



# Social Transformation

Leading Social Transformation in Africa

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Social Transformation Newsletter

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## Innovative social initiatives that transform lives



### From the Editor



The Institute of Social Ministry and Mission (ISMM) was founded in 1994, and since then it has trained close to 1000 social and pastoral ministers, lay men and women who are engaged in various areas of transformation in our society through different initiatives across Africa and beyond. The Institute is leading Africa in the work of social transformation through development projects, social enterprises and initiatives in peace building, education and health.

Social Transformation newsletter gives the alumni the chance to share about their ministry and how they are impacting and transforming life in various fields. This also serves as a link between the Institute and the alumni. Apart

from the testimonies and the stories (and the pictures), we will provide updates on the new development within the Institute. We want to demonstrate the uniqueness of our programs and the impact we are creating.

This newsletter targets students, alumni, supporters, partners, benefactors and organizations working for social transformation. We want to encourage and indeed invite our social transformers write and share their inspiring stories that are changing the face of Africa. Expect to read and see more transformative stories every two months.

*Br. Jonas Yawovi Dzinekou*

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# Reshaping Technical Education for Social Transformation

By Mathias Adossi Koffissan



them with technical skills that can ensure self reliance and sustainability.

## Background leading to experience

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Southern Africa. The economic difficulties have a serious impact on the majority of Malawians who are low-income earners. One of the immediate concerns is the inability of families to educate their children. A large number of those who complete secondary school education are unable to further their education to university level due to the high cost of university education.

Until 1994 there were secondary schools which were offering technical education to their students while receiving much needed support from the government. After 1994 however, with the election of new and “democratically elected government”, technical training became one of the first casualties and as a result, there were no technical secondary schools in the whole country. This led to the collapse of technical training and further aggravated the unemployment problem in Malawi.

This socio-economic situation leaves the youth vulnerable to many social evils such as unemployment, prostitution, and alcohol and drug abuse calling for an intervention to help young people find a better way of life. The C.T.C was set up to try to address this situation through integral technical education that can

help the youth become agents of transformation in their families and communities.

## What makes our approach different from others?

We have developed training that is holistic and transformative. We ensure our students receive sufficient workshop practice that enables the students to have sufficient hands-on experience. We also incorporate Human formation, Entrepreneurship, Communication and Computer skills in our curriculum. As a result, our students have a deeper appreciation for human interaction and business acumen.



## The Comboni Technical College

The Comboni Technical College is an Institution geared towards the provision of holistic technical education for young people. We offer practical skills and holistic formation while instilling discipleship in our trainees. There is a worrying concern amongst many young people who complete their secondary school education and are not selected to join universities due to the limited places available. This situation leads to anxiety as many young people are uncertain of their future. We at the Comboni Technical College endeavor to reduce this gap and provide a hope and a future for these young people, by equipping



We also try to keep our fees lower than Government Colleges. This is the commitment of the Comboni Missionaries in Malawi to raise the living standard of the young people from poor families. The students secure employment and continue to deliver exemplary work to their employers.

### Value for the youth and the society

We impart the technical skills to equip the students with the technical know-how of a specific trade. We instill the understanding human formation in our students to help them to co-exist well with other people. The Entrepreneurial skills that we impart on the young people are to enable them to have all the concepts of running a business.

### Ministerial approach to the youth

We believe that it is our responsibility to help these young people be fully alive and fully participate in the development of the Nation. We address the personal needs of each student and allow for additional classes with the teachers.

### Impact on the industry in Malawi

The demand for our graduates from various organizations has been on the rise in the past two years such that we have been unable to meet this demand. Our college has secured the exclusive opportunity to train the artisans and technicians of three big companies in the country. This has further cemented our credibility and boosted the confidence of our students.

In our production department we create, design and produce items out of wood and metal, first for the use of the College, and then for our clients.

