

Missionary *Reflections*

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Editorial

This issue of *Missionary Reflections* is dedicated to the theme of governance. The choice flows from the discussions we had in our group during the meetings in Nairobi, but also from the experience of the provinces of Kenya and South Sudan.

The two provinces seemed directed to a merge, when a referendum in both countries brought the process to a halt. South Sudan and Kenya will continue to cooperate in some fields – formation, health care for our confreres – but a merge is now below the horizon.

I must confess that writing this editorial is a tricky business. As editor, I should have an impartial, or at least equidistant, approach to the articles published in the magazine. This time this is made difficult by the fact that I am the author of one of them, exactly against the merge.

On the other hand, I can note that Fr. Pierli – who writes on the reasons for a merge – used arguments very close to mine to support the opposite opinion. This is perhaps a sign that a change is in the

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making. Its need is felt and, certainly, many confreres would like a new kind of governance.

The Missionary Reflections groups wishes to offer this issue to all as a preparation to the General Chapter that the Comboni Missionaries will celebrate later this year. We also want to re-launch the call for articles. This forum is by no means dedicated only to those living and working in Kenya. It is an instrument open to all. So feel free to contribute with your reflection on missionary themes, pastoral work, or any other issue you think might be of interest to other missionaries around the world.

Giuseppe Caramazza

Reasons for a yes!

The last general chapter encouraged a transformation of governance without giving clear criteria and motivations. The hope was to merge several provinces so that personnel and structures could be reduced and probably the cost of governance as well. The criteria for the change in governance were not elaborated. Moreover, the changes should have occurred within the framework of the incumbent Rule of Life: in other words, only cosmetic changes would be allowed. Hence the majority of the confreres considered the exercise a waste of time, energy and money. This rejection has been clear in Kenya both at level of discussions and of ballot.

Yet, I was one of the few who voted *yes* to the merge with South Sudan. My hope was to set something into motion the beginning of a *transformation of the style, methodology and structures of governance*. It goes without saying that the Rule of Life (part four on the service of authority) is expected to be changed rather radically. In other words, the merge should be the first step followed by many others, as I shall try to elaborate in this article. The present system is clumsy and stagnancy prone! Our leaders are engulfed in trite *Management* to the detriment of *Governance*; hence we suffer of a chronic vacuum of leadership. The resignation of Benedict XVI was an admission of the same inadequacy in the Church. Pope Francis started, I hope, a radical process of transformation.

**The geographical criterion ...
should be phased out**

In the governance of the Church, the geographical criterion is still fundamental and untouchable. There is great fear of changing it even though the present world conditions – mobility and pluralism - seem irreversible. Parishes are obviously designed on a geographical criterion. The traditional society where the parish structures thrived was characterized by homogenous style of living both among agriculturalists and pastoralists. The boundaries included groups of people with the same mindset, culture religious practices, ethnicity, and language.

At the beginning of the third millennium the urban set up is gradually replacing the rural one. *Pluralism and diversity* are in the same place. *Uniformity and homogeneity* cannot remain the only criteria to form a parish. The same can be said of dioceses. Nobody can deny that the basic assumption of the geographical criterion is in crisis, even though with different degrees according to continents.

The policy of governance of Propaganda Fide, the Roman Congregation founded in 1622 by Pope Urban VIII, took the geographical criterion as the strategy for fostering and controlling missionary activities. Each missionary institute was assigned a given territory with precise boundaries; the members of that institute would operate within those boundaries establishing their own methodology, under the leadership of their own bishops and in collaboration of the female branch of the same charismatic family.

This missionary strategy, called *Jus Commissionis*, changed on 24th February 1969 replaced by the so called *Mandatum*. The dioceses became responsible of their

missionary activities. Seeking a plurality of pastoral agents, both male and female, became a major concern for the bishops. From this point of view *uniformity* was replaced by *pluralism*.

Moreover in the traditional society the missions were in the South. The well established local Churches were in the North. In the second half of the 20th century, the situation changed dramatically, making the mission a five continent affair and enterprise. Thus even for the missionary activity of the Church the geographical criterion had come to an end. The first document to recognize it was *Redemptoris Missio* (1990, chapter IV) which acknowledges the end of the geographical criterion as yardstick to identify the missions.

Though the geographical criterion is seriously challenged at parish and diocesan levels, and phased out in modern Missiology, in our Institute it is still part and parcel of the mindset, imagination and fantasy of many missionaries, particularly the ones from the North and of their benefactors. Many have not yet internalized the end of the geographical criterion.

