

THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE (Jn 8:32)

**Workshop on Evangelization and Education
Comboni House, Juba**

April 2016



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Introduction

15 April 2016

The Comboni Missionaries in South Sudan held their annual workshop in Juba from 5-8 April. Forty-six people, including religious, diocesan priests, catechists and other lay people who work in Catholic education institutions, attended this workshop.

This year participants were invited to look at how the Catholic Church is involved in evangelization and education, and also how the two aspects are interrelated in order to offer a holistic pastoral approach. The guiding topic was “the truth will make you free (John 8:32)”.

South Sudan is one of the least educated countries in the world. Statistics say that about 72% of the country’s population are illiterate. Women are far more in disadvantage in terms of education. The Church has always been committed to education, while engaged in evangelisation, and is making a good contribution to improve education at all levels in South Sudan.

At this workshop different topics related to education were presented by invited guests who are experts in some specific areas. Some speakers focused on either education or evangelization while some others had a topic that touched both areas.

In the field of education, participants were informed about the general status of education in South Sudan, focusing on some particular aspects such as the new curriculum that was launched in 2015, how the national ministry attempts to implement quality education.

They also learned, from a study case, how quality education is being implemented despite limited resources in the area of Fangak County, in South Sudan’s Jonglei state.

In the field of evangelization, participants had also an introduction about the general status of evangelization and its history in South Sudan. John Ashworth, one of the speakers, in his presentation underlined the unique ecumenical relationships with Protestant churches.

South Sudan is the only country in the world where the Catholic Church is a member of the national Council of Churches and, in addition, is one of its founding members.

Other relevant topics related to evangelisation were also covered: the importance of catechists and the use of the vernacular language in spreading the Gospel, the question as to what extent the Church should challenge or embrace the local cultures, as well as the question of how to transmit Christian values and attitudes in a more meaningful way.

Two specific topics touched both areas of education and evangelisation. The first was presented Br. Bill Firman who reflected on how truth is searched for in religion and science. He pointed out that religion and science are not opponents. Instead, they are like partners performing a dance. Each one should inspire the other.

Fr. Manny Ginete, in his turn, posed the question of how to educate and evangelize to be free. In the end, it is Jesus Christ who sets us free because He is the Truth. Thus, evangelization and education, used in the service of the Gospel, are tools that lead people to freedom.

One cross-cutting topic was healing of trauma. Sr. Barbara Paleczny and Fr. Mario De Battista presented the implications and opportunities of this topic considering the fact that a large part of the South Sudanese population is actually traumatized, either by the previous wars and the current civil war or by daily violence perpetuated in the local cultures.

Neither evangelization nor education can reach people who are traumatised and make a significant impact on them if they are not able to process and internalize what they are offered.

Trauma healing opens the door so that people healed of trauma are able to communicate again and build trustful relationships. This is the beginning of a transformation process that brings about real change in the life of an individual and in society.

The workshop gave attendants the opportunity to actively participate and offer feed-back to the presenters. Also, two Eucharistic celebrations were held and participants had the chance to entrust their work and South Sudan to the care of God.

Participants evaluated the entire workshop as very positive activity and hope for a follow-up, which would include having another workshop for them to come together again. Now is the time to put into practice what they have heard and shared!

Fr. Gregor Schmidt, MCCJ

Resolutions and Recommendations

The participants of the Workshop on Evangelization and Education, held at Comboni House in April 2016, are deeply committed to serve the people of South Sudan. At the same time, we are concerned about the current situation and the developments in the country. For the government, education clearly is not a priority. The Church is occupied with many issues so that evangelization and education do not receive sufficient attention.

We are Catholics from different backgrounds: teachers and head masters, diocesan clergy and religious, brothers, sisters and missionaries and lay workers. We have discerned at the workshop and at our places of work what needs to be done in South Sudan and propose the following.

Our message to the government:

- Make education a priority. Release the full amount which is allocated in the national budget for education.
- Train, employ and pay more teachers.
- Invite teachers from other countries in large numbers.
- Encourage higher student enrolment, especially of girls.
- Promote agriculture and vocational training strongly.
- Promote positive critical thinking in all areas of research.
- Accept the principles of good governance and ethical standards.
- Accept diversity in unity, one nation made of many peoples and cultures. Help all citizens to identify positively with South Sudan.

Our message to the Catholic Church:

- At the centre of what the Church says and does is the person of Jesus Christ whom we present as Healer, Liberator and Redeemer. He is the One who leads people to inner freedom because he embodies God's full Truth to humanity in word and deed.
- We need to live Christian values with conviction if we want others to believe that this is the way of true freedom and peace.

- Evangelization today requires re-evangelization of Catholics who have long been in the Church. Church members should know the faith and identify with it. Faith and life need to be integrated.
- Evangelization is not possible if we do not forgive each other. We need to reconcile the wounds of the past.
- Representatives of the Church should be known as humble and should serve the people of God like Jesus, who washed his disciples' feet.
- As we rely on lay people in education, the Church needs to involve them more in evangelization and proclamation of the Gospel.
- We need to develop a national pastoral plan (possibly with the SSCC) that relies on small Christian communities as promoters of healing and non-violent action in a society torn by conflict and war.
- We need a national education council of the Catholic Church or an education secretariat/commission at the bishop's conference (SCBC). The Church needs to be heard nationally and be able to advocate her interests to the government. Good working relations are necessary with the MoEST, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour. Other issues, besides promoting general education are the protection of the environment and modern technologies that threaten the dignity of the person.
- Coordination on the level of the SCBC may also lead to a more unified teaching model for all Catholic institutions in the country. Students in Catholic schools have the right to be introduced to the full message of the Church and should know the faith well by the time of graduation.
- The Church should offer education in remote areas where the government is not present.
- The Church needs to foster dialogue with the SPLA until real peace is reached. Chaplaincy programmes should be instituted to support and mentor soldiers so that they act within the boundaries of the law and uphold the rights of all.

Sincerely,

the participants

Trauma

What is it? What are its effects? How might we respond?

Life has its painful experiences!

- We always face the possibility of painful experiences.
- None of us escape difficult times entirely.

Stress

Stress comes from the feeling that a certain set of circumstances should not be happening. When we believe something in our life shouldn't be the way it is, we go into a mindset of resistance.

Anxiety

Anxiety stems from the feeling that something should be happening that clearly isn't. Longing for something that isn't happening causes us to be dissatisfied with our life as it is right now.

Where am I really?

In both stress and anxiety, our inner experience is that we want to be somewhere other than where we are. We are here, but our mind is not.

But has anything really changed?

The problem with just "getting past" a stressful or anxious time is that, although life appears to move on, nothing has actually changed.

We may have left a difficult situation behind, but we remain the same.

And then there is Trauma

- Trauma is a psycho-biological reaction to a TRAUMATIC EVENT – a terrible or terrifying experience or loss which a person has personally gone through or witnessed.
- Trauma is also known as a wound to the heart.

Trauma: a part of life

- Trauma has always existed. It is part of creation's evolution process.
- Trauma destroys our ordinary means of managing or coping with life.
- Trauma is something outside our normal, habitual experience.
- Trauma can be experienced physically, mentally, and emotionally.

- ❑ Primary trauma is the experience of one who has suffered or witnessed the violence or loss.
- ❑ Secondary trauma may happen to a person as a result of listening to or learning about the traumatic event suffered by another or others.
- ❑ Both primary and secondary trauma may result from public events such as war, murder, violence in a family, or from supposedly secret or hidden trauma such as rape, torture, impotence or harassment.

Whether an experience proves to be traumatic depends on such factors as:

- the person's age
- the severity of the threat
- the degree of physical harm inflicted
- the possibility of escape
- how accustomed to coping with difficulties the individual is
- the cumulative effect of previous trauma

What can happen after a traumatic event?

- ❑ Shock and denial are typical responses. Both are normal protective reactions.
- ❑ Shock is a sudden and often intense disturbance of your emotional state that may leave you feeling stunned or dazed.
- ❑ Denial is not acknowledging that something very stressful has happened, or not experiencing fully the intensity of the event. You may temporarily feel numb or disconnected from life.

And then what can happen?

- ❑ Feelings become intense and sometimes are unpredictable eg. anger, mood swings, aggressiveness.
- ❑ Thoughts and behavior patterns are affected eg. confusion, difficulty concentrating, refusing or being unable to work.
- ❑ Nightmares and recurring flashbacks.
- ❑ Recurring emotional reactions are common eg. guilt, fear, shame, self-blame, feeling sad, hopeless or powerless.
- ❑ Interpersonal relationships often become strained eg. withdrawing from others, loss of interest in life, sexual misbehavior.
- ❑ Physical symptoms may accompany the extreme stress eg. sleeplessness, eating disorders, headaches, nausea, restlessness, pains that seem to have no cause.

Does experiencing trauma mean one is weak?

- Feeling traumatized should never be judged as a weakness.
- Our reaction to potentially traumatizing situations is instinctual and therefore not under our conscious control.
- Feeling traumatized is an automatic response.

Can you see signs of trauma?

- What does trauma look like among the people that you work and minister with?
- Do you see any signs that may be the effect of trauma among your:
 - Students
 - Parishioners
 - Co-workers
 - etc

So what is going on?

- Trauma changes our brain.
- Normally, from birth, we receive physical stimuli from the world around us.
- When this information is welcome (not distressing), it goes to areas of the brain associated with memories and feelings.
- It is connected to similar experiences from our past.

For example ...

- We meet someone for the first time.
- We might shake hands.
- Unconsciously, we get a general sense of what this person is like from their handshake, their smile, their eye contact, how they seem to connect with us through all these signs.

But traumatic events are different

- These experiences are intrusive and result in an overwhelming arousal of our system.
- So they are taken in as fragments rather than as whole experiences.
- As such, they are stored in the sensory parts of the brain, where they remain compartmentalized as if each bit of data is in its own separate box.

Even years after the traumatic event...

- When we get cues that match the unprocessed stimuli from a traumatic event, these unintegrated memories are triggered.

- They come back to mind as if the event were occurring in the present.

Trauma and our three brains

The oldest part of the brain called your reptilian brain.

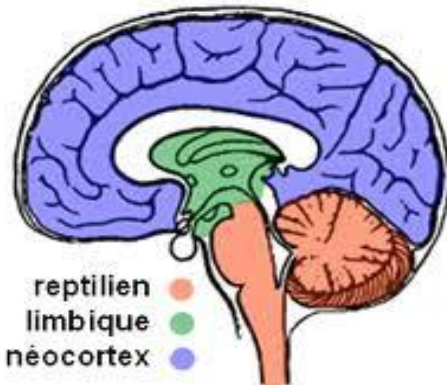
- In charge of your survival.
- Not clever, but very good at keeping you alive.
- Controls heartbeat, breathing, swallowing and startle response.
- In great danger, your reptilian brain overrides the other two.

The second oldest part of the brain is called the mammalian or limbic brain.

- Emotional, nurturing, social and imaginative.
- After trauma, is highly emotional so can have big mood swings.
- Constantly replays images and memories of the trauma, leaving you very tired.

The third and newest part of the brain is our neocortex.

- Along with the other two brains, it is what makes us human.
- It has language, logic, will, and conscience.
- In a crisis, it is blocked from acting.
- The language part of your brain also shuts down. So it is very hard to speak or to understand others.



Without language and memory working, you cannot process the traumatic event.

- You can't tell your story.
- Your trauma stays in the present – it's literally still happening.
- Without language you can't make sense of things, and you feel trapped.
- Stories heal us, educate others about dangers, and make sense of our world.

- Telling your story, done in a careful way when the person is ready, becomes a vital part of getting better.

When the instant on button gets stuck

- Humans have an instant on button that causes us to fight, flee, or freeze when threatened.
- It's the reptilian brain getting into action.
- Normally, it switches off after a stressful event has passed and we return to a relaxed state.
- But it can get stuck so we can't easily extinguish anxiety after a traumatic event.
- Once this happens, the effects of trauma become long lasting.

The signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

- Mentally re-experiencing the traumatic event.
- Avoidance of situations or thought which remind one of the traumatic event.
- Increased state of anxiety.
- Physical symptoms.
- General lack of interest in daily activities.
- Change of behavior.

Traumatic stress is not good for your health!

Trauma can cause a variety of secondary health problems eg.

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease
- Gastrointestinal troubles
- Some cancers
- Premature aging
- Migraine headaches
- Episodes of asthma
- Fluctuation of blood, sugar in diabetics
- More infections

Foundations of Body-Mind-Spirit Healing from Trauma

Psychosocial Support

Implications and Opportunities for Education and Evangelization

Pope Francis' encouragement to evangelize with the Joy of the Gospel . . .

Our work is new, touching hearts, remembering, being animated by the spirit to inflame the hearts of the faithful

#18 *"I ask you to to adopt [this way of evangelizing] in every activity which you undertake."*

#27 *"I dream of a . . . missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world . . ."*

#33 *"I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, styles and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. . . I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines . . . generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is not to walk alone . . ."*

Consider that shock and pain can block our ability to think, to make connections, to discover implications and alternatives.

How can we educate and evangelize creatively, boldly, courageously to heal ourselves and our people?

HOW DO WE KNOW?

- Senses, body knowing
- Intellect, reasoning, intuition, affectivity.
- Process: experience, understand, judge, decide and act.
- Reflect on these to know *that we know*.
- We become *aware* of different thoughts and feelings within us.

- We are *conscious* of some of our reactions.
- Our dreams, our intuitions and our bodies tell us about what is more hidden in our *unconscious*.
- Dialogue, discernment, collaboration

TRANSFORMATION happens as a person learns in body-mind-spirit to satisfy the conscious and unconscious heart and mind . . . to know *from within* the goodness of his/her own being.

TRAUMA is *not* a life sentence

The same mind-body systems control both the traumatic state and feelings of goodness and belonging.

The body naturally releases trauma and restores goodness. How?

Our answers to *how we release shock, distress and restore goodness*:

At times, people with compassion probably experience some symptoms of secondary trauma. It can creep up on us.

Healing from the effects of *vicarious trauma* may begin from thought, intuition, senses or feelings.

Since serious, primary trauma, however, *alters brain functions*, the healing process requires more.

Talking and thinking therapies can open doors.

Healing, however, needs to go beyond these.

KEY PRINCIPLES TO ASSIST HEALING FROM TRAUMA PROCESS

1. Provide a safe place of trust, for a person to learn gradually to feel, to be aware of feelings.
2. Become aware of the senses . . . Gently breathing more deeply, noticing a pleasant sight, touch, taste, smell, sound and savouring it. Breathe deeply . . .
3. Learn to separate ability to feel from fear
Become aware that it is safe to feel,
Even instinctual feelings of rage and fear without being overwhelmed.
Come to experience and know that i can hold my feelings without being harmed or destroyed.
4. Become aware of safe, solid ‘ground’
Remember -- feelings and sense experience -- before the traumatic experience. Draw pictures, share stories . . .

Our nervous system has evolved a hierarchical structure.

In the face of overwhelming threat, the more advanced systems shut down, leaving the brain, body and psyche to their more archaic functions. . . .

Healing restores these systems to their balanced operations.

- Flooded by rage, *the frontal parts of the brain shut down.*
- *Capacity to stand back and observe one's sensations and emotions is lost.*
- Rage can become overwhelming causing panic . . . and turning one inward. . .
- Maintaining suppression takes a great amount of energy.

Immobilized by Fear

Fear is life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life. Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*.

Fear is useless. What is needed is trust. JESUS. Mark 5:36

BODIES NEED TO REGISTER THAT THEY ARE SAFE.

Greek Myth: Medusa

If trauma is to be transformed, we must learn *not* to confront it directly.

Core emotional symptoms of serious trauma:

numbness, shutdown, entrapment, helplessness, depression, fear, terror, rage and hopelessness.

The person remains fearful, unable to imagine safety.

FEAR'S racing heart = autonomic/involuntary nervous system prepares for survival action of fight/flight.