### Influencing the technical education in Malawi

We are consulted and our instructors invited to key decision making meetings in the Ministries of Education and Labour, as well as technical training institutions. We are consulted on the trends and emerging issues in the provision of technical training in Malawi. The Ministries of Education and Labor send officers from other Technical Institutions to visit Comboni Technical Institute to learn from us, especially on how to deliver technical Education.

We are directly involved in the ongoing process of developing new syllabus, new Curriculum and textbooks in some technical disciplines piloted by the United Nations Education Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Another area in which our influence is felt is the setting of national exams and marking of the examination scripts. At least four times a year our Instructors are involved in this exercise. They are also invited for discussions when a certain change is to be made in the technical sector.

### Belief in uniqueness

The exceptional part of our influence is based on the fact that, for many years, we have been the only Technical College in the country with a Production department where we make excellent furniture and construction materials. Our main focus is on quality items for sale. Our high quality products attract clients and thus ensure a ready market for our products.

Through our commitment to quality production, our students are challenged to maintain the same standard. They are able to do this even after they complete their studies. In our production department we create, design and produce items out of wood and metal, first for the use of the College, and then for our clients. It is the most effective way of gearing towards self-sustainability. It ensures that the college has a steady stream of cash flows as a not for profit institution. Our products are highly competitive and we make the best home items in the country such as doors, dining tables, beds, coffee tables, wall units and other wood products. We are also the lead producers of burglar proof windows and doors as well as metal beds.

We believe that the young person is not only an asset or resource for tomorrow, but of today. Participating in building their future makes life easier for all. They are the only weapon we have for a better today and a better tomorrow.



# Empowering orphans through communities

By Consolata and Peter Kunyada

## The mango tree orphan support trust (Kenya)



It is common place in the African society to extend a helping hand to support members of the extended family. This is particularly so when both parents die and leave young children to fend for themselves. But the traditional strength is collapsing across the continent as too many children are left orphans following the death of both their parents due to the dreaded HIV/AIDS scourge. The result is that whole families are dragged too far below the poverty line. Severe malnutrition, preventable diseases and infant mortality rates increases. School attendance rates and performance take a nosedive.

It is against this background that THE MANGO TREE ORPHAN SUPPORT TRUST was started in 2002 to address the plight of orphans, vulnerable children and the youth. Our main focus is to support the education of children, provide vocational training for the young people in order to become self reliant, as well as provide microfinance credit facilities to various groups and needy individuals.

### The role of the mango tree orphan support trust in community development

The Mango Tree Orphan Support Trust Kenya (TMT(K)), operates in Rachuonyo North District in Homa-Bay county. The project covers two locations namely Wangchieng and Kobuya. Due to the overwhelming number of orphans in the project area as occasioned by the wide spread incidences of HIV/AIDS scourge, there was an urgent need

to come up with a strategy that would address the crisis efficiently and effectively. Many orphaned children dropped out of school due to lack of school fees, school uniform, as well as appropriate parental guidance and lack of role models within the community. It was a scenario of a community that had lost hope especially in the education sector.

The immediate need therefore at this point was to urgently restore the pride of the community by initiating a programme that would ensure that all orphans and vulnerable children have access to quality education. It is at this point that the TMT (K) embarked on an intensive registration of orphans with the help of village volunteers who are appointed by the community members as a link between them

and the organization, the provincial administration and the target project beneficiaries. After the registration there was the need to ensure retention of orphans in schools through payment of school fees for those in secondary schools, colleges, vocational training, and the universities. The orphans in primary school are supported with school uniform and other requirements to ensure their continued stay in school. We also support them with medical care, psychosocial support and nutritional support for the highly malnourished. As of now the project is actively supporting over 4,800 orphans.

### Water and sanitation

Access to water is a basic need in development. In the project implementation zone there are areas with serious water problems, but with the help of the community development support committee, the project has been able to assist in the conservation of two springs and construction of overnight storage tanks. It has also managed to drill three boreholes in order to provide the community with clean water. This has immensely reduced the incidences of water born diseases hence cutting down on medical costs. In this area the project has also placed water tanks in 22 primary schools for rain water harvesting. This is meant to help children access clean water when they are in school. To address the issue of girl child vulnerability the project has been constructing toilets and bathrooms



for the girls in primary schools. The project provides the building materials and pays for the labor but the schools and the community members dig the pit latrines as part of their contribution towards the project.

