELIGIOUS HORIZON

Among the many religions that have beset Africa for centuries now, Christianity appears as the 'redemption' of African Traditional Religions. Already in our ancestors' mind, it was somehow clear that death is only the door to the 'next village'. But this kind of immortality is limited, because the ancestor is 'alive' only as long as he is still remembered.

When there is no one left to remember him, he disappears into the silent 'zamani'. Jesus gives a new meaning to human fate. He throws a new light on our ancestors' existence and gathers all humankind into one people, the family of His Father. With the Incarnation we learn that there is more to life than mere earthly gratification. Jesus, who is the Son of God, proves to be the Master of human history, from the remotest 'zamani' to the 'sasa', and opens wide a future of happiness in heaven. In his death and Resurrection, he destroyed death so that all may live for ever. He gives a limitless future ('kesho bila mwisho') to our history because by his obedience, he was made the true 'ancestor', forever remembered by His Father, and by those to whom He gave the life that never ends.

When we contemplate Jesus' sufferings and prepare the faithful to share in the Paschal Mystery, let us help them reach beyond the 'evil'. Jesus' death (Good Friday) is not the end by any means. The new life of Easter is a mystery that throws a transforming light onto the past, on our present life and on what we are expecting. Thus Jesus redeems our ancestors and makes our past into salvation history, so that by him, who was 'super-exalted' as Eternal Ancestor (Phil 2:9-11), all men and women of all times and places may receive life to the fullness and look to the 'keisho' with hope.

Alphonse OWOUDOU  
SDB



*"The new life of Easter is a mystery that throws a transforming light unto the past, on our present life, and on what we are expecting".*

## JESUS IS RISEN; SO WHAT?

In his gospel, St Mark presents Jesus as having come to the world to establish the Kingdom of God. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15) Pope Paul VI, in the 1974 Document of the Synod of bishops, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* writes that "...as an evangeliser, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God. This kingdom is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes 'the rest' only the kingdom, therefore, is absolute and it makes other things relative" (EN 8)

Jesus, like any other missionary of today, was sent by God, the God of creation, of liberation, of challenge, of the poor and the God of the oppressed, to proclaim this kingdom. The prophesy of Isaiah affirms this thus, "...the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed." (Lk.4:18) This was Jesus' greatest mission. At incarnation, Jesus became man of his culture, religion and tradition, but He was open to the others; to the Samaritans, to women, to children and to the unbelieving world of the Gentiles. In Mark's gospel, Jesus is always moving to the 'other shore' of the sea of Galilee; a sign of a movement to the world beyond the limits of Judaism.

The four gospels give us different accounts of the way that Jesus undertook His mission. Matthew shows Jesus as the great teacher who fulfils the role of Moses, but who also makes a devastating attack on official religion.

Mark shows Jesus as the suffering servant struggling to fulfil the divine purpose in the face of opposition and hatred. Luke has a compassionate and caring Jesus who is in a continual dialogue with the people He meets. In John's gospel, Jesus is the Word made flesh, the triumphant one who invites His followers to 'come and see.'

This mission of Jesus costed Him His life. He had to undergo death on the cross in order to accomplish it. His resurrection, however, marks the central element of our belief. It is through His resurrection that the kingdom of God was inaugurated, the climax of our salvation and the new life of grace. It is by His resurrection that we believers look forward to an eschatological participation in the table fellowship. This is an evidence that Jesus did not give His life for a theory but for a way of life. Joachim Jeremias, the great German biblical scholar says that Jesus lived for the value of universal table-fellowship, and that it was this that challenged the values and institutions of His society; a challenge that led Him to an early grave.

Looking at our style of life today, it is evident that the causes for which Jesus died are still prevailing. In many societies here in Africa or elsewhere, we still have the oppressed. The street children and prostitutes do mushroom in a great number almost in any fast growing town, the refugees are almost found in every corner of our continent. War, violence and ethnic clashes have become a 'necessary part' of our daily life. Social injustices such as corruption, embezzlement of public funds (even in religious life!), child abuse, oppression, inequality in the society, jealousy, pride, greed, selfishness and lack of correct understanding are the orders of the day.

