KASSA –
KAAD Association of Scholars in Southern Africa

Arrupe Jesuit University Harare

"Things have a Price, People have a Dignity" (Pope Francis)
The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes in Africa"

Joint Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe
July 21st – 24th 2022

Conference Documentation

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KAAD
KATHOLISCHER AKADEMISCHER AUSLÄNDER-DIENST

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Joint Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe
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Overview

Individual arrival of all participants on the 21st of July	
Thursday **21st July 2022**	Evening: *Opening of the Conference* Opening addresses of delegation leaders and of partner organisations Introduction into the programme of the conference, reception/dinner
Friday **22nd July 2022**	Morning: *Thematic Session in the Plenary* *Thematic Sessions in Groups* Afternoon: *Topical Sub-Sectors, Sessions in Groups at different venues* Evening: *Plenary*
Saturday **23rd July 2022**	Morning: *Thematic Session in the Plenary* Afternoon: *Excursions into Art or Nature* *Evening:* *Closing of the Conference, Entertainment programme*
Sunday **24th July 2022**	Morning: *Holy Mass for Closure of the Conference*

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"Things have a Price, People have a Dignity" (Pope Francis) – The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes in Africa"

Joint Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe
July 21st – 24th 2022

PREFACE

Christian Churches have for a long time been at the forefront of shaping modern societies in African countries. In most of Sub-Sahara Africa, it was the missionaries who started in the 19th century (and with renewed vigour after World War II) to make the first steps in formal education, establishing the well-known mission schools, which up to now exist as pillars of quality education. Particularly the Catholic Church has been on the forefront of this and the effort has gone way beyond the schooling sector (Nursery, Primary, Secondary). It may serve as a telling example of the church influence in higher education that it was members of the Society of Jesus which were called by Emperor Haile Selassie to start the first University College in Ethiopia.

Education is thus the 'classic' vehicle of the church to convey its Christian ideas of human dignity, justice, mercy and reconciliation. There are however also more 'direct' ways of doing it: Bishops issuing pastoral letters for example which decry grievances and injustice or committees looking into matters of justice and peace on parish, diocesan and national level (Catholic Commissions of Justice and Peace – CCJP). Zimbabwe, the host country of our conference, has seen much of this and has been cited as one of the strongest cases in point.

Also in the sector of peace building, the church(es) have played a pivotal role. In many of the dreadful civil wars and ethnic clashes on the African continent, church structures and church actors have been present before the conflict (therefore knowing the opponents well), during the conflict (thus giving shelter and a sign of perseverance) and after the conflict (giving invaluable services during reconstruction). The cases of Mozambique and Northern Uganda can serve as instances: in the case of the former, the Catholic community of Sant' Egidio is known to have brokered important peace treaties while in the case of the latter, it was an interfaith, peace-building organisation ("Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative") which had a decisive impact in transforming the conflict. For the long conflict between North and South Sudan ("South Sudanese Council of Churches"), similar stories could be told and many more can be found and recounted.

When when we meet as scholars and academicians for a conference, however, we will do well also to ask critical questions. A critical view at the history of Christian mission and its intertwinement with colonialism and cultural arrogance

has been subject of much debate and research. But what about the problem we face today when the church and the clergy in a country are just as divided as the rest of society in view of an autocratic regime? What about church leaders and members who put their own ethnic background above the common good or even become part of the conflict (harrowing stories of such cases have been told during the genocide in Rwanda for example)? What if economies and societies suffer from corruption and misappropriation of public funds and the very churches that should point out what is wrong are being told to sort out their own financial intransparencies first?

As Catholics, we have been given a formidable tool with which to measure and evaluate wrongdoings as well as interventions: It is called "Catholic Social Teaching" and consists of the Catholic doctrines on matters of human dignity and common good in society. The principles of it often derive from particular papal encyclicals, but also from biblical teaching and the philosophical thinking of doctors of the universal church like St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas.

With this tool in hand, our conference wants to spell out the particular situation in African societies when it comes to social justice and wealth distribution, fight against oppression, subsidiarity and the role of the state.

We want to learn particularly from the situation in Zimbabwe, since we are hosted in this beautiful country with its rich and turbulent story. But we also want to learn from other national and regional stories when we welcome participants from over ten other African countries and delegates even from Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Apart from being a market for sharing experiences, our conference also strives to be a place for new ideas, new initiatives and approaches how the church can be true leaven in human societies, giving them a taste of what true justice and peace means for every woman and man who has been made in the likeness of the creator.

Fr. Dr. Dr. J. Oduor Afulo SJ, Vice-Chancellor Arrupe Jesuit University
Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ, President of KAAD

Thursday, 21st July 2022

6.30 pm Conference Opening

Opening Addresses:

- His Grace Robert C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare
- His Grace, Archbishop Paolo Rudelli, Apostolic Nuncio to Zimbabwe
- His Excellency Udo Volz, German Ambassador, Harare
- Fr. Dr. J. Oduor Afulo SJ, Vice-Chancellor Arrupe Jesuit University
- Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ, President of KAAD
- Dr. Locardia Shayamunda and Mr. Adio-Adet T. Dinika
  (chair of KAAD Partner Committee and of KAAD-Network KASSA)

Facilitation: Dr. Marko Kuhn, KAAD

- *Keynote:* Dr. David Kaulem, Dean, School of Education & Leadership at Arrupe Jesuit Univ., Lecturer in Ethics, Development and Social Justice:
  "Pope Francis declares that 'Things have a Price and People have a Dignity'. What Does this Mean in the Context of Africa?"

Afterwards: Reception/Dinner

Friday, 22nd July 2022

8.00 am Holy Mass at Arrupe Jesuit University

9.00 am Thematic Session in the Plenary
The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes – Perspectives from Academia and Praxis

Facilitation: Fr. Dr. J. Oduor Afulo SJ, Vice-Chancellor Arrupe University

Presentation: Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ, President of KAAD, Former Secretary of the German Bishops' Conference:
"The Involvement of the Church in societal Processes – Experience in the Context of Germany and of Europe"

Statements, questions, discussion in the plenary –
break for coffee or tea

10.00 am Thematic Sessions in Groups
Experience and Perspectives of Church in Societal Processes in the Participants' Home Countries

Group Southern Africa
Group East Africa
Group West Africa
Group Horn of Africa
Group "Out of Africa" (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Middle East)

11.30 pm Feedback to the Plenary: Outcome of the Group Sessions

12.30 pm lunch

2.00 pm Thematic Sessions in Groups
Church in Societal Processes – Topical Sub-Sectors

Groups discuss their sub-topics in different places in Harare, after a short tour of the place.

- Empowerment and Capacity Building of Civil Society:
  Silveira House, Jesuit Social Justice & Development Centre
- Social Outreach and the Option for the Poor
  Mbare Parish and Social Projects,
- Education and Formation of Responsible Citizens
  St. Peter's Kubatana Training Centre in Highfield,
- Intervention into Justice and Peace
  Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace, Archdiocese of Harare
- Christian Ethics, the Church and the Media
  Jesuit Communications

6.00 pm Dinner

7.00 pm Feedback to the Plenary: Outcome of the Group Sessions

Afterwards: Possibility to socialize at the conference venue
Entertainment

Saturday, 23rd July 2022

8.00 am Holy Mass at Arrupe Jesuit University

9.00 am Thematic Session in the Plenary
Conclusions and Perspectives for the Future

Facilitation: Dr. Locardia Shayamunda, KAAD Partner Committee Zimbabwe

Presentation: Dr. Catherine Biira, Kampala/Uganda,
Christopher Omolo, Arusha/Tanzania

"10 Concrete Suggestions for a Future Role of the Church in Societies of Africa and Beyond"

Podium-Discussion: "Future Visions of Church and its Role in Societies of Africa and Beyond"

Panellists:

- *Fr. Arnold Moyo SJ, Harare/Zimbabwe*
- *Oscar Ceballos Perdomo, La Plata/Colombia, Berlin/Germany*
- *Prof. Dr. Margit Eckholt, Osnabrück/Germany*
- *Dr. Lydia A. Radoli, Nairobi/Kenya*

12.30 pm lunch

1.00 pm Excursions

Excursion 1

Art Excursion: National Gallery, Mbare Art Space, Village Unhu

Excursion 2:

Nature Excursion: Visit to Lion Park

7.00 pm Closing the Conference
Dinner and Entertainment Programme on invitation of the organizers

Sunday, 24th July 2022

8.00 am Holy Mass for Closure of the Conference

Participants of KAAD – AJU Joint Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe,

July 21st – 24th 2022

	Name	Country	Organisation
1.	Afulo, Fr. Dr. Oduor Joseph SJ	Kenya	AJU/SJ
2.	Ekwueme, Fr. Dr. Evaristus SJ	Nigeria	AJU/SJ
3.	Dendere, Ruth Ratidzo	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
4.	Kaulem, Dr. David	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
5.	Mandeya, Sr. Dr. Annah S.	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
6.	Muchenje, Ngoni	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
7.	Zangairai, Francis	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
8.	Lishandi, Steven	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
9.	Banda, Alponia	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
10.	Tererai, Agnes Chipo	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
11.	Watzka, Prof. Heinrich SJ	Germany	AJU/SJ
12.	Arthur, Fr. Benjamin	Ghana	AJU/SJ
13.	Nyachowe, Dr. Monica	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
14.	Ndoro, Mercy	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
15.	Arimoso, Fr. Joseph SJ	Zimbabwe	AJU/SJ
16.	Representative JPC Bulawayo	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
17.	Nkongolo, Zoe	South Africa	Misereor Partners
18.	Moyo, Fr. Arnold SJ	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
19.	Kandewo, Gabriel Isaac	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
20.	Mupikata, Vimbai	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
21.	Vengesa, Elliot	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
22.	Kondo, Faith	Zimbabwe	Misereor Partners
23.	Bvukutwa, Godess	Zimbabwe	KASSA
24.	Chakeredza, Dr. Sebastian	Zimbabwe	KASSA
25.	Kwambana, Llloyd	Zimbabwe	KASSA
26.	Madziyauswa, Nyasha	Zimbabwe	KASSA
27.	Magwaku, Takudzwa	Zimbabwe	KASSA
28.	Takawira-Matwaya, Yvonne	Zimbabwe	KASSA
29.	Kandowe, Caroline Idah	Zimbabwe	KASSA
30.	Chembe, Pylaia	Zimbabwe	KASSA
31.	Mutukudzi, Selby	Zimbabwe	KASSA
32.	Makore, Tendai Abgirl	Zimbabwe	KASSA
33.	Chabaya, Shesby	Zimbabwe	KASSA
34.	Gudhlanga, Prof. Enna Sukutai	Zimbabwe	KASSA
35.	Musavengana, Pride Makumucha	Zimbabwe	KASSA
36.	Dinika, Adio-Adet Tichafara	Zimbabwe	KASSA
37.	Mutiwanyuka, Chemwi Natsayi	Zimbabwe	KASSA
38.	Mada, Sharon Yeukai	Zimbabwe	KASSA
39.	Chabikisa, Prisca	Zimbabwe	KASSA
40.	Matambo, Kudakwashe Martin	Zimbabwe	KASSA
41.	Mahute, Life	Zimbabwe	KASSA
42.	Mwaurayeni, Joannah	Zimbabwe	KASSA

