



# Networking Cedara

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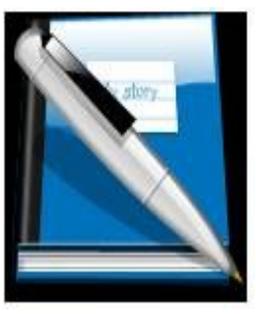
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## THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AT CEDARA

**Tuesday, 21 August:** Institute Liturgy (4.15 pm Freeborn Kimbome OMI presiding)

**Saturday, 25 August:** Cluster Sports & Family Fun Day at SMMS.

**Tuesday, 27 August:** Institute Liturgy (4.15 pm Patrick Aleke SPS presiding)



### A NOTICE FROM THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER. Stuart C. Bate, OMI.

I am proposing Tuesday 21 August 1215- 1400hrs for our first meeting of the collaborative research group.  
I suggest the theme of **The mission to heal and save.**  
Let me hear if you have other suggestions.  
Choosing the theme will be the main task of our first meeting.  
Please let me know if you will attend or not.

### QUOTES OF THE WEEK. Editorial

**‘CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOU CHANGE YOUR WORLD’-**  
Norman Vincent Peale.

**‘MY BEST FRIEND IS THE ONE WHO BRINGS THE BEST IN ME’-**  
Henry Ford.

**‘THERE IS NO ONE WHO IS INSIGNIFICANT IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD’-**  
Alistair Begg.

**CRITICAL ANALYSES OF THE AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY.****Octavio Bernardo, SCJ.**

Classic philosophy at the current juncture in history is being constantly bombarded by African philosophers and theologians. Quite a number of them trivialize and play down classic philosophy simply because it was mostly done by westerners. It is important to note right at the beginning that philosophy is first and foremost a human endeavour. With this regards, Africans ought to participate in this endeavour in conjunction with their fellow human beings located all over the world. On the other hand, post modernity has put forth the view according to which our way of understanding and viewing the world depends on our place in history our cultural background our presuppositions. In other words, our knowledge is remarkably situated. Making an acquaintance with African philosophers leads one to easily see that the African philosophy lives distortedly from this insight.

The claim that Africans have a philosophy distinct from the western philosophy is not very convincing. First one has to distinguish between philosophy and philosophers and the second one has to take into account that statement by a philosopher is not necessarily a statement of philosophy. Here the positive side of post modernity would emerge. It is undoubtedly correct that we are situated in space and time and our place and time in history might well influence the way in which we perceive certain things. The very same person will look at her mother differently as time goes by. A husband would have a different view of the wife than the one he or she has when they first met.

From this perspective, we can reassert that post modernity is right when it says that our knowledge is situated and that we always know from a certain point of view. However, there is one thing that is left out and that is the transcendental character of knowledge. The intelligibility of the universe is a truth that is both situated and transcendental. The very existence of a person is also a truth that is both situated and transcendental. In other words, a thing can be conceived by an African under the place in history his life's situation and at the same time, that very same thing might well go beyond the bound of an African milieu. At this point, the feebleness of post modernity would emerge. That there is such a thing as objective truth is not just an academic construct to put the lower classes down. Without the objective truth human quest for knowledge of themselves and of the world will collapse. Now it becomes clear that an African philosophy radically distinct from a western philosophy would appear to be absurd.

From what we have mentioned above one can easily notice why there is so much confusion in the so-called African philosophy. The self-proclaimed official interpreters of African reality want us to believe that we are not what we think we are. They are building up what I would call a dictatorship of opinion. In which one's viewpoint is forced upon others .

Within the dictatorship of opinion, philosophy is reduced to a matter of opinions which none is better than other. It is instructive to take note that philosophy is both particular and universal. In other words, philosophically speaking something can speak in a very special way to Africans but that does not mean that the very same thing is not related to other human beings placed in other quarters of the world. As I mentioned earlier within the so-called African philosophy there are those who argue paradoxically with the intention of promoting African thought that the Cartesian cogito ergo sum is a framework which characterizes the west while Ubuntu is the framework that characterises Africans. As Desmond Tutu quoted by Julius Gathogo stunningly put forth:

‘Africans believe in something that is difficult to render in English. We call it Ubuntu, botho. It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, and hospitality, putting yourself on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together’

It is, of course, true that we can only be human together. The problem begins when it affirms that this is typically African as if a human being who is situated in Europe can be human alone. Aristotle defines human beings as a rational animal. We cannot say that is typically European characteristic of Europeans. At this point, it would be ideal to spell out that rationality and communion are both characteristics of being human the very same Aristotle mentioned that human is social beings and outside of it their either beasts or something else. On the other hand, Tutu has used his rationality to formulate and bring about his statement. In other words neither Ubuntu nor rationality, alone can describe comprehensively what humanity is. ....