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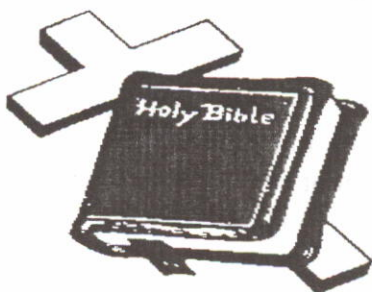
*"Despite all the human sufferings and injustices ... God is always God, He is always very close to us".*

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I wonder whether or not such people who undertake such malicious acts know that Jesus is risen, that He died for the sins of all the people and that they ought to be free from such short-comings? A close look shows that all these acts are because of existing unjust socio-political structures in our respective religious houses and the whole society at large. As a person of good-will, what have you done or what can you do to try and rectify the existing injustices in your community or society? If you can not stop it, mention or talk about it at least.

Our God is a God of justice. To be recalled to His covenant with us, always means a challenge to our attitudes and to our actions as human beings, Christians and more so as religious. Despite all the human sufferings and injustices that lie before our eyes, the natural and human-made disasters that afflict our world, God is always God, an infinite compassionate Being who cares for His creatures. He is always very close to us. He is even "closer to us than the marrow of our bones." (Holy Koran) But, often times, I tend to refuse to agree to believe that God is as close to us as the holy writings put it. With all the existing injustices in our societies or at times religious communities, Where is this risen Lord in our daily discussions on ministries and authority, or in our daily practice of the sacraments?

Vedastus Msilanga CSSp.



## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS Sexuality or Love ?

### 1. Observation

The significance and observance of the ten commandment have become a pastoral challenge, especially in Africa. Many interrogations has been registered as one reflects on the deplorable situations which are taking place in African societies today.

Few years ago a Congolese professor, Benezet Bujo, wrote a book entitled " Do we still need the ten commandments? ". In 1973, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya, an Oblate Immaculate Missionary, gave, with vigour, a Lenten Conference in Brussels on the theme " Culture, Developpement et Christianism (Culture, development and Christianity). Tackling the point of the reorientation of Theology, Fr. Tissa felt the need to rethink the ten commandments.

An overlook at the recent Theological publications shows that there is much coverage in African libraries about the ten commandments. What is interesting is the fact that the emphasis of many African Theologians lays on sexuality rather than on the society. Only little coverage is relatively on international relationship.

The sixth and ninth commandment, for instance, are very much stressed in the theological elaborations, in the pastoral work and in the seminaries and religious formation houses. While the fifth, seventh, eighth and tenth commandments which actually have a great social and cultural significance are relatively neglected. The question then raises up: Are we

“... everyday is  
a moment of  
love”

doing justice to Jesus' words when we present the ten commandments as principles of Sexuality rather than the principle of love? We should then change our emphasis when we speak of the ten commandments.

## 2. The ten commandments as a call to Love

In Mark 12: 28-34, Jesus summarize the ten commandments as a call to a twofold love, that is, (i) "You must love your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. (ii)"You must love your neighbor as yourself".

Thus, everyday is a moment of love when one heeds to the call to love. Such a love is above all to offer one's life to the other no matter what lies in that. To love, then, is to love the unlovable and befriend the inimical. Hence, each of us is called to that love.

We are daily called to love of God and neighbor. Loving God is to commune with him even in our most difficult life situation. Once we live in love and generously give, we can make a difference. It is love which turns the society's din into peace and harmony. It softens the adamant heart and brings reconciliation to those who are apart, like the poor and rich, weak and strong.

## 3. The "Autopsy" of African Societies in relation to the 5th, 8th and 10th Commandment

(i) The Fifth Commandment:  
"You shall not kill"

Today the memories of active opposition, war, and violence, etc. persist among people in Africa. The cases of genocide in Rwanda, Burundi, Eastern Congo and the recent tribal clashes in Nakuru are the best known and concrete examples

for us. Instead of being great people as God expects us to be, we are now divided and eventually overcome and led into our own "slavery". We live, so to say, in the principle of *Homo homini lupus est*. All these attitudes end to the cases of death. We kill because of our personal interest or that of our friends. We neglect human life for the pride of our respective country.

A glance regard at the world shows how fast is the development of factories which produce supplies for bacteriological, ecological and biological war. A great number of people work hard daily to produce guns, weapons, etc. in order to kill human lives. Africa, to some extent, seems to be one of the suitable grounds for both experimentation and business.