### Savings and credit

To empower the small scale business enterprises, the project also runs a group guaranteed Saving and Credit Programme, in which registered members can save and access credit at 10%. In this project clients receive training on simple book keeping, entrepreneurial skills, benefits of saving and how to save. All this efforts are geared towards empowering the community to have the capacity to take over some of the costs as a phase out plan of the TMT(K).

### Medical Support

TMT(K) offers simple treatment to common diseases like malaria and coughs. This service is offered to the registered orphans only, and the organization meets all the costs of medication. Additional services offered include health talks in schools, Anti AIDS campaigns, voluntary counseling and testing, formation of support groups and support for women with fistula problems.

### Alternative Family Based care

In this programme the community members identify homes within the community with widows who are known to be good mothers and willing to support the orphans, then the project places in those homes vulnerable girls who were under the care of guardians that did not support



The Mango Tree Orphan Support Trust Kenya is a key development partner not only in the targeted community but also in the county as a whole.



their education or abused them sexually. The project has eight such homes with at least ten girls per home. In this way the girls are able to be assisted to concentrate on their studies.

### The Community Service Volunteers

This is a group of young people supported by the project who have completed their secondary school education. They offer community service in their area of interest for one year before they join colleges or universities. This includes serving as untrained teachers, repairing community roads and tree planting.

### Social Transformation

The Mango Tree Orphan Support Trust Kenya is a key development partner not only in the targeted community but also in the county as a whole. We support the orphans through education at all levels and ensure a sustainable future for them. With the community development projects, we are on a deliberate path of social transformation in restoring hope in the community by enhancing sustainable development through participatory approach.

It is clear that TMT(K) has employed a concoction of the development approaches, depending on the need at a specific time but also employing the SOCIAL WELFARE APPROACH in most of its initiatives, and especially in the education and health sectors. In this project, we are changing lives through social transformation. All our efforts are geared towards the realization of the vision of the projects which is to see an empowered community fully involved in the care of orphans and vulnerable children through the spirit of love and solidarity, thus ensuring integral development for all.

# Promoting peace through children among the pastoral communities in Kenya

By Monica Kinyua



Parents and Children from Pokot Community in Baringo County and Samburu Community in Samburu County exchanging gifts during Inter Community Children and Parents Twining activity organized by Children Peace Initiative Kenya.

The Children Peace Initiative Kenya (CPI-Kenya) was established after the realization that, though the pastoralist communities have been fighting for many generations, children have never been involved directly in the resolution of these conflicts. Children can positively contribute to the social transformation of the society and in CPI-Kenya, we are giving children this opportunity to coach their parents and influence their communities to live peacefully with each other.

The CPI-Kenya peace program has three phases. In the first phase, we give children from different schools and ethnic communities an opportunity to interact through Children Peace Camp, twinning for friendship for peace and peace exchange holiday programs. The activities are designed to help the children to break the ice, promote teamwork and bond with each other thus developing friendships. By the end of this phase, most or all the participating children naturally acquire a friend from a community outside their own to journey with for peace.

The next phase is the children and parents peace meeting. In this phase, we organize children and family twinning and inter community children and family visits. The activities in this phase are aimed at making the families know each other courtesy of their children. It is also during this meeting that the members of the both communities identify the super ordinate goals that they can maximize on to sustain friendship.

The activities are designed towards helping the children to break the ice, promote teamwork and bond with each other thus developing friendships.

The third phase of the program is Education and Campaign for Peace. The activities in this phase include peace concerts, peace caravans and establishment of peace clubs in schools. These activities involve on-going formation of children through peace clubs and engaging children in peace campaigns through organizing concerts in which children communicate peace messages and educate communities about peace. CPI-Kenya has been in operation since 2011 and has been able to reach out to **24,521** beneficiaries directly through the project.

