

The Presentation of Bishop Sixbert Macumi during the visit in the Diocese of Edmonton

Outline of Contents

I. Presentation of the Diocese of Buye

The Diocese of Buye is situated in the Northern part of Burundi. Burundi is a small country with 27,835 km² and is bordering with Rwanda in the North, Democratic Republic of Congo in the North-West and the United Republic of Tanzania in the South and North-East. Burundi has a population of over 8 million.

The Diocese of Buye therefore is the elder one of the six Dioceses which form the Anglican Church of Burundi. It was born on the 11th of June 1965. The Diocese of Buye traces its origin from the coming of the East African Revival started in Rwanda in 1934. It is in 1936 that the British Missionaries escorted by a group of Africans (Ugandans and Rwandans) surveyed Burundi to open a missionary centre "Buye" in the Northern part of Burundi. 29 years later (1965) Buye Centre became a Diocese which at that time could cover the whole of Burundi.

The diocese of Buye has 28 parishes and four archdeaconries. From its birth to nowadays, its mission is to contribute to ensure the population of its intervention an integral development based on Evangelism. Evangelism is the principal aspect of its mission. However, this mission would be inadequate if social and economic activities had not been undertaken since its establishment in the country. It is in this way that Health, Universal Education, humanitarian action and disasters response are in its attributions.

II. Current Sectors of Intervention

II.1. Peace Building

Burundi has been under the civil war between 3 ethnic groups since 1993 up to 2005. That war caused the disappearance of over 5 hundred thousand people. Some villages have been ravaged and whole sale looting of houses. National infrastructure have been burnt, others looted.

A huge population has been internally displaced; many others have gone into exile in the neighboring Countries mainly in Tanzania, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere.

The Diocese of Buye has not been spared the consequences of that terrible war. Church roofs have been destroyed and corrugated iron sheets stolen. The

Diocese has lost not only Church buildings but also many Anglican members and some of the Clergy have been cruelly assassinated.

Now as the war ended, the government is experiencing a period of welcoming people coming back from exile. The government also is having the responsibility of bringing trust among the 3 ethnic groups whose relationship is poor due to the fact that those who remained displaced within the country and those who are coming from exile consider each other as bad people who have killed theirs and destroyed their properties.

Yes people are coming from the exile, but most of them are in extreme poverty due to the fact that when they arrive they found that their homes have been destroyed, their properties burnt others stolen. However, they are all starting new life and are really committed to the development activities.

Due to the above situation, the government is requesting everybody including Non-governmental organizations, Private Sectors, Civil Societies especially Churches to consider the reconciliation process of Burundians.

Therefore the Diocese of Buye have heard the appeal of the government on the site of reconciliation especially in the Northern part of Burundi where the Diocese of Buye is located. The process of reconciliation demands the Diocese to gather people from 4 administrative Provinces to be trained on how to cohabitate peacefully, on how to develop themselves and develop the country and the Church.

The problem that the Diocese is facing is lacking funds to hold Seminars. Our wish is to strengthen the good relationship between people despite their differences of ethnicity. So we request a support from the Diocese of Edmonton to achieve this programme.

II.2. Education

The Literacy rate in Burundi is still low and since 2006 the Government has considered the second millennium Development Goal “ To achieve the universal Primary School” by abolishing school fees in Primary School. This therefore led to the increase of the number of students in Primary Schools whereas the infrastructures, school materials are not relatively increased. For instance, you may find a classroom containing over 100 students instead of 50, and some students have to walk over 10 Km to reach their schools. This situation is occurring also in the schools under the church and government control. The Anglican Church, Buye Diocese is having six primary schools.

We are therefore obliged by this situation to extend the existed Schools and construct new Schools in order to solve this crucial problem.

In addition, we are planning to construct two Secondary Schools for which one is technical School whereby masons, plumbers and carpenters will be trained to enable them to create jobs themselves.

