



T A A B C O

Tribute to Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai

TAAABCO UPDATE—

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Remaining true to the faith despite hardships

By Sam Kiplagat

“Each year the hurricane and typhoon seasons increase in ferocity and destruction, torrential floods on one hand and terrible droughts on the other- these are no longer seasonal we cope with, they have become massive matters of life and death, especially for the world’s poor whether they live in the affluent North or poverty-stricken South”. These are the words of the Rev. Samuel Kobia as captured in his book- *Called to the One Hope*.

Calamities

The words ably capture what humanity is undergoing at the moment. From one calamity to another, insecurity and danger lurk everywhere. The number of people who lose their lives every day is shocking with the figures difficult to comprehend. The number of widows has been on the rise just like orphans.

Terror

From the continuing conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, the threats in Iran and North Korea, broken promises in Israel and Palestine, the genocide in Darfur and the larger Sudan; the threat of Al-Shabaab in Somalia, the ongoing conflict in Libya and the fearsome war on terror, death indeed, lurks everywhere.

In the same book, the Rev. Kobia says, “In the face of the relentless cultural and personal humiliation and abuse, suicide has risen to an alarming level, especially among mothers who feel utter despair at their inability to provide for their children or save them from starvation and death from preventable diseases.”

Reminded

Many people in our society are alienated from one another and have few opportunities to exert any real influence on one another. But it is during such moments that we are reminded to support one another. We should be there for each other and offer comfort because everyone is longing for heal-

ing.

The Rev. Samuel Kobia says that not only people, but the whole of Creation cries out for relief, consolation and healing. It is true that we are confronted with such a serious crisis, and we have somehow isolated the human species from the rest of creation as if nature could not collapse with arrogant humans acts.

In such circumstances offers Rev. Kobia, we are called upon to be prayerful and giving thanks for our place and by living faithfully where God in Jesus Christ has brought us to be, “so that the world may see what is the depth and cost of God’s own fidelity to the world God has made.”



We should all plant trees in honour of our departed heroine.



So many lives lost in the month of September

It was indeed a black month for Kenya as death robbed us our loved ones throughout the period. Hardly a day passed without reports of deaths. Many succumbed as a result of road accidents, killer brews and fire tragedies.

We lose at least 2,000 people in road accidents every year according to the police.

The month started on a sad note when it was reported that 23 people, mostly relatives and neighbours had died in a road accident in Mbooni district. The victims were returning from a dowry negotiation ceremony in Makueni.

The deaths did not stop there as more people died as seen below:-

September 5: Two lorries involved in a head-on collision along Karatina-Kiganjo road in Nyeri cause the death of three people while 11 others sustain injuries.

September 7: Eight people drown while 26 rescued after a cattle truck they were traveling in plunges into a swollen river in Isiolo.

September 9: Eight people die on the spot in a road accident along the Meru-Embu highway, a week after another accident had claimed 10 lives.

September 9: Five people perish in a road accident along the Machakos-Makutano Road in a night accident.

September 12: More than 100 Sinai residents perish in a fire tragedy resulting from an oli spill in the nearby Kenya Pipeline depot.

September 13: At least 19 die after consuming a methanol-laced drink known as 'Yokozuna' in Nyahururu and Ol Kalou in Central province

September 14: Seven die after consuming a similar methanol-laced drink in Ruiru, Kiambu County.

September 17: 11 people die after a road accident involving a bus and a lorry along Nairobi-Mobasa highway, in Manyani area.

September 18: Four people die after a building collapses in Vihiga.

September 19: 13 people die in Mwingi accident involving a Garissa bus. All were buried in a mass grave at the scene.

September 20: Four people die when a fuel tanker overturns in Busia. The residents' rush to scoop fuel leads to the disaster.

September 24: 17 people die in a road accident involving Eldoret Express bus in Lodwar.

September 25: Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai dies of ovarian cancer at the Nairobi Hospital.

“ We survive , not by our strength but by how we respond to the weak; not by our wealth but by how we respond to the poor; not by our power but how we are concerned for the powerless,” Rev. Samuel Kobia.

Let us treasure every moment because life is precious

By Reuben Inganji

If the world around you doesn't fulfill your expectations, and thoughts like "What do I live for?" and "What is the meaning of my life?" keep bothering you, then it is time for talk. It's not a feeling of melancholy, and no medicine will cure it.