We bring the heart rate back to normal by discharging the immense survival energy through spontaneous trembling.

The vicious cycle of intense sensation/rage/fear locks a person in the biological trauma response.

A traumatized individual is literally imprisoned, repeatedly frightened and restrained . . . by his/her own persistent *physiological reactions* and *by fear of those reactions and emotions*.

Trembling reactions are often so subtle as to be barely noticeable.

Shaking and trembling reset the nervous system and help restore the psyche to wholeness. . . .

Awaken the Living, Knowing Body

Instinct and reason together = opportunity to become more whole human beings.

KEY TO TRANSFORMING TRAUMA AND DIFFICULT EMOTIONS

Help individuals keep the 'observing' mind alert as it *simultaneously* experiences the raw sensations generated in the archaic portions of the brain.

THE KEY: BEING ABLE TO SENSE SAFELY BOTH *INTENSE AND SUBTLE BODY SENSATIONS AND FEELINGS*.

When a person feels safe and can trust another/others, s/he can be guided to tell their story.

Focus on what strengthened them before the trauma, on happy memories and what helped them through the tough times.

How do they cope now and how are they integrating the meaning of their suffering in their life journey?

- Establish the innate power of rhythm between resistance /fear and acceptance/containment.
- Shift awareness between a comfortable body area and an area in discomfort and distress.
- Shifting reconnects to the body's innate wisdom: the body's *natural restorative* rhythm that tells us This feeling is time-limited. Suffering will not last forever.
- **GRADUALLY RESTORE ACTIVE, DEFENSIVE AND PROTECTIVE RESPONSES**
- Our bodies learn that we are not helpless victims, that we survived our ordeals, that we are intact and alive to the core of our beings.
- With body-based learning, the mind's interpretation of what happened and the meaning of it to one's life and who one is shifts profoundly.
- Separate or 'uncouple' the conditioned association of fear and helplessness from the (normally time-limited but now maladaptive) biological immobility response.
- Accepting one's intense sensations enhances the capacity for healthy assertion, pleasure and goodness.
- By re-owning a sense of one's power, gradually come to *self-forgiveness and self-acceptance*. . . a compassionate realization that *the immobility and rage* are biologically driven, instinctual imperatives, not a source of shame. . . a major insight!

Profoundly important to resolve trauma:

Anger and rage can be life-giving energy to be used for good.

Restoring ‘dynamic equilibrium’ and relaxed alertness builds robust resilience. Felt in the viscera and in your *internal* milieu, it gives a secure home-base within your organism.

Healing builds capacity to be grounded in present time and for social engagement which has powerful implications for health and happiness.

Social engagement

- ✧ protects the cardiovascular and immune systems.
- ✧ sharpens cognitive skill
- ✧ provides belonging and safety.
- ✧ creates potential to heal from debilitating symptoms and to generate energy for satisfying relationships.

According to the African Christians who were interviewed,

1. Jesus’ healing extends to all aspects of life, including the individual and communal spheres.
2. Jesus’ healing signifies his supremacy over all powers of evil in the universe.
3. Jesus’ healing includes salvation and liberation in a holistic approach to religion and health. God, in Christ, is the ultimate healer. In the bible, Yahweh and Jesus are *Healer – Saviour - Liberator*.

Both traditional African spirituality and African Christianity value vitality, liveliness, health and wholeness. Despite the severe, continuing suffering across the continent, Christians in Africa affirm that ultimately Yahweh’s self-revelation in Jesus brings “the healing of the nations” (Revelations 22:2)

Implications and opportunities for education and evangelization Jesus:

Actual healing for women, men, children, all ages, hope, celebrations of healing the sick, blessings: children . . . Pregnant women Understanding emotions, lessen domestic violence

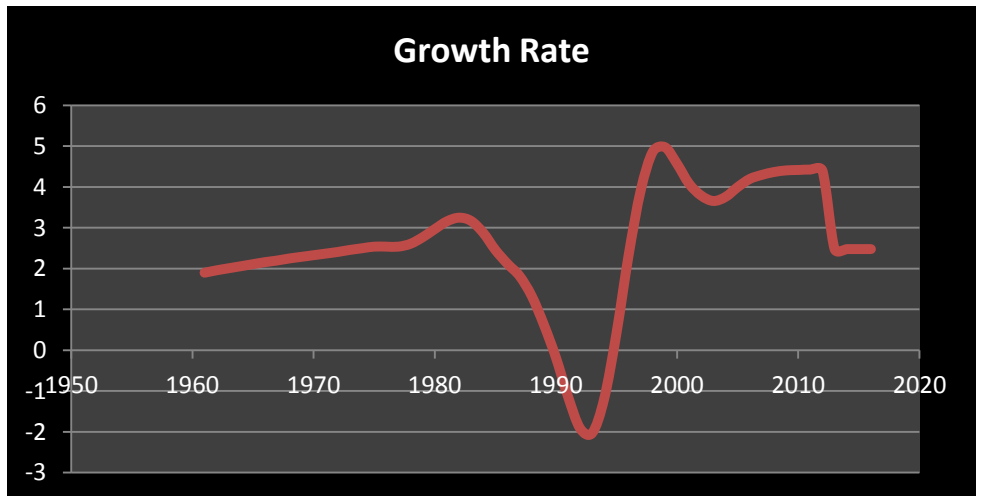
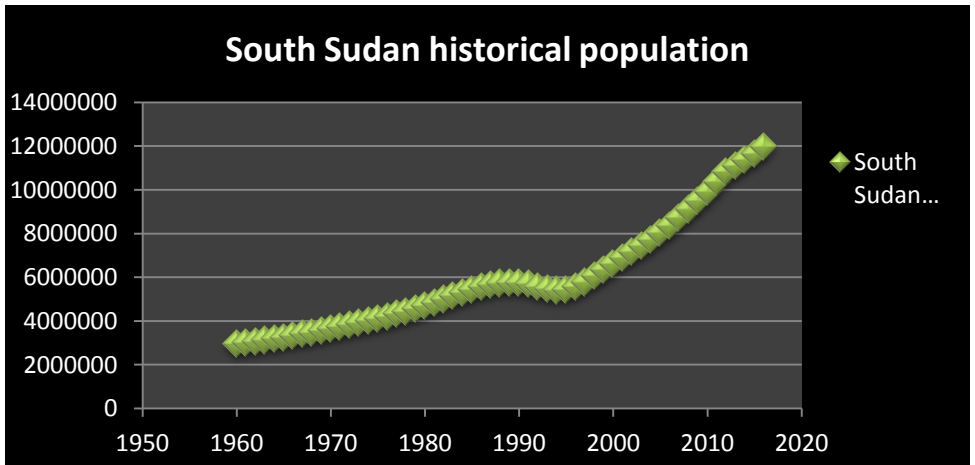
Education in South Sudan

Primary Education

Quantity

Male life expectancy at birth is 54.1 years.

Female life expectancy at birth is 56 years.



2015 figures (United Nations Statistics, 2016)

421 341 live births

128 315 deaths

Natural increase: 293 025 people

Net migration: -3 383 people

6 023 155 males as of 31 Dec 2015

5 931 513 females as of 31 Dec 2015

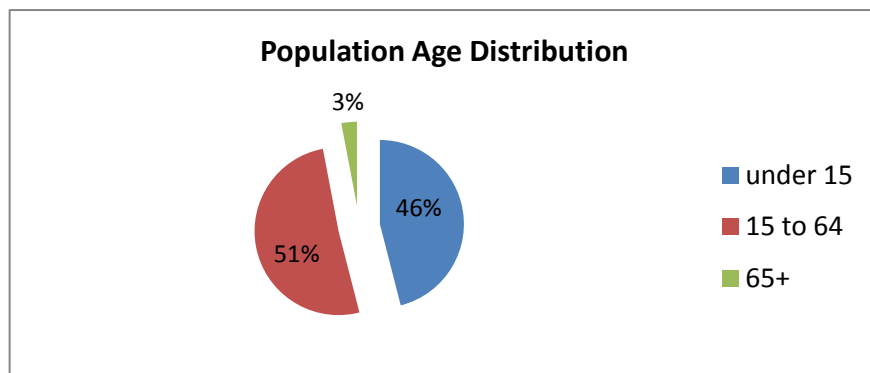
Literacy of population

According to UN estimates 2 067 320 persons or 32% of adult population (aged 15 years and above) in South Sudan are able to read and write.

Literacy rate for adult male population is 39%

Literacy rate for adult female population is 25%

Youth literacy rates are 47% and 42% for males and females accordingly. Youth literacy rate definition covers the population between the ages of 15 to 24 years.



If 5 – 18 is considered school age, then just under half the population is of school age. (United Nations Statistics, 2016)

421 341 live births in 2015

About 42 000 under 5 deaths in 2015

New children to enter school each year about 380 000

About 5 million school age children in South Sudan

EMIS data 2015 only covers 7 of the 10 States

- 1 273 574 in ALL schooling 2015
- 1 005 362 in Primary Schools
- 58 928 in Secondary schools
- 196 048 in AES and ECD
- 9070 in Uni, 3050 in TVE, 1116 in TTI

Primary Student Numbers by State



Teacher Numbers by State

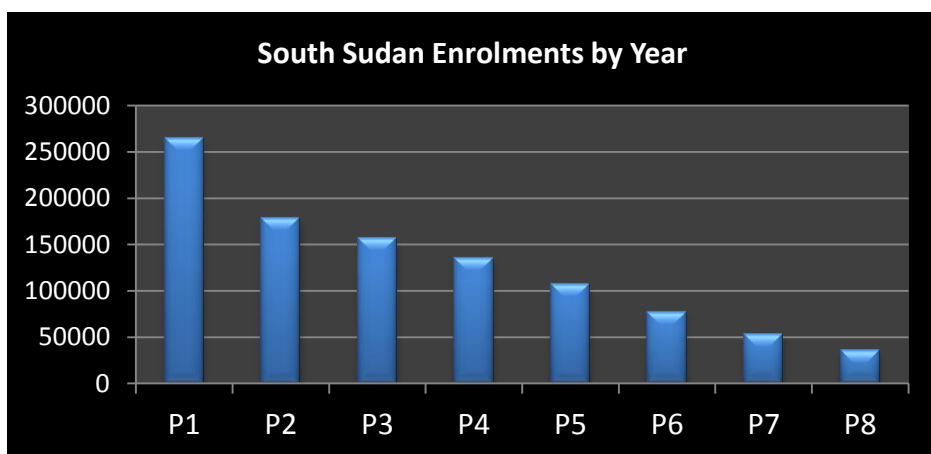
State	Teachers	% Female	PTR
CEQ	5835	27%	33
EEQ	3161	16%	35
LAK	2475	8%	52
NBG	4648	9%	41
WAR	4397	7%	46
WBG	1847	20%	45
WEQ	2752	17%	33
TOTAL	25115	15%	40

School Numbers by State

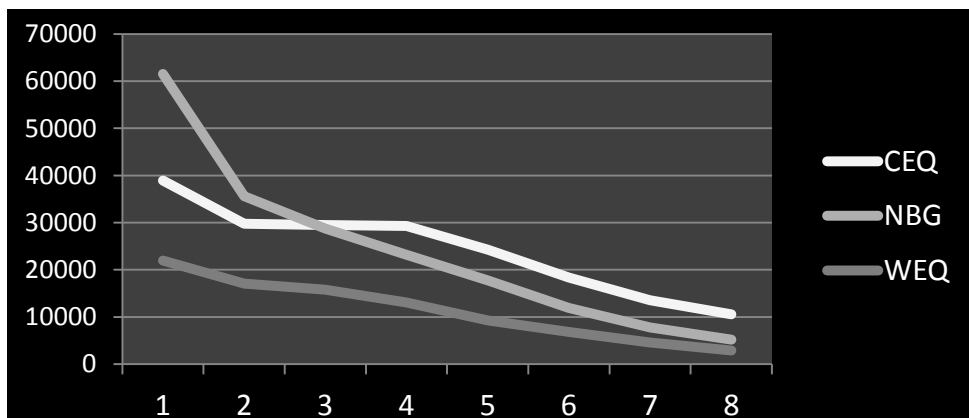
State	Schools	% Govt
CEQ	566	54%
EEQ	327	66%
LAK	347	90%
NBG	557	73%
WAR	524	79%
WBG	211	66%
WEQ	380	69%
TOTAL	2912	71%

Classrooms

State	Classrooms	Permanent	semi Perm	PCR
CEQ	3983	2010	1480	56
EEQ	2218	918	663	71
LAK	2322	558	380	138
NBG	3399	931	884	106
WAR	3325	743	863	127
WBG	1395	747	430	71
WEQ	2298	911	370	71
TOTAL	18900	6818	5070	85



Retention by year



Gender disparity in all States combined remains pronounced and consistent in each grade. 60 % of all pupils are male

In Central Equatoria enrolment is almost gender balanced. In Warrap only 1 in 3 students are female.

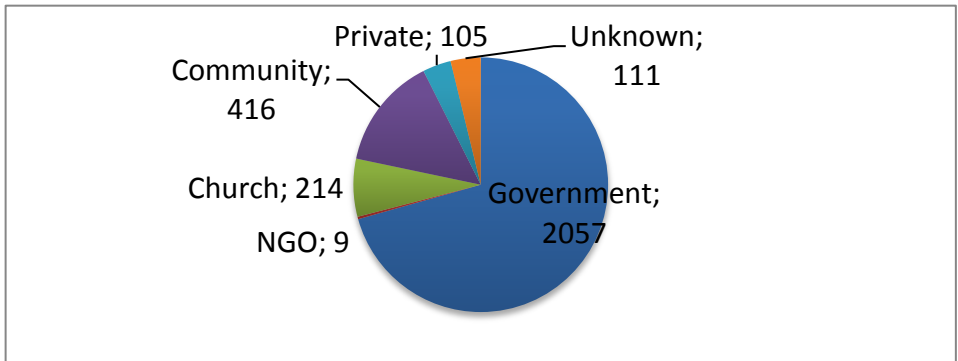
90% of primary school children are overage

77% are overage at P1

96% are overage by P8

Gross intake rate is 76% at P1 (108% in NBG, 54% in WBG)

Ownership of schools



Quality of Education

What infrastructure aspects are key?