## The Uniqueness of CPI Kenya

The approach of CPI Kenya to peace is trans-generational. We target children in the same age group within the target communities. This is because, CPI-Kenya journeys with these children for some years before they transition to high schools. Most of the targeted children are in learning institutions, as it is easier to trace them for follow up and Monitoring and Evaluation. Children and their parents work together to nurture harmony with neighboring communities. Some of the inter community activities bring together children and parents in one forum where parents give testimonies on conflict and peace initiatives and the children communicate their feelings through role play and poems to their parents.

## CPI- Kenya Contribution to Social Transformation

Conflict is a major cause of poverty. In a conflict situation, people are not able to make use of the resources available



to them, no matter how little. Ethnic conflict among the neighboring pastoralist communities has always resulted in death, loss of property and interruption on education, a major tool in fighting poverty among others. Through journeying with the communities towards promoting interaction for peace, the frequency of violent conflict has reduced. Subsequently the number of deaths related to ethnic conflict has also reduced.

Conflict affects life and livelihood. Due to persistent conflicts, the communities we work with have been unable to do economic activities. Farms and villages are abandoned. But for the last three years of journeying with these communities, life has normalized. Communities are farming and cattle rustling has reduced. Most of the neighboring communities have been able to access markets and there is economic interdependence between communities through trading, farming and accessing markets and other services within each other's boundaries. As a result, the communities have been able to improve their livelihood in different ways.

CPI-Kenya has empowered children to influence their communities through their families to reconcile. Since the program began, children have continued to connect families and communities through each other, therefore challenging their parents to change the attitude towards each other as expressed by one of the parents, *"Children can challenge you to love and adore something or somebody you used to hate"* says Mzee Lebeneiyo, a Samburu elder. Children have influenced community members to voluntarily interact and get to know each other and live together peacefully as expressed by one elder, *"Children encouraged us to attempt to meet Pokots for the first time and since then the fear of Pokots has reduced."* - says Mr Parsaloi, another Samburu

elder. Members of the communities participating in CPI-Kenya peace program have been able to discuss emerging conflicts and peace related issues on their own without involving the government or political leaders, thus taking part in bringing the change they want to see.

Additionally, through CPI Kenya peace program, women who were rarely given a chance to take part in peace meetings, have had an opportunity to not only attend the meetings but also to directly participate and contribute towards issues related to peace as there is equal platform for all by the virtue of being parents of the children in the peace program. As a result, there are many women who are active participants in matters related to peace and conflict because of their children.

### The Outcome

Children have had personal experiences that have largely influenced their decisions and choices in life on matters pertaining peaceful coexistence with neighboring communities. Through our different programs, children have been exposed to environments outside their own. This has opened their worldview and perspective about cultural diversity.

Members of neighboring communities have established different economic activities like crossbreeding animals and farming where members from Samburu and Pokot communities work in each other's farm. Neighboring community members have been able to access social amenities like hospitals, schools and market as a result of interactions and friendship. During one of the inter community parents exchange program between Gabra and Rendille communities, gifts such as clothing, animals and artifacts worth over Ksh 136,000 was voluntarily exchanged.

### Conclusion

Engaging the community in the realization of their own challenges and journeying with them as they take initiatives towards the change they want to achieve is a strong component of promoting peace. This approach has made the parents and children active actors of their own transformation therefore strengthening sustainability of the peace process. Creating a platform for children from different neighboring communities to meet and interact, enables them to make informed decision towards promoting peace. They have untapped potential and inherent goodness to like each other irrespective of their ethnic background.