	Name	Country	Organisation
43.	Chabikisa, Lucy	Zimbabwe	KASSA
44.	Gundidza, Tinashe	Zimbabwe	KASSA
45.	Nyikadzino, Audrey Nyasha	Zimbabwe	KASSA
46.	Shayamunda, Dr. Locardia	Zimbabwe	KAAD Partner Commitee ZW
47.	Mugozi, Fr. Ashton Isheanesu SJ	Zimbabwe	KAAD Partner Commitee ZW
48.	Johnson, Fr. Nigel SJ	Zimbabwe	KAAD Partner Commitee ZW
49.	Chapisa, Aulline	Zimbabwe	FES
50.	Tsegaye Yoseph Sugebo	Ethiopia	KASHA
51.	Gemechu Bekele Lemu	Ethiopia	KASHA
52.	Dr. Worku Yacob Kalore	Ethiopia	KAAD Partner Committee ET
53.	Dr. Elias Lewi Teklemariam	Ethiopia	KAAD Partner Committee ET
54.	Dr. Mekdem Tesfamichael Hassen	Ethiopia	KAAD Partner Committee ET
55.	Dr. Ephrem Tekle Yacob	Ethiopia	KAAD Partner Committee ET
56.	Kuusaana, Dr. Elias Danyi	Ghana	KASWA Ghana
57.	Adokiya, Dr. Martin Nyaaba	Ghana	KASWA Ghana
58.	Cobb, Dr. Michael Lieber	Ghana	KASWA Ghana
59.	Campion, Dr. Benjamin Betey	Ghana	KAAD Partner Committee GH
60.	Nkansah, Prof. Marian A.	Ghana	KAAD Partner Committee GH
61.	Tata, Dr. Padabo Kèlèm	Togo	KASWA Togo
62.	Okolo, Chukwudi Johnpaul	Nigeria	KASWA Nigeria
63.	Biira, Dr. Catherine Promise	Uganda	KASEA UG
64.	Kisekka-Ntale, Dr. Frederick	Uganda	KASEA UG
65.	Ishengoma, Prof. Esther K.	Tanzania	KASEA TZ
66.	Mvungi, Nakundwa Sengondo	Tanzania	KASEA TZ
67.	Omolo, Christopher Otieno	Kenya	KASEA KE/TZ
68.	Mwangi, Dr. Veronica Wambui	Kenya	KASEA KE
69.	Omolo, Dr. Alphonce C. L.	Kenya	KASEA KE
70.	Mwangi, Dr. James Maina	Kenya	KASEA KE
71.	Mugo, Dr. John Kubatha	Kenya	KAAD Partner Committee KE
72.	Radoli, Dr. Lydia Ouma	Kenya	KAAD Partner Committee KE
73.	Odari, Dr. Eddy Okoth	Kenya	KAAD Partner Committee KE
74.	Perdomo Ceballos, Oscar A.	Colombia	KAAD Latin America
75.	Zapata Mafla, Sandra Elizabeth	Ecuador	KAAD Latin America
76.	Ghattas, Michael	Egypt	KAAD Middle East
77.	Gamal Zaki Matta, Christine	Egypt	KAAD Middle East
78.	Capaliku, Sara	Albania	KAAD Eastern Europe
79.	Riedel, Dr. Rafał	Poland	KAAD Eastern Europe
80.	Caracho, Trinnah Marie	Philippines	KAAD Asia
81.	Langendörfer, Fr. Dr. Hans SJ	Germany	KAAD President
82.	Eckholt, Prof. Margit	Germany	KAAD Selection Board
83.	Käppler, Prof. Christoph	Germany	KAAD Selection Board
84.	Kuhn, Dr. Marko	Germany	Staff KAAD
85.	Hulverscheidt Fagundes, F.	Germany	Staff KAAD

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Summary of the Proceedings

The plans for this conference have been on since 2020, but because of the pandemic situation in Zimbabwe and elsewhere, it could not take place 2020, neither in 2021.

From July 21 to 24, 2022, finally, 85 participants met at the venue, Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU) in Harare. Participants from the staff and students of AJU, partners of Misereor in Southern Africa and participants from the side of KAAD, the Catholic Academic Exchange Service with its headquarters in Germany. The participants from AJU were headed by Fr. Dr. Joseph Oduor Afulo, Vice-Chancellor of the university and host of the conference. KAAD participants comprised of current scholars, alumni and partners from the host country Zimbabwe, but also from more than ten African countries as well as from Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. The chairlady of the KAAD-Partner Committee Dr. Locardia Shayamunda was a key partner and organizer of the Conference as well as Adio-Adet T. Dinike, the chairman of KASSA, the KAAD Association of Scholars from Southern Africa. The KAAD delegation from Germany was headed by the President, Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ. Also present were two members of the KAAD Academic Committee, Prof. Margit Eckholt and Prof. Christoph de Oliveira Käppler and two staff members of the KAAD-Africa Department, Dr. Marko Kuhn and Fernanda Hulverscheidt Fagundes.

The aim of the conference was to contextualize Catholic social teaching in Africa in order to elaborate on the special situation in African societies with regard to social justice and the distribution of wealth, the fight against oppression, subsidiarity and the role of the state. The Archbishop of Harare, Robert C. Ndlovu, and the Apostolic Nuncio in Zimbabwe, Archbishop Paolo Rudelli, addressed in their speeches the special role of Church doctrine for a country like Zimbabwe, which has been in a political and economic crisis for a long time; the German ambassador in Harare, Udo Volz, acknowledged the positive and invaluable contribution of the church to Zimbabwe's society in his welcoming speech.

Dr. David Kaulemu, Lecturer in Philosophy and Social Ethics at Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU) and member of the KAAD Partner Panel in Zimbabwe, gave the keynote address on the first evening on the theme 'Pope Francis Declares that 'Things have a Price and People have a Dignity.' What does this mean in the Context of Africa?", in which he criticized the fact that church actors were also increasingly submitting to the primacy of the economy, be it in church educational institutions, hospitals or social services. This would have negative repercussions worldwide, but is devastating in a country like Zimbabwe. He expressed concern that "parishes and missions will slowly be looking and working like market driven stations for the extraction of value or as bureaucratic structures for the management and governance of citizens". He referred in particular to the impulses of Pope Francis, who emphasized that an economic system geared purely to growth and profit optimization kills because it focuses on money and only obeys money. Kaulem emphatically called the participants to listen to the pope's cry when he says "No to an economy of exclusion! No to the throw away culture which turns human beings into rubbish! No to the commodification of everything including human beings!"

In his presentation on the second day of the conference, Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ reflected on the participation of the Church in social processes in the German and European context. He decried that in Germany and other European countries the chances of a successful social activity of the church are decreasing and trust in the Catholic Church in particular is dwindling. Nevertheless, according to Langendörfer, the churches - especially in Germany - still have a wide range of opportunities for social commitment, which are well used. Using examples from the field of life ethics (protection of human embryos, surrogate motherhood), he showed that it was and is essential to come to good and fair compromises with social actors and politicians and thus to be as close to existing Catholic ethical positions as possible – instead of postulating one's own position as non-negotiable and staying out of the discussion from the start. Personal contacts with politicians are indispensable for a dialogue on an equal footing and the prerequisite for a debate on political projects of common interest for the benefit of the people affected.

In addition to lectures and plenary discussions, the participants from various regions of Africa and the world worked on the topic in workshops based on their own experiences and perspectives and presented their results in the plenary session.

At the end of the conference, the two KAAD alumni Dr. Catherine Biira (Uganda) and Christopher Otieno Omolo (Kenya/Tanzania) presented ten concrete theses for the future role of the church in African societies and beyond. A peak of their demands was that church actors in Africa should support credible individuals to run for political (elective) offices. The Church should thus 'supply' African governments with men and women of integrity who fear God and choose the preferred option of the poor. The two set another central point in the demand that executive leaders must be held accountable by church leaders. The Church in Africa has a central role to play in speaking truth to those in power in oppressive systems that perpetuate corruption, racism, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of marginalized groups within society. In this way, bishops and other church actors could reveal the inadequacy of policies based on coercion and falsehood, and show that the true source of power lies in servitude rather than domination.

In a succeeding panel discussion, the points were discussed further and other perspectives were added, for example by Prof. Margit Eckholt (Chair for Dogmatics and Fundamental Theology, University of Osnabrück) or by Oscar Perdomo Cabellos (KAAD scholarship holder from Colombia), showing that the more a society is characterized by religious plurality, the less internal church reform topics are discussed. If the Catholic Church is in a minority position, it is very much more concerned with inner stabilization and placing their issues in society as a whole. In Latin America, for example, reform issues similar to those in Western Europe are on the agenda in many places. In Ethiopia or Albania, however, the focus is more on peace and a reconciliation of interests between different ethnic groups. All participants agreed that a southward shift of the worldwide Catholic "gravitation" represents an epochal change and must also be reflected in theology and church leadership structures.

In addition to the academic part of the program with lectures and workshops, the participants visited various places in Harare and met representatives of various organizations and institutions in order to concretely experience and reflect on the social role of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe. The “Education and Civil Society” section was illustrated by the agricultural education center Silveira House, which is committed to social justice, active citizenship, responsible politics and community development - it was founded and is run by Jesuits. The visit of the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace to its headquarters in the Archdiocese of Harare was dedicated to the topic of "Justice and Peace" and the participants were inspired to a discussion how such action should look like in their local context. Education and upbringing alongside disadvantaged youth could be experienced and discussed specifically at St. Peter's Kubatana Training Center in the Highfield district, while the church's role in modern communication was discussed at the Jesuit Communications Centre.

Conference participants furthermore had the opportunity to take part in an 'art excursion' to the National Gallery, Mbare Art Space and Village Unhu or have a taste of African animals at 'Lion Park', Harare. The possibility of an "encore" was an African safari at Imire Rhino & Wildlife Conservation, which aims to ensure wildlife safety through long-term, sustainable environmental management and positive community projects.

On the last day, all participants celebrated a solemn final service in the church of Arrupe Jesuit University - the accompaniment of the service by rhythms and songs from Zimbabwe was particularly impressive for the guests from outside the country. Here, praying and celebrating together, the group experienced once again how the topics of the conference are related to local spirituality. They expressed how powerful it can be to build community across national and continental borders – especially when it comes to the commitment of Christians to justice and human dignity.

Report by:
Marko Kuhn
Fernanda Hulverscheidt Fagundes

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Conference Report

Introduction

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Preface

Christian Churches have for a long time been at the forefront of shaping modern societies in African countries. In most of Sub-Sahara Africa, it was the missionaries who started in the 19th century (and with renewed vigour after World War II) to make the first steps in formal education, establishing the well-known mission schools, which up to now exist as pillars of quality education. Particularly the Catholic Church has been on the forefront of this and the effort has gone way beyond the schooling sector (Nursery, Primary, Secondary). It may serve as a telling example of the church influence in higher education that it was members of the Society of Jesus which were called by Emperor Haile Selassie to start the first University College in Ethiopia. Education is thus the 'classic' vehicle of the church to convey its Christian ideas of human dignity, justice, mercy and reconciliation. There are however also more 'direct' ways of doing it: Bishops issuing pastoral letters for example which decry grievances and injustice or committees looking into matters of justice and peace on parish, diocesan and national level (Catholic Commissions of Justice and Peace – CCJP). Zimbabwe, the host country of our conference, has seen much of this and has been cited as one of the strongest cases in point. Also in the sector of peace building, the church(es) have played a pivotal role. In many of the dreadful civil wars and ethnic clashes on the African continent, church structures and church actors have been present before the conflict (therefore knowing the opponents well), during the conflict (thus giving shelter and a sign of perseverance) and after the conflict (giving invaluable services during reconstruction). The cases of Mozambique and Northern Uganda can serve as instances: in the case of the former, the Catholic community of Sant' Egidio is known to have brokered important peace treaties while in the case of the latter, it was an interfaith, peace-building organisation ("Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative") which had a decisive impact in transforming the conflict. For the long conflict between North and South Sudan ("South Sudanese Council of Churches"), similar stories could be told and many more can be found and recounted. When when we meet as scholars and academicians for a conference, however, we will do well also to ask critical questions. A critical view at the history of Christian mission and its intertwinement with colonialism and cultural arrogance has been subject of much debate and research. But what about the problem we face today when the church and the clergy in a country are just as divided as the rest of society in view of an autocratic regime? What about church leaders and members who put their own ethnic background above the common good or even become part of the conflict (harrowing stories of such cases have been told during the genocide in Rwanda for example)? What if economies and societies suffer from corruption and misappropriation of public funds and the very churches that should point out what is wrong are being told to sort out their own financial intransparencies first? As Catholics, we have been given a formidable tool with which to measure and evaluate wrongdoings as well as interventions: It is called "Catholic Social Teaching" and consists of the Catholic doctrines on matters of human dignity and common good in society. The principles of it often derive from particular papal encyclicals, but also from biblical teaching and the philosophical thinking of doctors of the universal church like St. Augustine or St. Thomas Aquinas. With this tool in hand, our conference wants to spell out the particular situation in African societies when it comes to social justice and wealth distribution, fight against oppression, subsidiarity and the role of the state. We want to

learn particularly from the situation in Zimbabwe, since we are hosted in this beautiful country with its rich and turbulent story. But we also want to learn from other national and regional stories when we welcome participants from over ten other African countries and delegates even from Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Apart from being a market for sharing experiences, our conference also strives to be a place for new ideas, new initiatives and approaches how the church can be true leaven in human societies, giving them a taste of what true justice and peace means for every woman and man who has been made in the likeness of the creator.