INFRASTRUCTURE

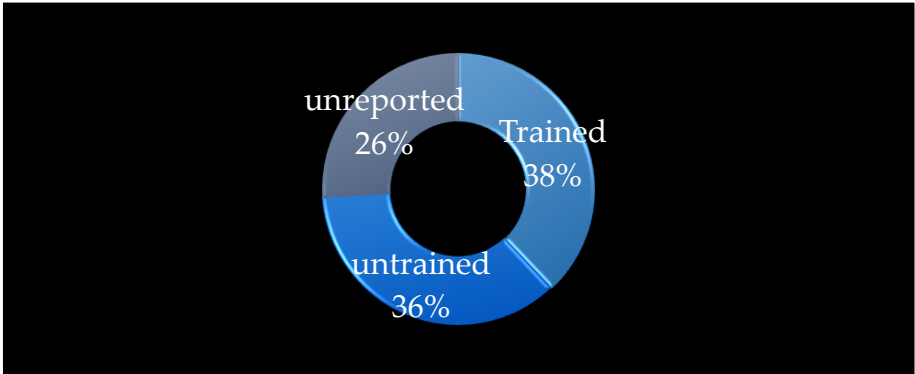
- Classrooms
- Latrines
- Furniture
- Fencing
- Water, etc

RESOURCES

- Textbooks
- Curriculum
- Chalkboards

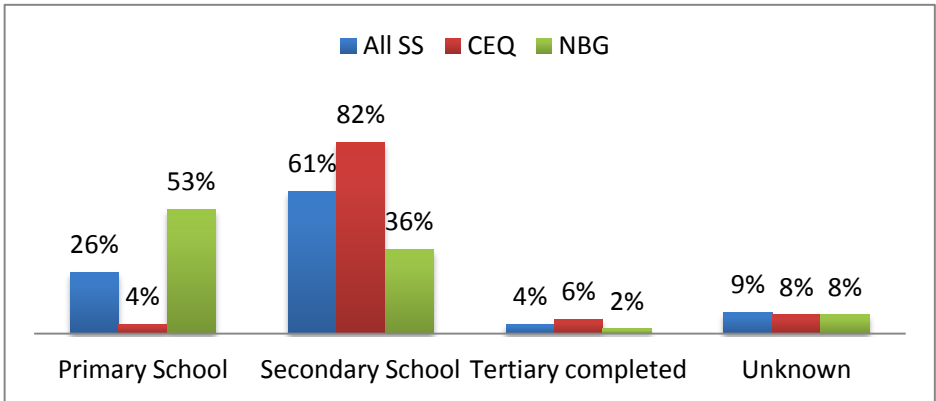
- Chalk
- Pens
- Exercise books, etc

Professional Qualifications of Teachers



“Trained” included any In-service training, Pre-Service training, and higher qualifications

Basic Qualifications



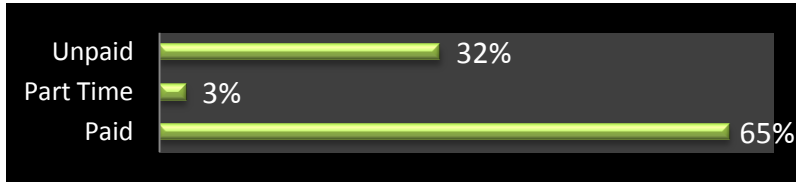
A study of 1800 Grade 6 students, and 160 teachers across 4 States were given an internationally agreed standards for literacy and numeracy at grade 4 level. Mean score for students in English was 35, and in Maths 29%. Mean scores for teachers were 62% and 63%. Only 28% scored above 80 in Maths, and 31% in English

Workload

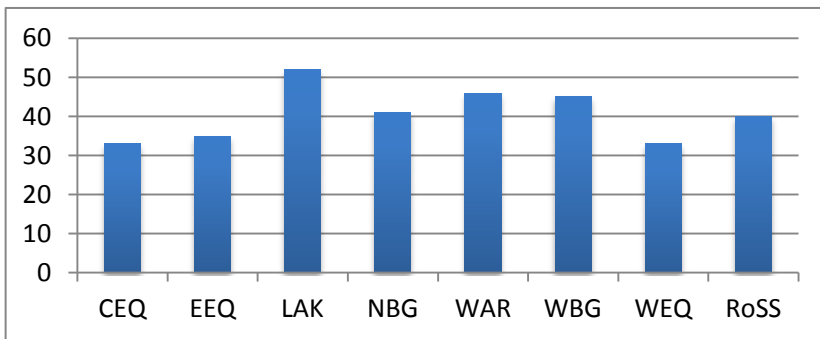
47% of teachers teach less than 25% of timetables lessons. 81% teach less than 50%.

Lesson preparation, marking of student work, administrative, and extra-curricular activities all register low levels of engagement. This low level of activity is explained by current practice – primary teachers in SS are subject teachers. Timetabling difficulties result in low teaching loads, particularly in subjects with low weightings. Classes are teacher-less while teachers are sitting under a nearby tree, or in the teachers room.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO

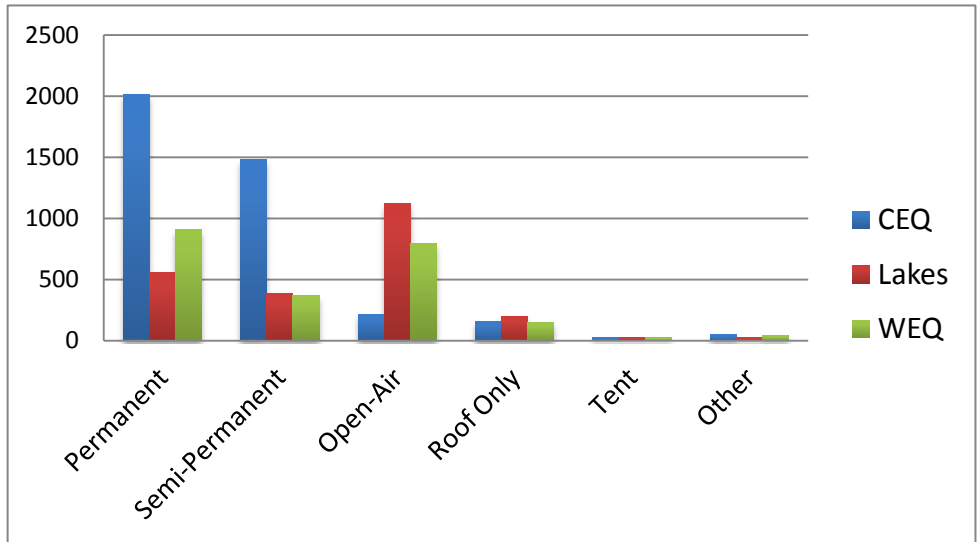


PTR in all states, except WES, is slightly better in non-Government schools

Pupil Classroom Ratio

STATE	PCR
CEQ	56
EEQ	71
LAK	138
NBG	106
WAR	127
WBG	71
WEQ	71
TOTAL	85

CLASSROOMS



Pupil-Textbook-Ratio

Overall 1.7 English textbooks per student, 1.8 for Maths

English 1.6 in P1 3.6 in P8

Maths 1.6 in P1 4.3 in P8

Language of Instruction

Class	English	Arabic	Mother Tongue
P1	56	9	69
P2	60	8	65
P3	70	8	54
P4	88	6	31
P5	97	5	12
P6	96	5	9
P7	92	5	6
P8	86	5	5

Promotion/Repetition

State	Promotion Rate P1 - P2	Promotion Rate P2-P3	Promotion Rate P7-P8
CEQ	75	91	86
EEQ	70	83	69
LAK	70	83	73
NBG	57	69	75
WAR	64	73	66
WBG	71	88	93
WEQ	74	81	69

Drop-outs

Class	State	Boys	Girls
P1	7	7	8
P2	6	6	7
P3	6	6	8
P4	7	6	8
P5	8	7	11
P6	8	7	11
P7	9	7	13
P8	9	8	16

21% of Males leave for marriage

79% of Females leave for marriage

Other

7% of schools are multi-shift

18% of schools multi-shift in WBG

98% of schools follow the South Sudan Curriculum

36% of schools have access to drinking water (49% CEQ, 20% WEQ)

48% access to latrines, (73% CEQ, 35% NBG)

Sr Orla Treacy

“I am the Way” of Education today – My Way, Our Way, the Lord’s Way

MY WAY - My Background in Education...

Myself – my name – educational background

Teacher training for four years – Religion and Music

Boys – girls – boys – girls – teaching north, south, east and west of my country

My Cultural Background:

Cultural context – Irish – European – free education – discipline – disadvantaged areas...

In a study of 215 countries in literacy – Ireland - 99% of our country are literate.

Government provides services to the community – free education, health care and even housing for some. If you have no work the government will contribute a weekly payment to sustain you and your family...

...life is very different in Europe and I give you this as a means to my background – I will talk about my experience of education in South Sudan but hopefully you will not judge my statements too harshly when you can see I come from a very different cultural background....

Our WAY - My Congregation

Loreto – committed to education – women globally

Not all missionaries....Mary Ward – 400 years ago “women in time to come will do much”

Based on the spirituality and model of the Jesuits Mary Ward sought to open an apostolic congregation – where the sisters dressed according to the time and place they lived, free from monastic enclosure and governed by women – 400 years ago

this was new in the church and many viewed her way and order with suspicion – most especially the local clergy and the Jesuits themselves...

She travelled throughout Europe seeking support, opening schools for girls and welcoming young women into this new way of religious life....it was the time of the inquisition and eventually the Cardinals of the Inquisition caught up with her and an order of suppression was issued – she was imprisoned by the church and declared a heretic, schismatic and rebel to Holy Church...the order was suppressed and schools were closed

Mary was eventually released from prison and absolved by the Pope - she returned to her home country of England and died there

All seemed lost – that was 1645 and today I am delighted to stand in front of you as a follower of Mary Ward and tell you that her dream for girls and education has continued up today....

Our Primary and Secondary School are among two of the newest Loreto and Mary Ward schools to be opened in the world today....

THE LORD'S WAY - Courage to move - Coming to South Sudan

Congregation – started the courage to move – rediscover our missionary spirit...

Invite of the Bishop – set up a girls boarding school,

Zeinab in Kenya – Bishop came twice to Ireland to invite us and we came in February 2006.

When a Bishop tells you things are ready you believe him...

House took two years...

School in April 2008 35 Dinka girls from different counties –

Different dialects,

Suspicions – lions in Rumbek, our area crocodiles...

Today ten years since our arrival we have 200 girls in our boarding secondary school, 535 boys and girls from the local community in our Primary School and 150 older children in our ALP programme....

On Friday we had our 5th graduation – most of our graduates have gone on to third level education – universities in Kenya/Uganda/Catholic University in Juba and Wau and nursing in WAU in CHTI....

Struggles /challenges–

- Students
- Languages – students and workers and teachers
- Health – hysteria – malaria and typhoid – local witchdoctors
- Agriculture
- Fighting – to prove you are not a coward
- Our Primary 8 examination – cheating etc...
- Our own entrance examination – 13% Maths average and 33% English average
- Forced Marriage – is our greatest challenge - parents sign a commitment form but still marry the daughters and even threaten the Ministries....
- Exams

Primary – State level

Secondary - unified examination?

Government examinations – Khartoum versus South Sudan certificate = not clear where the government stands – new syllabus – June and change in structures.....is it really over?? = criteria for admission to University - standards – Catholic university – change standard....

Donors:

We can't live them and we can't live without them..

Donors – expectations – GESS – support for girls – we never got the Primary school one – money got lost somewhere..

Unrealistic goals at times – our village school needing wheelchair accessibility – children won't make it to the school on the roads...

School fees contribution – devaluing of the pound....poverty

Mr Omot Okony Olok

Director General Assurance and Standards, MoEST

South Sudan's Journey on Curriculum

Introduction and Background

Education: Is the process of acquiring and developing society's desired and valued knowledge, skills, and attitudes

Curriculum: Is a Planned process of human learning by which knowledge is gained, skills developed, and socially valued attitudes are acquired

One curriculum was being offered in Sudan which did not reflect the needs, culture, and aspirations of the people of South Sudan. South Sudanese felt they were not included, and the demand for relevant curriculum for the people of South Sudan was and still is an educational need and aspiration of South Sudanese since the end of Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule in Sudan. In 1994, the first national convention of SPLM (Sudan People Liberation Movement) was convened in Chikudum (Eastern Equatoria) and one resolution of the conference amongst others was demand to develop a curriculum for New Sudan. March 1994, a curriculum conference was conducted in Limuru (Kenya) and a curriculum steering committee formed and mandated to develop curricula for primary education. In 1996, the curriculum steering committee with support from partners (UNICEF) and others developed the education policy for New Sudan and primary school syllabuses.

In 2002, the SoE (Secretariat of Education) for New Sudan took over the full responsibility of education for the liberated areas of: South Sudan, Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile. SoE with support from UNICEF developed teaching and learning materials for primary education for only five core subjects, English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, and Christian Religious Education (CRE). In 2003 the textbooks were used in primary schools in the liberated areas of South Sudan, Nuba Mountains, and Blue Nile. In 2006 the secondary education syllabuses for twelve subjects were developed in Maridi CDC. The secondary education curriculum was launched in Lui Girls secondary school (WES) by H. E. Salva Kiir Mayardit the president of the Republic of South Sudan, July 2007.

The prolonged Sudan civil war created a situation where different curricula from the neighbouring states (Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya,) including Sudan and New Sudan were being offered. This created a need for a unified curriculum after CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) 2005. The journey to review the curriculum began with initial workshop supported by UNESCO in Juba Regency Hotel 2012. In 2013, DFID (Department For International Development) UK contracted consultants from Curriculum Foundation (UK) to review the curriculum of South Sudan and a team led by Dr. Brian Male came to Juba to start the review. UNICEF with GPE (Global Partnership in Education) funds continue the process of revision to the New Curriculum for South Sudan

The process of the revision has been guided by the Interim constitution of South Sudan, Education Act 2012, MoEST strategic plan 2012-2017

The following issues were identified and needed to be addressed in the New Curriculum:

- The current South Sudan Curriculum had not been adequately and uniformly implemented
- The curriculum had not been adequately contextualized
- The political, socio-economic needs had drastically changed
- There was an urgent need to identify the needs and the gaps in the curriculum
- The Government decided to have a major reform in educational system especially, ECD, Primary, and Secondary levels including AES programs
- The Curriculum should meet the test requirements of the 21st Century
- The need to introduce National Languages both as medium of instruction at lower primary and as subject at upper primary
- The need to move toward having skills/competency based curriculum
- Reducing the content
- Introducing ICT into the curriculum
- Integrating cross-cutting issues and other relevant emerging issues
- Introducing TVET element across the curriculum
- Reflecting South Sudanese culture and heritage
- Introducing new ALP and CGS curriculum
- A unified curriculum standardized and offering the exams

The New Curriculum for South Sudan

Vision

To provide a vibrant and dynamic Curriculum that will challenge to all learners, stimulate and inspire. An inclusive curriculum, that provides for all learners, whatever their needs. A curriculum that excites imaginations, raise aspirations and widen horizon. A curriculum that will allow our new nation to develop in prosperity and harmony, and which will prepare our young people to challenge the test of the 21st Century

The Key Aims

The vision provides the key aims for the curriculum. The key aims define what the nation wants its young people to be by the time they leave education. The following are the key aims for the new curriculum for South Sudan:

Good citizens of South Sudan: who are?

- Patriotic and proud of their rich culture and heritage
- Active participants in society for the good of themselves and others
- Committed to unity, democracy, human rights, gender equity, peace and reconciliation
- Ready to take their place as global citizens, proud of South Sudan's role and position in the world

Successful lifelong learners: who are?

- Literate, numerate and keen to learn
- Able to learn independently and with others
- Proficient in the key competencies
- Committed to lifelong learning

Creative, confident and productive individuals: who are?

- Enterprising and creative problem solvers
- Willing to exert the effort that is necessary to success
- Able to relate well to others, and understand others' concern and needs
- Diligent, resilient and persistent in their attitude to work

Environmentally responsible members of society: who are?

- Committed to sustainable forms of development

- Aware of the fragility of the environment, and the importance of environmental sustainability to life and prosperity
- Appreciative of the need for everyone to work together to preserve the environment for the common good and for the future generations

The Philosophical Approach

To achieve the aforementioned aims, we need a curriculum that is based on an active, constructivist approach of learning. Learning will need to move beyond textbook and teacher-directed lessons to the active engagement of learners in their own learning

South Sudan Curriculum Framework

Values and Principles

Values

Education in South Sudan will be based on a shared commitment to:

- Human rights and gender equity
- Respect and integrity
- Peace and tolerance
- Compassion and social justice
- Democracy and national pride

Principles

The South Sudan Curriculum should provide:

- A culture of excellence that supports innovation, creativity, continuous improvement and effectiveness
- An environment of empowerment that promotes independence, individual learning, critical thinking, problem “solving and emotional intelligence
- A context of South Sudanese heritage and culture that builds national pride and identity within an understanding of global citizenship
- A spirit of hope, respect, peace, reconciliation, unity and national pride, democracy and global understanding

The values and principles will guide the construction of the Curriculum and also guide the way it is taught. They will Underpin and guide the subject syllabuses, and the way Schools are run and how teachers are trained

SOUTH SUDANESE CULTURE AND HERITAGE

This is a key element of the curriculum for two reasons. Firstly, knowledge and appreciation of their own heritage and Culture enables young people to develop into active and responsible future citizens of South Sudan and the wider world, and to develop their own strong identities

Secondly, young people learn best when the curriculum is set within their own experiences, locations and cultures. South rich heritage is the birthright of every citizen. This is not a subject to be looked at in individual lessons, but should provide a context for all learning and permeate the whole curriculum. The very vibrant culture of South Sudan embraces music, dance, literature and art along with cultural traditions, beliefs and understandings. Young people need to learn about these, and also learn to appreciate and value them, and make them part of their lives.