Unfortunately this not a subject of reflection and Theological action, whereas we are all aware of that. All this shows that we are still far to elaborate the significance of the fifth commandment in relation to our today's situation in Africa. We sometimes catechize and Theologize when two people or two tribes are fighting; when there is a case of abortion. But when it comes to act accordingly against abuses, to struggle for the season for the production of weapons, we become passive.

(ii) Eighth Commandment: " *You shall not bear false witness* "

We live in a moment whereby many people have become victims of lies, myths and brainwashing. The media are very much preoccupied by the question of sex, sport, consummation and mode, etc. All these do not give a true witness to the realities of life today. Experience shows that though

peace and justice have often been proclaimed in our churches, it only remains at the level of theory. The reality has been what we all know: injustice, violence and exploitation of others.

(iii) The Tenth Commandment: "You shall not covet neighbors property"

We also find in Africa a little Theological coverage about the respect of someone's goods. In most African countries, one can see how some people (foreigners or natives) are treating others in a way that neglect their human dignity. The weak and poor, for instance, are exploited and taken advantage of.

The transfer of the goods of the poor toward the rich has become something common. Strange enough the dominant use their power to set up a "blind system of peace" just to suit their demand. Unfortunately, many Christians instead of counteracting this conditioning have fallen victims of this trend. African Theological reflection does not also say a lot about this misery system and the exploitation of mineral resources (case of D.R. Congo) by the so-called "developed countries".

Furthermore, one registers annually many cases of African Christians who have been sanctioned by the local Church for having found guilty of sexual immorality (i.e.. p o l y g a m y , homosexuality...). They have been automatically dispensed from some sacraments. Whereas

people who cruelly make others suffer can still continue receiving sacraments. What then should we emphasis more: sexual immorality or social justice?

#### 4. Suggestion

One of the dangers that we must heed in African Churches is the great emphasis which is made on sexuality as regards the observation of the ten commandments. Since most African Catholic Churches are involved now in question concerning justice and human rights, I suggest that African Theologians should elaborate and practice a Theology of Conscientisation under the tree. This should be a Theology which deals more with social positions of people than with mere relationship between individuals.

A Theology of Conscientisation under the tree should aim above all, to bring people to the realization of the full human dignity. Love, therefore, should be the starting point of this process. It is, in this regard, I believe, that we can follow the example of our ancestors in the faith who assumed the responsibility of looking for a new way to transform the societies of their time.

My belief is that once a Theology of conscientisation under the tree gets roots in African communities, it may help us to tackle many situations that we deplore now.

**Roger Mushi Vanzila, SVD.**

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## WHO IS A TEACHER?

Let us begin by wondering who a teacher is. According to the advanced learner's dictionary, a teacher is a person who gives instructions to somebody; one who causes somebody "to know" or be able to do something. By inference, educators, coaches, trainers as instructors are teachers.

Going by that definition, a parent is the primary teacher by virtue of his or her relationship with the child. Parents "know" what is good for their children and they give them just that. They may not be able to identify the gifts of their children but certainly they will be in the forefront to see that their children acquire and integrate relevant knowledge and develop skills as much as possible. All other educational agents could be teachers by extension to use Machiavelli's expression.

The other agents include the Lord's tribes namely sisters, brothers, and priests. These tribes through their learning institutions, Sunday schools, masses e.t.c. cause people to know who they are. A peer group is indeed "a teacher". Many young people come to know several things through their closest allies - the peer group, so much so that if not checked the group may solely determine its members' destiny. Here, we will examine a teacher in the realm of academics.

Teaching is a noble profession. It is an enjoyable, relaxing and self fulfilling mission. To its practitioners, it is ever refreshing. Always full of challenges that keeps the teacher ahead of time and students. It comes as no surprise that if there is a person of vision in our world of today, then it is that chalkholder. One may hesitate to ask, were that to be true,

would all teachers not by excelling in their works and shattering records year after year? Would teachers be manhandling their students the way reality stands? The answers to those queries lie yet in another question; are teachers made or born?

As a science, teaching requires gifts whereas as an art, it calls for skills. If a teacher is gifted but unskilled he/she will be like a treasure in an earthen vessel untold. But if a teacher has skills without gifts, then the students would be the young antelope that has to escape the hunter's snare. To have both gift and skill is the secret. A student, like a bee, would travel miles and miles in search of 'nectar'. Or else, why would students desert one class and overwhelmingly sign for another when either could suffice in given situation?