Opening Session

The opening session was facilitated by Dr. Marko Kuhn, representing KAAD, who welcomed everyone to the joint conference and went on with introductions of invited dignitaries. The first welcoming remarks were by the host of the conference, Fr. Dr. J. Oduor Afulo, Vice-Chancelor of the Arrupe Jesuit University who declared the Conference officially open. His Grace Robert C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare also delivered a welcome message to the participants followed by His Excellency Udo Volz, German Ambassador in Zimbabwe and Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ, President of KAAD. Dr. Locardia Shayamunda and Mr. Adio-Adet T. Dinika (chair of KAAD Partner Committee and of KAAD-Network KASSA) finalized the list of speakers to open the conference.

Keynote Address

Dr. David Kaulem, the Dean of the School of Education & Leadership at Arrupe Jesuit University and also a lecturer in Ethics, Development and Social Justice gave the keynote address entitled “Pope Francis declares that 'Things have a Price and People have a Dignity'. What Does this Mean in the Context of Africa?” In his address, Dr Kaulem argued that Africa is at a crossroads as it moved from anti-colonial struggles to a new dispensation. Africa needs a new breed of ethical and transformational leaders with new skills set and especially a wide social imaginary. After years of anti-colonial struggle, Africa needs leaders who can now help the countries stabilize socially and grow their economies without undermining human relations and environmental sustainability. It needs leaders who can help African people deal with various forms of trauma and deliberately organized processes of reconciliation. He also went on to highlight that this discussion raises the issue of how different definitions of value can result in confusion of how to value things. This danger multiplies in capitalist markets where there is a push to make everything available for sale – land, water, air, labour, human beings etc. in human history campaigns to refuse and stop certain things from being commodified and sold – human beings (slave trade and slavery), child labour, and sex. These are struggles today in Africa and he alluded to the danger that the church itself can subscribe to this trend of quantifying, commodifying and economizing their pastoral work and their service to the people.

Thematic Session in the Plenary

The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes – Perspectives from Academia and Praxis

This session was facilitated by Fr. Dr. J. Oduor Afulo SJ, Vice-Chancellor Arrupe University The speaker of the session was Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ, President of KAAD, Former Secretary of the German Bishops' Conference. His speech was entitled "The Involvement of the Church in societal Processes – Experience in the Context of Germany and of Europe". The full wording of the speech is available in the collection of texts.

First Thematic Session in Groups –

Experience and Perspectives of Church in Societal Processes in the Participants' Home Countries

Participants were divided into groups according to their geographic origin. The following groups then gave feedback presentations to the plenary; Group Southern Africa (2x), Group East Africa, Group West Africa, Group Horn of Africa (Ethiopia), Group "Out of Africa" (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Middle East)

Each group was asked to follow the following guidelines:

- **In which area has the involvement of the church in societal processes been particularly strong and successful and a blessing in your country?**
- **In which area has the involvement of the church in societal processes been missing or sadly absent? For which reasons has that been so?**
- **Please formulate 5 Principles which should according to you guide the involvement of the church in societal processes.**

EAST AFRICA GROUP 1 (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent	Reasons for missing or absent involvement
Religion and development of human life	Political division in Kenya	Lack of management skills in leaders
Quality Education and well established schools	Silence of the church in peace and justice issues	Mismanagement of institutions
Provision of affordable health services	Civic education not adequate	Lack of professional personnel in church structures
Peace and conflict resolutions	Inclusion of minority and marginalized groups	Lack of dialogue
Community socio economic development (capacity building	Church not speaking in one voice on critical issues eg. Covid 19 (Tanzania)	Misappropriation of funds
Empowerment of rural population	Reduced commitment in helping the poor	Corruption scandals
Insurance payment for the elderly (Kenya	Corruption and misappropriation of funds(Uganda)	
Care homes	Instigating division using the pulpit	

Suggested Principles

1. Devolved centralization of power and consideration of the laity
2. Preferential option of the poor
3. Dialogue and democracy
4. Transparency and accountability
5. Generosity and simplicity of the religious

EAST AFRICA GROUP 2 (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Frontline in the education sector	Low quality education and less paid personnel	No faith in action ,church not doing what they preach
Sustainable intervention projects for the communities	Youth and capacity building is not so prioritised	Lack of well-crafted and sustainability considerations in projects
Faith in action	Church not including the marginalised	Corruption
Social outreach and option of the poor	Meaningful interventions in emergencies	Lack of dialogue with grassroots
Not holding the government responsible		

<u>Suggested principles</u>

1. Proper management of funds and income generating projects
2. Resourceful planning
3. Parish inclusiveness and spread the gospel at the parishes too
4. Sustainability should be prioritised

SOUTHERN AFRICA GROUP 1 (Zimbabwe, South Africa)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Disaster response eg. Cholera outbreaks cyclones	Muted voices of the church	Timidity of political environment in Zimbabwe
Social welfare and option of the poor	Church not engaging the youth in processes that affect them	Ignorance of prevailing social problems eg. Drug abuse
Justice and peace ,election observation	Drug abuse and child abuse	Lack of professionalism in church institutions
Widespread dialogue and participation of everyone		Appointment of leadership positions to unqualified persons eg. Nuns
Inclusivity and lobbying eg. Conversion of constitution to local languages		Power dynamics within the church
Women empowerment opportunities		Economic constrains in Zimbabwe

Suggested Principles

1. Objectivity and truth seeking
2. Inclusivity in all works
3. Salvation at the centre of everything
4. Honesty and accountability

SOUTHERN AFRICA GROUP 2 (Zimbabwe, South Africa)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Educational and Health sector support	Political confrontation with leaders	Church is silenced through threats
Electoral support(observations, voter registration, civic education)	Sexual reproductive health issues and mental health issues	Rural –urban divide such that rural is less prioritised in processes
Community development initiatives eg. Emergency response to Covid 19 and cyclones	Crumbling institutions of the church	Power preserved in the religious eg.leaders could be unqualified nuns or priests
Peace and reconciliation building	Abuse of power within the church	Misplaced priorities
Capacity building and advocacy work		Lack of inspired leadership
Speaking truth to power eg. Pastoral letters		

Suggested Principles

1. Transformational leaders in church institutions
2. Spirit of service and subsidiarity at different levels of society
3. Inclusivity
4. Active and equal participation
5. Accountability and justice

HORN OF AFRICA GROUP (Ethiopia)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Education and construction for schools	Projects meant to benefit the disabled and disadvantaged old people	Lack of balance between pastoral an development activities
Improvement of health care systems in the country	Youth and children's advocacy programs	Lack of unity in decision making processes in the church
Advocacy work for marginalised groups eg. Women	Women in church institutions	Lack of funds
Strong advocacy for inter-denominational and inter- religious dialogue		
Hospitality of refugees and care support		
Voice of the voiceless		
Aid for development projects for the poor		

<u>Suggested Principles</u>

1. Inclusive practices in all church institutions
2. Empowerment
3. Critical thinking and constructive criticism
4. Value for indigenous knowledge
5. Consideration for the laity

„OUT OF AFRICA“ GROUP

(Colombia, Germany, Ecuador, Philippines, Egypt, Poland, Albania)

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Mediation of reconciliation processes(Albania)	Lack of community engagement	Conditional acceptance and tolerance of certain groups
Intervention in poor remote areas hard to reach (Ecuador)	Technological gap , church should be inclusive	Lack of collaboration with other parties
Support of electoral processes (Philippines)	Limited presence in rural	Lack of representation for the poor
Hospital buildings, schools and community support (Egypt)	Absence or silence in public debates	
Facilitation for peace agreements(Columbia)		

<u>Suggested Principles</u>

1. Inclusive participation
2. Value based neutrality
3. Social gospel and formations
4. Option for the poor and marginalised
5. Voice for the voiceless

WEST AFRICA GROUP

Strong and successful involvement of the church in societal processes	**Areas that the church's involvement is missing and absent**	**Reasons for missing or absent involvement**
Education and health services delivery	Community mobilization to participate in processes	Reluctance of church and misconceptions of lay people
Environmental protection and sustainability	Environment management	Inability to have a lay driven church
Social amenities provision	Ethnic and religious fights	Absence of social teachings in communities
Food aid and social support	Sexual and reproductive health issues	Division among church and the laity
Eradication of harmful cultural practices		
Shaping political discourse		
Inter-religious dialogue		

Suggested Principles

1. Mutual respect in the church's communication
2. Tolerance for diversity
3. Consistency in the voice and the rules
4. Church must show a united front
5. Subsidiarity between the clergy and lay faithful

Second Thematic Session in Groups – Church in Societal Processes, Topical Sub-Sectors

In this session, groups visited different church structures in Harare where they had topics to discuss and then presented their feedback. The following topics were discussed: Empowerment and Capacity Building of Civil Society, Social Outreach and the Option for the Poor, Education and Formation of Responsible Citizens, Intervention into Justice, Peace and Christian Ethics, The Church and the Media.

The groups were given the following instructions:

1. **Have a short tour of the place (max. 20 minutes) in order to learn more of the mission and vision. The following discussions are not to be only about the place where you are. The place can however inspire your deliberations.**
   Invite people who work there to join your discussion.
2. **Work on the following guiding questions:**
   a) what is unique and special about the church's involvement in the sub-sector that you are discussing?
   b) where has the church had a negative impact in that sub-sector or has not provided the input you feel it should have?
   c) what is your future vision for the church in its mission for this sub-sector?

The feedback from the group visits is shown below.