Rather the answer is you are so special. The black dot in your heart has just begun to grow.

You are in the beginning of your path. Thousands of people were shown that way and they are on the move already. Age, religion, race and gender don't matter. Find out the truth about yourself.

The true meaning of life is about a person's ability to get the most out of life without causing adversity to others. Human life is usually driven by the insatiable nature of the ego. Each person along with their Ego has been conditioned, from birth to approximately five years of age, as a result of learnt exposure and genetic inheritance. The true meaning of life for most people is all about satiating the craving created by their EGO.

The true meaning of life may be dependent on your particular value systems and your ability to control your Ego. Each individual's particular set of morals or values, are those that they inherited from genetic sources and those that they learnt from the environ-

ment within which they were raised. The meaning of life for each individual depends on his belief systems.

In order to find something, you must know exactly what it is that you are looking for. You must know how and where to search for it then you have to know how to recognize it when you find it.

The ultimate quest in life is rooted in a deep desire to experience bliss or ecstasy. Most people believe that it's simply a matter of seeking love or attention, which creates a need to feel that you are important to someone. Most people are desperately trying to trigger this euphoria

through the application of physical, chemical or supernatural stimulus. Basically, I think that the true meaning of life all depends on the person. The meaning of life is what the person beholding that life wants it to be. It should be all up to the person.

There isn't exactly one true meaning to life. There could be the religious stand point or success or happiness. But I seriously do believe that the meaning of true life is whatever you make of it.

There is no right and there is no wrong. All that is, is all there is. The true meaning of life is your personal hopes and dreams. Whatever you think the right answer to this question is then you are right.

Life is precious let us celebrate and affirm it



By Dr. Agnes Abuom

Life is a gift that we should receive graciously

Life is precious and should be lived in full
Life is sacred and should to be protected

Life is a daily journey that we make

Life is a gift to be shared with others
Life is lived meaningfully in fellowship

Life is nourished by others when we let them in the circle
Life flourishes when we extend an invitation to the table

Life is a web that weaves and ties many forces
Life is both a positive and negative force

Life is a choice we make as we travel the road
Life is a decision between good and bad

Life is sacred and should be enhanced
Life is a vital force for humanity

Life is to be enriched through our actions
Life is a river that flows

Let us Kenyans keep the web of life alive
Let us remember life is sacred and protect it

Let us stop the abuse of life
Let us celebrate life and affirm it.

Tribute to the great heroine

By Chantal Ongaro

I woke up to find the news of the passing of the First African Woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize being aired on Network Africa, the BBC World Service Breakfast show. It was stunning while at the same time, filled with a sense of gratitude that I lived in the lifetime of such a great woman.

She dared to earn a PhD. She dared to stand for Presidency. She dared to ignore the dangers and perils of defying the Moi Regime, but managed to save Karura Forest and Uhuru Park, among many other projects. She was a Member of Parliament, an Assistant Minister, but she received news of her Nobel Prize win whilst wearing gumboots working in a gar-

den. She was an extraordinary woman, and she definitely left her mark not just in Kenya, but around the world.

I have spent the day looking at her pictures with Nelson Mandela, Oprah Winfrey and other world leaders. I listened to the radio as Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf gave her tribute to her friend and colleague.

I listened as Gladwell Otieno, reminisced on the Late Maathai comparing her with her own late mother, freedom fighter Wambui Otieno-Mbugua.

All these have helped me understand, what a resource and a treasure the Professor was, and also made me alive to the fact that one never knows what he has until he has lost it.

She wanted to be our President. What if we gave her that chance? Let her steal that First Democratically Elected Female President in Africa from her friend. She was in government, but was made an Assistant Minister. Had she been the Commander in Chief, could we have had the sad stories of Maize Scandal? The arguments about GMOs? The embezzlement of Free Primary School Education? Would it have been business as usual for Kenya Pipeline, Kenya Power and others state corporations? We have taken so much of our time in politics barking up the wrong tree, and wondering why the country is in a sorry state. It is because the same old names keep being recycled in the august House.

At the end of the day, we are doing the same thing and wondering why the results are not different. None of them have earned that privilege from me. Time has come for us to look at the alternatives. Those who have proved themselves in their little corner, those are the ones who deserve our vote.

