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THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL DIMENSIONS OF THE KAMPALA DOCUMENT
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By birth and conception, the Kampala Document (KD) is a jubilee document. This conception and birthing process of the Document signals its core spirit, namely, collaboration beyond boundaries. This presentation is not a summary or review of the KD, which has very clear subheading to guide the reader, and which has already been done by the Secretariat. It simply gives few insights into the main theological and pastoral thrust of the Document.

Jubilee Ethos as the Organising Theological and Pastoral Principle of the KD

Because jubilee defines the nature, character and purpose of the KD, we look to jubilee for key insights into its theological and pastoral message for the Church-Family of God in Africa and beyond. The term jubilee occurs 19 times in the KD. Biblical jubilee was both a personal and communal affair; insofar as the individual was a constitutive member of the community of Israel. As a member of the Universal Church, SECAM situated its jubilee celebration within the contexts of the biblical jubilee (Lev 25:8-22) and the Great Jubilee of our Lord Jesus Christ in 2000 and in his core jubilee agenda (Luke 4:18-19; John 10:10). SECAM drew from them the inspiration of its own core jubilee message contained in the KD.

Biblical jubilee (Lev 25:8-22) first of all calls all God's people to awareness of the jubilee year. This call requires: 1) a return to their ancestral land and roots; 2) individual and the communal public acknowledgement that they had deviated from God's covenant (the day of atonement); 3) deep gratitude to God for God's sustained faithfulness to his covenant despite their unfaithfulness; and 4) a firm commitment on the part of the people thenceforth to embrace and live faithfully and resolutely by God's covenant which defines their identity as God's people. In his inaugural mission statement (Luke 4:18-19), Jesus places his entire salvific mission within this biblical jubilee context. His gospel jubilee introduces the proclamation of God's gratuitous love and mercy for all peoples, not only Israel; especially the most vulnerable and neediest (materially and spiritually) in society.

When John Paul II launched the celebration of Great Jubilee of our Lord Jesus Christ with *Tertio Millennio Adveniente The Coming of the Third Millennium* (TMA), he offered all God's people a well-defined three-year programme of activities: Year of the Father, Year of the Son and Year of the Holy Spirit, climaxing in the Year 2000 with the Year of the Trinity, the Triune God who is the author of our salvation. At the end of that Jubilee, John Paul II issued the forward-looking *Novo Millennio Ineunte (At the Dawn of the New Millennium)*. Here he offered his personal reflections on the entire Jubilee process and

warmly exhorted all God's people individually and communally to do their own reflection on the graces of the Great Jubilee and so draw from it the graces needed for living more fully and faithfully in all aspects of life in the jubilee spirit of Jesus Christ and his gospel. Similarly, for the celebration of its Golden Jubilee in 2019, SECAM had issued an *Instrumentum Laboris* in 2018 which gave well defined monthly activities for different sectors of God's people. The theme of the jubilee celebration was "*Church Family of God in Africa Celebrate Your Jubilee: Welcome Christ your Saviour*". At the end of the jubilee celebration on 29th July 2019, SECAM then issued this Kampala Document, equivalent to *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (NMI) with the theme "*That they may know Christ and have life in abundance*" (John 17:3; 10:10)". Like the NMI, the KD is a forward-looking document inviting all God's people to continue to reflect on the graces of the past 50 years, in particular, of the Church-Family of God in Africa, Madagascar and the Islands. Fundamentally this entails assuming personal and communal responsibility and commitment "to grow more deeply in our desire to truly know Christ and closely follow him in order to receive from him the fullness of life that he came to give to humanity (cf. Jn 10:10)" (KD 2).

Concretely, "relying on the Word of God and the Eucharist, and guided by the Holy Spirit", SECAM and the Church-Family of God commit ourselves **"to return** to our baptismal roots in Christ and his gospel; **to deepen** the knowledge of our professed baptismal faith; **to live** our baptismal promises in all circumstances of life; and **to generate** a new impetus and a zeal for our mission of evangelization in order **to build**, for all citizens, a new Africa centred on God". (no. 2). This agenda can only be achieved through solid knowledge of, and rootedness in Jesus and his gospel.

Jesus Christ and His Gospel as the Heart of the KD

The primary purpose of the KD is to call on all God's people to receive life in abundance which Jesus gives. It follows naturally that Jesus Christ and his gospel should feature prominently and pervasively in the KD. Normally when one welcomes a visitor, one listens to what the visitor has to say. Similarly, the Church-Family of God that welcomed Christ its Saviour during the jubilee year is now called upon to listen to him and his gospel. The gospel occurs 137 times in the KD from the first to the last paragraph; Jesus and Jesus Christ combined about 98 times. Indeed, the gospel which is both Jesus himself, "God's Gospel" (cf. Rom 1:1:1-2) and his gospel message (Rom 1:16) is the leitmotif of the KD. This gospel is God's active and powerful instrument of salvation for all peoples without discrimination. Furthermore, **because the gospel is God's good news for humanity, it requires "no permission to be proclaimed"** (no. 147). It is by listening to Jesus and his gospel and living by him in all aspects of life that we receive life in abundance. The KD spells out fully how this can be done in its different chapters and sections.

Individual and Corporate Responsibility and Commitment to Live by the Gospel

The KD has unrelenting emphasis on personal and shared/corporate responsibility for taking the concrete actions proposed in the Document. Responsibility of different categories of persons occurs 19 times (of the Church in Africa, nos. 22, 74, 107, of

SECAM nos. 37, 119c; of African intelligentsia, no. 44; of African governments, no 94; of every believer/persons/the baptised, nos. 59, 60, 73, 74, 112, 151, collective and shared responsibility, nos. 112, 141, 147; of humanity, no. 104). Its jubilee-rooted agenda already cited is packed with action words: *to return*; *to deepen*, *to live*, and *to generate a new impetus for mission with the ultimate purpose "to build for all citizens [not just Catholics of Christians] a new Africa centred on God"* (no. 1) The agenda requires that individuals and the community (Church-Family of God) **assume the responsibility** to immerse themselves in Christ and his gospel. Knowledge of Jesus and his gospel is knowledge of one's true self in Christ (no. 73). It is also knowledge of the true corporate identity of believers as God's Family commissioned to proclaim God's gospel of salvation to the whole world. True knowledge of Jesus, God's agent of salvation is not passive. Rather it involves and obligates one to be engaged in mission within and ad extra. The emphasis on mission and missionaries occur 301 times.

While it is true that the main responsibility for gaining this knowledge of Christ and his gospel lies primarily with the individual (see the references above, since life is lived by persons), nevertheless, SECAM itself, the community, pastors and all categories of God's people: priests, consecrated persons, catechists, families, theologians, politicians, institutions of formation and other institutions have the responsibility to study together, reflect on, review their past and enrich their activities in all aspects of life with the life-giving knowledge of Christ and his gospel. No person or profession is excluded from receiving the fulness of life which Christ gives freely and without discrimination. Even the review of Africa's past and present is to be done in the light of justice (truth in relationship) and Christ's desire to give life in abundance to all God's people. When the KD is read in this light, its structure and major sections come clearly to light.

Focus on Inculturation. In line with the call of Pope Paul VI for "an African Christianity", and of *Ecclesia in Africa* (nos. 55-62), the Bishops and their collaborators: priests, consecrated persons and the Christ's lay faithful in Africa are exhorted "to explore ways of sowing the gospel in the life and hopes, the culture, and the economic, political, social and spiritual realities of the people. Because an African Christianity must have "inculturation as its theological and pastoral option" (no. 217; see nos. 37-39, 196).

Some Significant Newness in the KD

The involvement of SECAM. Apart from emphasis on personal responsibility (no. 73); the KD emphasizes the responsibility of SECAM and communities or groups to get involved. SECAM commits itself to grow in this knowledge of Christ by returning to the original vision of its founders to work in unity: "SECAM itself is committed to respond with zeal to its mission of ensuring the unity and cohesion of the Church-Family of God, an ecclesial communion necessary for a new missionary commitment expected on the African continent, Madagascar and the adjacent islands". (no. 10; see also nos. 13, 79) and to accompany God's Family in their diverse strivings for life in abundance. **SECAM is thus not speaking to the people from the outside as if issuing impersonal dogmatic and authoritative commands.** The tone of the KD is hortatory, one of appeal to all to come on board and be personally involved, to know and feel that their

personal involvement is capital; and to believe in and live by the gospel as Jesus himself did in his ministry. The "we" tone of the Document is impressive.

Accompaniment as pastoral strategy. The KD emphasises the need for diverse forms of accompaniment as a pastoral strategy. Accompaniment ensures that people understand what they are required to do and gives them hope that they are not alone. The Church needs to "accompany the hopes and anxieties of a people called to take their destiny in their hands" (no. 22). It equally "has the responsibility to accompany the new born Christians in their early stages till they assume full responsibility to keep alive their divine life received at baptism" (no. 74). The new pastoral orientation requires that pastoral agents "accompany popular devotions from the inside" to assure they are on the solidly rooted in Scripture and in Church's teaching (no. 158). SECAM will be committed to "accompany young couples in the first year of their matrimonial life", this being the most challenging part of the wedded life (no. 119b). This motif of accompaniment is rooted in the fact that during the past fifty years of SECAM, "God was already at work, preceding and accompanying his people in the work of proclaiming the gospel" (no. 27). The KD ends with a prayer for Mary to "accompany us on the road of the proclamation of the Good News" of Jesus her Son (no. 219).

Need to stay in touch with the past. The KD highlights the need to review and learn from the past in the spirit of Sankofa. Since the Church-Family of God in Africa and the entire continent itself is not an island, it has been and continues to be adversely affected and exploited by foreigners with the collusion of some greedy Africans. All history, like Scripture, is for our instruction. A review of the progress and lapses of the Church-Family of God in Africa in the past fifty years, particularly in where it stands with regard to the mission mandate given to SECAM at its foundation by Pope Paul VI ("You can and you must have an African Christianity (no. 51; cf. 14, 85, 217) and by SECAM's own repeated general assemblies, aids towards activating and sustaining in the jubilee spirit, a firm commitment on the part of SECAM and the Church-Family of God in Africa, Madagascar and the Islands to move forward resolutely and courageously.

Need for awareness that the Church-Family of God in Africa is not a passive recipient of the gospel. Often the impression is given that Africa is a mere recipient of the gospel message through the work of European missionaries. Or that Christianity in Africa is a foreign religion. The KD takes great pains to document Africa's unique and enviable contribution to Scripture, to the life of Israel and of Jesus and indeed to the growth and expansion of the early Church. All this is in line with helping Africa to stand on its own feet and not feel inferior in any way to other nations. Ultimately it is in line with acknowledging God's gifts to the Church and world through Africa's contributions in the past and present.

Call to act together as Church-Family of God. The KD is a call for the people of God in Africa and beyond to think together, work and act together toward appropriating and sharing with others the abundance of life that Jesus came to give humanity at great cost to himself. He, God-Word become flesh (John 1:14), stripped himself of glory (Phil 2:6-11) to dwell among us and show us that it is possible for humans to live the divine life.

To this end he gave himself in the Eucharist as food and drink to nourish and sustain God's life in us, the gift of divine life we received at baptism. Through his passion, death and resurrection and the imparting of the Holy Spirit, he sealed this life in us for good. By building up the members of God's family and with everybody doing their part to grow in all ways into Christ and, together to bear witness to the gospel, we cooperate with God to ensure that his reign or sphere of values becomes a reality in Africa.

Adequate formation, a necessary tool for proactive evangelization in Africa and the Islands. To underscore its importance in the evangelizing mission of the Church-Family of God in Africa, the KD places emphasis on "adequate formation of pastoral workers and the participation of the laity" (no. 37). Such formation, which has different dimensions (nos. 140-149), will not only equip "Christians and enable them to become true ministers of the gospel"; it is also necessary for effective engagement in the New Evangelization (no. 138; see nos. 139-144, 148, 157, 161, 176, 196, 201-202, 213, 215-216). It is in this connection that "centres of spiritual renewal and of Christian formation, monasteries, religious institutes and congregations of the Consecrated Life, novitiates, major seminaries, catechetical schools, Catholic institutes and universities" are urged "to carry out research concerning the spirituality of engagement, taking into account the concerns of the people and the demands of their faith in Jesus Christ" (no. 161).

KD, a document full of hope. If individuals, communities, ecclesial communities and tertiary institutions commit themselves to studying it, augmenting it with their own experiences in life; and most importantly living the gospel of Jesus in all dimensions of life, the KD would have achieved its purpose: Calling on and urging all God's people to receive Christ's gift of abundant life in all areas of human endeavour. And thereby bring to birth a new and renewed Africa.

Conclusion. During the jubilee year (29th July 2018- 29th July 2019), SECAM invited us Church-Family of God in Africa to "welcome Christ our Saviour"; now in this KD, SECAM has clearly invited us to listen continually to this Christ whom we have welcomed, and to embrace, accept, believe in, and live by his teaching in the gospel. When we do this, we are sure to receive the abundance of life that he came to give us. May we not fail in this mission of active reception of Jesus and his gospel. The sole reason he came among us was so that we may have life in ever increasing abundance and share the same with all peoples in Africa and beyond. When we do this, our celebration of the Golden Jubilee of SECAM will yield the desired abundant fruit in a new and renewed Africa and the world.