Empowerment and Capacity Building of Civil Society – Silveira House

UNIQUE THINGS	Negative	Future Vision for the Church
Social teachings of the church used to empower young people	Lack of implementation of projects	More action oriented projects/ Implementation
Critical problem identification before action planning	Power structure is aligned to the church which compromises activities	Cultivate future leaders through youth advantage
Evidence based interventions	Lack of transparency and accountability	Revolutionized spirit in the church
Trusted platform for beneficiaries –Safe Space	Misappropriation of funds	Encouraging the laity to participate and get involved in political processes in the country
Focal point is serving humanity and not profit		

Christian Ethics, the Church and the Media House – Jesuit Communications

UNIQUE THINGS	Negative	Future Vision for the Church
Youth focused	Lack of strong influence in pastoral follow ups	Media development dialogue to diffuse tension in religious-socio-political divide
Public education and faith liturgy	Lack of follow up mechanisms for liturgical releases	Maximised platform to prompt change or action in the church
Platform to stimulate discussions that influence action or change		Critical voice and space to even discuss pastoral letters
Very friendly environment		

Education and Formation of Responsible Citizens - St Peters Kubatana Training College

UNIQUE THINGS	Negative	Future Vision for the Church
Hands on skills training	Local church absent	Self-sustainability of the training centre
Sustainable interventions	Lack of business incubation	Capitalise on the mass of young people to the advantage of the church
Family spirit environment	No culture of giving back to the church	Promote independence
Empowering	Dependency attitude from those trained	Strategic planning and action to keep running
Opportunities for multiple effect	Lack of funding to upgrade the centre	Demand –driven curriculum
Discovery of catholic talents		Functional alumni structures to encourage and support current trainees
Responsible citizens hub		

Intervention into Justice and Peace Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

UNIQUE THINGS	Negative	Future Vision for the Church
Empowering local communities	Church taken a drawback on publications and documenting peace and justice issues	Strongly involved church which is open to the laity
Capacity building and human rights advocacy	Church is somehow silenced	Economically emancipating initiatives
Open to assist everyone not only the church	Lack of financial resources for the commission to extend its work and reach more people	Church as a platform for dialogue on social justice issues
Unique projects that cut across common social problems	Church failing to confront and call those in power to task	A church that confronts its own issues
Voice for the voiceless	CCJP not being taken as a serious commission by some politicians	A church which is Action oriented and vision driven
Non Partisan and informs pastoral letters		A well capacitated , professional and goal driven church
Professionalised working environment		
Collaboration with other organizations to assist cases of abuse and violence		

Thematic Session in the Plenary: Conclusions and Perspectives for the Future

This session was facilitated by Dr. Locardia Shayamunda, KAAD Partner Committee Zimbabwe and presentations were by Dr. Catherine Biira, Kampala/Uganda, Christopher Omolo, Arusha/Tanzania tittled the 10 Concrete Suggestions for a Future Role of the Church in Societies of Africa and beyond.

The following were their ten points:

1. Reeducate society with proper spiritual and moral values; initiate cultural, institutional and mindset change to eliminate the habits that cause poverty – greed and waste, indifference to the pain of others and the exploitation of people and irresponsible use of natural resources and the environment.
2. Mentor and support individuals to run for elective positions. The church ought to be supplying the government with men and women of integrity who fear God and who choose the preferential option of the poor.
3. Holding leaders accountable; speaking truth to power in oppressive systems that sustain corruption, racism, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of marginalized groups within the society, expose the insufficiency of all politics based on coercion and falsehood and find the true source of power in servanthood rather than dominion.
4. To promote peaceful conflict resolution by fostering dialogue and cooperation in ways that can arbitrate rival interests, cultures, religious traditions, support alternative justice systems and build social cohesion.
5. Fidelity to its calling. Our Story must be evident in the way we live with one another in our own church and cultural contexts, and also in our engagement with persons and groups in other cultural and religious contexts.
6. Contribute to the cultivation of an authentic collective African identity that emphasizes the virtues of African culture “I am because you are” and questions the negative external labels imposed on the African people and the continent at large.
7. Advocate for Social Justice; Speak on behalf of the weak and those at the peripheral. Advocate for concerted efforts towards social transformation based on shared spiritual values of social justice to ensure socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development.
8. More assertively offer affordable and value laden education to meet the deficit of moral values in our social and professional spaces.
9. Challenging unequal power relations between the global north and Africa that continue to bleed the continent of its resources; unfair terms of trade; corporate irresponsibility; exploitation by economic powers.
10. Contribute to protection of the environment, and Africa’s natural and cultural heritage.

Podium-Discussion: “Future Visions of Church and its Role in Societies of Africa and Beyond

In a succeeding panel discussion, the following panelists discussed the suggestions of the two speakers together with them: Fr. Arnold Moyo SJ from Zimbabwe; Oscar Ceballos Perdomo from La Plata, Colombia; Prof. Dr. Margit Eckholt from Osnabrück, Germany and Dr. Lydia A. Radoli from Nairobi, Kenya.

The “ten concrete points” were discussed further and other perspectives were added, for example by Prof. Margit Eckholt (Chair for Dogmatics and Fundamental Theology, University of Osnabrück) or by Oscar Perdomo Cabellos (KAAD scholarship holder from Colombia). The possibilities of brokerage of peaceful conflict resolutions (point No. 4) were seen as very high by all panelists in all regions of origins. Oscar Cabellos gave a vivid example of the fragile peace in his country Colombia and how church representatives played a key role. Also the current war in the Ukraine was mentioned and the unfortunately rather faint hopes of religious actors playing a positive role. The role of the Russian Orthodox church in supporting the war raging country was rather mentioned as a particularly negative example of church coming far too close to a ruling power and sharing their destructive political views almost one to one. The strongest and at times most controversial discussion was induced by point No. 2, as it was not clear how exactly the church could mentor and support individuals to run for elective positions and how they could later be held accountable by the church mentors.

Controversial opinions were also brought forward about the question, how Catholic representatives (mostly bishops) can stand in for justice in matters of gender equality for example (while there is no possibility for women to reach the higher positions of influence in the church itself) or in matters of democratic division of power in a state (while in the church itself the executive, judiciary and legislative is all in one hand). This connected with topics that KAAD had discussed in other fora throughout the year: How much reform is needed to attain a synodal church and how differently do various parts of the Catholic World press for such reforms. The podium discussion showed that the more a society is characterized by religious plurality, the less internal church reform topics are discussed. If the Catholic Church is in a minority position, it is very much more concerned with inner stabilization and placing their issues in society as a whole. In Latin America, for example, reform issues similar to those in Western Europe are on the agenda in many places. In Ethiopia or Albania, however, the focus is more on peace and a reconciliation of interests between different ethnic groups. All participants agreed that a southward shift of the worldwide Catholic "gravitation" represents an epochal change and must also be reflected in theology and church leadership structures.

The last past of the afternoon had one group going for an Art excursion at Village Unhu, National Gallery, Gallery Delta and the Shona Stone Sculptors while the other group joined the Nature Excursion, a Visit to the Lion Park.

The Conference closed off in the evening by presentation of gifts and votes of thanks which was followed by dinner and entertainment by a music group.

Report by:
Locardia Shayamunda

P. Hans Langendörfer SJ

President of KAAD

Opening Address

Arrupe Jesuit University, Harare, 20th July 2022

Your Grace Archbishop Robert Ndlovu,
your Excellency Ambassador Volz,
my dear fellow Jesuit, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Oduor Afulo,
dear Mrs. Shayamunda and Mr. Dinika as representatives of KAAD in Zimbabwe,
dear Participants in this conference from over 20 countries in Africa, Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East
dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Sisters and Brothers,

It is a pleasant coincidence that I belong to the same religious order that runs this esteemed institution, a university named after Fr. Pedro Arrupe, our remarkable Superior General who was from time to time called a "second founder" of the Society of Jesus. He led us Jesuits into the implementation of the Second Vatican Council. His particular concern was that the relationship between faith and justice was enforced and that a preferential option for the poor inspired and directed the work of the Society. In the spirit of such faith we are here today to open our conference that starts with a quote of a man whose membership of the Society of Jesus is another mere but pleasant coincidence: "Things have a Price, People have a Dignity".

It is the emphasis on human dignity that drives the organization forward, which I am today heading as its president: KAAD has the dignity of the individual in focus and her or his capacity building. According to our convictions this includes a strong commitment for the greater, the common good. We are eager to support our scholars in contributing to it ever better and with ever more academic knowledge and Christian understanding.

The Catholic Church has been on the forefront of promoting education the world over and particularly also in the countries of Africa. Education is thus the 'classic' vehicle of the church to convey its Christian ideas of human dignity, justice, mercy and reconciliation. KAAD has put an emphasis on higher, post-graduate education in order to help build an elite of responsible people who have the common good in mind, both in the societies of their origin as on a global level. This follows the universality of the Εκκλησία καθολική, bound together as a global community. As KAAD we are happy to be connected with Zimbabwe, its church institutions, educational institutions and many remarkable women and men who share with us the idea of working together for a better tomorrow, contributing our share to the coming of the kingdom of God. I am looking forward to learning from the situation here and in other African countries. How have matters of justice and peace been brought to the forefront of societies on parish, diocesan and national level? The host country of our conference will surely inspire our discussions.

I am very glad to be able to visit Sub-Sahara-Africa for the first time and experience what it means to be brothers and sisters in both joy and difficulty, in solidarity and in controversial debate. Besides this, I am looking forward to see some of its natural beauty and wealth also during a tour, which many of us will do together on Sunday.

Yes, we want to learn particularly from the situation in Zimbabwe, since we are hosted in this beautiful country with its rich and turbulent story. But we also want to learn from other national and regional stories when we welcome participants from over ten other African countries and delegates even from Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Apart from being a market for sharing experience, our conference will also strive to be a place for new ideas, new initiatives and approaches how the church can be true leaven in human societies. Let us learn from each other in the next few days so that we may leave Harare enriched and inspired.

The Involvement of the Church in Societal processes in Africa

Joint Conference of KAAD and Arrupe Jesuit University, Harare/Zimbabwe, July 21st – 24th 2022

Notes of the Keynote address by Dr David Kaulemu, Dean of Education and Leadership at AJU, on 21 July 2022

Pope Francis declares that "Things have a price and people have dignity". What does this mean in the context of Africa?

Pope Francis Tweeted:

"Things have a price & can be for sale, but people have a dignity that is priceless & worth far more than things. -Pope Francis #LaborDay2017

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The words of Pope Francis (Tweet on Labour Day 2017) are responding to the tendencies in the late modern age of treating humans as if they were things and things as if they are not alive.
Some of these tendencies are:

- Globalization of the technocratic Paradigm - "the tendency of making the method and aims of science and technology an epistemological paradigm which shapes the lives of individuals and the working of society"[1] without making a distinction between humans and things.
- Disenchantment of nature – the general belief in modernity that nature is dead. It does not have spirit or purpose. Only humans can give nature its purpose and meaning. The Pope brings out the practical, economic and cultural implications of working according to this belief and attitude.
  E.g. The disenchantment of nature allows for the treatment of nature as dead and therefore can be acquired, possessed, bought and sold for the sake of fulfilling the desires of human beings.
  Modernity is characterized by the spread of the market and the turning of natural things into commodities. Once capitalism as an economic system was invented, it adopted the market and specific forms of understanding and implementing rationality in order to facilitate the social division of labour, the legal system of private property, processes of enforcing contracts and facilitating the 'individual propensity for self-interested behaviour'[2].

[1] Pope Francis (2015:62-3) *Laudato Si' Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Care for Our Common Home,* Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, #107
[2] Poole, R. (1991:3) *Morality and Modernity,* London and New York, Routledge.

Morality and spirituality of the modern market in what Adam Smith characterized as the commercial society assumes the following:

- Division of labour will solve the problem of interdependency (not inter-subjectivity, identity, relatedness or the common good)
- Selfishness or self-interestedness is what will result in the good for others (not sympathy, solidarity or care) – note that both the developed world are beginning to say that "development/charity doesn't work. But is business that works even for the developing world." Hence DFID, EU, USAID etc have been cutting their budgets and governments have been putting more money in supporting their businesses to enter into developing coutries.
- Attempts to be benevolent and moral will end in disaster for everyone. (As Dambisa Moyo[3] argues, aid results in corruption in Africa)
- In modern administration, law & education reason must reign & emotions banished
- Reason is understood in terms of Efficiency (means-ends), Juridical (consistency – treat everyone the same; do the same tomorrow what you did yesterday - Rule utilitarianism), Scientific (based only on empirical evidence)
- In modern rational society, the public sphere is constructed as masculine (developmentally focused – meaning being aggressive, self-interested, promoting endless production and growth)
- The private is constructed as feminine (meaning it is focused on reproduction, caring, and recuperation) – Which spiritiuality does the church follow? Does the church see itself as part of the public sphere or the private sphere? How does it straddle between the two realms?
- The virtues of the public sphere are Instrumental, Juridical Reason or Cognitive or Scientific
- Male Rational qualities are displayed as: Power (in politics), Production/Growth (Instrumental Reason – means- ends - in economics – efficiency- quantitative – profit and loss accounting; money as a means of measuring value – profit as the goal), Rational Organization (in bureaucratic administration), Marginalization of the feminine from the public sphere, Exploitation of the care provided by Women, Family, Community and the Environment.
- The self-interested morality of the market inspired and justified by the ideology of growth and production result in the uncontrolled exploitation of the environment and of women, and communities plus the endless damping of rubbish.