STUDENT COMPETENCIES

Critical and creative thinking

- Plan and carry out investigations, using a range of sources to find information
- Sort and analyze information and come to conclusions
- Suggest and develop solutions to problems, using their imaginations to create new approaches
- Evaluate different suggested solutions

Communication

- Read and comprehend critically a variety of types and forms of texts
- Write fluently on diverse subjects and for different audiences
- Speak clearly and communicate ideas and information coherently in a variety of situations
- Listen and comprehend speech in a variety of forms
- Use a range of media, technologies and languages to communicate messages, ideas and opinions

Co-operation

- Work collaboratively towards common goals

- Be tolerant of others and respectful of differing views, when working together
- Adapt behaviour to suit different situations
- Negotiate, respecting others' rights and responsibilities, and use strategies to resolve disputes and conflicts
- Contribute to environmental sustainability

Culture and identity

- Take pride in South Sudanese identity and the diverse nature of South Sudanese society.
- Build understanding of South Sudanese heritage in relation to the wider world
- Appreciate and contribute to the development of South Sudanese culture
- Value diversity and respect people of different races, faiths, communities, cultures, and those with disabilities.

LEARNING AREAS

The way subjects are learned, and therefore appear within the curriculum, vary with age of the learners. The subject models therefore reflect the way in which learners learn at different ages

Early Childhood: Language, Mathematics, Outdoor & Physical, Environment, Personal & Social, Creative, Music, Religious Education

Primary 1-8:

1. Required: National Language, English, Mathematics, Religious Education, Science, Social Studies, Arts, Physical Education, and Arabic from P5
2. School Programmes: Personal Development and Careers Guidance

Academic Secondary

Mr Ustaz Avelino Androga Said

Director General for Planning & Budgeting, MoEST

Development of Quality Education for Republic of South Sudan

Concept Education

- Education is the process of acquiring socially and developmentally valued knowledge; skills & attitudes.
- In other words it also refers to the process of developing desirable qualities in people
- It is a process for integrating the individual into a given and global society, and changing the obsolete values and norms of a society to the desired. For individuals, this process is lifelong. It begins at birth and ends with death.
- Formal education forms a good percentage of this process
- To fulfil this expectation “Quality Education” is required

Quality Education

- One difficulty is that while most people understand intuitively what they mean by “quality of education” there may not be a common understanding of the term. This is especially true now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, when education is increasingly understood to be more than “reading, writing, and arithmetic.” There is a growing consensus on the importance of aspects such as relevance, universal values, peace and security, and informed decision-making
- Further, the concept “Quality Education” has come to attention of stakeholders as learners, parents and communities, educators, leaders, and nations acknowledge that what is learned (i.e. content) and how learning occurs (i.e. methodology) is as important as access to education

Concept Quality Education for Republic of South Sudan

- Interestingly, the role of education has also been recognized in the discourse on the causation of civil wars. Some empirical evidence shows that civil wars are concentrated in countries with little education and

importantly a country with higher percentage of its youth in the schools reduces considerably its risk, particularly in African countries where civil wars have become pronounced and epidemic

- The Concept Quality Education for Republic of South Sudan generates further questions:
 1. What should education do to the people of South Sudan?
 2. How should this be achieved?
 3. Where is South Sudan today?
 4. What should be Priority of RSS as a State in 21st Century?

What should education do to the people of South Sudan?

- Education should be the top priority of the Republic of South Sudan to be able to enhance the development of the country from the current state of 4th world to 1st world in the 21st century. Without this there cannot be inclusive progress in the four areas required by RSS i.e. socio-economic development, political development, and industrialization and effective utilization of natural resources to ensure sustainable environment and development.
- It is apparent that education which does not meet the needs of the people is counter-productive. The contribution of “*education for Arabic-Islamism*” in Sudan to the over forty years of civil strife in South Sudan which currently has spread to Western Sudan (Darfur Region), Kordofan and Blue Nile and to some extent to Eastern Sudan (Beja Region) is one of the undoubted evidence.
- In South Sudan, it became clear that indoctrination (such as Arabic-Islamism) or/and pure academic oriented education has failed to resolve the plight of the people. Academic education is not a recipe’ to the social and physical problems of the people.
- And it is not overstatement that the current conflict in RSS has a lot to do with type of education we had

How should this be achieved?

- Setting the Education laws right and ensuring that the laws are put to action
- Education Act 2012 – National Annual Budget at least 10% for Gen. Education and 5% Higher Education
- Ensuring that education is the 1st priority of the nation

- Review of the Curriculum to 21st Century needs of RSS
- Implementation of the reviewed Curriculum (appropriate teacher education & training mode and approach)
- For the sake of peaceful and stable South Sudan the elites and the politicians have to rethink their ways and resort to sensitization of our people in sustainable nation building for all. The greatest tool to this is education.
- Currently, not much is done in the area of education modernization for the 21st century. The context, content and implementation of education especially at education institution (schools & Teacher Training Institutes and Universities) levels remain obsolete. At General Education Level a relatively modern Curriculum Framework and Syllabus have been produced for Early childhood development (ECD), primary schools, secondary schools and Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET). Support materials are still to be produced.
- However the implementation which forms the real education process is far from being touched. This area demands for proper planning and putting the plan into practice.
- One of the greatest required resources is trained, politically and professionally committed & sensitized teachers and education managers.

Where is South Sudan today?

- The reflection on Education and in particular as to what is going on in the Republic of south Sudan in the 21st Century gives clear need for the RSS to refocus its priorities.
- Most of us the South Sudanese educationalists and politicians still view education in the form of 1905 United Kingdom Education System and Aspirations.
- People, especially the elites, regard western and formal context of education as the absolute truth that must work for everybody and environment. One is often perturbed by the disparity between what is actually occurring in institutions of learning and the various government education policies all of which in some ways stress love, national unity, patriotism, self-reliance, productivity, democracy, honesty, etc.
- The context of education and the vehicle for implementation often are pure academic and sectionalised into subject areas such as Science, Mathematics, History, Language, etc. These are then taught as pure

knowledge and some skills where the methodology is claimed to be modern. Yet the result of the learning remains the same – academic – not related to the actual life of the people and the environment.

- By the time of writing this presentation, if put modestly, only 11% of our teachers for ECD, Primary, secondary & TVET combined could be proven to be qualified and supported with correct/genuine professional certificates.
- However, this very 11% group is also obsolete and still using non 21st century methodology. This group is in addition to the 89% untrained teaching cadre that require in-service training.
- The only light in the tunnel is the reviewing of the curriculum currently on process
- Proper implementation is required

What should be Priority of RSS as a State in 21st Century?

- As already mentioned before, the following are the priorities:
 1. Setting the Education laws right and ensuring that the laws are put to action
 2. Education Act 2012 states: National Annual Budget should be at least 10% for Gen. Ed. and 5% Higher Ed.
 3. Ensuring that education is the 1st priority of the nation
 4. Review of the Curriculum to 21st Century to proceed to completion for all institution of education
 5. Implementation of the reviewed Curriculum (appropriate teacher education & training mode and approach)

With limited resources available, how can we equip primary schools adequately and implement quality standards?

Situation of Fangak County, Jonglei State:

The county had a population of about 120,000 before the conflict (today about 200,000) and an illiteracy rate of over 95%. Education is welcomed but not the highest priority in the struggle of survival. In many chapels, the only person who can read is the catechist. Schools open when teachers are available. Some schools get salaries from NGOs and open as requested (since recently). But schools that do not get financial aid open at most 8 months, others 6 or 4 months. “Teachers” are men who know how to write. Until recently none had a proper qualification. There are now 2 teachers who graduated at the Solidarity College in Yambio (of about 300 teachers). Some teachers have not completed their primary education. Almost none have completed secondary education. Teachers often do not know more than what is printed in the books, and where the books are mistaken, teachers are not able to recognize it. A school book is considered infallible like the Bible. Teachers know only one method: write the text of the book on the blackboard, practice pronunciation (students answer as a group), explain some vocabulary with other vocabulary that most students do not understand, and leave the classroom before the end of the lesson while the students copy the text. I found students in P6 that draw what they see on the blackboard because they never learnt the alphabet. The majority in P7 and P8 cannot speak English because they only practiced to repeat sounds in a group. They never learnt the meaning of what was repeated. Only Old Fangak has a P8 class in the county (35 students in 2016).

Part 1: Ensure ongoing classes and attendance → example: Primary 7 & 8 in Old Fangak

The majority of children do not attend school. Although we encourage school enrolment (girl enrolment), our main focus is on the regular attendance of those students who are enrolled, and on teaching all lessons.

- Provide all school material (exercise books, pens, blackboards...), transport from Juba, no stationary shops in the region
- Timetable: 6 lessons of 45 min per day, 8:30 am to 2:50 pm (English 7, Mathematics 8, Science 7, SST 5, CRE 3)
- Pay teachers enough (pay per lesson), currently 400 SSP per week, will be adjusted to inflation
- Control attendance of teachers: If a teacher does not come to class, another teacher will enter the class (teaching his own subject). For every additional lesson taught, a teacher receives 10 SSP. If the absent teacher was sick, it will be paid from an extra budget. If the absent teacher did not come for a reason other than sickness, the money will be deducted from him and given to the teacher who taught in his place.
- Control attendance of students: keep daily attendance and know them by name, involve families, enforce punctuality and attendance through manual work
- Provide infrastructure (classrooms, tables, benches, latrines, water, fence...)
- Offer food

Part 2: Ensure quality of contents (methods)

- Screen candidates → assessment in English and Mathematics
- Provide text books → print with permission of the Ministry
- Correct text books → example: Social Studies
- Use other text books → example: Kenyan syllabus books (The High Flyers Series: Combined Encyclopaedia STD. 8), Cambridge *Grammar In Use*
- Publish teaching aids → English Grammar, SST P8 exam guide
- Make students talk → drama, debates
- Sit in class and advise teachers → know what and how they teach, check teaching records
- Prepare exams with relevant questions → know how exams relate to what was taught
- Teacher training → cooperation with Solidarity College ongoing in-service training
- Provide a library → reading room for self-study, books are not taken home
- Correct MoEST exam papers → example Jonglei State

SURVEY

Your name, institution & location in South Sudan:

PART 1: ENSURE ONGOING CLASSES AND ATTENDANCE

1. Are you able to provide sufficient school material? If not, why?
2. Can you pay teachers enough so that they do not look for better paid jobs? If not, why?
3. How do you control the attendance of teachers? Would it help if you pay only for each lesson taught so that they are more present?
4. How do you keep registered students in class?
5. Does your school have enough classrooms, tables, latrines, a fence...?
6. Do you offer food to keep students concentrated and enrolled?

PART 2: ENSURE QUALITY OF CONTENTS (METHODS)

1. Do you have all text books needed? If not, are you interested in organizing a book print with other schools? (Cost per book less than 3 USD)
2. Have you corrected SS text books? If yes, which subjects or class levels?
3. Which other books besides the New Sudan syllabus do you use?
4. Have you published additional teaching aids? If yes, which subjects / class levels?
5. How do you make students talk?
6. How do you monitor and instruct teachers?
7. Who prepares your exams and how? If you do not write them yourself, do you check every task/question?
8. Do you offer regular teacher training? If yes, which organization or program?
9. Do you have a library? Which literature do you recommend?
10. Have you corrected the exam papers of your state?
11. Are there other challenges/obstacles?

You may send your answer to Fr Gregor: gregor.bogdong@gmail.com

The Reality of Evangelisation in South Sudan

I am a missionary who has spent 33 years working in South Sudan and Sudan, working in various fields, including as the first headmaster of St Charles Lwanga School, Malakal. Currently I advise the Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference and the South Sudan Council of Churches, particularly on peace and reconciliation. One thing I bring to the conversation is institutional memory.

On evangelisation, I highly recommend everybody to read *One Church From Every Tribe, Tongue and People: Symposium on the Role of the Church in the Independence of South Sudan*, available from the Pauline Sisters' bookshop. It is a collection of all the presentations at that Symposium.

Evangelisation in South Sudan began with the Austrian Franciscans around 1855. Most of them died and they had to withdraw. Then came St Daniel Comboni with his innovative “Save Africa through Africans” policy. The first Catholic missions opened around 1901. In 1938 the Mill Hill Missionaries came to what is now Malakal Diocese. In 1962 the Missionary Societies Act was passed and the expulsion of missionaries began. In 1964 all missionaries in south Sudan were expelled. This was supposed to destroy the Church but, although there was a difficult period of transition, in fact the Church became stronger as indigenous clergy became the leaders. After the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement missionaries began to return in the mid-1970s. In 1983 a new wave of missionary societies began to arrive, eg Kiltegan Fathers and White Fathers, followed by many more. Another new wave of missionaries arrived after the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and this included Solidarity with South Sudan, a new model of mission in which many congregations contribute to the team. All of these form the Local Church with the indigenous clergy. “Local' must not be equated solely with 'native' personnel... 'Local Church'... in an extended, larger, not restricted sense [means] the believing Christian community, foreign and native, missionary and diocesan...” (Fr Philip Pitya, *One Church From Every Tribe, Tongue and People*, p 101). A personal observation: during the 1983-2005 civil war there was a very close bond between indigenous and missionary personnel. Nowadays there seems to be more of a distance.

In Sudan, ecumenism is very important. The south was divided by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium government into spheres of influence for different denominations (see map, *One Church From Every Tribe, Tongue and People*, p 232). As well as Catholics, the Anglicans, Presbyterians and some evangelicals were the main missionary groups. In 1965 the Sudan Council of Churches was formed by Bishops Augustino Baroni (Catholic) and Oliver Allison (Anglican), two men of vision, to resist Arabisation and Islamisation. The Catholic Church is a full and founding member of this and all subsequent councils, which is fairly unique in the ecumenical world. From 1983-2005 much of the good work that the Church did for peace was done through the ecumenical networks. Together we are strong. See my own book, *The Voice of the Voiceless: The Role of the Church in the Sudanese Civil War 1983-2005*, available from Pauline Sisters, for more details of that era of ecumenical collaboration. From 2005 the councils of churches became weak for various reasons: the absence of a common enemy; denominations and Church leaders turning inwards to rebuild their own damaged churches; the merging of the two councils (SCC which operated in government-held areas and NSCC in SPLA-controlled “liberated areas”) and then the separation into two councils again after the independence of South Sudan in 2011. When the new conflict began in December 2013 people in South Sudan and internationally remembered the role of the Church in the previous conflicts and looked to the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) to bring peace, but unfortunately we didn't have the capacity. At the end of 2014 the Heads of Churches made an emergency decision to dismiss the top leadership of SSCC and reform the council. Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro has fully supported this process. A new Chair was appointed (Rev Peter Gai Lual, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan) and a Catholic priest, Fr James Oyet Latansio, was appointed as Secretary General (NB: a Catholic priest, Fr Matthew, has just been appointed as Secretary General of SCC in Khartoum too). SSCC had a key meeting of Church leaders in Kigali in mid-2015 from which emerged a Peace Action Plan with three pillars: advocacy (changing the narrative), neutral forums (for South Sudanese stakeholders to address the root causes of the conflict under Church mediation) and reconciliation (a long-term process beginning at the grassroots and lasting for ten to twenty years). After several months of behind the scenes preparation, this process is likely to be seen starting during 2016.