Perhaps it is hyperbolic to state that a teacher has to afford a million smiles by the end of the day. If she/he doesn't smile in the class he/she will necessarily, do it in the staff room. Even behind these "stone faces" there are unavoidable sparks of smiles. A smile retrieves the files the teacher wants from a student. Thus he/she manages to 'cover' the syllabus. However, teachers are not there to just 'cover' the syllabus; they have even bigger role to play in shaping the character and behavior of their 'disciples'. In the process, a relationship is established. Many a time, if the relationship is healthy and genuine the teacher leaves a lasting print in the student's world.

A teacher nurses students from sadness to happiness, dullness to liveliness, pessimism to optimism and above all from the world of ignorance to one of knowledgeable zeal.

Elias Mokua, SJ

*"As a science, teaching requires gifts, whereas as an art, it calls for skills".*

## INCULTURATION OF OLD PEOPLE'S HOME

There has been lengthy and deeper reflections on the inculturation of the gospel and liturgy. Many African theologians have expressed their thoughts on the subject. Some of these contributions are bearing fruit in the sense that an experimentation has been done in various parts of Africa and in different areas of Christian life: evangelization, liturgy, catechesis and morality. Yet it is desirable to reflect on one other important aspect of Christian life. I mean to talk about religious or consecrated life. I am not a global thinker and so I propose to reflect on an insignificant aspect of this life.

I happened to be at Bakhita Documentation Center. The lady in-charge of the center at the time was Mrs. Kione, a Christian of P.C.E.A. (Presbyterian Church of Eastern Africa). As soon as she learnt that I was a student at Tangaza College, she wanted to know many things about the Catholicism: the burning issue of celibacy, recruitment and formation of Priests, Religious and Missionaries, and many other things. Anyway, she had noticed 'with great horror' an elderly priest who was staying alone at New People premises. She wondered what would happen if this old man feel sick at night? or was ambushed by burglars of if anything else should happen to him? She pitied the man for loneliness and boredom.

It is a fact that a number of religious find themselves in similar situation as this old Combòni priest. I have met several older priests and brothers, not to mention sisters and missionaries, who did not want to go back to their countries of origin for fear of finding themselves in loneliness or with a building all for themselves. Our friends, Europeans and North Americans, have found a way of dealing with the situation of

the aged. Their either put them all together in the 'old people's home' of the congregation or one that is run by the govern meant. These homes have been set up through the inspiration of their social situation whereby the old are sent to such centers run by government to care for the old. Rumor has it that these old folks are sent to these centers by their very own children! If this is true, then we can take it for granted that the practice is an accepted norm in those particular societies. Thanks be to God!

In Africa, after a centenary of evangelization, there has been a rise in vocations to the priestly, religious and missionary life. This phenomenon has taken some people by surprise and others give thanks to God for it. Whether the motives are right or not, healthy or not, fact is that, sooner or later we will have old religious, missionaries and priests in large numbers, too. Actually, the situation is here already because in Moshi diocese, (where I come from) a four-storey complex exists for the old priests. What worries me, like Mrs Kione, is that we might be tempted to copy the models os the West. The problem is that 'old folks homes' are not social practices in Africa as it is the case in some Western countries. Therefore, as we think of inculturation of religious life in Africa, we must also think of inculturation of older religious too.

Christians (and for that matter Catholics), say that a priest or religious is one who is taken from among the people set apart for the same people in matters concerning their relationship with God and through it with others. We also say that these priests and religious are

*"I am not a global thinker and so I propose to reflect on an insignificant aspect of this life"*

commissioned and sent by their people; that is, their diocese, parish, Christian community and indeed, their families. From this theological and religious principles, I propose that once they have done their duty up to their old age, they could be received back by those who sent them. This will be a great honer to them and to those who sent them.

In Africa, we like pride in our ancestors who did good works in their times. In Africa we talk well of our elders who have done commendable and noble works. Certainly priestly, religious and missionary lives are noble and commendable lives and work. I am sure that parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends of old religious or priests will be happy to have them back. Children and grandchildren will certainly marvel and learn a lot from the stories of these old, noble men and women. I for one will be enriched by many stories and get to know what happens 'behind the scenes' of priestly and consecrated lives. In this way, the old will not only be removed from their loneliness, but even more will have a continuous apostolate as they teach the young and old. This is how we in Africa look after our older members of the family. Even those who do not have children are taken care of.