[3] Moyo, D. (2009) *Dead AID: Why Aid is not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa,* London, Allen Lane.

- This becomes worse when the market completely dominates human transactions and the global economy is financialized. As Pope Francis points out, the global financial crisis of 2007 demonstrates the impact of when "Finance overwhelms the real economy"[4].

Pope Francis is responding to the need to reverse the morality and spirituality of the public sphere in modern commercial society.

He argues that in being fascinated by modern rationality, technology and growth, we have forgotten and undermined what we in Africa call the morality of ubuntu – where care is more important than individual success, relationships are more important that technological success, and humanity more important than mathematical growth.

Leadership needs that bring human dignity

Africa is at a crossroads as we move from anti-colonial struggles to a new dispensation. We need a new breed of ethical and transformational leaders with new skills set and especially a wide social imaginary. After years of anti-colonial struggle, Africa needs leaders who can now help the countries stabilize socially and grow their economies without undermining human relations and environmental sustainability. It needs leaders who can help African people deal with various forms of trauma, deliberately organized processes of reconciliation, and lead efforts of building social cohesion, to facilitate participation in the complex phenomena of economic development, peace-building and social cohesion in the context of globalization.

Good ethical leadership means more than basking in past glories and expressions of good intentions. It means not only having the ability to inspire, but also the skills to organize, facilitate and deal with people's emotions and especially frustrations physical and spiritual hurts. It requires an appreciation of the forces that have shaped our countries and continents and, in turn, the forces which have shaped our ideas, behaviours, personalities and traditions. This understanding, which needs to be nuanced, will help to respond to people's needs, wants and aspirations and balance them against the demands of science, business and political power. The role of political leaders is not merely to teach people what to want and what to aspire for. It is also to listen to people, and find new and innovative ways of creating the concepts, processes, institutions, behaviours, cultures and systems that can facilitate the understanding, organization and fulfilment of human welfare and environmental sustainability.

[4] Pope Francis (2015:63-4) *Laudato Si'* Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Care for Our Common Home, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa.

Pope Francis's statement above reminds us of some critical values that need to guide our development priorities. He is challenging the tendencies in modern society to define development in such a way that human life and life in general is objectified, commodified, commercialized, financialised and given a price just like other objects. The overwhelming prioritization of economics over humanities in schools and universities is a symptom of how modern spirituality has succeeded.

Pope Francis emphasizes the dangers of being carried away by the fascination, demands, beauty and threats of economics, politics, science in relation to human life and life in general.

> "Politics must not be subject to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy. Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life".[5]

Karl Marx, in *Das Kapital*[6] explained how the logic of the market starts with focus on how commodities are distributed to human beings in order to fulfil human needs. But with the invention of money and finance, this focus on human needs is inverted so that money and profit instead of the fulfillment of human needs become the focus of the system. Marx describes this in Chapter 5 "Contradictions in the General Formula" where he explains the confusion of use-value and exchange-value[7] and eventually exchange value and human dignity.

This discussion raises the issue of how different definitions of value can result in confusion of how to value things. This danger multiplies in capitalist markets where the is a push to make everything available for sale – land, water, air, labour, human beings etc.

We have seen in human history campaigns to refuse and stop certain things from being commodified and sold – human beings (slave trade and slavery), child labour, sex. Today people fight capitalist pressure to sell alcohol, pornography, guns, drugs to children. These are struggles today in Africa and in the global world. These struggles require a certain caliber of leadership.

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[5] Pope Francis (2015:104) *Laudato Si'* Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on the Care for Our Common Home, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa.

[6] Marx, K, (1975) *Capital Vol. 1,* Introduced by Enest Mandel and translated by Ben Fowkes, The Pelican Marx Library.

[7] Marx, K, (1975) *Das Capital Vol. 1*

Wide social imaginary[8] that lacks in political and church leadership

Africa is a modern political project formed by various forces and traditions. It is a paradoxical social, political and economic artefact of both modern European imperialism and African traditional and post-colonial systems and processes. Modern Africa is a product of both liberation struggles for political freedom and post-colonial struggles for democracy. Any leadership wanting to help Africa move forward must have a wide imagination and emotional capacity to recognise these realities. It demands, as Achille Mbembe recognised, "the end of monologues". Mbembe goes on to point out the context that calls for a new African ethical and transformational leadership,

> "Africa and the world have changed. And Africa's relationship to the world has also changed. The classical borderlines (symbolic, cultural, structural…) that used to allow us to define ourselves as 'others' – and allowed others to designate us in the same way – have, for the most part, been redrawn. This certainly does not mean that structural domination has been abolished. But its structure, its forms, and the ways in which it is deployed are not what they were in the recent past."[9]

Leaders that have a wide social imaginary and mature emotional intelligence have the ability to deal with these changes and to help others negotiate through them. It means having leaders who "forge complex intellectual mechanisms and modes of reasoning that are attentive to nuances and constantly on the lookout for paradoxes"[10].

Unfortunately, many of our leaders, church and political, are still steeped in the old exclusivist political binaries and are blind to the new developments the global economy.

National Leadership, Unfulfilled Promises and Wasted Opportunities

National leadership is about persuading and convincing different constituencies in the country to contribute to national development. Evangelization takes steps further towards salvation. Leadership is about helping the nation to overcome its challenges by mobilizing all people and all available resources. Leadership challenges and raises to higher levels the national imaginative abilities of citizens. True leaders challenge national cultures, traditions, imaginaries and traditional

[8] Taylor, C., (2004) Modern Social Imaginaries, Public Planet Books, Duke University Press, Durham and London, p.23.
[9] Mbembe, Achille, "The End of Monologues" Editorial, CODESRIA Bulletin 1, 2000, page 3
[10] Ibid

emotional responses. Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Kwame Nkrumah and Nelson Mandela did it. They challenged their followers to venture beyond their intellectual, emotional and social comfort zones. True leaders inspire citizens to transcend themselves and go beyond selfishness and provincialism – beyond exclusivism and narrow mindedness. They inspire ordinary people to commit themselves to solidarity across class, race, gender and ethnic boundaries. They move people towards the common good.

I think this is what Pope Francis wants for the Church and society through Synodality. The Synodality leadership is meant to inspire, guide and facilitate,

> "Living a participative and inclusive ecclesial process that offers everyone – especially those who for various reasons find themselves on the margins – the opportunity to express themselves and to be heard in order to contribute to the edification of the People of God."[11]

This process should be at the same time an evangelizing process that helps society at large to benefit and to be better. As the Synodality Preparatory Document declares, the process is supposed to be

> "Recognizing and appreciating the wealth and the variety of the gifts and charisms that the Spirit liberally bestows for the good of the community and the benefit of the entire human family."[12]

This means that, church, political and social leaders ought to appreciate and facilitate the talents, skills, views and attitudes of all they work with and lead. They should be leaders that know and defend the role of civil society as separate from the state on the one hand and the private corporate sector on the other. Church leaders especially, ought to resist being carried by the logic of these two powers. Civil society should be a realm that recognises, respects and facilitates the growth and fulfilment of human beings as human beings. It recognizes and supports individuals who can freely form themselves into families, social groups, and associations. It therefore should not seek to reduce those individuals, families, groups, communities and solidarities into cogs of established political powers or economic systems that impose some arbitrary standards they give a priori.

[11] Synod of Bishops, Synod 2021-2023, For a Synodal Church – Communion, Participation, Mission, *Preparatory Document* p.3.
[12] Ibid

As the Human Development Report 2004 points out,

> Cultural liberty is a vital part of human development because being able to choose one's identity – who one is – without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices is important in leading a full life. People want the freedom to practice their religion openly, to speak their language, to celebrate their ethnic and religious heritage without fear of ridicule or punishment or diminished opportunity. People want the freedom to participate in society without having to slip off their chosen cultural moorings[13].

The undermining of civil society as an ethical ideal of the social order has been at the centre of many challenges of the modern world, especially in Africa where people's cultures have been de-legitimized and ethics undermined. Democracy is weakened when civil society is diminished. Modern society has seen the expansion of the state on the one hand and the capitalist market on the other at the expense of 'intermediate' institutions which can be the basis of a healthy society. These intermediate institutions are the family, and voluntary associations which are based on voluntary participation and solidarity. Civil society is the realm which builds the relationships that sustain society (although it is not entirely free of evils and injustices). In this sense any society wanting to pay attention to its social imaginaries in order to widen and deepen them for a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious society, will need to engage families and communities in order to help them dialogically engage each other. Civil society works with a unique logic. It contrasts itself to the logic of contracts found on the market and the logic of coercive legal and public obligation of the state. Explaining this point, Pope Benedict writes,

> "When both the logic of the market and the logic of the State come to an agreement that each will continue to exercise a monopoly over its respective area of influence, in the long term much is lost: solidarity in relations between citizens, participation and adherence, actions of gratuitousness, all of which stand in contrast with giving in order to acquire (the logic of exchange) and giving through duty (the logic of public obligation, imposed by State Law). The exclusive binary model of market-plus-State is corrosive of society, while economic forms based on solidarity, which find their natural home in civil society without being restricted to it, build up society. The market of gratuitousness does not exist, and attitudes of gratuitousness cannot be established by law. Yet both the market and politics need individuals who are open to reciprocal gift."[14]

[13] UNDP, (2004:1) Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World, New York, UNDP.

[14] Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, #39

Thus, for Pope Benedict 'A strong civil sector is the basis of a healthy society and a healthy economy; economic contracts and state bureaucracies cannot hold a society together in peace, nor increase its solidarity.'[15] Economic contracts and state bureaucracies do not have within themselves and in their logic, spaces for Ubuntu, solidarity and care. Capitalist contracts recognize people only as buyers and sellers, capital or labour – i.e. less than human. Civil society is the realm in which human beings meet as human beings and not as cogs in economic or ideological political machines. The widening and deepening of civil society as public space and the ethical ideal is the sure way of respecting the dignity of human beings and fighting against de-humanising them. This is an important way of resisting the tendency of instrumentalizing humans and God's creation and putting an economic price on them. This is critical in African societies created by colonial political impositions and global commercial demands. Therefore, there is need to develop new social imaginaries out of dialogical engagements of people, families and communities emanating from different backgrounds and where conflicts and violence have characterised past engagements.

The church globally and especially in Africa is failing to defend the realm of civil society. It is being sucked into the global economic power systems. The failure by church leaders and church members to appreciate this need means that they have allowed, intentionally or unintentionally, church institutions and organisations to adopt the logic and language of political powers and that of the dominant neoliberal economic systems. Below are examples of the processes:

- Universities and colleges are being turned into corporations with CEOs directed by 'a corporate-based ideology that embraces standardizing the curriculum, supporting top-down management, and reducing community colleges to job training sites'[16].
- Health care is more and more commodified, privatized and commercialized.
- The church, through persuasion, coercion and choice is more and more withdrawing from providing public spaces for cultivating ethical and democratic values and its social-justice and peace institutions are succumbing to the political and commercial forces which privatise citizenship and educate youth to become consuming subjects rather than civic-minded and critical citizens[17].

[15] Ibid

[16] Giroux, H. A. (2010:149) 'Higher Education in Search of Democracy?', *Politics of Hope: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Youth, Race, and Democracy,* Boulder, London, Paradigm Publishers.