Is all this reference to peace activities out of place in a talk on evangelisation? No, because what we have here is holistic evangelisation, addressing the needs of

the whole person, which includes things like peace, development, education, etc. It is about evangelisation rather than sacramentalisation, mission rather than maintenance. It affirms human dignity. This is not new: missionaries in the 19th century affirmed that Africans were human beings and had souls; this was mentioned by many participants in the 2011 Symposium. Bishop Paride Taban was told by the people of Kuron, an isolated area which he opened up during the last war, that before he came, they didn't realise that they were human beings. Catholic evangelisation has always included not just a church but schools, clinics, vocation training, youth activities, etc. The Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference affirmed this when they appealed for missionaries to come to Malakal Diocese, destroyed during the early part of the current conflict. While there are many protestant Christians in Greater Upper Nile, it is only the Catholic Church which can be relied upon to bring education and development to the youth of that area who are a central part of the conflict. It was also affirmed in the Jonglei peace process in 2012, when a Murle paramount chief said that there used to be missionaries in Pibor in the 1940s, but then they left and were not replaced. "How can you expect us to behave peacefully if you don't send missionaries to teach us how?" Just last week I was in Boma, where there are local conflicts, and government officials asked me to take the same message to the bishops; "We need a priest in Boma to teach us to be peaceful".

What is the current situation? South Sudan is still a mission country, in that we are surrounded by the poor, the marginalised, the unevangelised. There is still a need for primary evangelisation; many people and communities have not yet been exposed to the gospel. But are our Christians truly evangelised? The behaviour of Christians from the highest to the lowest suggests not. Thus there is also a need for the New Evangelisation, as Pope Benedict XVI called it (see also the chapter on New Evangelisation by Bishop Daniel Adwok in *One Church From Every Tribe, Tongue and People*, pp 167-176). Are our diocesan priests prepared for mission rather than maintenance?

Catechesis in South Sudan

Methodology: presentation of three brief inputs or provocations in view of eliciting a sharing of knowledge and experiences.

- 1) Definition of the word 'catechesis'. Root in the Greek and then Latin languages: to instruct somebody.

An online article by Vaticanist R. Mickens, 'The greatest story never told', comments on some words of Pope emeritus Benedict XVI and challenges Catholics asking if our "narrative of the meaning of life is no longer necessary or inspiring for so many people of our time". See: <http://ncronline.org/blogs/roman-observer/greatest-story-never-told>

Question: What about us in South Sudan: what are the challenges we face in presenting the Gospel story and the teaching of the Catholic Church to our people? What does the proliferation of independent Churches tell us? What are our experiences of failure and success and our proposals?

- 2) The final documents of the two Synods for Africa offer us precious guidelines.

From *Ecclesia in Africa*, 1995, No. 59: "On several occasions the Synod Fathers stressed the particular importance for evangelization of inculturation, the process by which "catechesis 'takes flesh' in the various cultures". Christianity in the various human cultures". The Synod considers inculturation an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa. Inculturation includes two dimensions: on the one hand, "the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity" and, on the other, "the insertion of and, on the other, "the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures".

Question: What do we think about inculturation? Do we have examples? Have we tried something in this direction? What the successes, and the challenges, and the failures? What are our suggestions?

- 3) Both documents of the Synods emphasize the role of the catechists and *Africae Munus*,(2011), the final apostolic exhortation at the end of the second synod, dedicates a whole section to them.

No. 125. Catechists are invaluable pastoral agents in the mission of evangelization. Their role was very important during the first evangelization, the preparation of catechumens and the direction and support of communities. “In a natural way they brought about a successful inculturation that has produced marvellous fruits. Africans have evangelized Africans!

No. 126. I urge bishops and priests to be concerned for the human, intellectual, doctrinal, moral, spiritual and pastoral formation of catechists. They should pay great attention to the living conditions of catechists, in order to ensure their dignity.

TWO Clear recommendations are made about the catechists:

Question: Where are we in South Sudan in regard to these two recommendations?

To what extent should Education challenge or embrace local cultures

Religious education is a key component to developing the faith of our church members. The church offers a number of creative and interactive ways to discover, engage and embrace Christian education and religious practice. Culture sets of patterns, of and for behavior, that regulate interaction and enable mutual communication among a plurality of people, establishing them into a particular and distinct human group - occasionally used in the more limited sense of the intellectual products of culture.

The call for a new evangelization —started by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI called “urgent need to proclaim the Gospel afresh in a highly secularized environment”— has huge implications for Catholics in education, at home and at school. Both are *places of evangelization*.

According to the Congregation for Catholic Education, “*The mission of the Church is to evangelize, for the interior transformation and the renewal of humanity. For young people, the school is one of the ways for this evangelization to take place.*”

A. IMPORTANCE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

While addressing the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education recently, Pope Francis called Catholic education “one of the most important challenges for the Church, currently committed to new evangelization in an historical and cultural context that is undergoing constant transformation.”

On the value of dialogue in Catholic education, Pope Francis reportedly said:

“Effectively, Catholic schools and universities are attended by many students who are not Christian or do not believe. Catholic educational institutions offer to all an approach to education that has as its aim the full development of the person, which responds to

the right of every person to access to knowledge. However, they are also called upon to offer, with full respect for the freedom of each person and using the methods appropriate to the scholastic environment, the Christian belief, that is, to present Jesus Christ as the meaning of life, the cosmos and history. Jesus began to proclaim the good news of the 'Galilee of the people', a crossroads of people, diverse in terms of race, culture and religion." This context resembles today's world, in certain respects.

The Pope also said that educators must speak to be understood by the younger generation. "Every educator – and the Church as a whole is an educating mother – is required to change, in the sense of knowing how to communicate with the young."

He laid the responsibility of expressing "the living presence of the Gospel in the field of education, science and culture" on Catholic education institutions, adding they must "know how to enter, with courage, into the Areopagus of contemporary cultures and to initiate dialogue, aware of the gift they are able to offer to all."

Importance of Catholic Education: Vatican II on different roles

The Second Vatican Council gave careful consideration to the importance of education in people's lives and its ever-growing influence on the social progress of the age. Vatican II strongly affirmed the Church's contribution to and involvement in education. It also strong emphasis on the importance of parents and their right to educate their children and of the state to help the parents.

The Declaration on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis, stated that all people "of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to education".

This education, the document explained, should be in keeping with their ultimate goal, adapted to their ability, sex and the cultural and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace in the world.

All Christians, the document stated, have a right to a Christian education which not only develops the maturity of the human person but has as its principal

purpose a further goal. Throughout the course of their education, Christians should be gradually introduced to the mystery of salvation, become more aware of the gift of Faith they have received.

A Christian education must also ensure they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them, but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world. Thus they should grow into adulthood as members of the body of Christ who are willing and able to contribute to the good of the society to which they belong.

a. Family

Since parents have given life to their children, *Gravissimum Educationis* placed great emphasis on the responsibility of parents and because of this, “they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators”.

The document calls for parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and respect for God and man, in which “the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered”.

Gravissimum Educationis named the family as the primary school of the social virtues which are necessary to every society. It proposed the Christian family, enriched by the grace of marriage, as the most appropriate context for children to experience a wholesome human society and Church.

Finally, the document explained that it is through the family that children are “gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God”.

According to *Gravissimum Educationis*, while the task of imparting education belongs primarily to the family, it also requires the help of society as a whole. Therefore, as outlined in this document, it is the duty of the State to ensure that all its citizens have access to an adequate education and are prepared for the proper exercise of their civic rights and duties.

The document asserts that the function of the State is to promote the education of youth in many ways. Namely: *“to protect the duties and rights of parents and others who share in education and to give them aid; according to the principle of subsidiarity, when the endeavors of parents and other societies are lacking, to*

carry out the work of education in accordance with the wishes of the parents; and, moreover, as the common good demands, to build schools and institutions”.

b. Ethos or local customs

Catholic schools are highlighted as playing *an essential role in the life of the Church*. No less than other schools, Catholic schools pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth.

However, the primary function of Catholic schools, according to the document, is to create a *“special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation”*.

Such an atmosphere enables young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in that new life which has been given to them in baptism, thus orienting students to live in a social context influenced by their Faith.

c. Teachers

The document states that Catholic schools are almost entirely dependent upon teachers “for the accomplishment of its goals and programs”.

Teachers in Catholic schools should be prepared for their work with special care, the document said, and they should have appropriate qualifications and adequate learning, both religious and secular. They should be trained in accordance with correct pedagogical methodology is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world.

Catholic school teachers are also called in this document to be charitable both towards each other and towards their students, and endowed with an apostolic spirit, they are encouraged to bear witness by their lives and by their instruction to Jesus Christ.

Catholic parents, the document states, have a particular duty to send their children to Catholic schools whenever this is possible, as well as to give Catholic schools all the support in their power, cooperating with them in their work for the good of their children.

According to the document, attention should also be paid “to the needs of today in establishing and directing Catholic schools”.

Pastors are directed in *Gravissimum Educationis* to provide much needed catechesis to all, especially in areas of the new churches, which are attended also by students who are not Catholics.

d. Senior or higher education

The Church likewise was *called to devote considerable care to higher-level education, especially colleges and universities*. The document recommends and encourages the establishment of Catholic universities and faculties in strategic locations throughout the world, calling for them to be noteworthy “not for their numbers but for their pursuit of knowledge”.

Special attention and allowances for students of great promise but of modest resources were recommended, especially for those from newly developing nations. *Gravissimum Educationis* called for a greater measure of coordination in the sphere of academic institutes. “Cooperation is the order of the day,” it asserts. University faculties are encouraged to assist each other insofar as their goal will permit.

e. Universities or Colleges

In addition, universities were encouraged to undertake joint enterprises, such as promoting and organizing international gatherings “by sharing scientific inquiries with one another, by communicating their discoveries to one another, by having exchange of professors for a time and by promoting all else that is conducive to greater assistance”. The document also concluded by affirming its deep gratitude to those priests, religious men and women, and laity who by their evangelical self-dedication are devoted to the noble work of education and schools of every type and level.

f. Formation

Gravissimum Educationis “sets out the foundation upon which Catholic education contributes to the upbuilding of young Catholics”. It emphasizes the role of Christian education in contributing to the human formation of young people which it achieves “*by creating a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity*”.

The document highlights “*the profound importance of education and encourages the dialogue necessary between all peoples in developing open, just and robust principles for the education of young people generally in society.*” .

A Catholic vision seeks to sustain and enhance people's capacity to discover the meaning of life in the context of God's love. "*The work of Catholic education is a work of hope and love which 'helps individuals to be ever more human, leads them ever more fully to the truth, instills in them growing respect for life, and trains them in right inter-personal relations,' it says.*

B. FIVE ESSENTIAL MARKS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Like the marks of the Church proclaimed in the Creed – one, holy, catholic, and apostolic – so, too, does the Holy See identify the principal features of a school as *Catholic*: 1) a Catholic school should be inspired by a supernatural vision, 2) founded on Christian anthropology, 3) animated by communion and community, 4) imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, and 5) sustained by gospel witness. These benchmarks help to answer the critical question: *Is this a Catholic school according to the mind of the Church?*

Pope John Paul II reminded us: It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the Church's institutions be genuinely Catholic: Catholic in their self-understanding and Catholic in their identity. It is precisely because of its Catholic identity, which is anything but sectarian, that a school derives the originality that enables it to be a genuine instrument of the Church's evangelizing mission. The first and most important task for Catholic schools is to maintain and continually strengthen their Catholic identity.

The five elements that necessarily belong to a school's Catholic identity are the principles proposed by the Holy See that justify the Church's heavy investment in schooling. Moreover, they are measurable benchmarks, forming the backbone and inspiring the mission of every Catholic school.

Emphasis on local Cultures (founded on Christian anthropology)

A second principle that derives from communicating a Catholic worldview to children is the notion that they should learn to transform culture in light of the gospel. Schools prepare students to relate the Catholic faith to their particular culture and to live that faith in practice.

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, the Congregation for Catholic Education commented: From the nature of the Catholic

school also stems one of the most significant elements of its educational project: the synthesis between culture and faith. The endeavor to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation, and coordination, bringing forth within what is learned in a school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture, and of history.

Furthermore, young Catholics, in a way appropriate to their age, must also learn to make judgments based on religious and moral truths. They should learn to be critical and evaluative. It is the Catholic faith that provides young people with the essential principles for critique and evaluation.

The educational philosophy that guides Catholic schools also seeks to ensure that they are places where "faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony." Central to the Catholic school is its mission of holiness, of saint-making. Mindful of redemption in Christ, the Catholic school aims to form in its pupils those particular virtues that will enable them to live a new life in Christ and help them to play their part in serving society and the Church. It strives to develop virtue "by the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living." The Congregation for Catholic Education has written that "the Catholic school tries to create within its walls a climate in which the pupil's faith will gradually mature and enable him or her to assume the responsibility placed on him by Baptism."

A primary way of helping Catholic students become more committed to their faith is by providing solid religious instruction. To be sure, "education in the faith is a part of the finality of a Catholic school." For young Catholics, such instruction embraces both teaching the truths of the faith and fostering its practice. Still, we must always take special care to avoid the error that a Catholic school's distinctiveness rests solely on the shoulders of its religious-education program. Such a position would foster the misunderstanding that faith and life can be divorced, that religion is a merely private affair without doctrinal content or moral obligations.

Some of the main challenges in South Sudan

- Traditional customs: Early marriage both for girls and boys
- Civil war disrupted schooling different syllabus (Sudan Kenya and Uganda)
- Globalization: Education is a second to Poverty and hunger in (MDGs)
- Lack of coordination at the national level

Way forward

Our Mission - To re-energize the Catholic Church in South Sudan by developing world-class resources that inspire people to rediscover the genius of Catholicism.

Our Vision - To be the innovative leader in the New Evangelization helping Catholics and their parishes become the-best-version-of-themselves in third Millennium.

Sources

Declaration on Christian education *Gravissimum Educationis* proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965

Formation of Christian Values and Attitudes

“A well rounded education is concerned not only with acquiring knowledge but in developing values and principles and the appreciation of the beauty of creation. Both Evangelization and Education seek to reveal the truth about who we are & why we are here. We are seekers after truth, the 'truth that will make us free.’”

INTRODUCTION:

Clarification of Terms

Values in general refer to principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behavior, enduring beliefs about what is a worthwhile idea for which one strives, standards by which particular beliefs and actions are judged to be good or desirable. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. Examples of values are love, fairness, equality, justice, happiness, security, peace of mind etc.

By attitudes, we mean the acquired tendencies or predispositions to make judgments and behave in a predictable manner. Examples of attitudes are openness, tolerance, respect, acceptances, freedom from prejudice etc.

The term Christian values historically refers to the values derived from the teachings of Jesus and taught by the Church. The term, however, has various applications and meanings, and specific definitions can vary widely between denominations, geographical locations, and different schools of thought.

Worldly values include wealth, power, pleasure, revenge, fame, vanity and status. These are the most important things to people who perceive no power or purpose beyond themselves. Worldly values promote jealousies, resentments and conflicts among people in accordance with the purposes of the evil one. (John 8:44, Acts 5:3, Romans 16:17-20, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:25-32, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, 1 John 3:8-10).

The values taught in the Bible are often the opposite of worldly values: kindness and respect for all people instead of power; humility instead of status; honesty and generosity instead of wealth; self-control instead of self-indulgence;

forgiveness instead of revenge. Christian values promote peace and good will among people in accordance with the purposes of God. We will never achieve perfection in this life, but those people who strive to obey God often find a sense of joy and peace that no worldly rewards can match!

Education is Formation in values

While thinking of the formation of Christian values within the great theme of Evangelization and Education, we have to keep in mind that all education is focused, not merely on passing on neither useful information, nor just on training people for employment but on the formation of the whole person. Parents want to help their children grow, not just prepare them for work. The most important task that any of us will do is to be a human person as a social being. Of course debate about the purposes of education never seems to end. Should young people become educated to get prepared to enter the workforce, or should the purpose of education be focused more on social, academic, cultural and intellectual development so that students can grow up to be engaged citizens?

Christian Values and Society

We can speak about the topic of values on two levels: group or societal values and individual or personal values. On the first level, we know that a set of values is characteristic of every society. In South Sudan, for example, the principles by which many people live are based, to a large extent on cultural – tribal values.