Children from Gabra, Turkana, Samburu, El Molo and Rendille Communities engaging in songs, traditional dances, poems and skits with the theme of Peace and Conflict during Inter Community Children Peace Concert in Marsabit County

# Continental Renewable Energy Company

By Oscar Aghan

## Providing communities with affordable building materials



One of the greatest challenges facing low income communities is the cost of building residential houses, due to the high cost of building materials. Families are unable to build affordable but decent homes, due to the high cost of building materials. And so any effort towards making this noble idea a reality is not only welcome, but a great relief to ordinary people anywhere in Kenya, and particularly in the city of Nairobi. One such organization is Continental Renewable Energy Company which is using waste plastic and other recyclable products to manufacture affordable building materials for use by slum communities.

Continental Renewable Energy Ltd (Corec) was founded in 2012 but started operations in 2013 and is a recycler and seller of environmentally friendly building hardware to developers and other people building residential houses.

The company provides affordable and durable construction products namely Resin Roofing Tiles, Man Hole Covers, Plastic Lumber Planks and Fencing Posts.

It uses waste plastic, which presently has low to limited use. Local communities through community based organizations are contracted to collect and deposit the plastic in collection centers and are equipped with crushers to basically process and clean waste plastic before taking them to the factory.

Corec secures its supplies of plastic from a number of waste-sorting businesses that in turn have purchased waste from (informal) collectors or collected the waste themselves.

### Social Impact

At the start of 2016, the enterprise reported 250 workers including 15 full-time employees, 170 part-time workers. The youth are highly represented among the workers with 60% of the total labor force under the age of 28. The enterprise aims to work with 2,500 people by 2018 and believes that 1,500 direct and indirect jobs will be created by the end of 2016. With an appreciation for health matters, Corec has helped 25 workers register for health insurance thus affording them a chance to access better health care services. Out of its work it is estimated that Corec indirectly improves the livelihood of over 6,000 people in marginalized communities.

Training and raising awareness are essential in the enterprise's business model. Corec employees receive skills



training on the sorting of plastic and production of posts as well as in business administration and management. In addition, partners, collectors and the community, with particular attention to women, receive information on how to recycle waste. By so doing, Corec is able to encourage change in the behavior of these people with regard to waste.

### Environmental impact

Over 2,000 tons of solid waste daily is generated in the Nairobi city. Yet, due to a lack of waste management systems, ineffective by-laws on littering, and illegal dumping, only 850-1,100 tons of this solid waste are collected each day. The consequences of plastic waste are quite dramatic for natural resources, animals and human health, and include choking of animals and soils, blockage of waterways and sewers causing backups and flooding which lead to serious health issues. Burning plastic is not an option as it produces toxic fumes which include climate-altering greenhouse gases and carcinogen-containing smoke. This calls for better waste management as well as new ways of recycling waste.

Through its work, COREC has recycled over 650 tons of plastic from the environment which saves the lives of animals and plants and reduced 360 tons of CO emissions and as replaced 45,000 wooden posts and plastic lumber, which corresponds to saving approximately 1,800 trees. Not only that, Corec also trains communities about conservation and sustainable consumption. The innovation in their business has helped mitigate climate change by saving acres of forest land.

### Economic impact

Kenya as a country has annual housing shortage currently standing at 300,000 units. As a social contribution to bridge this gap, we recycle post-consumer waste plastic into affordable building hardware namely-fencing Posts, Roofing Tiles and Lumber Planks. This hardware can reduce the cost of construction by 30 to 40%. This has reduced the financial costs related to building homes and discouraged theft of building materials.

The value chain used by Corec stimulates entrepreneurship and recycling. The company works with Community Self Help Groups who collect, wash and crush the waste and upon delivery to the plant, it is further processed into different building hardware through a



process that is patented through Kenya Industrial Property Institute.

### Partnerships

Corec has chosen its partners strategically to cater for each step in the value chain. **Kariobangi Waste Management Alliance (KWMA)** is the key partner in the supply of plastic waste. The KWMA members are provided with a stable income for collecting and sorting waste, and suitable plastics are picked up twice a week by Corec. In addition, KWMA benefits from training provided by Corec on how to sort waste and plastic.

Another partner is **World Vision** which supports poverty eradication and advocates social transformation. The NGO has purchased various products from Corec since 2014 and has so far fenced off about half of its grounds with the plastic posts.

