



# Networking Cedara



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## THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AT CEDARA

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**Tuesday, 28 August:** Institute Liturgy (4.15 pm Patrick Aleke SPS presiding)

**Tuesday, 06 September:** Cluster Worship (SJTI at 5.30 pm)  
 :Stakeholders/Special General Meeting( 8.30 am boardroom)  
 :Cluster Executive ( 2.00 pm at ESSA)

**Tuesday, 11 September:** Institute Liturgy (4.15 pm Luigi Morell M.Afr presiding)

STAFF MEANDERINGS.....1

### STAFF MEANDERINGS

Fr Emmanuel Ndlovu CMM will be away from the 23 - 28<sup>th</sup> of August. On the 28<sup>th</sup> he will be attending two Liturgy meetings in Khanya House Pretoria.

THE CHALLENGES OF.....1

### The Challenges of Poverty in Africa

Srs. Sam and Eugenia (Development Studies I)

IS THERE AN AFRICAN.....3

Countries in the sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable to the global economic crises of poverty and inequality. Historically, Africans face challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequalities. The region experiences endless high levels of unemployment depending on food imports, widespread conflict and political insecurity and vulnerability to the impact of climate change. This paper enlightens the poverty and unemployment challenges in the region by reflecting on the effectiveness of African policy approaches adopted so far. It then suggests recommendations in areas of socio-economic policy-making as well as regional cooperation. Vulnerability to poverty include a noticeable increase of people living in shortages. Overall large populations experience a high proportion of living on the poverty threshold, food dependency- reliance on imported food aid-and inequality between and within countries. Across the sub-Saharan region research has proven that people are facing multiple risks and vulnerabilities due to poverty and unemployment (Diamond 1999). But poor people, especially those living in rural areas who depend on agriculture, and in tropical ecologies, are at high-

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er risk than others (Diamond 1999:60). Poverty is perpetuated by harvest failure, market failure and volatility; conflict and health shocks, among other factors. While these socio-political factors independently affect poverty and poverty reduction, it is easier to see their impact when we speak about the *resource curse*. Sub-Saharan Africa is endowed with natural resources. These resource endowments – such as oil, gas, coltan, diamonds, and hardwoods – have become a ‘curse’ in the face of the political incentives and policy failures (Robinson et al 2005:19). Indeed, ‘policy failure [is] the prime cause of the underperformance of the resource abundant countries’ (Lal and Myint 1996:87). As these resources are commonly owned by the state, the government decides the extraction level, timeframe and expenditure 10 of the rents. It is easy to see that some governments would wish to benefit economically and politically from the resource as quickly as possible, which leads to over-extraction and short-term policy-making.

We, therefore, suggest that for Africa to come out, these poverty quagmire short-term and long-term development policy agendas, like the NEPAD, should be revisited by governments and political leaders. This also throws a challenge to the Church in revising her positing of political economy influence for Africa’s development agendas.

### IS THERE AN AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY?

By Felisberto Dumbo SCJ

In the first instance one may answer yes to the question posed. However, those who are sceptics may say no. *Mutatis mutandis*-let us state in African world view. African spirituality is grounded in many aspects of religiosity and philosophical thought. In this regard there is no dichotomy between sacred and secular because total realization of the human being is understood in a holistic way. Simply put, the visible and invisible worlds involve each other. Therefore, within the framework of African spirituality one finds an integral way of praying, worshiping and dialoguing with God. Sometimes God is addressed through the ancestors and at other times God is addressed directly. That is why one should not be surprised that in many African cultures there are altars for the ancestors and not for God. The reason for this is because there is a belief that God as the source of life shares his being with the ancestors who are in communion with the entire community, sustaining the vital force and in a communicative manner share with the living on earth and those not yet born. Put simply, ‘the worshiper prays in solidarity with them to the Creator, using prayer-formulas or sacred places which they have bequeathed to him. These are regarded as pledges of divine favour, since the dead are held to stand in a close relationship to God, even if they are not invoked themselves’ (Shorter 1983:199). Thus, the *anamnestic* thinking and solidarity is observed in African spirituality.

Agreeing with John Mbiti (1969:34), religiosity is intrinsic and “spontaneous” (not only in rural areas) in the life of Africans. Therefore, humans becoming as a microcosm within the macrocosm act together with all creatures to manifest the universal solidarity of creation. Hitherto the way of expressing African spirituality is always in terms of integration and the involvement of God, the world, divinities and the spirits which unfortunately have been reduced into *animism*. This holistic view is the most important for African spirituality because ‘the cosmos in its variety of forms, speaks a language which reveals the highest form of life, namely God, who triumphs over death. With this view, the cosmos has a sacramental dimension for the African person (Bujo 2010:210). The integral aspect which is noticed in Africa’s way of praying is always addressing God as the source of love and life. However, through prayers, God is mentioned by attributes and personal name, that is, God is perceived as a Supreme Being who is not only transcendent but also immanent and relational. That is why He is in many circumstances the prime addressee. Nevertheless, African people involve in their prayers and spirituality the reality of spirits, although ‘the spirits take a much more indefinite form...’ (Cameron 1977:30) to whom requests are made.

It is worth emphasizing here that the way African people address God is not the same way they address the spirits because there is a hierarchy in the African cosmological view. On this note, ‘people make offerings and sacrifices, in certain cases, to the spirits, especially the living and the dead’ (Mbiti 1975:10). Hence, we can say that there is an African spirituality because God is the centre of African religiosity and it is proved through myths of creation (see E. Mveng 1979:234) and the attributes which are also found in Christian philosophy (attributes). To reduce African religion to *animism* is to obscure the whole African belief, which goes beyond that. That is why I concur with Cameron (1977:30) who warns us, ‘one must be careful in applying this label [*animism*] to African religions, because as we have seen, these religions have strong beliefs in the Supreme Being and in the ancestors’. Finally, the old question of some missionaries, colonizers, pessimist Africans and some argumentative fallacies of the existence of African spirituality seems to be a mere ignorance because it is there. The problem is the arrogance of those who consider other spiritualities as devilish in the name of the Christian God and think that Western spirituality should be the pattern of African spirituality as if God privileges a certain culture over others. This is detrimental.

**ST AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, PRAY FOR US**



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