On an individual level, one's personal values are vital in influencing actions, motivating behavior, and determining life-styles. Our values are reflected in the judgments we make and the solutions we choose. They are real and relevant. Christians find that their personal values are often different from the values of others and from many societal values, especially in the changing world in which we live today.

In this presentation, we will consider some of the features of today's society, Christian values and their basis, and how we deal with the differences between our values and those of others.

We live in a situation in which values of our society are not necessarily always in harmony with Christian values. Christianity may offer one set of values and the

society in which Christian lives offers a different set of value. But this is not a new phenomenon and will always be part of the Christian experience. Believers have always had to deal with differences between their own values and those of the society in which they lived. Jesus even compared the end times to the time in which Noah lived.

But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:37-39)

South Sudan after independence is passing through a time in which change is happening more broadly and more rapidly than in the past. The changes that are taking place affect the values of our society. This period of rapidly changing values continues today. This is not a phenomenon that only Christians notice, but it is noted by many in our Country.

Unstable Families

One aspect of life in which we see significant change today is that of home and family. The family unit has been a fundamental unit of any society. Scripture bases all authority on parental authority. For these reasons, changes in the family unit and its role cause concern.

Today, many families are unstable. The many years of war have led to new models of family. Young people come to live together often without the formalities of marriage being completed. They get children and yet have to struggle to make ends meet. Little time is given to the upbringing of children within certain cultural or religious values. In schools, we find that a large percentage of children come from so-called "non-traditional" family situations. In such unstable homes and families, the teaching of values is often lacking.

The Role of a Catholic School and the Crisis of Values

In the past cultural and Christian values were taught and fostered in the home and family, and the schools supported the family's teaching. Now the schools are called upon on to function in lieu of the family.

This has been recognized by educators. The Catholic Church has long established “...her own schools, because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person, since the school is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of the human person, and of history is developed and conveyed.”

People are finding more and more trouble making meaning out of their lives. This seems to make values clarification more important in these vastly changing times. Schools should help students examine, develop and rationally choose their values. Students need help with sorting through the conflicting values of television, newspapers, peers and parents. Students need to judge these values for themselves. And they need to feel good about their own decisions and behaviors. Students must process society's confusing signals in a way that will let them live with themselves and interact with others.

What is taught in public schools in the way of values will often be that which is encouraged and accepted in today's society. This especially includes acceptance of alternative lifestyles and values. Today, we see the erosion of the basic family unit in the many broken homes and children born to unwed mothers. We also see a tolerance and acceptance of promiscuity, couples living together outside of wedlock. Such lifestyles are clearly the result of deteriorating values and disappearing morals.

The Catholic School and Attitudes of Life

The school has to prepare its entire programme of formation, both its content and the method used such that either implicit or explicit reference to a determined attitude to life is unavoidable in education because it comes into every decision that is made. A school is not only a place where one is given a choice of intellectual values, but a place one has presented an array of values which are actively lived. The school must be a community whose values are communicated through the interpersonal and sincere relationships of its members and through both individual and corporate adherence to the outlook of life that permeates the school.¹

¹ Cf. SCCE, *L'École Catholique*, 1977, no. 28,31

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. The Catholic school should be committed thus to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the perfect man, all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Its duty is to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ.

Adolescents who do not attend school

Young people in trade and or profession and their number is enormous, undergo an accelerated fortunate or unfortunate, perfect or imperfect results.

There is therefore need for a special catechesis for these adolescents. It will have to examine the immediate, day-to-day problems, to support the young people when they commence working, helping them to engage in activity commensurate with their ability in collaboration with Catholic movements.

Further, to the extent that the young workers still retain adolescent characteristics and needs, catechesis should not merely throw light on their concrete activity, it should also guide them towards acceptance of God's over-all plan.

The fear of God is disappearing. As this happens, the foundation for morals and for the teaching of morals to the young shifts away from the Word of God. There is little interest to mention of God in aspects of public life. Those who would base morals on the Bible are labeled "fundamentalists," a label that has acquired a decidedly negative connotation. At the same time, there is a great move for greater tolerance of so-called "alternative life-styles" and individual rights of expression.

These changes are reflected in many ways, and they are mirrored in our children and young people. In schools, the conduct and attitudes of the young reflect the conditions in their homes and in society. Many of the signs that we see in our schools are disturbing.

Observation of young people shows that a growing number of them are involved in sexual relationships and the use of alcohol. This is also happening at younger ages. These behaviors are promoted through the media of printed material, television, radio, and movies. Indiscrete use of improper and explicit

language has increased. Basic manners are often lacking. There is more disrespect shown to peers, to other people (especially authority figures), and for property. Occasions that were once formal and treated with dignity are no longer treated in that way by some.

Open manifestation of this is seen during days of festivities, eg. Christmas night celebrations, end of year etc.

In some places it is often said that we should not discourage our youth from engaging in such behaviors or lifestyles, but rather teach them how to participate in them in a safe way. This attitude is also reflected in the popular music, reading material, and dress styles of today. In the midst of such teachings, the pursuit of ones own pleasures becomes foremost. It is not surprising then that we also witness a diminishing of basic manners, respectfulness, and humility.

The Apostle Paul has aptly described these times in his second letter to Timothy:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with diverse lusts. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (II Tim. 3:7-7)

The Christian's Foundation

Already in the Old Testament time, the foundation for Christian values was revealed. Moses explained to the children of Israel:

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy Fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only,

but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. (Deut.8:2-3)

The psalmist has written,

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. 119:9-10)

The Word of God thus forms the foundation for the life of a believer and is the basis for Christian values. Paul explains this to the Ephesians by telling them that they "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:20)

In the same way, Jesus said,

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. (Matt. 7:24-25)

By faith, the child of God has, as the foundation for his life, the Word of God and Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. Even in the midst of a rapidly changing world, this foundation is secure. Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8) And His Word is enduring and timeless. Jesus himself said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. 24:35)

For that reason, we want to treasure the Word of God, as expressed in the words of the Psalm that we just heard, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart." Throughout Psalm 119, the importance and preciousness of God's Word is expressed. There also the psalmist writes, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. 119:105)

Especially in these times, it is important that we read and study God's Word. This is true for all of us, but I would like to especially emphasize this to the young believers. It is a great joy when the Word of God is dear to a young believer. This will provide a sure foundation in all of the storms of life. The Apostle Paul had this joy for his younger brother-in-faith Timothy, and mentions in his second

letter to Timothy, "*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" (II Tim. 3:14-1)

Christian Values

The Word of God shines as the bright sun of grace into the heart of a believer. The Heavenly

Father, by His grace and through the Holy Spirit, teaches and guides us on the way of faith. The Apostle writes to Titus:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:11-14)

The child of God, as a pardoned sinner, knows the truth of the Apostle Paul's words when he writes, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8)

Jesus Christ revealed the depth of God's love when He gave Himself for us. In the heart of a child of God has been born a love for Him who has first loved us. With Paul, the Christian says, ". . .the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

In this way, God's love and grace work in a believer's heart to effect an inward, personal humility and a desire to walk in obedience of faith. The believer does not want to lose this great treasure that he has received. Because of this, the believer chooses to avoid those things that war against faith and a good conscience. For that reason, he does not wish to go to the dance halls, theaters, drinking places, and sports arenas of this world. For that reason, he wants to avoid that music and literature that appeals to the flesh and its lusts. For that reason, he does not want to bring television into his home. For that reason, he wants to keep the sanctity and permanence of marriage; he avoids intimate relationships outside of marriage;

he wants to keep the right priorities in his home in the care and upbringing of his children.

Also for that reason, at the work place, a Christian endeavors to do his duties honestly and diligently. At school, he wants to be diligent in his work and obedient to his teachers. He wants to be content and thankful for the school and work opportunities that God has given him and not join with those who complain and resist the people whom God has placed in positions of authority.

A Christian wants to conduct himself so that he shows respect for other people and their belongings. He wants to keep holy the Sabbath day. In short, a Christian wants to "abstain from all appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5:22)

Why does a child of God want to so live? It is not so that he by his good life might be saved.

Rather, he wants to keep faith and a good conscience. Because his conscience is sensitive, the child of God wants to avoid those things that offend the conscience. When sins have wounded the conscience, he wants to put sin away and believe it forgiven in the name and blood of Jesus. He has not wanted to be found having his own righteousness, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:9)

The Apostle Paul characterizes Christian values near the end of his letter to the Philippians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:5-8)

In the World, but not of the World

In the face of differences between his values and those of others, the Christian can encounter difficult questions. How do I relate to the world and to people in our society? How do I deal with differences between my values and society's values? How do I tell those on the outside of God's kingdom how I believe and

why I continue to cling to traditional Christian values? The fact that the values of a child of God differ from some of the values in our society does not mean that we avoid contact with the world. It simply means that we choose to avoid those things that war against faith and a good conscience.

The prayer of Jesus on behalf of His own was this: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 7:1,4-76)

We live our lives in the midst of our society. A large part of our lives are spent in our neighborhoods, in our schools, in our universities, at our work places, perhaps at community events, and in certain civic duties. This we cannot and do not try to avoid. Jesus did not pray that we would be taken out of the world, but that we would be kept from evil.

Yet, believers often encounter differences between their values and those of the world in which they live. This is not new. The Bible gives us many examples of former believers who also encountered this. Joseph, in Egypt, served in the house of the Pharaoh's captain of the guard. There he tried to serve faithfully. But he also faced temptations and suffered injustice because he endeavored to live as a child of God. Moses experienced the same things when he was raised in the house of the Pharaoh. His choice was "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11:25) Daniel and his friends had similar experiences in Babylon. And we could go on listing the experiences of former travelers. When we examine the lives of those believers, we notice that even though they suffered because of their faith, they nonetheless endeavored to humbly and faithfully perform the duties that had been given them in this life and in their societies.

The greatest example of this is the life of Jesus. His life was one of servitude. Often He was wrongly criticized and ridiculed. When He was brought to be crucified, He was beaten, a crown of thorns was placed on His head, He was spat on and mocked, and finally He was nailed to the cross to die. Nonetheless, on the cross, He spoke to God on behalf of those who had treated Him in this way and said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

By His example, Jesus showed us what our attitude should be toward all people. It has been said in this way that we should "hate sin but love the sinner."

In this, a child of God often feels that his measure of faith is small and his confession of faith is weak. The child of God is also aware that he is lacking in understanding. Because of this, he can wonder, "How will I answer those who ask about my faith? How can I explain that my values are and why I live as I do?" Often the simplest answer is the best. One can simply say, for example, "I am a child of God, and I do not want to do anything that will offend God."

The Apostle Paul was once called on to confess his faith in a very difficult situation. He stood before King Agrippa and his wife and a large group of people that included high ranking officials. Paul's confession is recorded in the book of Acts, chapter 26. It is a simple confession, in which Paul confessed his faith in Jesus and spoke about his own life and how he had been called to repentance.

But, a believer does not confess his faith by words only. The life of a believer shines as a light in this world. In it is reflected his faith, his peace with God, and the values that he holds. The world observes the lives of believers, even of their young children at home or at school. Other people can sense that there is a special force at work in the life of a believer. The values by which they live are not confused and inconsistent. Nor are they the values that parents, school, or society force upon them. On the contrary, their values are personal convictions and serve as the foundation of their lives.

Very often, the life of a child of God is a sermon that reaches the heart of a person who is

seeking meaning and direction for his or her life. And if such a person comes to question us

about how we believe and live, we can then in a simple way speak about God, who has been

gracious to us, and about His Son, who has redeemed us, and about the gospel, that is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 1:15)

Conclusion

We live in a time of rapid changes and of great challenges to Christian moral values. Nonetheless, it is our duty and desire as Christians to publicly express our understanding and the values that we hold. This we can do without apology. We want to do so because we love our country and people and because we believe

that respect for God's Word and observance of its teaching will also gain God's blessing for our nations.

We want to yet hold in our hearts the timeless truths of God's Word. The Prophet Micah has

written words that seem to provide a foundation for our value system. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

The child of God is on a journey through life. Jesus said of this journey that it is on a narrow way that leads unto life. (Matt. 7:14) The destination is heaven. To find this way and to remain on it, a person must receive God's grace. God is gracious. He gives His grace to the humble. (I Peter 5:5)

We humbly ask God that He would hear the prayer of His Son also on our behalf and keep us from evil. We ask, as the psalmist David did, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

Cherish the Truth

The Encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), was promulgated by Pope John Paul II in September 1998. It was arguably the most important of Pope John Paul II's pontificate and the issues it raised were placed by Pope Benedict at the heart of his period of office. The document deals with the issue of Truth and the decline in importance of Truth in modern society as well as the relationship between faith and reason. Pope Benedict identified the issue of Truth as the single most important issue facing the world today.

The Pope quotes from the Book of Sirach:

"...the wise man.. Is the one who loves and seeks the truth: 'Happy the man who meditates on wisdom and reasons intelligently, who reflects in his heart on her ways and ponders her secrets. He pursues her like a hunter and lies in wait on her paths. He peers through her windows and listens at her doors.... He places his children under her protection and lodges under her boughs; by her he is sheltered from the heat and he dwells in the shade of her glory.' (Sir 14:20-27).

So I am proposing we focus on '*the Truth*', taking inspiration from two beautiful passages in St John's Gospel:

'The truth will make you free.' (John 8:32)

and *'I am the way, the truth, the light.'*(John 14:6)

'Cherish the truth' implies wanting to have genuine knowledge but also being willing to stand up for what one knows and believes. We cherish what is important to us. The truth is important to us. We develop personal integrity by being true to what we believe in and we are liberated by our integrity. Yet some would have us believe that there is an underlying conflict in what constitutes truth.

Further, people get caught up in the prejudices and enthusiasms of their own era and frequently cling to an ideology or outdated idea rather than accepting the growth in knowledge. Sometimes they adhere to ideas that seem to be right at the time but later are shown to be far from the truth. This is true for both science and

religion.

Both science and religion seek the truth about the universe in which we live and the ultimate mysteries of “*Where did we come from, why do we stay in existence and what does it all mean?*”

The Introduction to *Fides et Ratio* asserts:

The following questions arise from the fundamental search for meaning across the world in all cultures which mark human beings out from animals:

Who am I?

Where have I come from and where am I going?

Why is there evil?

What is there after this life?

Perhaps the most difficult question is ‘how is it that anything exists?’ These are not abstract questions but questions posed by thinking people who start with acceptance of Descartes dictum: ‘*Cogito, ergo sum*’ (I am thinking; therefore I exist). Truth does exist and is to be cherished but we are seekers after truth, possessors of partial truth (and error) and are not possessors of total truth. Jesus justifiably claimed to be “*the way, the truth and the light*” and we seek after Jesus who is God, the only being who possesses absolute truth.

2009 marked the passing of 400 years since Galileo built a telescope and first turned it toward the heavens. He discovered startling new facts - that the Moon has craters, Venus has phases, Jupiter has moons, and Saturn has rings. Galileo, armed with the new technology of the telescope, challenged the common view of the cosmos, which held sway in his day, that had been put forward almost 1500 years earlier by Claudius Ptolemy (c90–c168 CE) in his astronomical text, *Almagest (The Great Treatise)*.

Ptolemy had provided a model that accurately predicted the planets’ positions and was the basis of Western and Islamic calculations. His model described the planets moving in circular fashion around the earth but with each planet having an additional circular motion called an ‘epicycle’. His scientific model explained the facts and provided a basis for measurement, but did not in fact, accurately describe the genuine reality.

Below is a description of the conflict that followed when Galileo challenged the erroneous, Ptolemaic model:

‘Galileo’s conflicts with accepted authority were first with Aristotelian

philosophers in Italian universities. They tried to bring the Catholic Church, particularly its police arm, the Roman Inquisition, into the battle against Galileo.

High church officials did not initially oppose Galileo's science. Indeed, one cardinal remarked that the Bible tells us how to go to Heaven, not how the heavens go..'