While the center was originally just a client, it is now considered a partner as they not only advocate about environmental conservation, but also about recycling for which they use Corec's example.

## ISMM UPDATES

### The PhD Programme in Social Transformation

The ISMM launched the PHD in social transformation in August 2014. The Social transformation involves a new organisation of all social economic, cultural and technological identities involving women, minorities, professionals and communities in order to improve human dignity and social justice

Social transformation projects range from setting up a business training school for youth with the Machakos County government to research on the problems of marketing of horticultural products by small farmers, to how to improve public

participation in county government in Lamu County.

The programme has six areas of specialization: governance, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, security and sustainable peace, organizational management and social ministry. The teaching staff in the ISMM provides close accompaniment of thesis planning and accompaniment so that candidates can finish successfully in three years.

Candidates for the PhD in social transformation work as a team, helping each to formulate thesis and social transformation projects, preparing



to work in social transformation not as isolated individuals but a mutually supporting “family” of social transformation. We are looking for more candidates. Come and join us.

### Unique and Relevant Master of Arts in Social Transformation



The **Master of Arts in Social Transformation** exists to develop and train agents of positive social transformation.

Inspired by faith and diverse cultures, the Master’s Program believes in the potentialities of human beings to positively transform the world.

The Program is based on the

education philosophy inspired by prominent change agents including John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Nelson Mandela, Wangari Maathai. The Program believes that human beings organised in communities and groups are the agents and the beneficiaries of transformation of the world.

The Program prepares leaders in the positive response of social transformation focusing on:

- 1. Governance:** policy making and implementation, devolution and access to resources.
- 2. Organization Management:** effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and common good.
- 3. Sustainable Development:**

local and renewable resources, impact on environment, development of whole persons.

- 4. Pastoral Ministry:** effective institutional and charismatic leadership in the church and society.
- 5. Security and Sustainable Peace:** contemporary management strategies and the principles of Pope Francis on peaceful co-existence.

You have the potential to be an agent of positive transformation. This Program adds more value to your uniqueness for your organization and society.

*For more information contact us [ma.ismm@tangaza.org](mailto:ma.ismm@tangaza.org)*



## The Foundation for Social Transformation

Are you looking for a friendly but academic oriented institute to sharpen your skills and knowledge for the next level? Then, the Institute of Social Ministry in Mission, undergraduate programmes is offering diverse training for agents of social transformation through:

- *Diploma in Sciences of Human Development* (2 years): training practitioners able to contribute to social transformation through participation in projects of integral human development; animation and accompaniment of communities in the process of their own development; running awareness raising activities; facilitating popular and civic education; integrating social ministry with their own profession. Mode of Study: Full Time
- *Diploma in Social Ministry* (2 years): training pastoral agents to transform faith based communities as agents of social transformation and promote integral human development.
- *Diploma in Civic and Development Education* (2 Years): training community educators to mobilize, organize and animate grassroots communities to participate actively in devolved governance and local development. Mode of Study: Distance Learning (School based).
- *BA in Sustainable Human Development* – 8 semesters: training full-fledged agents of social transformation able to



accompany communities in the process of their transformation, with a special focus on human and sustainable development; justice, peace and reconciliation; project management, and a capacity of linking faith and social responsibility. Mode of Study: Full Time/ Part-Time and Online.

## Social Transformation through social entrepreneurship



Five beautiful and exciting years have now elapsed since we embarked on the fulfilling journey of running the MBA in social entrepreneurship at ISMM- Tangaza.

Within this period, more than 200 lead social enterprises some with trailblazing innovations such as, **Nucafe, Mfarm, Lipisha, Corec, Strauss Energy, Toto Health, Farm Drive** amongst others, have been natured and are setting the pace in innovation, impact and job creation in Africa while tackling major social issues geared towards systemic change.