This sounds so much like a fantasy or a dream. Yes, it is true, I am dreaming. I am dreaming of a future where our older consecrated men and women are not rendered useless by crowding them in a house, playing cards and criticizing each other. I am dreaming of situation when these men and women will be reunited with their age mates and share about their different but complementary works of life. I am dreaming of a dignified African ending of their lives as I see them going round a circle with

kids, teaching them songs and singing their hearts to God and ancestors, in different melodies and languages learnt in their youthful years.

Come back our grandpas and grandmas in faith,

Come back, and share your faith,

Come back, and exhort our faith,

Come back, tell other people your faith.

Sosthenes Sambua

## POET'S CORNER

### A CRY WITH NO HELP

A warm handshake  
spelt a living wish  
cheerful and welcoming  
But now there is more  
When the warmed fellow  
was set a blaze

I met a stranger in daylight  
Hospitable and cheerful  
But at dusk  
Everything was dark  
And I was crushed like pebbles

In a mare pierce of a thorn  
I made a loud cry  
Only to find later  
The spear waiting for me

After a long wait  
Gazing to the ocean depth  
I determined not the colour  
Which is proper to the ocean  
And the more wide I opened the eyes  
The more painful they became.

Steve Githio

## TANGAZA: OUR HOME.

Tangaza day, 25th March, was marked by many activities. Among the speakers was Fr. Aylward Shorter, the College's principal. He introduced the academic function with a challenging and encouraging speech.

"Tangaza College is your home", he said. He definitely implied that all students and staff should treat the college like a real home. It is obvious that when we have a good home we are proud of it. A good house or family is the joy of every member of that family. The opposite is also true. A disintegrated home or family is like a dress of shame and disgrace worn by every member of that family. Should we not be proud of our college then?

The principal noted that the college has every potential to benefit its members. In this regard, he affirmed that it would be unwise to start building fantastic visions for the future of Tangaza college. However, Tangaza College must continue growing in every aspect. The college's population growth should, in fact, reflect the growth of all the other aspects. The college's physical expansion should mirror the spiritual and social maturity of the members.

Fr. Aylward Shorter therefore stressed the consolidation of the present status of the college. He acknowledged that the relationship between Tangaza and the Catholic University, main campus, has gone a long way. On behalf of Tangaza College, the Principal expressed our gratitude to the Rector of CUEA, Rev. Fr. Caesar Lukudu. He also thanked the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Rev. Fr. Beatus Kitururu.

Among those who have worked tirelessly for the college, making it our home, is Rev. Dr. Patrick Harrington, SMA. He has served the college relentlessly as the Dean of studies for three years. While we appreciate his tremendous contribution, we thank God for giving us, yet, another concerned and hardworking Dean, Br. Tom Kearney, CFC.

Another notable achievement is the excellent spirit of co-operation and communication between the SRC and the Administration. This has been visible throughout this academic year. This shows that Tangaza College is becoming a real home for all of us.

It was also impressive to hear the graduands affirm that Tangaza is not a makeshift but a real home. They did not exclude themselves from this "sweet reality". To them, the Principal implied that: Tangaza is a home to remember, to pray for and to come back and assist either in teaching or in any other way.

May all this be for the glory of God the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

Sr. Mary Nelly, IHM



## ACCIDENTALLY SPEAKING

These reports were actually submitted to an insurance company when the policy holders were asked for a brief statement describing their particular accident. The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intention.

I thought my window was down but found it was up when I put my hand through it.

A pedestrian hit me and went under my car.

The man all over the place. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.

I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment.

The accident occurred when I was attempting to bring my car out of a skid by steering it into the other vehicle.

I was driving my car out of the driveway in the usual manner, when it was struck by the other car in the same place it had been struck several times before.

I was on my way to the doctor's with rear-end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to have an accident.

As I approached the intersection, a stop sign suddenly appeared in a place where no stop sign had ever appeared before. I was unable to stop in time to avoid the accident.

The telephone pole was approaching fast. I was attempting to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end.

To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front, I struck the pedestrian.

My car was legally parked as it backed into the other vehicle.

An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my vehicle, and vanished.

When I saw I could not avoid a collision, I stepped on the gas and crashed into the other car.