Subsequently, the Vatican put Galileo on trial as a heretic for his ideas about helio-centrism, the Copernican doctrine that the Earth revolves around the Sun. In 1616 the Church ordered Galileo not to hold or defend Copernicanism. In 1624, Pope Urban VIII, a friend of Galileo, gave him permission to discuss the Copernican system in a book if he gave the Ptolemaic system equal time. The *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* was published in Florence in 1632.

There were complaints, however, and the Inquisition ordered Galileo to appear before it in Rome. His book was put on the Index of forbidden books, where it remained for more than 200 years until 1835. In 1633, Galileo himself was sentenced to life in prison but his sentence was commuted to house arrest until his death in 1642.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II admitted that the Church had erred. He wrote:

Thanks to his intuition as a brilliant physicist and by relying on different arguments, Galileo, who practically invented the experimental method, understood why only the sun could function as the centre of the world, as it was then known, that is to say, as a planetary system. The error of the theologians of the time, when they maintained the centrality of the Earth, was to think that our understanding of the physical world's structure was, in some way, imposed by the literal sense of Sacred Scripture....

In 2000, Pope John Paul II issued a formal apology for all the errors of the Church over the last 2000 years including the trial of Galileo among others and this year a statue is being placed in the Vatican gardens, outside the apartment where the astronomer was accommodated while he was awaiting his heresy trial in 1633.

Good people are seekers after the truth but good people also make mistakes. Scientists can make mistakes, and so can philosophers, theologians and Church leaders, because all are human.

Some adhere to an ill-founded notion that there is conflict between science and religion. This is the view promoted by modern day atheists such as Richard Dawkins, author of 'The God Delusion'. I see no conflict between what we believe as Christians – our faith – and what we learn through scientific research – our knowledge.

Just over a century ago, Robert Hugh Benson, the son of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, converted to Catholicism and became a priest. Benson wrote:

"There is but one thing in the world worth pursuing – the knowledge of God."

I agree but for a more complete statement, I would add to Benson's words, the statement of astronaut, Frank Borman who said:

"The more we learn about the wonders of our universe, the more clearly we are going to perceive the hand of God".

Both science and religion seek the truth and the truth reveals the hand of God. That is the hand we are each invited to grasp. There is no better hand to hold.

'*Saerching for Truth*' implies wanting to have genuine knowledge but also being willing to stand up for what one knows and believes. We cherish what is important to us. The truth is important to us. We develop personal integrity by being true to what we believe in and we are liberated by our integrity.

Science has made some incredible advances, especially in our knowledge of the universe. Just over 50 years ago, the first man-made object, Sputnik 1 ('Travelling Companion'), was sent into orbit - on Oct. 4th 1957. It was only 55.9cm diameter, weighed 83.5kg and beeped for 23 days. The first human in space, Yuri Gagarin, made his historic orbit of the earth on 12th April, 1961.

Today, amore than 3,000 useful satellites and 6,000 pieces of space junk are orbiting Earth. The present generation is now taking for granted extraordinary new technologies such as Global Positioning Satellites (GPSs) that help us identify exactly where we are on earth. C

In this period of rapid scientific development, it really should be obvious that neither science nor religion possesses final or absolute truth. At various times both scientists and theologians have fallen into the error of claiming to possess the

truth but in reality both scientists and theologians are seekers after truth. The scientist Michelson proclaimed in 1894:

“The most important fundamental laws and facts of physical science have all been discovered, and these are now so firmly established that the possibility of their ever being supplemented in consequence of new discoveries is exceedingly remote . . . our future discoveries must be looked for in the sixth place of decimals. Newton’s mechanics accounted for the everyday world; Maxwell’s theory of electromagnetic radiation described light and heat very well; there was now an atomic theory for the micro-world, and, for the big picture, a universe of the solar system, embedded in a huge Milky Way galaxy.”

Everything seemingly was explained, he thought but how wrong he was. Scientists did have a much better grasp of the truth since Galileo and Newton but scientists were only just beginning to learn how much they did not know. Time’s *Man of the Century*, the great scientist, Albert Einstein was only fifteen when Michelson made his rash assertion.

Many people today have little knowledge of the nature and development of the universe, but realise it differs markedly from the simple creation stories of the Bible. They hear and read reports about an alleged conflict between religious beliefs and scientific discoveries. Dr Nick Hawkes, in his book, *‘The Dance Between Science and Faith’*, says:

‘There is a perceived disparity between Christian dogma and the “pure” objective truth of science. The rift between the two disciplines is exacerbated by religious extremists who are antagonistic towards conventional science. This causes many to believe that the dead hand of religion is still trying to suppress the truth that was hard won and emancipated by the Enlightenment.’

Neither religion nor science possesses objective truth. Both religion and science seek resolutely after truth in complementary ways. Extremists on either side muddy the water of truth. When young people go to University, they will confront many seductively presented half-truths or fallacies that promote the notion of the *‘dead hand of religion’* versus *‘the pure objective truth of science’*.

Jessica Shepherd, writing in the UK Guardian on 19 February, 2009, said:

“Every religion on campus has its student society, from the Christian

Union to the Jedi Knights. Now the non-religionists will have theirs too. ... The "anti-God squad", as it is happy to be called ... is planning campaigns and events across the country to protest against religious privilege and promote the understanding of science. It has the support of some of the country's leading critics of religion: the scientist Richard Dawkins, the philosopher AC Grayling, and the Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee. The launch comes four months after a campaign for 30 London buses to parade the slogan: 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.' The campaign began in response to evangelical Christian adverts on buses. "

Richard Dawkins has sold millions of copies of his book entitled, *'The God Delusion'*. He writes very fluently and colourfully. He might be a good biologist but he is definitely not a theologian and the religion he attacks is certainly not the religion of well-educated Christians. Dawkins begins Chapter 2 of his by describing Yahweh as

'Arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction. Jealous and proud of it, a petty unjust, unforgiving control freak, a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser, a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capricious, malevolent bully.'

Dawkins arguments are not new but he is popularising them, ironically with the fervour of an evangelist. John Draper in 1875 published a book entitled: *'History of the Conflict between Religion & Science'*. In 1895, Andrew White published his work: *'A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom'*.

Hawkes identifies four principal themes in this genre of books:

- Christianity has been anti-science throughout history.
- Christianity is not credible in the light of scientific discoveries.
- Does the order we see in creation point to the existence of God?
- Is the chaos and suffering we see evidence that a loving God does not exist?

Nonetheless, many of the great scientists were strongly religious. George Le Maitre, who in 1920 proposed the *'Big Bang Theory'* for the origin of the universe, was a Jesuit priest. Astrophysicist Hugh Ross concludes:

If time's beginning is concurrent with the beginning of the universe, as the space-time theorem says, then the cause of the universe must be some entity operating in a time dimension completely independent of, and pre-existent to, the time dimension of the cosmos.

This conclusion is powerfully important to our understanding of who God is and who or what God isn't. It tells us that the creator is transcendent, operating beyond the dimensional limits of the universe. It tells us that God is not the universe itself, nor is God contained within the universe."

Science can only take us so far in an empirical framework. Religion seeks the truth at another level. The fourth theme identified by Hawkes on chaos and suffering was an issue for Charles Darwin who witnessed quite vicious behaviour within the animal kingdom and '*survival of the fittest*'. Darwinism became synonymous with emancipation from ignorance and religion and John Draper wrote: '*Religion must relinquish that ... domineering position she has so long maintained against science.*'

Yet Darwin wrote, late in his life, in 1879:

'I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God. I feel compelled to look to a first cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man and I deserve to be called a Theist...'

Both science and religion seek the truth; neither possesses it. Far from delusions or conflict, I see the information science and religion provide as converging coherently. Indeed, it was Albert Einstein who asserted:

'Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.'

Only God can claim to be, and possess, absolute truth. Good people are honest seekers after truth. Good people sometimes make mistakes but they always cherish the truth.

Why were so many good people, including Cardinals and Bishops, upset with Copernicus and Galileo when they challenged the notion that the earth was at the centre of the universe? I guess Christians were essentially very comfortable with the notion of man being on the planet at the centre of the universe. Being at the centre seems important and sits very easily with the notion of God's special love for man.

Although it was, and is, a Christian belief that God is everywhere, his ubiquity did not really challenge the human mind in the geocentric idea of the cosmos. What seemed very clear and acceptable was that God loved and watched over each person. Somewhere vaguely "up there" was heaven whereas "down below" there was "hell-fire". This relatively simple model of the cosmos was easy to comprehend.

So any denigration of the centrality and importance of man in the cosmos was seen as an heretical attack. Yet the shift in ideas to accommodate a heliocentric universe was a very small one compared to the shift required by more recent mind-boggling scientific advances as we have learned more of the vast cosmos in which the earth is a very small and insignificant planet.

Many people find the notions of 'eternity' and 'infinity' challenging but these are words needed in mathematics and science just as much as in religion. Neither scientists nor theologians understand all they study but both groups seek answers in differing ways - and they often reach convergent conclusions. Indeed, Frederick Burnham, science-historian, writing of the modern view that the cosmos began with a 'Big Bang', said:

'These findings make the idea that God created the universe a more respectable hypothesis today than at any time in the past.'

Nick Hawkes comments:

'It is significant that both biblical literalists and atheistic scientists have opposed the Big Bang Theory for ideological reasons rather than scientific ones.'

The tools of science are observation, measurement and interpretation. Science applies our human reason in an empirical way. Yet measurement and empirical analysis has never been capable of describing the whole of human experience. Rodney Dawkins writes:

'This is a world where DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.'

But one of the critics of Dawkin's atheistic campaign, John Polkinghorne, responds aptly:

'Did Oscar Schindler take great risks to rescue more than one thousand Jews from extermination because of some implicit calculation of genetic advantage?'

Science seeks truth empirically but that approach will never explain human beings completely. The truths of science are balanced by genuine religious experience, aesthetic delight and our sense of moral duty. Some scientists demand the right to push traditional boundaries in the name of research but other people, arguing from religious, aesthetic or ethical perspectives, correctly assert that there are more principles to consider than simply 'if it can be done, it should be permitted'.

Science, in fact, can become very speculative in seeking to provide answers. The simple Bohr-Rutherford Theory of the Atom, for example, with its visual imagery of protons, neutrons and electrons, has given way to 'String Theory', as scientists attempt to reconcile the laws of Quantum Mechanics and Relativity.

Each vibrating string is thought to be 100 billion, billion times smaller than an atom. Scientists, however, have presented five competing string theories. So now we have M-Theory - tiny membranes - that says the five different versions describe the same thing. Nick Hawkes says that

'M-Theory has made it possible that 'the Big Bang' might have been caused by the collision of two parallel universes moving through the eleventh dimension'.

I understand three dimensions. I think I even understand Einstein's notion of time as a fourth dimension. In Mathematics, I learned to perform operations with any number of dimensions. But I simply cannot comprehend what Scientists mean when they talk about living in a universe of eleven dimensions. Some even surmise that maybe there is not one universe but parallel universes or 'multi-verses'. It is ironic that we are now being asked to place our faith in scientific theories too difficult for most of us to grasp. Science can be just as mysterious as religion.

Science, religion, the Arts, philosophy culture, history and tradition are complimentary carriers of value and meaning. In fact we now live in world where we are confronted not with *'the pure objective truth of science'* but the difficulty of distinguishing what exists from what is a made up. We need to ask: Is this 'theory or fact', 'a model or actual', 'virtual or real', 'guessed or known', 'true or

false'. Not only religion but also science breeds its sceptics: "Did man really walk on the moon?" is one such sceptical question - although personally the evidence convinces me man has done so.

Nick Hawkes says that:

'There must be a dialogue between science and religion. There are critical issues in life, and indeed within the universe as we know it, where science has to acknowledge its inability to proceed.'

Science gives us valuable empirical knowledge but there is more to existence than knowledge. We experience feeling and emotions. We can be moved to compassion. We reflect on values such as goodness and freedom. We don't just dance to DNA but are free to make decisions. Religion offers us revelation through scripture, tradition and authentic miracles. Religion invites us to be honest seekers after truth and truth is something to be cherished.

Only God is, and possesses, absolute truth. Good people are honest seekers after truth but even very good people sometimes make mistakes. History reveals that Church leaders, scientists and political leaders have sometimes been spectacularly wrong in overstating what they assert to be truth. Let us look at some examples.

Usury

The papal prohibition on usury meant that it was a sin to charge interest on a money loan. Prior to the 16th century, the old feudal system prevailed in Christendom. The great estates were ruled over by Lords and the masses who lived on these estates were bound together by clearly defined sets of rights and mutual obligations. Borrowing and lending were unnecessary except during times of famine. The Church's teaching on usury was a clear law designed to stop anyone from making a profit out of someone else's misery.

But as trade routes opened up, industrialization occurred and businesses were developed, the feudal system was coming apart. When Charles Borromeo became Bishop of Milan in 1565, he drew attention to the fact that no fewer than 12 popes and three ecumenical councils had flatly condemned the taking of any interest on a loan. Borromeo initially tried to oppose any softening of the ban on usury but within 30 years, this moral doctrine taught at the highest levels of the Church was

questioned, undermined and buried. Jesuit theologians and bishops devised an intricate set of redefinitions to suit the new circumstances. A period of heated controversy came to an end. The Church simply had to adapt to the changing world of which it was part.

In fact in 1850, Pope Pius IX borrowed money at a substantial rate of interest to repair St Peter's Basilica. Finally, what was once regarded as intrinsically evil was transformed into a moral obligation by the 1983 Code of Canon Law which required diligent administrators to invest surplus monies wisely for supporting the works of the Church.

Slavery

The Brothers Purcell opposed the bishops and the Church in its accommodation of slavery. The Church's historical approach right up until the 1860s just before the American Civil War was that slavery was a regrettable but unavoidable condition of fallen human nature. While Spain and Portugal were subduing the New World in the 15th and 16th centuries, no fewer than five popes gave representatives of these countries the right to capture non-believers and reduce them to a state of perpetual slavery. In 1839, Pope Gregory XIII, condemned the slave trade but many US bishops continued to assert it did not apply to slavery as such in the United States.

It was not until Archbishop John Purcell of Cincinnati and his brother, Fr Edward Purcell, editor of the Diocesan Catholic newspaper began to speak out in dissent that attitudes within the Church began to change. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, aided by the courageous voice of Abraham Lincoln, few apologists for slavery could be found in the US Catholic population. An embarrassing statement from the Holy Office in 1886 repeated the old line that 'slavery itself is not at all contrary to the natural and divine law. Finally, in 1888, Pope Leo XIII stated that all forms of slavery were morally wrong.

Mary Ward & the Status of Women

The Council of Trent which concluded in 1563 introduced a lot of regimentation in the Counter-Reformation era. Among the decrees the Council ordered all Bishops to ensure that all nuns in their jurisdictions lived in total

enclosure. The juridical status of women in that period was one of ‘complete subjection to the dominion of man, having no authority of her own’ (James Cain).

All Mary Ward wanted to do was to set up an active congregation for women combining an interior life of prayer with an exterior life of preaching the gospel and doing good works in the world, just as the Jesuits were doing. For a time she was given assistance and encouragement by some Jesuits and Pope Paul V in 1615. The number of her companions grew and the work flourished but with considerable clerical machinations and concerns over the issue of control, the new pope, Urban VIII in 1631 was pressured into suppressing the order. For a time, Mary Ward was even goaled as a heretic and schismatic even though she had said or done nothing wrong other than try to set an active order of women that some clerics derided as those ‘galloping girls’.

Some seventy years later the suppression order was lifted and in 1877 Pope Pius IX gave full approbation to the rapidly growing order but it was not until 1909, 224 years after Mary Ward’s birth that the modern IBVMs were allowed to identify Mary Ward as their foundress.