*To be continued.*

## HUMANITY LIVING JUSTICE

**Kelvin F Banda, OP & Felisberto J Dumbo, SCJ.**

Justice has a paradox or misconceptions. Meaning that, it is easier to talk about justice than doing what justice really entails. This refers to the classic definition of Thomas Aquinas, ‘justice obliges us to “render to each his [sic] due”: *ius suum uni cui que tribuere*’. For Byrne (1988:10), justice is ‘present when people are treated according to their God-given dignity’. Justice compels all the areas of human life. Unfortunately, the theoretical aspect of justice has prevailed more than the practical dimension of the term justice. How can we talk about justice where most people [countries] are still living under the stigma of dependence on colonial powers,

European capitalism, and multinational capitalism? There has been so much talk about justice other than living and doing justice. It is the same as talking theology and not doing theology – like some philosophers talk about philosophy other than doing philosophy – good at talking but very poor at implementation. One must ask oneself, “what is really justice?” The answer should never come from a selfish motive or intention. It must come from the heart of what justice should and must be. For Packer, justice is doing what is right or “as it should be.” Justice is an attribute of God – holiness and righteousness – living and doing what is right. Justice is a gift of holiness and righteousness which must be implemented and lived. Like Paul Louis Metzger, justice must involve making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by upholding both goodness and objectivity.

To live righteously, “we need to look after the poor, orphans and widows in their distress and to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world” (Proverbs 29:7; James 1:27 NRSV). For as long as justice does not become a human character, then, justice will never be lived. Justice must flow from the well of goodness – restoring lives as children of God. The poor, orphans, widows, the abused, the marginalized must receive their due. If not, justice has not been done or lived. There must be fair trial in courts; prisoners must be treated with dignity and not being abused.

Justice has been misused by a lot of people in such a way that some rich countries – the ruling classes seem to be the only benefactors of what is intended to be shared with the poor. Regrettably, the economic dependence which is caused by external forces (non-Africans) in agreement with internal forces (Africans) imposes their power over those who are fragile. Such is injustice. It is not living and doing what justice entails – equity. The rich minority becomes steadily richer at the expense of the poor majority. In this way, justice becomes an empty word. In Africa, things are worse; visibly, there is a big gap between those who are considered higher classes and those who are considered lower classes; meaning externally politicians pretend to surpass this gap, but in truth, it is just a mere utopia.

Furthermore, for justice to prevail, and to end a “mere utopia,” there is need to denounce oppression towards the poor. The government as well as Church leaders should not just favour the rich and look down on those who are less fortunate (James 2:1-13). For this to happen, there is a need to fight human circles which downplay social justice while highlighting personal morality. This brings injustice. There must be a transformed society; or community transformation which should be part of restoring wholeness of all persons. Both the Church and government leaders must be able to address inequalities that haunt the less fortunate. Abuses of women, girls or boys, unfair wages must be eradicated. As Howard Bess says, for

justice to be lived, education must be desegregated – meaning that, education without discrimination and appropriate housing are necessary to achieve justice for all. Churches and people in government should not remain terribly segregated by race and economic status.

Thus, one of the ways for justice to be lived is that, women and children must be involved in the matters of justice. Justice cannot be lived when the mediators are all the patriarchal who formulate ideas that suit and favour them at the expense of women and children. For as long as there continues to be unequal distribution of wealth between the classes, power, unemployment, segregation, tribalism, racism, sexism, disrespect of the other gender, sexual orientation, wars, genocide, rape, defilement, child molestation, street children/elders, less medical care for the needy and only reserved for the privileged; a society full of envy, jealousy, favouring only the rich and downplay social justice; then, justice will not be lived.

Lastly, humanity must never neglect the important matters of the law – “justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matthew. 23:23 NRSV). For justice to be lived, we are to purify our hearts (James 4:8) whose desires lead us to corruption. It is only with/through transformed hearts that we can extend and live the justice of God to the poor, orphans, and widows, and the rest of humanity without showing prejudice.

**THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION AND THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MINISTER:  
PRIEST, RELIGIOUS, CONSECRATED LAY MINISTER.**

**Augustine Epieru, MCCJ.**

Those who are close-followers of the events of the Universal Church may already be having questions as to what the particular content of this year’s Synod of Bishops scheduled for October (2018) will be. Well, the theme is already clearly stated, ‘**Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**’. This theme presupposes a number of aspects for vocational discernment, but to me, experience itself gives us material for reflection, the most urgent of which seems to be the ‘Sexual Revolution’ of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some of us, especially the young generation, may already be nursing wounds of ‘struggle’ in our sexuality peculiar to this generation which make up part of our vocational stories, and we feel compelled by this experience to be witnesses to the gospel of the *Theology of the body*, which seems to be the prophetic sign to be stamped on the foreheads of most of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saints, already having their first major representative in heaven (St John Paul II, pray for us).