The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him.

I saw the slow-moving, sad-faced old gentleman as he bounced off the bonnet of my car.

Coming home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with the tree I don't have.

The indirect cause of this accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth.

Anonymous.

## SHORT THOUGHTS (Test your IQ with a haiku)

\* 'Haiku': an unrhymed Japanese verse form made up of 17 syllables arranged 5 - 7 - 5

### Principal Course

Though life can be short  
Mission Anthropology  
Sure makes it shorter.

### Rain in Spain

When rain seems endless  
Those cursing poor El Nino  
Forget he's God Son

### Road Safety

Let's not mend the roads!  
Potholes could serve as foxholes  
If 'clashes' should spread.

### Liberation Theology

Tangaza picnics  
Reveal more liberation  
Than theology.

### Oil on Troubled Waters?

An upset Saddam,  
Canny Clinton should perceive  
Could be too dam' sad.

### 'Non angli sed angeli' \*\*

Angela' teaching  
Angels [?] to speak like Angles  
While she remains both.

\*\* For the instruction of the linguistically deprived, this means 'Not Angles, but

angels and was allegedly said by the Pope [name forgotten] who, seeing beautiful, fair-haired, blue-eyed slave children in Rome, asked where they came from. He was so moved by their innocent appearance that, when told they were Angles, he replied as quoted. He last ordered missionaries to be sent to convert the pagan Angles. The Angles were not the only Germanic people to settle in Britain, but it was from 'Angle-land' that England derived its name. The Angles are still remembered through the name 'East Anglia', which comprises the English countries of Suffolk [South folk] and Norfolk [North folk]

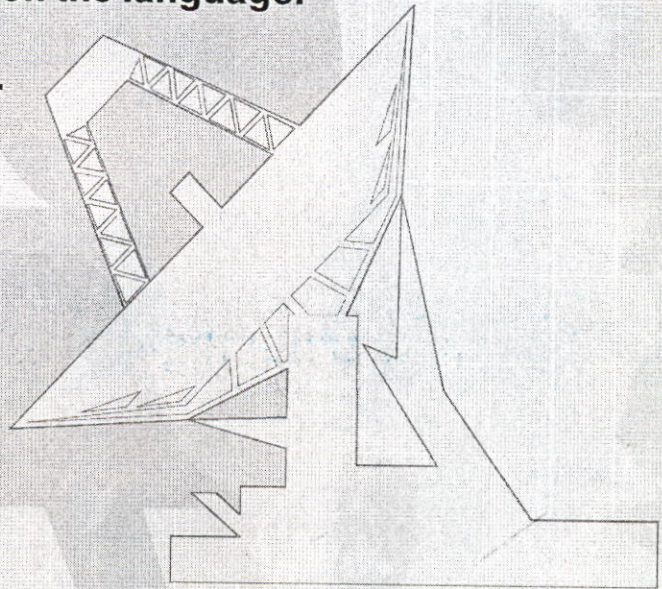
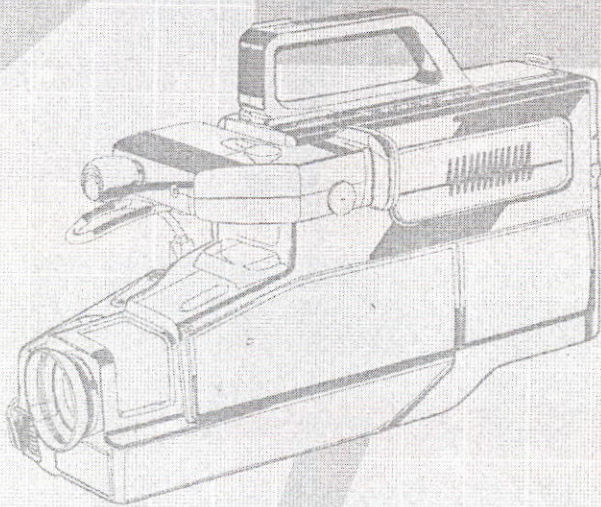
Roy B. Fosker, S.D.B.  
[East Angle of the South Folk]

## **SOCIAL COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT**

\* The Social Communication Department offers courses that lead to a Diploma level.