Mary MacKillop

Mary MacKillop, born in 1842, founded a new congregation, the Josephite Sisters, whose mission was to found schools and orphanages to provide much needed education especially in remote regions of Australia and rural New Zealand. The Bishop of Adelaide attempted to control the congregation. He excommunicated Mary on the charge of disobedience but he later apologised for his actions and absolved Mary from excommunication. The issue of clerical control has arisen many times in the history of the Church leading at times to unjust action. The Pope visited Australia in 1995 for the formal beatification of Mary and she is to be canonized on October 17th this year.

Yves Congar & Ecumenism

The French Dominican theologian, Yves Congar, spent his life trying to heal the divisions between the Christian Churches. But he was denied permission to attend several ecumenical gatherings as an observer including the founding meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1948. He was refused permission to

publish his books and was removed from his teaching post in 1954 by the Holy Office. Between 1955 and 1958 he was virtually under house arrest and forbidden to have any contact with Protestants.

With the election of Pope John XXIII, the cloud over Yves Congar was lifted and he attended all the sessions of the 2nd Vatican Council as a peritus. Congar contributed greatly to the more sensitive language now used in dialogue between the Churches. Pope Paul VI appointed him to be a member of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue and of the new Pontifical International Theological Commission. In 1994, six months before his death at the age of ninety-one, Congar was appointed a Cardinal by Pope John Paul II. The man with unsettling ideas who had been viewed with such suspicion in the decades before the Vatican Council, was vindicated.

What is the point of talking about the above? It demonstrates that the Church has and does change its position, sometimes in matters that were once thought to be immutable. The Church must operate in the society in which it is situated and this sometimes requires significant adaptation. The Church is made up of human beings with human weakness. So mistakes are inevitable. The Church is a wonderful force for good. It helps people in their search for truth but is also a seeker after truth itself.

People who challenge the Church are often neither rebels nor apostates but in many cases are later recognized as saints or persons of great insight. Unfortunately too many in authority in the Church over-react to challenge and criticism but it is a good thing if complacency is challenged.

Sometimes we exalt people too much, including even the Pope. I think most modern Popes are very good and prayerful men but they may not always have the best information, advice or insights. We tend almost to deify our Popes rather than see them as human. Popes can be very human. At least seven popes were married. Eleven were the sons of other popes or priests. For example Pope St Silverus (536 – 537) was the son Pope St Homidas (514 – 523). Since the Second Lateran Council confirmed the requirement of celibacy in 1139, six popes are known to have had illegitimate children.

These are unpleasant, uncomfortable truths we may like to gloss over or hide. The Church, however, as a very good seeker after truth still sits well with me. The Church as possessor of all truth does not. History simply does not allow such a proposition.

Pope Benedict XVI's acknowledges our human weakness in a reflection on Tertullian, born about 150CE, a great influence in the development of Christian dogma, but a man who converted to the Church and then left it.

The Pope said: *"I often think of this great moral and intellectual figure, this man who made such a great contribution to Christian thought. It is clear that in the end he lacked the simplicity and humility to be part of the Church, to accept her weaknesses."*

"When one sees only one's own ideas, in all their greatness, in the end it is precisely this greatness that is lost. The essential characteristic of great theologians is the humility to remain with the Church, to accept her weaknesses and their own, because only God is truly holy. We, on the other hand, always have need of forgiveness."

So what does the theme, 'cherish the truth', imply? It is fundamental that seeking truth is a key part of being fully human. Truth is the basis of our integrity: truth is the basis of our freedom. Human beings seek a meaningful existence which we will only find as humble seekers of the truth, following our conscience.

By our reason and experience, we can reach such the worthy conclusions that it is important to take care of our planet, as many environmentalists and ecologists argue; that we should care for one another, as many humanists and philanthropists argue; that technological development can be a great help to human existence, as many scientists argue. The knowledge provided by scientists is basic to our understanding of our existence. I believe it is also possible to reason our way to the existence of a supreme, creator being but genuine atheists would not agree with me on that point.

We need, however, the revelation of scripture and tradition to believe in the triune God as the source of life love, to believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and in the notion of eternal life after death – the principal Christian mysteries. Obviously not all religions accept these revealed truths but the wisdom of this Christian message – indeed the freedom it offers to seek the truth (not the approach of Islam) – captivates me.

The Catholic Church leads us and supports us in the search for truth and freedom but it does not "give" truth to us. Seeking is the challenge of our faith. The other Christian Churches offer differing emphases. I believe that some fall into the trap of overstating the differences between the Christian denominations

rather than emphasising what is cherished in common. All religions, including the Catholic Church, have been wrong and can still be wrong.

All religions can inform us in some respects but individual conscience is still conscience as we seek the truth. My personal problem with Islam, especially in its more radical expression, is the evident lack of respect for freedom of individuals.

In seeking the truth, I believe it is right to stress such notions as:

- Always follow your own “common sense”
- Traditional family values are a good guide
- We have a loving and compassionate God
- Human dignity and respect for others are key values
- Deliberate harming of others is always wrong
- Personal integrity - doing, and living by, what one believes to be right - makes one free
- Be wary of religious fanatics because they lack balance and a wider sympathetic perspective
- Use your talents to find God by whatever field most enriches your life be it in science, religion, the arts, social service, environmental concern and so on

I believe it is wrong, if we really accept the Gospel imperative that the *“the truth will set us free”* for anyone to try to impose on us that:

- The Church is the hierarchy rather than the *‘people of God’*. The ‘people of God’ is the Second Vatican Council definition of the Church
- People cannot push for genuine equality, leading to the ordination of women
- People cannot ask for more married clergy
- We cannot have compassion and openness to the sacraments for those in breach of formal Church law. In this country, courageous Catholic Bishops, such as John Heaps & Geoffrey Robinson, have argued this way.

As Catholics we need the loving support of the Church, but as our compassionate teacher, not as an ideological enforcer. We seek the truth within the Church which is at its finest when it acts as the hand of God, reaching out to those in need. Social service is faith in action. It is the faith in action of the people who are the Church. Some people are more genuinely ‘religious’ than they

realise when they care for others, not in a pious sense but by being genuinely concerned for others and bringing God's love to others.

Most people seek values and attitudes that elevate the human spirit. They seek an education for their children that provides a coherent system of beliefs. They hope that their children will learn to be adults of sound common sense, with integrated knowledge and values. They may not be able to express it as well as the great spiritual writer, Thomas Merton, but somehow many people understand intuitively what he expressed when he wrote:

'Ultimately, faith is the only key to the universe. The final meaning of human existence, and the answers to the questions on which all our happiness depends cannot be found in any other way.'

Arguably the greatest modern-day scientist, Stephen Hawking, born in 1942, (precisely 300 years after the death of Galileo), a man crippled by motor neurone disease, stated:

'Why is there anything at all? When we have answered this question we will know the mind of God.'

Robert Hugh Benson wrote:

"There is but one thing in the world worth pursuing – the knowledge of God."

Both science and religion cherish the truth of the profound mystery of existence. How is it that we are here? I believe the conclusions of both science and religion point to the same reality of God, *'the way the truth and the light'* (John 14:6). This is, indeed, a truth to be cherished.

How To Educate And Evangelize To Be Free

Introduction . . . clarifying . . .

- Our aim is to be free. “*the truth will set you free.*” If Jesus is the “truth,” then it is Jesus who will set you free. Not education, not evangelization.
- Education and evangelization are means / tools / instruments that leads us to freedom; education and evangelization are not opposites, they complement each other, “2 sides of the same coin” for a Christian
- What is being asked is the “how”, i.e., how may education and evangelization help attain the goal of freedom. So, it is expected that at the end of this keynote talk some concrete suggestions are made towards attaining the goal or aim of freedom.
- BUT, for Christians, reality revolves around the person of Jesus. Thus, the expression *Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life*. What does this mean? It means that followers of Jesus
 - Abide by the teaching / values of Jesus (truth)
 - Follow the way this teaching and values are lived (way)
 - Live the way Jesus live or how Jesus celebrates life (Life)
- The important point is: Jesus is the be-all, and end-all of a Christian’s life – the alpha and the omega. Ultimately, *reality is seen from the vantage point of Christ* and not from an exclusively scientific perspective, uncontaminated by the revelation in Jesus.
- Implication: for human beings *reality is relational*, i.e., relationships.
 - God is love, God is merciful Father Vs. God as Supreme Being
- Implication: our view of what we term as “*reality*” or even “*truth*” depends in many instances on our own experience.
 - Discoveries of empirical science will only make sense and be accepted insofar as it gives meaning to personal relationships.
 - (*Richard Dawkins description of the God of the OT – a description of his father?*)

EXPERIENCES OF FREEDOM

REFERENDUM 2011 in South(ern) Sudan

- *What happened:*
- *Hugely successful – perhaps the most successful free referendum in recorded history (99.62% voted, 98.83% in favour of independence)*
- *Net result: independence from Khartoum, creation of a new nation*
- *Some questions:*
 - *What factors contributed to its success? Education? Evangelization? Leadership? Its being a one-issue referendum?*
 - *Can this success be duplicated? If so, how may education and evangelization help South Sudan to be truly free?*
- *Lessons we can learn from it:*
 - *Very high percentage of participation – it was community action, Africa style, both among South Sudanese and foreigners*
 - *Extensive publicity and education*
 - *Evangelization was at work, because referendum was closely portrayed in biblical terms “let my people decide,” and program like “101 days of prayer towards a peaceful referendum”*
 - *Choice is on a single issue – to be free or to remain under Khartoum government; option is crystal clear*
 - *It was successful also because it was the right time for it. It was a decision “whose time has come.” Very important*

PEOPLE POWER (EDSA) REVOLUTION 1986

- *What happened:*
- *Unique: a bloodless revolution, deposing a 20-year dictatorship*
- *1986 was the culmination of the protest movement against the dictatorship that started in 1970’s.*
- *1986 was provoked by:*
 - *Killing of former Sen. Benigno Aquino in 1983 under the watch of the Marcos regime*
 - *Calling of snap election in 1985*
- *Role of military – trigger of the EDSA revolution, but not the engine behind it*

- *Taking Marcos out was easy, building the nation after a dictatorship was arduous and bloody*
 - *Military coups: 1987, 1988, 1989*
 - *“Political revolution” easy; “social revolution” - painstaking*
- *Lessons we can learn from it:*
 - *EDSA – a religious event? Leaders knew exactly the real agents of revolution – not military might, but a population fed up with the dictatorship, but also educated civil society, and especially mobilized grass-roots (BECs) steeped in Active Non-Violence*
 - *Leader had vision – she knew exactly where to lead the people*
 - *The only way we can defeat violence and armed dictatorship is by education and evangelization*
 - *(Philippines) There is political stability; economic development is slowly emerging from the ashes of dictatorial rule, cronyism, kleptocracy, etc.*

Freedom and . . . freedoms

- *Freedom after a revolution . . . independence*
- *Freedom at a time of peace (after independence) . . .*

“The truth will set you free . . .” How?

- *Our Process hereafter:*
 - *Name, face the truths, realities, challenges and address them*
 - *Suggest ways to put things right and move in the direction of a truly free society and Church*

EDUCATING TOWARDS FREEDOM

TRUTHS ABOUT EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

- *Teachers, educators, administrators*
- *Infra-structure*
- *Course content / syllabus, curriculum*
- *Policies, laws*
- *Implementation*

IMPERATIVES IN REGARD TO EDUCATING TOWARDS FREEDOM

- *Teachers, educators, administrators*
- *Infra-structure*

- Course content / syllabus, curriculum –by government? By Church?
- Policies, laws
- Implementation
- EDUCATION OF THE POPULATION ON A MASSIVE SCALE
- Can this be done?
- The “Thomasite” experience (1903-1930) in the Philippines
 - 1901-1935: more than 1,000 teachers from the US
 - Sent to establish the public school system with English as medium of instruction
 - And to train teachers
 - In a period of less than 30 years, the program raised literacy rate in the Philippines to more than 80%
- Am I suggesting we duplicate the Thomasite experience here in S. Sudan?
 - News: employment of 20,000 teachers from Zimbabwe, Botswana, etc.

EVANGELIZING TOWARDS FREEDOM

TRUTHS ABOUT EVANGELIZATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

- Agents of evangelization: clergy, lay leaders, faithful
- Infra-structure
- Content of evangelization and catechesis
- Policies, laws
- Program or strategy of Implementation

HOW EVANGELIZATION CAN HELP TOWARDS A TRULY FREE SOUTH SUDAN

- Agents of evangelization: clergy, lay leaders, faithful
- Infra-structure
- Content of evangelization and catechesis
- Policies, laws
- Program or strategy of Implementation
- Formation of *Small Christian Communities*
- Coordination, synchronizing of agenda of evangelization: *National Pastoral Council* to set the agenda of evangelization in the next 20 years, i.e. National Pastoral Plan

Underpinnings to Education and Evangelization

- ▶ For education and evangelization to contribute in bringing about FREEDOM in South Sudan, they must be underpinned by
 - A clear, “owned” *VISION OF A NATION / CHURCH*
 - Credible, inspiring, resolute and accountable *LEADERSHIP* in nation and Church
 - Empowered and fully-engaged *COMMUNITY*

VISION OF A NATION / CHURCH

TRUTHS IN RELATION TO THE VISION OF A NATION / CHURCH

- ▶ Is it articulated clearly
- ▶ Is it “owned”, “appropriated” by the people
- ▶ How is it communicated?
- ▶ What programs do we have towards its “ownership” by the people

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL AND CHURCH VISION

- ▶ Is it articulated clearly
- ▶ Is it “owned”, “appropriated” by the people
- ▶ How is it communicated?
- ▶ What programs do we have towards its “ownership” by the people
- ▶ New Constitution / National Pastoral Plan

LEADERSHIP FOR A FREE SOUTH SUDAN (NATION AND CHURCH)

TRUTHS ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH SUDAN (SOCIETY)

- ▶ Experience of leadership in Africa
- ▶ Leadership-community relationship
- ▶ Exercise of leadership:
 - Selection
 - Credibility
 - Inspirational
 - Resoluteness
 - Accountability
- ▶ Experience of leadership in Africa

- ▶ Leadership-community relationship
- ▶ Exercise of leadership:
 - Selection
 - Credibility
 - Inspirational
 - Resolute
 - accountable

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH SUDAN SOCIETY

- ▶ Leadership-community relationship
- ▶ Exercise of leadership:
 - Selection
 - Credibility
 - Ability to inspire
 - Resoluteness
 - Accountability

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ABOUT CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH SUDAN

- ▶ Leadership-community relationship
- ▶ Exercise of leadership:
 - Selection
 - Credibility
 - Ability to inspire
 - Resoluteness
 - Accountability

COMMUNITY TOWARDS FREEDOM

TRUTHS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

- ▶ Family – community dynamic
 - Ubuntu “I am because we are”
 - Children are of the community
- ▶ Power (capability) of the community
 - Who makes the final decision
- ▶ Community in relation to the country/nation/state

- Family / Boma / Payam / County / Town, etc.
- Federalism?
- Society / nation in relation to the Church community

HOW WE CAN BECOME A TRULY FREE COMMUNITY

- Family – community dynamic
- Power (capability) of the community
- Community in relation to the country/nation/state
- Society / nation in relation to the Church community

SUMMARIZING . . .

- The truth will set us free . . .
- Education and evangelization will help
- But they have to be a “new” or ”renewed,” contemporary, updated and relevant, type of education and evangelization
- But also, the vision of nation / church needs to be articulated clearly, appropriated, “owned,” by the people / faithful
- Leadership needs to be re-examined and made relevant to current realities and needs
- Sense of community re-viewed and re-configured

Conclusion

- *The Gospel entrusted to us is also the word of truth. A truth which liberates (John 8:32) and which alone gives peace of heart is what people are looking for when we proclaim the Good News to them. The truth about God, about man and his mysterious destiny, about the world; the difficult truth that we seek in the Word of God and of which, we repeat, we are neither the masters nor the owners, but the depositaries, the heralds and the servants. (Evangelii Nuntiandi 78).*

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