II.3 Health

Let me note that malaria and HIV/AIDS are the first major causes of morbidity and mortality in Burundi. Our church is planning to bring its contribution. On the side of HIV/AIDS, we are planning both to prevent it and to support the infected and affected people through Associations. The orphans in Secondary School will be supported by uniforms, pens, copybooks and School fees. On the case of Malaria bed nets will be provided to the vulnerable population and the population will be sensitized on how to fight against Malaria. I take this opportunity to give thanks to the Diocese of Edmonton for having led a campaign in support of Malaria prevention in Buye Diocese with \$22, 446. 51.

To maximize the efficacy of the above efforts, health centre which are near the patients are needed because many people can walk over 10 Km to reach a health centre and often die before reaching it. We would like also to bring our contribution by starting one health centre at Kayanza.

II.4. Community Development

As over 85% of the Burundian population depend substantial on agriculture, and the land is no longer fertile, a low productivity is happening which leads the population suffering from malnutrition.

Therefore, we plan to enhance the agriculture Sector by sensitizing people on the modern agriculture techniques and promoting the livestock of goats and cows to produce manure for crops.

As said people have started coming from the exile and found their houses destroyed. However they are starting new life by building their houses. They are making mud bricks and set up the wall but roofing is a problem for them because it demands money to buy corrugated iron sheets and nails. The Diocese of Buye is asked by the government to give its contribution. So we are greatly eager to support those returnees with iron sheets. We are therefore approaching the Diocese of Edmonton to help with corrugated iron sheets.

II.5 Taking Care of the vulnerable people

The emphasis is focused mainly on elders, orphans and widows.

The elders are those who are over 75 years old. In Buye we have identified over 200 elders. Those are the people who have no strength to produce for their survival. For those persons,

- No strength to dig using hoes

- No strength to build houses
- No strength to collect fire wood from the forest
- No strength to collect water from far in the valleys
- No strength to earn money by digging for others to buy soaps
- They have no strength to earn money in order to buy clothes for themselves, to pay medical and other bills.

In addition those elders are living alone in their houses which are in critical situation. That loneliness for most is due to the fact that their relatives have all been taken away by the war. The parishes try their best to assist them but because of their limit resources it is overwhelming.

On the side of widows, those are many due to the war which has taken away their husbands. As you may know in Africa men are the most taken to war because they are considered as the good fighters. Most of the men died leaving behind their small children who are now being taken care of by their mums and it is not easy for a widow mum alone to take care of 8 children. You can find that those children are in need of:

- School fees for those who are in secondary school
- School uniforms, shoes, soaps
- Copy books
- They need what to eat and where to live to mention but few

The presence of widows and orphans have not only the consequences of war only as mentioned above. But it is also the consequence of HIV/AIDS and malaria the terrible diseases which are taking many lives of people.

So to deal with that situation, the Diocese of Buye have thought to establish a sustainable project which could enable it to support efficiently vulnerable people to mention Elders, Widows, and Orphans. That project is to construct an Elders, Widows, and Orphans centre. That centre will be mainly with rooms for guests, restaurant and a conference hall. The Diocese has a land in Ngozi town (3rd town in the Country) from where the centre could be built.

Our hands are opened to receive any support from the Diocese of Edmonton to build E.W.O.C (Elders, Widows, and Orphans centre).

The purpose of the centre is to generate money and that money will be exclusively allocated to support Elders, Widows and Orphans.

II.6. Capacity Building

a) Training of Clergy

The Anglican Church/Buye Diocese is facing a shortage of human resources well skilled. This is so because the majority of our Pastors are trained locally

for a certificate level due to the lack of institution of Theology in our country from where we can train students at the degree level. So funds are needed to train at least 5 students in the nearest countries such as in Uganda or Kenya.

b) Rebuilding Churches

As I have already said, many church buildings have been destroyed during the war. Now the diocese is concerned in rebuilding the destroyed Churches. Christians are trying their best by making bricks and set up the walls but roofing is a problem. They are not able to get funds to buy iron sheets and nails due to poverty. Therefore we are requesting to our partners a financial support to roof these churches.

Conclusion

Those are the actual sectors of intervention of the Diocese of Buye. It is my pleasure to say that the Diocese of Edmonton is free to decide what sectors he is ready to intervene in order to support the works of Buye Diocese.

God Bless you!

Rt Rev Sixbert MACUMI
The Bishop of the Diocese of Buye