### **\* English**

The English course under the Social Communication Department offers English courses for non-English speakers and for those who wish to improve on the language. It is now registered with **PITMANS INTERNATIONAL.**



## **TANGAZA VISION**

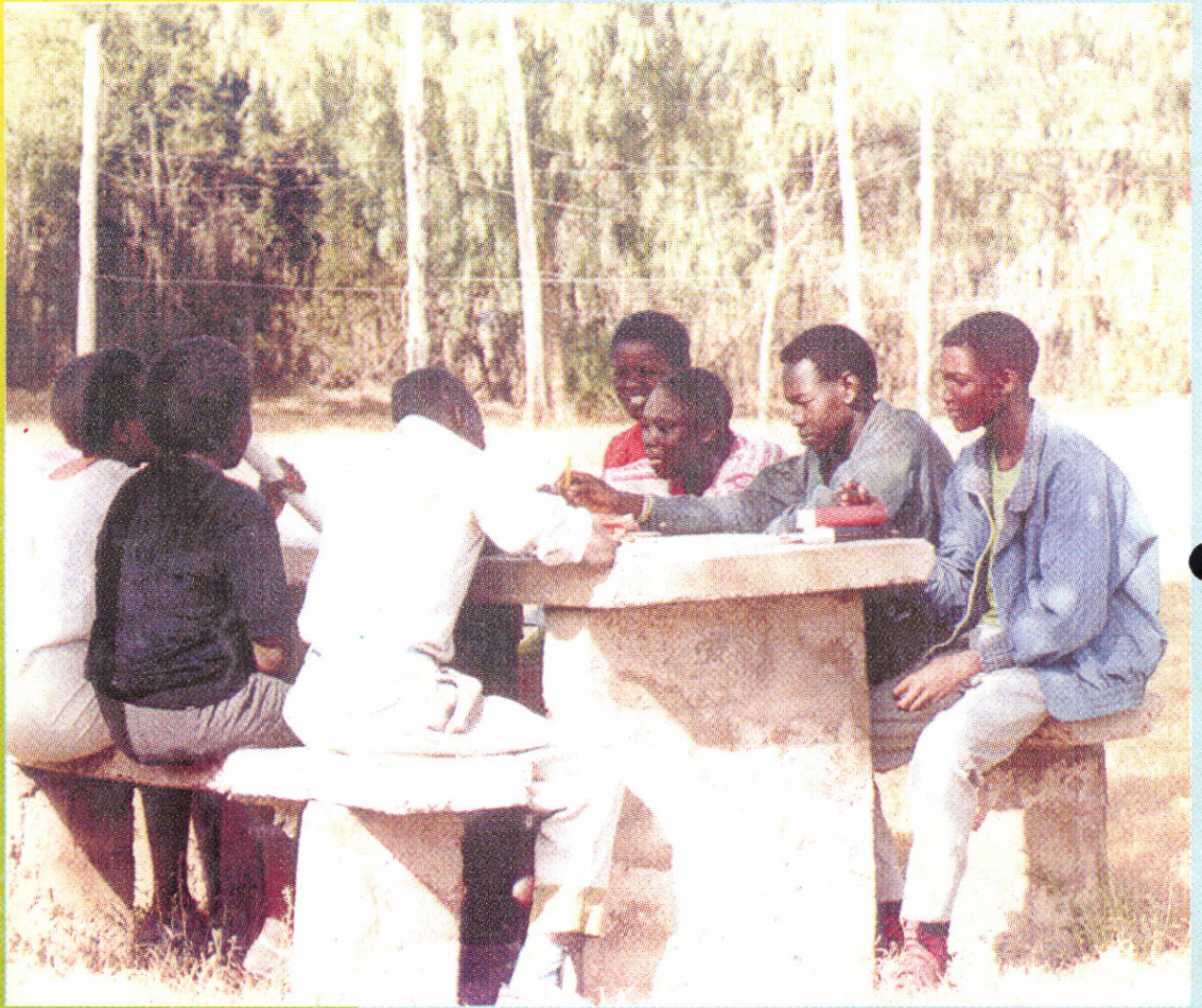
*is a College Magazine.  
It is an academic oriented  
magazine*

## **TANGAZA NEWS LETTER**

is a monthly publication. It covers:

- \* News from various offices
- \* Sports
- \* Club News, etc.

It also serves as a means of promoting writing skills. It is produced by Tangaza Vision Club



**THEOLOGY:  
OUR WAY  
OUR LIFE**