[17] Giroux, H. A. (2010:43) 'Disney, Casino Capitalism, and the Stealing of Childhood Innocence', Politics of Hope: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Youth, Race, and Democracy, Boulder, London, Paradigm Publishers.

- Parishes and missions will slowly be looking and working like market driven stations for the extraction of value or as bureaucratic structures for the management and governance of citizens. In Zimbabwe, as we move towards the 2023 elections in the context of harsh economic conditions, pressure is mounting for politicians to instrumentalize the church in their own interests. We are seeing more and more church leaders and church members obliging.

Pope Francis summarises the predicament of the majority when he writes,

> "The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity. This epochal change has been set in motion by the enormous qualitative, quantitative, rapid and cumulative advances occuring in the sciences and in technology, and by their instant application in different areas of nature and of life. We are in an age of knowledge and information, which has led to new and often anonymous kinds of power."[18]

And yet, as Henry Giroux points out, "All problems are now laid on the doorstep of the individual, regardless of how unlikely the individual might have been involved in creating them. This makes it more socially acceptable to blame the poor, homeless, uninsured, jobless, and other disadvantages individuals and groups for their problems".[19]

But social analysis should help us to understand, as the sociologist Wright Mills[20] pointed out, we may be justified to blame individuals if only a few of them are not able to achieve what others, the majority are achieving. For example, if only 0.2% of young people are engaged in drugs, prostitution, or crime, we may be justified to say there is something wrong with their upbringing and their personal qualities. But if, on the other hand, 30% of the young people are involved, then we must look at the whole system, not to individual weaknesses for explanation. No amount of personal individual counselling, training, or even financial support can solve this social problem without looking into the system that is producing conditions that produce these problems. Usually these are conditions of

[18] APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY, CONSECRATED PERSONS AND THE LAY FAITHFUL ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL IN TODAY'S WORLD #54

[19] Giroux, H. A. (2010:26) 'Neoliberalism, Education, and the Politics of Disposability', Politics of Hope: Barack Obama and the Crisis of Youth, Race, and Democracy, Boulder, London, Paradigm Publishers.

[20] Mills, C. Wright, (1959, 2000) The Sociological Imagination, with a new Afterword by Todd Gitlin, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.5.

unemployment, poverty, social dislocation, economic decline and neglect, political oppression and social and cultural violence.

The church is taking the easy way out by addressing individuals and avoiding the more challenging solution of dealing with systems and structures of society at local and global levels. Pope Francis and indeed Pope Benedict have paved the way for us to confront the global economic capitalist financialized systems and the global political and militarized systems of domination that are commodifying and instrumentalizing life and undermining the dignity of humans and all of God's creation. Yet too many of our church institutions, commissions, lay associations, universities, continue to work as if everything is still normal. They are not researching to find out how exactly the social, political and economic systems are working. For example, the Zimbabwe Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), after some research on housing provision makes the following recommendations:

- **Housing Delivery Policy Options** The government needs to ensure that residential stands are only sold and allocated to people on the waiting list. The provision of enmities such as roads, water, electricity, sewer, proper drainage systems and recreation facilities should be done before land is allocated to citizens.
- **Recommendations on Housing Delivery** CCJPZ recommends that: • The government must engage citizens and raise awareness on all legislation and official procedure in the acquisition of residential stands.
- The state must increase the targeted number of housing units to be developed under NDS1 by 2025 from 220 000 units to a number that correlates with existing demand. NDS1 proposes that government will acquire 10 000 hectares of land for housing purposes. CCJP recommends that the process for allocating this land to land developers be strictly regulated to protect citizens from illicit dealings by housing cooperatives.[21]

Here CCJP assumes that the state is in charge. It does not make a distinction between local and national government, let alone refer to the fact that the two are fighting and that social movements and land barons have taken advantage of that. Davidson Muchadenyika (2020) in his studies found out

[21] CCJPZ, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (2020:14) THE ECONOMY WE WANT, Policy Brief on Zimbabwean Citizens' Ideas on the Economy They Want.

that the national government and the local governments in Chitungwiza, Epworth and Harare, are not fully in charge of housing policy and delivery[22].

- **Childhood under siege:** We know that the welfare of children is under attack by corporations who employ psychologists and other scientific experts to mold the desires, attitudes and emotions of children. Joel Bakan points out that,

  "Big business not only produces an inordinate amount of harm and danger to children, but also dictates the ways we fear (or do not fear) harm and danger. Whatever the issue – sex and violence in children's media, mental disorders among children, the ill effects of industrial chemicals on children's health, or failing schools – business interests, with the help of marketeers, media, and public relation firms, craft "information" that creates and downplays fears in order to help sell products and justify harmful practices. The problem is compounded by the fact the very institutions responsible for providing good and impartial information – government, science, medicine, and education – have over the last few decades, come under industry's influence"[23] As we say in Zimbabwe, "Zimbabwe is open for business".

Let us just look at what the church is doing today and judge whether it can compete with big business in moulding people's desires, attitudes, behaviours and identities. To what extent can our liturgies, education institutions, political systems and our scientific organizations resist the pull of big business? As students abandon the study of philosophy, literature, history and the rest of humanities in favour of subjects that are closer to financialized profits, do we keep to our game and collapse or we join the trend? What kind of dignity can we preach to our daughter who is determined to finish her education through proceeds from prostitution? What kind of hope can we give to a grandmother in an African rural area, who wakes up at 4.00am and goes to sleep at 10.00pm and yet the value of her efforts are judged by the global economy as being less than the values of the efforts of a finance consultant who works on his computer less than 2 hours per day?

It is true of us lay people and also of church leaders – bishops, priests, sisters, brothers etc. that the modern economy is effectively and practically convincing us that there is no distinction between value and price, between

[22] Muchadenyika, D. (2020) *Seeking Urban Transformation: Alternative Urban Futures in Zimbabwe,* Harare, Weaver Press.

[23] Bakan, J. (2012:4) *Childhood Under Siege: How Big Business Ruthlessly Targets Children,* London, Vintage Books.

dignity and value. Pope Francis seems to be crying in the wilderness when he says:

No to an economy of exclusion!
No to the throw away culture which turns human beings into rubbish!
No to the commodification of everything including human beings!
No to the new idolatry of money which undermines the real economy!

A few months ago, I was asked to participate in discussions on research commissioned by the German Bishops' Conference Commission on International Church Affairs. The research was entitled, "How socio-ecological transformation can succeed: An interdisciplinary study within the framework of the dialogue project on the contribution of the Catholic Church to socio-ecological transformation in the light of Laudato si'. (Bonn 2021)

I am grateful to have been invited. But the process revealed to me the power of global capital in shaping the vocabulary and the values that surround the discussion. In other church developmental work, the influences of the private sector, of global capital and of national political interests are very evident.

The church is supposed to be a universal institution working for universal solidarity and the common good. But unfortunately, our solutions to global problems are still steeped in nationalisms and the techno-economic paradigm. Unless the church finds ways of translating the Gospel values into reality, human beings will continue to be given a price and their dignity undermined. As the financialization of the economy and reliance on tech-economic model intensifies, the throw away culture will move societies from being dominated by unemployment to the dominance of redundancy. As Zygmunt Bauman asserted, "the economy will intensify the production of human rubbish."[24]

[24] Zygmunt Bauman (2013) *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts,* 1st Edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.

Dr. Hans Langendörfer SJ

The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes

Experience in Germany and in Europe

Harare, 7/22/22

The church is part of our world and in the same time transcends it. It has its roots in the teaching and the destiny of Jesus Christ. Jesus was much involved in all kinds of expectations. He dealt with many people of a great variation of backgrounds. He criticized some and showed solidarity with many. This is especially true for people on the fringes of society – those who are physically, psychologically, mentally, morally burdened. Jesus himself demonstrates: His faith and his action belong together. He cares. That's what also the young church wanted to do. In this context it was necessary - as it was for Jesus - also to define its relationship towards the political authorities. Particularly when they claimed not only political, but also religious authority. The boundaries between cooperation and dispute ask for our attention even today. Belief definitely requires social commitment, in short: "faith and justice" belong together.

I will speak to you from a practical point of view. We are all aware that an even stronger involvement of our Church with the contemporary society is needed and practical ways have to be explored. I therefore share some experience which I was able to gain in Germany and on a wider scope in Europe. I was able to gather them in the political arena of Bonn – the former capital of Germany. I was responsible there for a political-ethical centre of the Society of Jesus. Later I became secretary of the German Bishops' Conference. I want to state it expressly: I limit myself to what I know from my own experience rather than speculating about African challenges which I am sure to become acquainted with in the course of this conference.

I know, in my country opportunities for church engagement in society are very different from those in the various African countries. I think that in the context of Germany they are often quite conducive and beneficial. I do not derive any judgment from this. Germany has its own religious and social history. It is different from others and not a benchmark for others. At best, our experiences are inspirational to others in other countries and places.

1. The societal work of the Church: general remarks

   a. The Church's engagement in society must derive from faith: it is the Church's faith lived through the medium of action. If that is given, the Churches' action becomes an authentical part of the Church's mission without losing touch with the actions of other people of good will. A key factor for the faith-based work of the Church is the orientation towards human dignity, which should be protected comprehensively and sustainably, and the respect for God's creation. I need not repeat the authoritative statements towards this by the Second Vatican Council, the Popes and the Synods of Bishops that you are all familiar with.

      Social action of the Church requires a number of virtues. One of them is particularly close to my heart: an attitude of humility. As women and men of the Church, we owe our many partners in the social sphere great respect and honest appreciation. It is not necessary and not possible to agree with them in everything or feel in congruence with them. But like us, they take part in social life. As interest groups, association officials, actors in social and economic life and also as politicians they pursue the same path as we do.

      One of the obstacles to cooperation, I have found, is a certain arrogance on the part of church representatives - especially clerics. Some of them think they own the whole truth and are superior to others. In Germany, we are currently talking a lot about clericalism. Pope Francis urges us to do so. I believe that clericalism is often a sign of a certain weakness. As clergy, we then notice that our education and our knowledge of social and public life are limited and compensate for deficits with a habit of superiority that is not justified.

   b. A second important aspect of Christian participation in societal processes is the following one: We face a great deal of pluralism within the church. For a long time lay Catholics have taken a very active part in the political life of my country and in the social activities of the Church. There are many professional organizations: organized women's, men's and youth work, social organizations with an affinity either to employees or to entrepreneurship, family associations and associations of full-time pastoral workers. Many different points of view come together in our large lay umbrella organization, the "Central Committee of German Catholics" (ZdK). In Germany we are currently discussing and trying to clarify some important questions

of church reform ("Synodal Path") and in this the laity are involved on an equal footing with the bishops. This means that the Catholic Church in Germany sees itself – which is also theologically correct – not merely as a bishops' church, but as a church of the baptized and confirmed, in which bishops and clergy have a special role and authority but not being the only decisive actors.

Plurality is an important issue and it opens the door to freedom. Are there however certain limits to plurality and freedom? Are there positions and convictions, which according to the Church's teaching do not allow deviations? This is a vital question of theological ethics. I'll give a few examples in a moment.

c. A third requirement for the societal involvement of the church is openness to all possible forms of dialogue and cooperation. I mean the cooperation with the other Christian Churches as well as with the other religions. In the German context, these are primarily the Muslims and the Jews. However, cooperation is also necessary beyond different worldviews. We can only make headway on pressing social issues if we cooperate appropriately with politicians, trade unionists and all possible stakeholders in civil society. It's not about the church, it's about the people.
One more thing: Particularly in the interaction with politicians, arrogance and know-it-all attitudes are to be avoided at all times – just as much as naively adapting questionable rhetorics and ambitions for power. One should not speak of politicians with arrogant or contemptuous undertones.