Pluralism in ministry and mission

One of the inspiring and encouraging developments over the last 50 years is the multiplication of ministries in Church and society. Different ministries to meet the variety of needs, of the challenges, of poverties. *Pluralism and rapid transformation* are inevitable and irreversible! We might map one area from the geographical point of view, but from the ministerial perspective there might be ten ministries. For example: Liturgical Sacramental and Celebration Ministry; Education Ministry, Social Ministry, Youth ministry, Environment Ministry, Disability Ministry; Cultural Mediators Ministry; Reconciliation Ministry; Ministry of Solidarity and Sharing; Ministry of Interreligious encounter,

ecumenical dialogue and social collaboration.

Pluralism is also in the very heart of mission theology and missionary paths (see *Redemptoris Missio* chapter 5) activities and specifications.

- *Mission as proclamation*, focused on the Word of God, biblical apostolate in all its different branches; mission as accompaniment of catechumens and foundation of the local Churches; this is what the majority of the priestly missionaries are doing, in organized parishes and dioceses.
- *Mission as service to integral human development* to meet basic needs such as nutrition, water, and health.
- *Mission at the service of education* a long lasting area with great investment of personal and financial resources.
- *Mission as promotion justice* and peace and integrity of creation.
- *Mission as reconciliation*, dialogue, solidarity across the borders of different religious affiliations and allegiances.

In other words, pluralism affects both *human life* and *missionary horizons*. Therefore, as in *human-political arena*, governance is structured on services, or ministries. Why not in our missionary Institute? Political governance has a pluralism of ministries! From finance to education, to youth, to transport, to labor and to agriculture... *The global governance* of the United Nations follows the same patterns as well! FAO (agriculture – food) – UNESCO –(education and culture), UNEP (environment and climate). Could it not be applied to the MCCJ?

A criterion for governance

Ministries are already strongly influencing the management of the

congregation, why then not to make them the pillars of governance as well? We might still keep the overall coordinating function and symbolic ministry of the Father General. Yet, as for everything else, a radical reshuffle should be envisaged.. No more assistants in charge of continents! The figure the Provincial Superior should also be phased out. The general secretariats would be far better utilized at continental level more than in Rome, since ministries are becoming more and more homogenous throughout the world, at least at continental level. The article 12 of the Rule of Life about the Clerical Institute would become totally irrelevant is to be scrapped altogether as relics of an old untenable ecclesiology and an obsolete theology of religious life. The so called *rotation*, which from a *ministerial* perspective is often disastrous, would be totally reconfigured. Moreover we would develop a real common methodology in each basic ministry, correcting in a radical way the style of individualism, often denounced by General Chapters to no avail. Such an approach to leadership

would render far easier the linkage between *leadership*, scientific *competence* and ministerial *experience* which in the present system is problematic if not altogether impossible.

I find the winds of change blowing in the Vatican with Pope Francis concerning governance rather encouraging! My hope is for a snowball effect, reaching out to the Comboni Family too. The longings for a new style, different structures, refreshing criteria and methodology of governance and leadership are on the air all over: in the political arena, in the civil society and in local Churches. Here in Kenya such a will was expressed in 2010 with the choice of a new constitution by referendum: a new dispensation turning on the hinge of devolution, decentralization, equal opportunity, pluralism. I do pray every day for the forthcoming chapter .. who knows ... a sudden and decisive gust of wind from above..

Francesco Pierli

The reasons against

In 2012, the Provincial Assembly of the Comboni Missionaries in Kenya overwhelmingly espoused the proposal of merging with the province of South Sudan. Later, a questionnaire was sent out to probe how to go about the union. What was to gather information to chart the way forward backfired. Most of the respondents disagreed with the merging. The provincial councils of South Sudan and Kenya could do little more than asking once again the opinion of the base. The referendum confirmed the response of the questionnaire: the majority of confreres were not comfortable with the merging.

In Kenya, the counting of votes was to take place at the end of the Provincial Assembly in January 2015. The day before, I mockingly invited those ‘against’ the merge not to forget to cast their vote. The remark was done jokingly and was thus understood. By chance, I was also asked to open the ballots. I cheered for the ‘no’ votes, while I announced a ‘yes’ vote with funereal attitude. Jokes aside, I sincerely supported the side against the merge, and I did so with some reasons.