I leave you with a clip from Prof. Wangari Maathai, and I too like her, choose to be a hummingbird.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw&feature=s_hare

Development in Africa is possible but we have to be more active

Despite gains in the second half of the 1990s, Sub-Saharan Africa entered the 21st century with many of the world's poorest countries. Average income per capita was lower than at the end of the 1960s.

Incomes, assets, and access to essential services are unequally distributed. And the region contains a growing share of the world's absolute poor, who have little power to influence the allocation of resources.

Moreover, many development problems have become largely confined to Africa. They include lagging primary school enrollments, high child mortality, and endemic diseases - including malaria and HIV/AIDS - that impose costs on Africa at least twice those in any other developing region.

To make matters worse, Africa's place in the global economy has been eroded, with declining export shares in traditional primary products, little diversification into new lines of business, and massive capital flight and loss of skills to other regions.

Now the region stands in danger of being excluded from the information revolution.

Many countries have made important economic reforms, improving macroeconomic management, liberalizing markets and trade, and widening the space for private sector activity.

Where these reforms have been sustained - and underpinned by civil peace - they have raised growth and incomes and reduced poverty.

Even as parts of the region are making headlines with wars and natural disasters, other parts are making headway with rising interest from domestic and foreign businesses and higher investment.

But the response has not been sufficient to overcome years of falling income or to reverse other adverse legacies from the long period of economic decline - including deteriorated capacity, weakened institutions, and inadequate infrastructure.

Major changes are needed if Africans - and their children - are to claim the 21st century.

With the region's rapidly growing population, 5 percent annual growth is needed to keep the number of poor from rising. Halving severe poverty by 2015 will require annual growth of more than 7 percent, along with a more equitable distribution of income.

Women

Moreover, Africa will not be able to sustain rapid growth without investing in its people.

Many lack the health, education, and access to inputs needed to contribute to - and benefit from - high growth. Women are one of Africa's hidden growth reserves, providing most of the region's labor, but their productivity is hampered by widespread inequality in education and access.

Thus gender equality can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction.

And HIV/AIDS still looms as a new menace, threatening to cut life expectancy by 20 years and undermine savings, growth, and the social fabric in many countries.

Africa thus faces an immense, multi-faceted development challenge. But the new century offers a window of opportunity to reverse the marginalization of Africa's people - and of Africa's governments, relative to donors, in the development agenda.

Globalization

Political participation has increased sharply in the past decade, paving the way for more accountable government, and there is greater consensus on the need to move away from the failed models of the past.

Globalization and new technology, especially information technology, offer great potential for Africa, historically a sparsely populated, isolated region. Though these factors also pose risks, including that of being left further behind, these are far outweighed by the potential benefits.

Partnerships

Making these benefits materialize will require a "business plan" conceived and owned by Africans, and supported by donors through coordinated, long-term partnerships.

African countries differ widely, so there is no universal formula for success. But many countries face similar issues, and can draw on positive African examples of how to address them.

“Improving governance and resolving conflict is perhaps the most basic requirement for faster development. Widespread civil conflicts impose enormous costs, spilling to neighboring countries. Contrary to popular belief, Africa's conflicts do not stem from ethnic diversity. Rather, in a pattern found around the world, conflicts are driven by poverty, underdevelopment, and lack of economic diversification, as well as by political systems that marginalize large parts of the population. But conflicts perpetuate poverty, creating a vicious circle that can be reversed only through special development efforts - including long-run peace building and political reforms. With success in these areas, countries can grow rapidly.” World Bank.

Jokes, jokes, jokes, jokes

An American and a Dutchman were talking about their flags. “What does your flag look like,” asked the American.

“It has three stripes,” replied the Dutchman, “red, white and blue. We say they have a connection with our taxes— we get red when we talk about the, white when we get our tax bills, and we pay them until we are blue in the face.”

“That’s just about what it is here,” replied the America, “Only we see stars, too.”

Visiting a cemetery one day, a group of people stopped at a stone, that among other things, read; “Here lies a politician and an honest man.” A man in the group commented; “Can you imagine that, two people in one grave?”

Assembly planning committee meet in Busan, Korea

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) will take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, from 30 October to 8 November 2013 under the theme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace”.

The assembly planning committee, which includes WCC Central Committee members and ecumenical partner representatives, met in the first week of October in Busan at the assembly venue – the Busan exhibition and conference centre (BEXCO).