2. Which chances do we realistically have? An analysis.
I have four observations and want to encourage you to do your analysis of your own conditions for societal involvement.

a. Germany is a functioning, free democracy. This democracy is currently suffering from some weaknesses. There are nationalistic, right-wing tendencies that can pose a threat to democracy and impede European integration. Under these circumstances, a strong rule of law and a solid separation of powers, including free journalism, are of great advantage and significance.

b. Churches in Germany enjoy a robust freedom that is enshrined in the Constitution. The state has to remain religiously neutral and there is no state church. This by no means excludes the existence of many social areas of cooperation between state and church. These appear particularly in the education system and the health sector. The freedom of the church also includes the possibility of levying membership fees in the form of a “church tax”. This guarantees a broad financial scope for church activities.

c. Germany is deeply intertwined with the European Union and with other supranational or international organisations. We operate as Churches a political office in Brussels, jointly with the other Bishops' Conferences of the European Union. Likewise, the Protestant and other churches and religious communities maintain institutions for the dialogue with the European Union. The Holy See maintains a nunciature at the European Union, with which we closely cooperate. Also important is the continental association of Bishops' Conferences in Europe (CCEE).

d. It nevertheless has to be admitted: The possibilities of a meaningful involvement of the church in the society are becoming smaller. On the one hand, trust in the Catholic Church in particular is dwindling, due to the many cases of abuse that are now gradually being uncovered. In addition, the gap between Catholicism on the one hand and many strong and decisive convictions in the society on the other hand lead to a substantial complication between church and society. This is not new, but ever more apparent and disturbing. People have less understanding for a – as they see it – huge deficit of democracy in the Church and cannot accept the role of women there. Additionally, Germany is going through a phase of dissolution of the religious landscape. The two big churches – the Protestant and the Catholic Church – are losing membership and acceptance at an alarming rate. More and more faithful create their own convictions, composing their faith from all kinds of different components thus remaining without a vital contact to Christian and Catholic teaching. Religion becomes more pluralist and more individual. We witness a new phase of secularization. As a result, much of the traditional Christian orientation for society is being lost. The Christian milieus are in the process of dissolving.

3. Concrete Opportunities we should take advantage of. We indeed have a wide range of opportunities for societal commitment. I have three substantive and three formal comments:
    a. With regard to politics, the church – not the single Catholics - does not have the task of being a political player itself, but of making politics possible. This happens by means of participation in public debates, by raising awareness, by creating an atmosphere which is favourable for politics. Politics are conducted by those with political responsibility and commitment, often – but not only – in connection with parliamentarian mandates and political parties. The church wants to promote and strengthen a culture and spirit of openness to questions of politics and the common good in general. It propagates and supports political virtues, i.e. attitudes without which it is difficult to shape the community in a prosperous manner. Here the attitudes of respect and appreciation, but also of serious debate and dialogue, which I indicated at the beginning, come into play.

    b. Social life benefits from a number of ethical values and principles that traditionally provide orientation for the German and European societies. They are closely linked to Catholic social ethics. These include a strong priority of the human person and their dignity, as laid down in human rights declarations. We call it the principle of personality. As a consequence of this priority for the human person, we advocate the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. Both play an important role in our societal life. The Federal Republic of Germany consists of 16 federal states, each with their own broad areas of own competence. The school system and the healthcare system for example are designed on a subsidiary basis by the "Bundesländer" (this German term could be translated into something like "federal states"). Subsidiarity guarantees many activities of the Churches and other non-profit institutions. Because the society - together with its respective actors - is expected to contribute what it can contribute through its own means – rather than always activating the state – this also gives a wide range of possibilities for the creation and running church institutions which will be financially supported by the state. The Catholic kindergartens, schools, hospitals and old people's facilities are partly refinanced with public funds. We try to fill subsidiarity with life, which incidentally is also very central at the European level. The German Caritas for example employs around 700,000 people and, together with the parallel Protestant organization, is the largest non-governmental employer in Germany. Next to

subsidiarity, solidarity is of equal importance. Much is done in all fields of social life, particularly by the church aid organizations like Misereor. In this context, we need to look at aspects of intergenerational justice, sustainability and other long-term perspectives.

c. I give you some examples of the social work of the church with the aim of making coexistence of people and particularly politics possible:

   i. Again and again the talk is about participation: The German Bishops' Conference authored a position paper which was trying to put up a model for a free societal order: The publication was brought out already in 2011. It is entitled „Chancengerechte Gesellschaft“ and speaks about a society which strives to provide equal opportunities for all its members. It deliberates on educational opportunities, work and intergenerational justice

   ii. The church is strongly involved in the topic of migration, i.e. openness to migrants and their participation. Together with the Protestant Church we published a paper in 2021 which was entitled „Migration menschenwürdig gestalten“ and dwelt on ways of creating human living conditions for migrants. As early as 2004, the German bishops published a pastoral letter about the promotion of integration and the shaping of coexistence.

   iii. The bishops' conference repeatedly engaged in ethical questions of the evolution of the media and digitalization, for example in a publication "Media Education and Justice in Participation".

   iv. The "Future of Creation - Future of Mankind" (1980) has been a constant theme for the Church in Germany. In 2011, a memorandum was published with the title “Committed to Creation. Suggestions for Sustainable Use of Energy”. Many large church associations and the bishops' conference are working on the implementation of "Laudato sí".

d. From a formal point of view, I have to counter the impression that the church only works through written statements. You are aware how important the aid agencies of the German Catholics are which focus on the global south and base on the solidarity within the universal church. They enable international solidarity to become practical - with church money and with state money that is given in the

spirit of subsidiarity. Misereor is also involved in our conference here. And KAAD as a co-organizer is an independent, recognized and proven component of international educational cooperation in the Catholic Church. You can imagine that the laity and their associations are theoretically and practically a decisive pillar of the social commitment of the church: they form the family associations, the Catholic parenthood in Germany, the youth associations, the social associations, etc.

e. I would like to draw your attention to a very successful instrument of social and political action: "Commissariat of Catholic Bishops - Catholic Office". We have such a Catholic Office in Berlin and in each capital of the 16 federal states. There, a well-structured dialogue takes place with the respective political parties, the state governments and parliaments as well as the courts and personal contacts and debates about political projects of common interest are everyday routine. Such contacts and debates are carried out – as we say in our country – "auf Augenhöhe", which means at "eye level" and with the aim of contributing to the well-being of the people concerned. This includes, for example, the question of active suicide assistance, against which the church has objections, but which political bodies and the supreme court consider permissible. It can generally be said that a main focus of the Catholic Offices - especially in Berlin – is to deal with questions of life ethics, medical ethics, family policy, etc.

f. Here we again encounter a basic disposition, without which a social engagement of the church is not possible: the willingness and ability to communicate and to compromise. I believe that, at least in public life, the greatest ethical task is to make good and fair compromises. Example: When legislation for the protection of human embryos was drawn up in Germany many years ago it resulted in regulations that are comparatively restrictive compared to other countries. By that time, the church was faced with the question: do we refrain from participating in the debate at all, because already the prerequisites for extra-corporal fertilization contradicted the church's ethical rules? Or should we, setting aside such concerns, participate in the opinion building process and support a solution that comes as close as possible to our position, such as the ban on surrogate motherhood? The Bishops' conference opted for the latter alternative and did it the same way in many other cases. And: unlike in the USA, a public excommunication of politicians who represent a position that deviates from church teaching is unthinkable in Germany.

4. I try to summarize: Of course, church involvement in processes of social change arises from our faith in Jesus Christ. God's love for his world invites man to respond and give back and practice undeviating love himself. This affects the actions of the individual as well as the social and especially the ecclesiastical organisms. Love always includes going beyond the status quo in the direction of a better future. The aim is not a superficial striving for optimization and certainly not a crude belief in progress. Rather, the dignity of the human being should be given validity and respect for all of God's creation should shape our actions.

   This requires going beyond the fixation on the present and short term, which often is the attitude of politicians and politics. Responsibility for the future however is impossible without challenging the status quo. That justifies a certain subversiveness of Christian engagement. But mostly our action is within the parameter of shared requirements of the civil society. In this sense it is necessary, for example, for the future of the globe, among other things, to successfully address the climate and energy challenges, to support economic development in a social market economy, to counter demographic change – the aging of society – and to further develop the political structure and peace order, especially in Europe. Our task is to further contribute to the reduction of worldwide development disparities and inequality of opportunities and our task is to fight unimaginable misery in processes of migration.

   One thing to keep in mind: Social and political life largely develops along the interests of individuals and groups. In extreme cases, there is a destructive egoism on the part of individuals and of entire social groups – which can also occur in the form of corruption. In any case, the imbalance between well-organized and badly organized or badly organisable interests should be considered. It is in accordance with the imperative of justice to stand by the less influential and, if necessary, to act as advocates for them. This is part of the option for the poor.

   Finally: Due to the digital revolution in particular, transformation processes are creating new freedom and new dangers for freedom alike. We live in a time of global cultural change full of ambivalence. This creates an enormous need for orientation. Christianity can contribute much. But we need to continue to dialogue. Alone we are too weak - in my country and I guess in African countries as well.

"Things have a Price, People have a Dignity" (Pope Francis)
The Involvement of the Church in Societal Processes in Africa"

Joint Conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, July 21st – 24th 2022

A presentation by Dr. Catherine Promise Biira, Uganda and Christopher Omolo, Kenya

"10 Concrete Suggestions for a Future Role of the Church in Societies of Africa and Beyond"

- 2,380,000,000: Today, two thirds of all Christians live in the global South and churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America are continuing to grow.

- Church and the State in Africa then……
    - Occasioned by its history of slavery and colonialism, Africa has been systemically disadvantaged and has always struggled to find its socio-economic, political, cultural, psychological and institutional feet.
    - Its quest to move from a passive norm taking object to an active subject capable of articulating its interests, is further undermined by the crises that it constantly has to endure.
    - Churches have traditionally played an 'evangelizing' and 'civilizing' role; providing social services like health and education.
    - During the colonial period, Christian churches were active agents in contestation for state power through backing appointments for chiefs and other political administrators. Rwanda 1931.
    - In some countries, political parties were aligned to christian religious denominations.

- Church and the State in Africa today
    - Today religious leaders wield a lot of influence and can influence electoral outcomes. Key politicians have tended to align themselves with the churches.
    - Albeit sometimes covert and other times overt, religious identities often become politically salient and serve as a basis for political mobilization in a number of African countries.

- Church and the political transformation of Africa
    - Attempts to engage in the political transformations of the African state have however been met with mixed reactions. Religious leaders like Archbishop Janani Luwum of Uganda paid with their lives and people like Rev. George Lukwiya, survived by sheer luck while Bishop Festo Kivengere was forced into a 2 years' exile during the Idi Amin regime.
    - Churches are only safe in this space when playing the role of complementing the efforts of the established regime or roles that the regime sees as further securing its continued existence.
    - Unfortunately, in some instances, like the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the church has been accused of complicity in crimes against humanity.

- In today's veiled dictatorships/quasi democratic states, some church leaders are speaking up against injustice much more boldly in their summons but being reminded to 'keep out of politics'.
- Despite the Church's law some Catholic priests have gone ahead to offer themselves for elective positions. In Uganda, 3 Catholic Priests have run for elective office since 2006.
- In 2010, the Anglican church in Uganda issued a policy barring ordained people from joining politics.
- Several pastors from the new churches have also contested in parliamentary and presidential elections in Uganda.

Big Question: What is the trajectory of Africa's development in the future and what is the likely role of the Church?