I entered the postulancy in Florence in 1979. Then I was completely

unaware of the working of a religious institute. Today, some 36 years later, I know better. Usually we religious embrace change when it is too late and for the wrong reasons. This time it was no different. The idea of merging provinces is not new. The proposal has been floating since 1994, at least. Then, in the wake of the Rwandan genocide, Fr Alex Zanotelli proposed the institution of an interprovincial flying squad with personnel from the provinces of Eastern Africa to deal with the question of refugees. Later, other confreres proposed to have a pan-eastern Africa province linked by ministries not geographical criteria. None of these proposals was accepted and implemented. Yet, if wild in a way, they did not lack merit altogether.

In particular, I had been attracted by the idea of a working structure based on ministry. Indeed, I wrote an article for one of our internal publications advocating the creation of such clusters of ministries. Media houses and animation activities could have cooperated beyond borders. The same could have applied to work among the pastoralists, etc. This proposal might not be enough to answer the needs of the mission today, but it contains a kernel of truth. In the debate for the merging of provinces, we will have to discuss the needed changes in our power/ministry structure. In my opinion we do need these changes if any merging is to succeed.

First of all **we need to rethink our governance**. Today the Institute is led in the same manner of the past. Little has changed in the last one hundred years. Our decision making is slow and often weighed down but ‘political’ considerations. Even decisions that are self-evident need weeks, if not months, to be reached. Go to any meeting of our major superiors and you will witness how the level of professionalism in organizing the proceedings is a far cry from that of

similar international bodies. Because of our organization of provinces, our Father General and his council remain in charge of most decision-making. Thus, they are busy dealing with petty matters - and some serious ones. Do they have the time to address the real issues of the Institute? A change of governance is needed to free up our leadership and enable them to work on directing the Institute towards the future.

We need to redesign our idea of local leadership. If ministry, or area of interest, is to be the new building block of our provinces, then we need to change their composition and scope. As it is today, the merging between South Sudan and Kenya would have meant to duplicate most structures and de facto have two parallel provinces running under one provincial. If such is the case, I do not see any benefit. Yet, to bring together the different sectors – pastoralist, urban ministry, media and animation, social commitments – we would need exactly a structural change. A change that will have to address the way we take decision, plan rotation, exchange personnel, prepare confreres for specific services.

This brings me to **the question of formation**. We could also do with reviewing our formation to ministry. In a recent publication (*Paths of Ministry among the Pastoralists*), our confreres who work with those peoples, suggested a specific training for those working among pastoralists. This training should start from the time of basic formation. As a matter of facts, many of our scholastics and brothers in formation do not receive adequate anthropological training. Besides, to train priests without an eye on their future ministry is not the best choice. Planning the ministry of a person since basic formation might seem an exaggeration, yet this is what most people do when they chose a carrier early in life, and devote their study and work towards its fulfilment.

I think that without this groundwork the merging of provinces will not answer to our problems. We would simply transfer the old structures to a new reality without any tangible benefit. We could learn a lesson from the Salesian family. They merged the provinces in Eastern Africa about a decade ago. They did so without any significant change in their organizational structure. Today they are moving away from that model because it failed.

In the weeks before the vote for or against the merging, I was asked to

support the move because it was the occasion to start a new way of ministering to people. I declined for the reasons I expressed above. Unless we have a clear vision of where we want to go prior to the merging, we will not be able to create a new methodology of action. As things stand, the merging would be an operation of wishful thinking, smoke without the roast. Then I prefer to continue with the old system until we will be ready for a change.

Giuseppe Caramazza

Prophetic Governance

A reflection about prophetic governance requires the analysis of today's reality: a great challenge in account of its complexity. Yet, it is from the proper understanding of this reality that the freedom and real development of peoples and nations depend. Globalisation might appear as the criterion to understand and make the right governance choices, but in my opinion it is not. Globalisation Governance does not consider and respect the complexity of life, the stratification of peoples' history and their cultures. It is a governance which imposes its own rules, it is self-referential.

Throughout history, we witnessed various attempt to have good governance and sound formation of leaders. Many political rulers of the world welcomed Protagoras's approach: *"Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not"*. They did so to simplify their approach to the world. The results have been as wide apart from dictatorship to total relativism-anarchy.