Here I make an attempt to bring into our awareness what could be our interior and exterior attitudes and dispositions before the fundamental truths of the theology of the body in the context of our time. Aware of the existing struggle, the vocational question could be: *how can we be these prophetic witnesses unless we stand out boldly on the side of Christ and speak the Truth that redeems the world from the enslavement of lust camouflaging itself under the faces of human rights and freedom?*

Not without recognizing the exceptions to the rule (in some cases), I have often pondered why the Church is markedly insistent on her teachings regarding human sexuality, particularly on sex and marriage, and all that revolves around this. But when one brings one's sinful self before the truth of the inner person, who is always longing for Love, for union with God, one comes to realize that the Church, far from imposing laws impossible to adhere to, and guided by the Holy Spirit, is being faithful to her mission received from Jesus himself, to 'teach them to obey all that I have commanded you' (Mathew 28:20a), the greatest commandment of which is "Love one another, just as I have loved you" (John 13:34); and we all know how Jesus in his teaching always leads us to the heart (synonymous with conscience), which is the centre of Love, of meeting with God; the centre of peace and of human happiness attested to by biblical tradition and confirmed by our inner experience.

When the disciples asked Jesus about the question of divorce, Jesus said to them; "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (Mathew 19:8). When faced with fundamental questions of human life which seem not to have direct answers from the scriptures, it may suffice that we enter into the depth of our hearts, and there we shall get answers which correspond to the truth, because the new Law, of which Jesus is the author, is written in our hearts. In this regard, rather than defend our 'sexual sins', it is necessary that we allow ourselves to be challenged by the truth of our sexuality and embrace the healing and peace that Christ gives us freely so that we may be sincere dispensers of this healing and peace to those we are called to minister to.

As for any aspect of our Christian witness, our sexuality, and the way we use our bodies, if it is to be redemptive and to lead us to true human fulfillment ought to image the love with which Christ loves us. West, in his introductory book to John Paul II's *Sexual Revolution; Theology of the Body for Beginners* (2009:93), outlines four qualities that characterize Christ's Love:

Christ gives his body *freely* (John 10:18); The freedom with which Christ gives his body is not freedom in the sense of having the right to do with one's body whatever one wants, characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it is freedom in the sense of having the right to do what we ought to do, which is "to glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:20b).

Christ gives his body *totally* (John 13:1); totally, that is, with neither reservation nor with any condition; with no selfish interest, ‘with no strings attached’.

Christ gives his body *faithfully* (‘I am with you always’, Mt 28:20b); Christ’s love is not a ‘contract love’ or an ‘instant love’ like the instant foods common in our modern restaurants, or the ‘instant love’ that begins and ends in between walls, but a love that commits itself to the beloved forever. Christ gives his body *fruitfully* (John 10:10); Christ comes so that we may have life abundantly. His love is a love that is pro-life and not destructive to life, it is a love that brings life and not one that terminates it. True love must always yield fruits, material or spiritual.

According to John Paul II, sexual union as a language of the body always has a ‘spousal meaning’ and must at all times express simultaneously these four qualities of Christ’s love. Each time when one or more of these qualities is (are) lacking in the act, it is an expression of lust disguised as love (even for couples wedded in church). In the face of the temptation of ‘hardness of heart’ that Jesus alerts us of, the core contemporary questions we should be asking ourselves therefore are; does masturbation image God’s *free, total, faithful and fruitful* love? or does it not? Does fornication (pre-marital sex- which, for religious men and women, is sacrilege)? Does adultery? Does homosexual behaviour? Does lusting after pornographic images? Does contracepted sex?

If the answer to each of these questions is Yes, that Yes will always be endorsed by God through the permanent peace and joy of a clear conscience. But if it is No, the opposite will be true. For instance, some of the authentic counter signs consciously or unconsciously manifested are; hiding one’s true identity from the partner, hiding oneself from God’s witnesses on earth (like parents, guardians, religious superiors, Christians whom one suspects know him or her), calculating movements prior to and after the act, letting the act known only to a person who approves of the sin, for security reasons; anxiety, using anti-life strategies (contraceptives); deep feelings of emptiness and inner division, fear (even for the future of the vocation), and physical, psychological and spiritual ‘illnesses’ whose impact varies according to circumstances surrounding the act, and others revealed in the heart.

For the message of redemption to heal us, we need to ask God for the grace of a true conversion of heart and so courageously face the truth and name our sin in the face of our identity, and acknowledge that ‘I have sinned’ when we have done so, and ask for God’s mercy (and the forgiveness of the person we have used to satisfy our lustful desires, if necessary). The more we open ourselves to the Truth, the more we shall allow the light of the gospel to illumine our sexual brokenness and God, who **Loves you and loves me unconditionally**, and always wills for us lasting peace and happiness, will not only have mercy on us all through, but will also heal us holistically and by the experience of our ‘redeemed brokenness’, he will empower us to be ‘wounded healers’ to a generation so urgently in need of sexual healing and redemption of the body. May Mary, Refuge of Sinners and Mother of Grace, accompany us on this journey.

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