- Africa some concerning facts…….
  - Population of 3 billion by 2063.
  - Global extreme poverty will become increasingly concentrated in Africa and without rapid progress in the region, the 2030 goal of eradicating global poverty shall not be reached.
  - Africa is the most-affected region in the world in terms of loss of income of poor households due to COVID-19.
  - Less than half of all African countries have experienced inclusive growth between 2000 and 2020.
  - Growth has been inclusive in only 17 out of 49 African countries in the sample; poverty-reducing, but inequality-increasing in 18 countries; and non-inclusive on either dimension in 14 African countries.
  - In 2063, 26 of the world's 40 most unequal nations will be African.
  - It is estimated that the overexploitation and degradation of the biodiversity ecosystems will result in the loss of 50% of Africa's bird and mammal species by the end of the century.
  - 60 years after independence, the African State remains in many respects oppressive, a failed attempt at inclusive development and a source of disillusionment for the majority of Africans.
  - In spite of this or maybe because of this, the greater part of Africa's poor is profoundly religious and in many instances faith communities are the poorest
- So what?…….
  - These circumstances call for the church to practically respond to the needs of society.
  - With the erosion of trust in elected leaders, the 10 concrete points on the role of the church in Africa are proposed on the premise that;
  - 1. The church cannot dissociate itself from the challenges of governance and therefore cannot be totally separated from the state.
  - 2. The fight for justice in our world continues to define the core mission of the church in civic spaces.

10 Concrete Suggestions for a Future Role of the Church in Societies of Africa and Beyond

1. Reeducate society with proper spiritual and moral values; initiate cultural, institutional and mindset change to eliminate the habits that cause poverty – greed and waste, indifference to the pain of others and the exploitation of people and irresponsible use of natural resources and the environment.
2. Mentor and support individuals to run for elective positions. The church ought to be supplying the government with men and women of integrity who fear God and who choose the preferential option of the poor.
3. Holding leaders accountable; speaking truth to power in oppressive systems that sustain corruption, racism, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of marginalized groups within the society, expose the insufficiency of all politics based on coercion and falsehood and find the true source of power in servanthood rather than dominion.
4. To promote peaceful conflict resolution by fostering dialogue and cooperation in ways that can arbitrate rival interests, cultures, religious traditions, support alternative justice systems and build social cohesion.
5. Fidelity to its calling. Our Story must be evident in the way we live with one another in our own church and cultural contexts, and also in our engagement with persons and groups in other cultural and religious contexts.
6. Contribute to the cultivation of an authentic collective African identity that emphasizes the virtues of African culture "I am because you are" and questions the negative external labels imposed on the African people and the continent at large.
7. Advocate for Social Justice; Speak on behalf of the weak and those at the peripheral. Advocate for concerted efforts towards social transformation based on shared spiritual values of social justice to ensure socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development.
8. More assertively offer affordable and value laden education to meet the deficit of moral values in our social and professional spaces.
9. Challenging unequal power relations between the global north and Africa that continue to bleed the continent of its resources; unfair terms of trade; corporate irresponsibility; exploitation by economic powers.
10. Contribute to protection of the environment, and Africa's natural and cultural heritage.

Some Quotes of Participants

"A life-changing experience that provided me with a new global perspective through learning about the conference participants' local contexts. The discussions on the Church's role in different countries enabled me with a thorough context-specific understanding on the social challenges around the world, but particularly in South and East Africa, which I had been unexposed to. It was so insightful to learn about the similarities and differences of the Church's role in such variety of realities and realize that the youth, no matter where they're from, share the same hope for the Church to be an actor for the common good and keep the preferential option for the poor'. The conference fostered in me a sense of unity and belonging to an international community of like-minded, yet, very diverse inspiring change-makers."

Sara Capaliku, Albania

"Despite our different nationalities, cultures and traditions, It is amazing just how similar our experiences and perspectives on the role of the church in societal processes are. The conversations were profound and the deliberations thoughtful, as is expected when there is a great meeting of minds. The future is promising with all the challenges it portends and I felt part of defining that future, as we did through the conversations in the conference. "

Dr. Veronica Mwangi, Kenya

"As a participant from Asia Department, it was striking to learn that there are similar patterns as to the critical role of the church in societal progress such as providing quality education, healthcare services, peace processes, etc. in nations not only in Africa but also in the Philippines, for one. It's also worthy to note that while the church and state have a fair share of fighting one's own personal demons (corruption, abuse, etc.), it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard justice and peace in our own communities as encapsulated in the Catholic Social Teaching. Hence, making this excerpt from the conference title even more fitting: *Things have a Price, People have Dignity (Pope Francis).* The palpable energy from the multicultural group and the genuine curiosity of various expertise were incredible and inspiring!"

Trinnah M. Caracho, Philippines

"The conference was a very enriching space to discuss with inspiring people about development challenges and new ideas on how we can contribute to making a better world together. Critically evaluating the actions of every one of us, as members of the church, opens up the opportunity to build new roads that lead to peace, social justice and inclusive development. It is good to know the mountain we must climb before reaching its summit! I am convinced that dialogue and mutual understanding are the key to a just, peaceful and prosperous world.

My deep heart thanks for such a memorable and unforgettable experience. I left the conference with renewed hope and with the strong commitment that each of us is an agent of change for our society. **"**

Sandra Zapata Mafla, Ecuador

"It is striking to find out that the Church is facing similar challenges in various countries across the continent while I am inspired by the fact that the Church , despite the challenges, has been the "salt of the earth" in the African society. "

Gemechu Bekele Lemu, Ethiopia

"I am grateful to have been able to participate in the conference. It was great to see how scholarships have really impacted on the lives of many Africans and others from Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. I also got to know many new points of view as far as "the role of the church in societal change" is concerned."

Dr. Marian Asantewah Nkansah, Ghana

„I was a member of the group from outside Africa and I feel that we gained the most from the conference – an insight into the reality on the ground of how church operates in different parts of Africa. It was also an unforgettable experience of being a part of a vibrant community of participants from various and diversified places. Inspiring people, meaningful exchanges, salient interactions. Exploring Zimbabwe was a great experience."

Prof. Dr. Rafal Riedel, Poland

"It was a unique experience for me as a Ghanaian to be part of this conference. Ghana and Zimbabwe have a special connection through President Mugabe and I felt we had come to visit our in-law because the first wife of the former president came from Ghana. Zimbabwe is a beautiful country with interest history, beautiful infrastructure for government agencies and enclosed drainage system in the Harare compared to my home country. My brain has printed images of the high rise buildings. The climate, vegetation in the city area, and design of the houses with trees, gardens and flowers within reflect to good old days of Zimbabwe. Harare seems densely populated yet, the streets are clean. This is remarkable for a country described as suffering.

The focus of our conference was the dignity of humanity. With my eyes closed, interactions with participants, personal observations on the streets of Harare and personal reflections I have come to the conclusion that human dignity has different perspectives linked to social context, environment, culture and time resulting diverse views and non-violent conflicts.

Throughout the conference I saw the manifestation of our God given talents (James 1: 17) in the form of teaching, organizing and dancing.

Dr. Martin Nyaaba Adokiya, Ghana

"The experience in Zimbabwe was mind opening especially understanding that though we come from the continent, we may not fully comprehend the contexts in different African countries.

There was viable potential, resilience, and commitment to the will of the people in Zimbabwe. I also saw a lot of the ethos of Christian service in contributing to peace and interreligious dialogue.

Dr. Lydia O Radoli, Kenya

„Es war für mich persönlich eine neue Erfahrung, mit Menschen verschiedener Nationalitäten Afrikas zusammenzukommen. Bei der Konferenz über die Situation der Kirchen in Afrika und ihre Aktivitäten in ihren Ländern und auch ihre Beziehung zur Regierung haben ich viel neues gelernt. Durch die Diskussionen versuchte ich einen Vergleich anzustellen zwischen der Situation der koptischen Kirche in Ägypten und der Situation der katholischen Kirche in Süd-, West und Ost-Afrika. Als Beispiel fand ich die Aktivitäten in der Gesellschaft während der Pandemie besonders interessant. Die Konferenz in Harare war sehr erfolgreich, was Themen, Organisation und neben den touristischen Reisen auch die Unterbringung anbelangt."

Michael Ghattas, Egypt

„Es waren gute und lehrreiche Erfahrungen, viele gute Begegnungen und Gespräche mit ehemaligen und aktuellen Stipendiaten und Stipendiatinnen aus Afrika, aber auch anderen Regionen der Welt. Es war eine sehr gelungene Akademie in Harare!"

Prof. Dr. Margit Eckholt, Germany

Das Ziel der Konferenz war für mich, die begeisterten gebildeten Katholiken von KAAD, Misereor Partners im südlichen Afrika und der Arrupe Jesuit University in Harare zusammen zu bringen. Die Konferenz gab uns einen einem sicheren Raum um sich frei auszudrücken, einander beistehen und eine gemeinsame Vision für die Zukunft der Kirche in Afrika haben. Aus Mangel an Demokratie könnte eine solche Diskussion in manchen afrikanischen Ländern ohne äußere Initiativen nicht zustande kommen. Durch den Austausch mit Teilnehmern aus anderen Regionen, anderen Ländern und sogar anderen Konfessionen konnte es in Harare gelingen. Wichtig war auch, die aktuelle europäische Erfahrung als Antizipation der Ereignisse zu sehen, die in vielen Fällen in wenigen Jahren in der Kirche in Afrika beschäftigen werden.
Es fiel mir auf, dass die Kirche in Afrika eine Hauptrolle im Leben der Menschen spielt, die sich nicht nur auf die religiöse Ebene beschränkt, sondern sich auch erweitert um die Bildung, das Wissen durch Medien, die finanzielle und politische Unterstützung etc. Deswegen ist die Unterstützung der afrikanischen Kirche von hoher Bedeutung für die Entwicklung der Gesellschaften und der Länder. Deshalb war zu spüren, dass die Afrikanerinnen und Afrikaner ihren Kirchen Liebe und Respekt schenken, was bei den Diskussionen auftauchte und die Kritik sehr konstruktiv und schonend machte. Auf der Konferenz lernte ich vieles über die Erwartungen und Ansprüche der Afrikanerinnen und Afrikaner von der Kirche. Viele Aspekte waren für mich persönlich überraschend, z.B. der Anspruch auf eine wirksame Rolle in der Politik, was anders ist als der Fall in meinem Land, wo die Kirchen auf politische Zurückhaltung setzen.
Die Diskussionen, sowohl in Plenum als auch in Gruppen, gab mir die Chance, einige Aspekte in meiner Kirche und in meiner Kultur von außen zu sehen, über viele Axiome nachzudenken und sie bewusster und tiefer wahrzunehmen.
Der Besuch in Zimbabwe war ein großes Erlebnis für mich. Ich glaube an den Spruch von Laura Lynne Jackson glaube „We are all leaves on different branches of the same tree" und so war dieses Erlebnis für mich eine Wanderung auf einem anderen Zweig im Baum des Lebens; neue Menschen, neue Ideen, neue Kulturen. Einiges was mir bekannt und ähnlich zu meiner Kultur und vieles war anders und spektakulär.
Die offene, humorvolle, spontane, nette und fleißige Persönlichkeit der Afrikanerinnen und Afrikaner war für mich sehr beeindruckend. Ihre Kooperation und Liebe zueinander lässt mich ein paar Tage die Individualität vergessen.

Christine Gamal, Egypt

Dignitaries during the opening of the conference

The host Fr. Dr. Joseph Oduor Afulo SJ opening the conference

Fr. Dr. Hans Langendörfer, KAAD President

Group Work in Session (East Africa Group)

Feedback from the Group work (West Africa Group)

Group work in session (Southern Africa Group)

Participants in the plenary

Topical Excursion to Mbare Parish, Harare

Topical Excursion to Mbare Parish, Harare

Group Picture during the conference

Presentation by Dr. Catherine Biira (Uganda) and Christopher Omolo (Kenya/Tanzania) on Saturday

Panel Discussion following the presentation

Art Excursion in Harare

Art Excursion in Harare

Entertainment on the last evening: Mbira group from Harare

Zimbabwean Choir during mass at the church of Arrupe Jesuit University

Dr. Locardia Shayamunda during the closing of the conference