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Congregation of the Holy Ghost and Evangelization through Education



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Introduction

“Come Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of thy faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth”.

This article is a short narration of my association with Holy Ghost Fathers right from my early childhood to the present time. In it I venture to show how the fire of the love of the Holy Ghost has renewed the face of Tanzania through the Spiritan motto of **“evangelization through education”**. Being one of the beneficiaries of the education offered by the Holy Ghost Fathers in Tanzania at their primary and secondary schools, I consider myself to be one of the tools for renewing the face of the Tanzanian society through my academic and administrative involvement at the University of Dar Es Salaam, the Open University of Tanzania, and now at Marian University College (MARUCo), Bagamoyo.

My Background

I was born in 1940 in a small village called Maharo in Mkuu Ward, Rombo District, Kilimanjaro Region. My parents, Peter Mamkwe and Anna Mookoni were among the first few converts into Christianity. Our Parish, Mkuu Parish, founded in 1885, is under the patronage of St. Catherine of Siena.

My academic life started in 1946 at Mkuu Primary School where I received my primary education. I completed Standard Six in 1952, and in 1953 I embarked on my secondary education at the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Secondary School, Umbwe. I completed Junior Secondary Education at Umbwe in 1956 and was awarded the Territorial Standard X Examination Certificate. This award opened the door for me to go to St. Francis College Pugu in 1957, an R.C. Senior Secondary School owned by the Holy Ghost Fathers. I completed the University of Cambridge Oversea School Certificate (Ordinary Level) in 1958, and two years later, in 1960, I was awarded the University of Cambridge Higher School Certificate (Advanced Level). This was the very first Form VI Examination conducted in the then Tanganyika Territory.

At that time (1960) Tanganyika was still under British rule, and there was no university in Tanganyika to go to. Luckily for me, the then Bishop of Moshi Diocese, Rt. Rev Joseph Kilasara, secured for me a scholarship to pursue university education in the then Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). I went to Germany in March 1961, took an intensive three months German language course in the city of Cologne at the “Afrikanum” an institute run by the White Fathers, after which I enrolled myself as a student at the Catholic University of Wurzburg, in Bavaria District. In 1964 I successfully completed the equivalent of the Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics, Physics and Astronomy, and four years later (1968) the equivalent of the Master of Arts Degree in Mathematics.

From October 1970 to May 1972 I was at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, where I was awarded the Master of Science Degree in Mathematics in December 1971. In December 1983 I went to the Catholic University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands for my PhD research and was awarded the PhD degree in Mathematics in August 1989.

University Career

My career as a university don spans a period of 54 years (1968-2022) and revolves around three universities in Tanzania: the University of Dar Es Salaam (39 years), the Open University of Tanzania (10 years), and Marian University College in Bagamoyo (5 years). My university career started in May 1968 at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), where I gradually climbed the professional ladder from Tutorial Fellow (1968) to full professor (1991). I spent 32 years at UDSM up to November 2000, when I reached the retirement age of 60.

The second university I worked at is the Open University of Tanzania (OUT), where I stayed for 10 years (December 2000 - November 2010). At the OUT, besides my academic role as professor, teaching and conducting research in mathematics, I was also Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies and for a brief period Deputy Vice Chancellor for Administration. In 2011, I returned to my *alma mater*, the University of Dar es Salaam, as Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics, and stayed there for an additional period of 7 years (December 2011 - November 2017). I left UDSM in November 2017 after the Government introduced a policy which directed public universities not to engage people of over 70 years in order to give employment to young academicians.

Promulgation of the Government Policy was to me a blessing in disguise because it enabled me realize a long cherished wish to work at a catholic institution so that I could in a small way give back what I had received from the Church. My association with Marian University College started in December 2017, when I was invited to join the College as Professor of Mathematics. My coming to MARUCo also gave me chance to renew my association with the Spiritans who metaphorically brought me up during my formative stages. I publicly confess that I feel genuinely happy to be back to where I truly belong.