It had gathered to offer direction for the development of the assembly spiritual life, the assembly programme, assembly business and the partnership needed to strengthen preparations over the next two years.

The committee met with leaders and members of local churches and had the opportunity to attend early morning prayer with one local congregation. While in Korea, the planning committee was welcomed by the leadership of the National Host Committee at a special reception at Nurimaru APEC house overlooking the Busan coast.

The committee considered the Korean concept of *madang* as a way to root the assembly in the host context and also give shape and meaning to the gathering. *Madang* is the traditional Korean “courtyard” connecting different parts of a house; a space for discussion, deliberation, celebration and fellowship; a traditional centre of family and community life. The assembly planning committee visited a number of traditional *madang* spaces in the city of Kyung-ju in order to understand the concept better.

Further the committee affirmed that the next assembly should be prepared in a spirit of *madang*, inviting participants into a common space of discussion and celebration.

Previous WCC assemblies have used similar concepts to help shape the meeting – *padare* at the Harare Assembly in 1998 and *mutirão* at the Porto Alegre Assembly in 2006.

The committee discussed the assembly theme, which takes the form of a prayer and suggested different ways to engage the fellowship of member churches in reflection and spiritual preparation for the assembly.

The committee will meet again in July 2012 to finalize its proposals to the WCC Central Committee which meets in August 2012.



Delegation from Indian and Pakistan visit Kenya

A delegation of women from Indian and Pakistani visited Kenya in September on a peace-building mission. Under the interfaith coalition, the delegation resolved to better relationship in the two countries.

The delegation comprising of Shaheena Khatib from Nagpur and Prof. Deepali Bhance among others had a chance to visit some parts of the country affected by the 2007-08 post election violence where they engaged women in rural areas on peace-building.

The delegation also met Dr. Agnes Abuom who spoke to them about peace building process and women participation, the UN Resolution 1325 and its importance as well as compliance and the role of inter-faith work for peace.

During the visit, the delegation had a chance to interact with Norwegian Church, Nairobi Peace Initiative and Association of Sisterhood of Kenya. They also visited the Kenya Justice and Peace Commission and the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL).



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Events for the Month of October

- › SUWEP Strategic Thinking– Juba– Dr. Abuom
- **AFSC Youth Dialogue– Nairobi– Dr. Abuom**
- **ELCK peace and reconciliation– Gordon and Afram**
- **EED– Berlin– Dr. Abuom**
- Disaster Preparedness– ELRECO– Gordon
- **Food Security baseline survey– JAM– Seith**
- **CSO assessment/NORAD– Addis– Dr. Abuom**

Ecumenical Conference resolve to continue supporting South Sudan

Africa’s newest republic was ushered in July 9 but a lot is yet to be done towards the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Conference

Meeting in September for a thanksgiving ceremony in Juba, South Sudan, church leaders urged the two states to fully honour the CPA to avoid post-independence crisis. Currently, there are simmering tensions over Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states. But more bloodshed can be avoided if the CPA is implemented fully and both governments involved at all levels.

The International Ecumenical Conference noted that internal

conflicts in the south would derail the successes achieved so far. “After the victory comes the biggest challenge. And this is very much the case with South Sudan, the biggest challenge of nation building that comes with attainment of political independence is no less daunting than the struggle for the liberation,” reads part of the communiqué.

2.5 million

The struggle, which lasted close to half a century, was the bloodiest as more than 2.5 million people lost their lives.

The Sudan Council of Churches thanked its ecumenical partners for the support offered and for standing with them in solidarity during struggle for a peaceful

and dignified people of Sudan. The Church vowed to continue to advocate for unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need and to provide support in crucial areas including health, water and sanitation, education and livelihoods, which are essential in the development process.

On governance, the conference agreed that the Church will participate actively in governance issues including promoting transparency and accountability in the public sector. It also promised to seek all means to actively participate in the constitution making process in order to ensure that the process is participatory and inclusive.

“The Church will not cease its efforts to safeguard the rights of minorities, to get religious and ethnic diversity fully acknowledged, and respectively freedom and rights to be guaranteed and written into the constitutional frameworks of the two states.”

Further, the Church promised to make every effort to document its historical experience in the long and continuing journey to bring the lessons of the historical experience to inform current and future interventions in promoting peace, reconciliation, healing of memories, respect for human dignity and justice for all the people of Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the rest of Africa.