These social entrepreneurs drawn from the fields of **Agribusiness, ICT & Mobile Tech, Green and renewable energy, waste management, health, training & education** as well as **business services** found a natural

habitat in our MBA program. Within it, they are armed with all the tools of developing an investable businesses with a strong social impact through the blended formula of class training by sector experts, coaching, mentoring, exposure to successful entrepreneurs, online lessons and regular trainings on pitching and interactions with investors.

Join us, and be part of this amazing transformation as we change the educational and entrepreneurial landscape of Kenya, one social entrepreneur at a time!

To learn more visit [www.mba-se.co.ke](http://www.mba-se.co.ke)



## Social transformation in my life and in ISMM approach to university degrees



### Multifaceted Transformations

Over my long age of 75 I have been broadly exposed to almost innumerable changes at all levels. I may assert without fear of being disproved that transformation is the bottom line of my life. My generation has witnessed over a span of 70 years unprecedented and radical changes. Yes! Transformation is the marrow of my bones. Obviously I feel very excited to be involved with my colleagues of ISMM and of Tangaza University to the elaboration and operationalization of university degrees on social transformation with 6 specializations: *governance - organization management - social entrepreneurship - pastoral ministry - sustainable development - sustainable security and peace*. A very unique approach never experimented in other universities worldwide, though programs on social transformation are mushrooming all over. Where is our originality and uniqueness? We, first and foremost, try to analyze how rapid changes and transformations affect, for good and for evil, the theories and the praxis of each one of the specializations. Take for example governance; we go far beyond teaching the traditional theories of governance! We research and teach first and foremost how transformations have affected positively or negatively, governance and its dynamics; then we try to envisage new hypothesis for adequate strategies for the future. I have witnessed changes which have influenced my life.

### Transformations at socio-cultural levels

- From dictatorship to democracy: Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Salazar, Stalin, Mao, Amin, Bocassa, Mobutu.
- From colonialism to independence in Africa and elsewhere;
- From euro centrism to globalization;
- From isolated nations to continental aggregation: European Union, African Union;
- From male dominance to shared role between genders

in the society and in the church

- From individual state governance to world governance with United Nations and related bodies;

### Transformations at religion/church level

- From mission for conversion and increased membership of the church to mission as inter-religious dialogue and mutual acceptance among religions in an era of violent intolerance and fundamentalisms.
- From only one ministry strictly linked to the sacrament of ordination combined with an arrogant clericalism by the ordained ministers to pluralism of ministries grounded on the sacraments of initiation particularly baptism and confirmation.
- From severe uniformity in the Roman Church: one language Latin, one Roma rite, one theology, to many local churches with multifaceted inculturations, in communion with the Pope but with broad ranges of differences.
- From charity to justice peace and integrity of creation, with the rise of social apostolate and ministry.
- From Ecumenical Councils geared towards detecting and condemning theological errors, to the Vatican II with a strong pastoral connotation that is with the goal of presenting in a positive way and plain language the Christian Message.
- From confrontation between faith and science to reciprocal engagement in a climate of mutually challenging respect and differences.

### Transformation streamlined the signs of the times

All the social documents of the Church open with an attentive and elaborated analysis of new changes/transformations followed by the theological reflection on them. In the ecclesial social teaching some of the above mentioned changes are called "signs of the times", that is *social events* with a strong potential for positive outcomes hence conducive to the building of a new world order marked by the values of the Kingdom of God. In other words the *signs of the times* are pregnant with God's vision and will to be detected with proper discernment by the Christian communities led by the bishops then to be obeyed by the church and by the world at large.

### Way forward: spiritual and scientific knowledge

What type of contribution may the ISMM offer in the processes of transformation just mentioned and others which spring up at any time? Two major ones:

- Scientific competence to detect and analyze processes of transformation as to intervene through ministerial initiatives to maximize the positive potentialities and correct deficiencies and loopholes;
- Adequate Spiritual and ethical values: to grasp the fundamental meaning of the changes in order to avoid the two extremes: *fundamentalism* to forestall all changes and *relativism* which tries to do away with all benchmarks for the triumph of immediate gains and profit.