Evangelization through education

The Congregation of the Holy Ghost has been on the forefront as far as Education in Tanzania is concerned. Up until when the Government nationalized private secondary schools, including Umbwe and Pugu secondary schools, the Congregation of the Holy Ghost was a key player in providing education at primary and secondary schools. This was in line with their policy of liberating its potential faithful from the dual yokes of poverty and ignorance. A healthy body and an enlightened mind are fertile grounds for spiritual liberation. This approach in evangelization was vividly evident in the efforts of individual Holy Ghost Fathers whom I encountered during my primary and secondary education days. The list includes Rev. Fr. Francis Greff at Mkuu Primary School, Rev. Fr. William Laurence O’Connor, Rev. Fr. William

Costelloe, Rev. Fr. Louis Dollan, and Rev. Fr. Anton Morgenroth, at Umbwe Secondary School, and Rev. Fr. James Lynch, Rev. Fr. John Aherne, Rev. Fr. Michael McTiernan, Rev. Fr. Bartholemew Lyons, Rev. Fr. Liam O’Sullivan, and Rev. Fr. Cyril Byrne at Pugu. St. Francis College, Pugu¹ was the place where many of the early Government leaders, including Ministers, received their advanced secondary education. It is worth noting that, the first president of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, was teaching at St. Francis College Pugu before he left to start the TANU, the political party which led to the independence of Tanganyika in 1961.

Distinctive Features of the Spiritan Approach to Education

Ask any mature person in Tanzania about the views on current and previous educated elite, and you will find one thing common in their replies, and is that the current educated elite is distinctively preoccupied with personal interests, lacking in their general attitudes in life, in their values, their social ethics, their characters, and in their general behaviour as compared to the older educated elite. Note that all are said to be educated. What then is missing in the education that is being offered now and the education then?

Education has three distinctive attributes: to impart knowledge to an individual, to equip the recipient with skills that can enable one to apply the acquired knowledge to solve or cope with real life problems that afflict society, third, and most importantly, to change the attitude of the individual towards his/her surroundings.

It is obvious from the current immense scientific and technical developments that the knowledge and skills components of “education” have vastly expanded in the recent past, and therefore our current educated elite is much more knowledgeable and much better equipped with skills to apply than knowledge in solving problems.

What is lacking in the current elite is precisely the aspect of change of attitude as consequence of having acquired knowledge and skills. Most examinations administered in our educational institutions measure knowledge acquired by a candidate and skills learnt to solve problems. Unfortunately, attitude cannot be measured using such questions. An individual’s character, values, ethical behaviour are not measurable using scientific units of length, weight, time, etc. These attributes of an individual are acquired by a student from other individuals in the environment in which the education is being offered. This is where the Spiritan education environment comes in. The environment in which the Holy Ghost Fathers offer education, be it at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, or now at University level is very conducive to imparting the desirable attitude of educated elite. That environment included elements of self-discipline, communal togetherness, respect to authority, respect to others, reverence to the Creator, and in general being your brother’s keeper in every aspect. My wish and desire is to see that these good attributes of the Spiritan education are revisited, refurbished, and reinstated where they are lacking.

MARUCo, the Epitome of Evangelization through Education

Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) in Mwanza is the biggest of the four Catholic Universities in Tanzania. The other three are Mwenge Catholic University (MWECAU) in Moshi, the Catholic University of Health and Allied Sciences (CUHAS), also located in Mwanza and Ruaha Catholic University (RUCU) located in Iringa.

¹ You may read with interest: Benjamin William Mkapa, *My Life My, My Purpose: A Tanzanian President Remembers*. (Mkuki na Nyota Publishers Ltd). 21-22.

Marian University College (MARUCo) is a Constituent College of SAUT. The College is owned by the Congregation of the Holy Ghost (Spiritans) and is the only higher learning institution of the Congregation, not only in Tanzania, but in the entire Eastern and Central African region.

MARUCo was officially launched on 31st May, 2015, hence it is now barely seven (7) years old. During this relatively short period of its existence the College has faced some very serious teething problems to the extent that, at some stage, the owner seriously contemplated shutting it down. The problems were caused mainly by the decision in 2017 of the Tanzania Commission for Universities to impose a student admission ban on the College, a ban which lasted for two consecutive years, 2017 and 2018. Although the ban was lifted in 2019, the damage had been done and has negatively impacted the operations of the College to the present time.

My joining the College in November 2017 was part and parcel of the steps taken by the owner and Management to address the shortfalls that led to the student admission ban. Thanks to the understanding and support of the owner and the entire MARUCo workforce, MARUCo has kept afloat. I sincerely believe that MARUCo shall not die. Many may come and many may go, but MARUCo shall go on forever. MARUCo has all the potential of becoming a centre of excellence, sharply focused on achieving the sentiments imbedded in its vision and mission statements.

Optimistic Ending

Let me end my short narration of my association and life with the Spiritans by thanking the Congregation for mooted and implementing this grand idea of establishing and continuing to sustain MARUCo as an institution of higher learning, focused on realizing the Congregation's characteristic motto of "Evangelization through Education" against all odds. The Congregation's mission of liberating mind and soul is a continuous process, an unfinished business that has to continue. MARUCo is the vivid front runner and instrument for achieving this liberation struggle under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary.