

**Protestant Schools as Peacemaking Schools © Rev.
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As a point of departure, I want to bring into our attention the words we read from 2 Corinthians 5:18–19. The words read:

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through

us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." 2 Cor 5:18–20.

As Christians we are given the message of reconciliation and we are made ambassadors of Christ to the world. We are not only to preach this message of reconciliation, but we are to demonstrate what it really means.

We know that reconciliation is done when two parties are in conflict. But the meaning of conflict as such may be confusing. In many societies, conflict is identified by active quarrels. However, this identification can be misleading, because in some societies, the absence of strifes does not guarantee the presence of peace. And I see this is the case of many societies in Africa. People are

insecure for many reasons. As people who are given the message of reconciliation, made ambassadors of Christ for this same message, we are to examine critically what takes peace from people and see how we can effectively communicate to world the message of reconciliation.

I assume that what makes people insecure varies from one place to another. What applies in one place may not fit into another. Therefore, discussing any of those causes may not be so helpful, at the moment. But when it comes to effective communication of the message of reconciliation, I see that the means applying to a wide area.

Many societies, especially in Africa, complain that citizens are unruly, leaders are corrupt and oppressive. But If we count the number of years we are with those who later on become responsible citizens and leaders, I see that we spend time with them for a relatively long time. When we also look at the age we begin being with them, it is beyond doubts that, we have them at the prime age. We are with them in the age, when something is implanted in their mind, is likely to stay for the rest of one's life. The question I want that we reflect is, what do we teach them? In the course of my presentation I will suggest what we ought to teach.

For many years, especially in Africa, the misuse of power and what we commonly call as corruption have been understood as chronic problems.

Whoever is in a certain position, acquires too much power making those under their power to suffer helplessly. Because of the uncontrolled power that some leaders have, it has become as tendency to begin using it selfishly, favouring a few people for reasons that benefit the leaders. Some even use their positions as weapons against their citizen. This leaves the majority with insecurity that makes them live with fear in their own lands.

Most of those who occupy different position in the government or whatever organizations in our societies are our Christians, and have perhaps attended our schools, be they seminary schools,

mere church schools or universities run by our churches.

Shouldn't the church through her schools do something to this problem. I see that the church has a great opportunity to do away with this problem, because the church has the message of reconciliation.

All the protestant schools have religion as one of the subjects they teach, and some of them have Bible Knowledge and Divinity as well. In these subjects, the main focus is moulding a person to live Christian life by deepening their understanding of the Scriptures and God's work to the humankind. If teachers are competent in the sense

that they teach what is to be taught in the right way, I envision our influence being so great!

College students do not have religion as one of the subjects, but it is possible to have Christian and Professional Ethics. For two years, I tried to teach this subject to the college students in Njombe to college students. By then, I realized that the contents of Christian and Professional Ethics was not taught by any of the universities here in Tanzania. But the subjects brought great impact on the students.

Thus far, I can confidently argue that Christians schools have a vital role to play in any country to enhance change and promote peace.

As an example of dealing against those who misuse their offices and power, I have a case that happened in 2016 in one of our Lutheran schools. A male teacher was reported to have an unhealthy relationship with one female student. The student did not like it, but she found no way to cut the relationship because she was afraid that the teacher would do something bad to her. In that same school there was a nun to whom this girl sought refuge and therefore confided her case. The nun gave her good piece of advice that worked well. But then the teacher realized that he has been deprived of what he used to enjoy. After learning that it was the nun who stood between the girl and him, he called the nun to his office. You can guess what the teacher did. He had a heap of sticks and anger. He showered sticks to

the nun to the point that the nun was injured. The other students, upon seeing the event, wanted to break the office of that teacher, but the matter was quickly reported to the headmaster and the teacher was arrested and sent to police whereas the injured nun was sent to the hospital.

The fate of the teacher rested upon the injured nun. When the nun was asked what should be done to the teacher, her response was: "I forgave him just when I stepped out of his office. So, I think the teacher has learned and understood that what he did was wrong. I think he will not repeat be it to me or to others. Let him be released and be brought back to the work.

Upon hearing that he had been forgiven, the teacher did not believe. But that is what the nun meant. Whenever the nun met the teacher, she would smile at him and greet him just as if nothing had happened. That was too much for that teacher. One day he called the nun and apologized to her for what he did. The nun said again, "I forgave you on that same day, so be in peace".

Because this nun I am talking about is the person I know, I asked her what motivated her to react to this whole even like she did? Her response was this: I have been taught to forgive even when I am mistreated. I have been forgiven more than what I can imagine. In addition, in this world, there are many people who need to see what forgiveness looks like. I am happy that it was me and not

anyone else, and in this way, I had the opportunity to forgive.

We do not need to be national heroes like Nelson Mandela was, but we can be heroes right where we are. There are lots of cases that show that our students are not at peace where they are. They are forced to engage in some matters although they are unwilling. But because the teachers more or less hold their future, students, especially girls seem to have no other opportunity.

When that develops, it will be their behaviour. When they are adults, they are likely to do likewise to others.

My proposal is: since the churches have some kind of autonomy in the schools they run, I think, the ELCT leaders under the department of Christian Education, could see what to include in the subject of religion, Bible knowledge and Divinity. If possible, Lutheran schools could begin teaching Christian and Social Ethics from Primary level to University level. I am very sure that, if Christian and Social ethics as a subject is well planned and well taught, it will bring a great impact among the Tanzanians. What I see, with time, the subject will be adopted by government schools. This would be a long run solution to many problems that threaten people. And this way, as church schools we will have played a great role in promoting peace.

- Interaction with other schools from other countries
- Workshops
- Orientations
- Writings
- The churches should prepare guidelines for their schools