From my experience as missionary, and from the formation received from many good masters and friends, I've learned that the complexity and the polyhedric nature of human life is the sign of its grandeur in God's project. Ignoring this polyhedric nature of life means to disrespect the source of life. When Protagoras' approach is adopted in life and governance, it leads to tragedies and awful consequences: the undermining and destruction of human dignity. I believe it is very urgent to promote a governance which respects human dignity. I would like to share a quote very dear to me. It is from *De Hominis Dignitate* of Pico Della Mirandola, an Italian Renaissance philosopher (1463-1494). After expanding on concepts of the human dignity, Pico Della Mirandola speaks of the human being, allowing space to God:

"We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your

own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very centre of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine.”

Unlike in Protagoras, here it is not matter for the human being to be the measure of all things. Rather, the human being is invited to freely choose and determine who he wants to be and how he wants to relate to other men. The choices to be made are not suppose to be according to utilitarian judgment. Today many choices, especially in governance, are done because they are useful, convenient. Prophetic governance has to go beyond the usefulness or immediacy. I would say that the prophecy of governance is in the attitude of the “*deer’s feet on the high peaks*”, to see far, to have in mind that the reality we face is just an aspect of it. And it is from this *peak, the centre of the world* that the ability to plan and act can spring keeping in mind future generations, allowing them to continue to live and to collaborate with God to the fashioning of the world. The prophecy of governance lies in the fact that events and actions ought to be planned and organized in such a way that their fruits will be “harvested” by others.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, an important moment for the life of the Church. It was a colourful spring of which we have not yet fully seen the significance for Christians and the entire world. One of the documents of this prophetic event is the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (GS). I think that GS inspired many to undergo a process of *on-going formation* and of harmonisation of life to God’s plan on humanity. Prophetic governance cannot avoid considering the freedom and love which God impressed in the heart of every single person. In GS 34 it’s clearly said: *Throughout the course of the centuries, men have laboured to better the circumstances of their lives through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort. To believers, this point is settled: considered in itself, this human activity accords with God's will. For man, created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him Who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to man, the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth.*

The revolutionary concept of *common good* (GS 59,68,73) is the one which I see most fitting for a prophetic governance. The effort to harmonize common good with personal responsibility, to blend “my rights” with “my duties”, is what makes my life a prophetic presence in the world. If experience shows us otherwise, it is because we still live the relativism and self reference of Protagoras’ approach to reality. Thus, the common good becomes the spoiled good; abused because it does not seem to belong to anybody. At times, *common good* and *progress* do not match. *Common-good minded governance* makes life go at a slower pace, yet with a more open mind. It is not matter to discard the

development of humanity, the various achievements in many fields of life. For me, prophetic governance has to keep in mind the limitation and the core of the human nature, and on this base build development. GS 65 says that “*Growth is not to be left solely to a kind of mechanical course of the economic activity of individuals, nor to the authority of government. For this reason, doctrines which obstruct the necessary reforms under the guise of a false liberty, and those which subordinate the basic rights of individual persons and groups to the collective organization of production must be shown to be erroneous*”.

Prophetic governance ought to consider the difference between development and progress. It could seem that these concepts are very well known to us, but I see that many, also amongst missionaries, might confuse and interchange development with progress. Globalisation thrives in this ambivalence: profit becomes the metre of progress, and the logic of unlimited progress is subjected to ever-growing profit.

Development is the attitude which offers the opportunity to improve our life, to better it within the range and the constitution of our nature and that of the world. The best development happens where boundaries are considered and talents, even the apparently meaningless, respected.

Progress instead pulls further and further; it does not consider limitations or boundaries or the nature of things. Progress ridicules these realities. If something can be thought, imagined, it can also be done and put in place. Many of the natural and human disasters have their roots in this power to be the measure and

the master of everything. While the development lies in the role of human beings as stewards-administrators of the nature, progress pushes Man to be the master. To take advantage to have been put at the *centre of creation* in order to subjects all things, even God who, though the Creator of all things, becomes useless.

The prophetic governance springing from the value of peace, freedom and justice has nothing to do with a world government or a world order. This last one is just the order given by *somebody* (the various clubs and organisations which have solutions for the government of the world) to be executed and or respected. Prophetic governance is the common work for the promotion of peace, freedom and justice. Prophetic governance has a lot to do with dialogue. Dialogue is the action which gives the parties involved in it the search for a common ground where to put the foundation for the ‘home’ where to dwell as humanity.

As missionaries we should promote for our communities, structures and our work the searching for a common ground where to encounter our brothers and sisters and with them continue our journey of life. The search of a common ground, the responsibility towards the common good put us in a not very comfort zone. A zone very risky where what we think to hold firm has to be donated for the development of human life, of those values which bring dignity to it. Prophetic governance needs persons able to have *deer’s feet to go towards the high peaks, to see far*, to read the reality not only for what it appears but for what it reveals to us. To believe that only the deaconship can make us instruments of prophetic governance.

Paolo Latorre

It is our time to eat

Approaching the question of what leadership is, and who a leader is, seems easy. There are good definitions given by scholars and opinion makers. I decided to close my academic eye and approach leadership as perceived by the young people in the slums in Kenya. What is leadership to young people? Who is a good leader according to them? Do we really have good leaders? What are leaders for?

It is important to note that there are several leadership standards and they are defined in respect to the institution and responsibilities. One can categorise them in terms of international, regional, national, and local outreach. Or one can put them in categories like political, civil society, or faith-based leadership. For instance, the Catholic Church is led by the pope. On the other hand, the Kenyan government is led by a President. My take is that these differences are only in the expected responsibilities but not in the expected moral character or ethical requirements. Honesty is expected in both the Holy Father and President Uhuru Kenyatta. Humility is expected in a parish priest as is expected in a Member of Parliament. Considering the vastness of this topic, I therefore chose to look at political leadership.

Deducing from the responses I got from several young people living in Nairobi, political leadership is access to power and control over community resources. It is an opportunity to get rich quickly and easily. Most of them firmly stated that *“one joins politics in Kenya either to amass wealth or protect already acquired wealth”*. While I agree with my fellow young people, I however wish to

state that these opinions about political leadership are the outcome of politicians’ behaviour, whatever the post they occupy. The first agenda in both our National Assembly and County assemblies after the 2013 elections was to discuss salary and remunerations. Our *Waheshimiwa (Honorable)* turned *Wizi wa Miwa (sugar cane thieves)*. They increased their salaries, awarded themselves loans and,

worst of all, cushioned their huge allowances from taxation. Our Parliament has been reduced to a house of thugs!

“Day and night we are watching over your welfare. It is for YOUR sake that we drink that milk and eat those apples.

Do you know what would

happen if we pigs failed in our duty? Jones would come back! Yes, Jones would come back! Surely, comrades,” cried Squealer almost pleadingly”. This excerpt from George Orwell’s book *Animal Farm* captures well the responses these leaders give to the people whenever accused of corruption. They come out in political rallies and mobilize their people under the pretence that *“Our community is being targeted”*; or *“It is the works of my political enemies who aim at tainting my name”*. Even though Kenyans are not animals in the farm, politicians portray almost the same behaviours as the animals. The ‘M-Pigs’ always get away with their deeds.

Corruption is real and endemic in Kenya. It has spread its roots all over public and private institutions. It has been embraced by all the young and the old, men and women, Christians and Muslims, leaders and subjects. So entrenched is this vice that almost all opportunities to

“Our leaders use us once when they need us for votes. Then they flush us down a toilet like a used condom” (a young man addicted to alcohol)

institute reforms in the country have misfired in the past. Corruption has seriously affected the lives of many people. As it is commonly said, “to know how much you have been rained on, find out when the rain started beating you”. Corruption existed in colonial times. While fighting for independence, some of our leaders were also fighting for opportunity to practice corruption. In fact, the first action of the independent government was to share the country like a cake amongst them - *no wonder you can't miss the names of the families of our first leaders in the post-colonial era among the list of the top rich in Kenya*. From 1963 to today, corruption has been adopted by regime after regime as an element of the government. How different is the era after the 2010 new Constitution?

In Kenya, the effects of corruption are everywhere. They include postponed economic growth, poor revenue collection, suspension of investments, increased cost of business, poor quality of work, distorted distribution of resources, extreme poverty, insecurity, violence and anarchy. More specifically, corruption has shattered the lives of many youths in Kenya. It has

killed ambitions and dreams. It rewards laziness and immorality while punishing honesty and hard work.

Until when are we going to live this way? Who will put a stop to this? What is our role as youths? They say a society deserves the leaders it has. This is undeniably true with the Kenyan situation. The whole society should first accept that corruption is a PROBLEM that needs to be urgently solved. Accepting requires an objective analysis on the merits and demerits of corruption at individual and societal level. This calls for a national dialogue not for the M-Pigs alone but for the whole national. It is also important for the government of the day to understand its functions because “a *government*, for protecting business only, is but a carcass, and soon falls by its own *corruption* and decay”

The youth should also come out and speak against this evil, not just with their words but with their deeds. It is time that the society is reminded of the importance of wise voting.

Filipe Resende