

"Affective, spiritual and emotional approach in education and healing"

A journey Healing the TRAUMA of Inequality and Initiating the MISSION of Equality

Responding with courage to the Young and the Dis-advantaged so that everyone flourishes according to God's plan

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INTRODUCTION

I. God Created equals, Human beings created Inequality

The tendency to dominate

1. "God created human kind in his image, male and female he created them" (Genesis, 1, 27). God created human beings as equals. Yet from the beginning we find that there is inequality and "a dominator model of society" (Eisler). Starting from Cain and Abel, this tendency to dominate and inequality is manifested in competition, injustice, discrimination and various forms of inter-human violence.

Inequality is enforced, striving for equality is natural.

2. Though we observe inequality everywhere, we notice also the striving for equality, a natural inclination in all of us. Inequality is unnatural and has to be enforced. Inequality implies inherent violence. Unequal structures, with inbuilt violence, have become established in the course of history. There is constant struggle between people seeking to uphold their equality and the enforcement of inequality by others. The privileged argue that equality is an impossible ideal and insist that inequality has always been the norm. Archaeologists and anthropologists (Riane Eisler, Lucy Goodison, Margret Mead, Hanna Rachel Bell, Gaurango Chattopadhyay) speak of Minoans in

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Crete, Fox Tribes in America, Manus in New Guinea and Ngarinyin in Australia for whom equality was/is the norm, the children treated as equals and involved in decision making and authority decentralised.

Inequality has disturbed the balance in relationships

3. The primary unit of life and existence is relationship (Bell, 1998). Today we find imbalance in relationships among people because of inequality. Inequality is not the norm, but an aberration that needs to be rectified. It is the repetition of unchallenged practices of inequality that leads to the formation of a dominator model of society. It has taken the shape of slavery, colonisation, and stratification of society according to different hierarchies as race, gender, caste, class or age.

Differences are misunderstood and feared

4. Differences in age, gender, class, caste, religion, race, colour, ethnicity, region, language, culture, nationality, marital status or ability are natural. Unfortunately, differences are misunderstood and feared. This results in prejudice and discrimination. The dominator model of society where people are divided into two opposite camps, the Advantaged and the Dis-Advantaged, is born. Inequality begins to show.

Privileges set the stage for conflicts

5. Discrimination against some goes hand in hand with privileges for others. Some consider privileges to be their right forgetting the rights of others. The privileged structure the society, make laws, have access to resources, and take decisions. They become entrenched in their positions. They transmit these as values through socialisation and education, culture and traditions, socio-political and economic theories and practices, philosophy and religion. Inequality is taught, practiced and propagated. Thus adults consider themselves privileged and find it difficult to accept children as equals. The stage is set for conflict in the home, school and society.

The vicious circle of violence and counter violence

6. As inequality is entrenched through privileges, the present day society is structured to be violent. Because of inequality, conflicts have been and continue to be the order of the day. The struggle for equality against discrimination results in counter-violence which meets with further violence from the powers that seek to maintain their domination. The vicious circle of violence and counter-violence continue unabated caused by the greed of some and the needs of the others. Every incidence of violence is a call to leave this vicious circle and join the dynamic cycle of growth in equality.

The Challenge of Equality

7. Human life and dignity is not a ready-made package. We are born little, dependent, and helpless. The life task of every human being is to grow into the fullness of humanity. The creation narrative tells the story of every adult human being faced with choices that test the limits of their freedom and responsibility and affect relationships in the universe. In a context of equality, it would be natural that differences are understood with sensitivity and the ensuing balance is celebrated. It is human to support the weak and the needy. Negotiating differences, welcoming inter-dependency, sharing resources and restoring balance in relationships is in the spirit of equality. One can also choose inequality and privileges and disturb this balance. Inequality in turn can become entrenched in human relationships. Ensuring balance makes the journey to maturity the adventure of human life. The challenge as well as the key to liberation is to choose the path of equality, and of balance in relationships.

Spirituality as the process of transition from inequality to equality, dependency to agency

8. Healing and reconciliation can lead to restoration of equality or balance in relationships. True liberation is in the transformation of entrenched attitudes, structures and practices. In the experience of equality all humans “come to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4, 13). The healing process itself is a spiritual journey. The entire process of child rearing, socialisation and education, culture and traditions, socio-political and economic theories and practices, philosophy and religion need to be transformed, not a mean task. Then the original human condition as intended by the creator can emerge: “*We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it*” (Ephesians 2, 10). Social work is a spiritual journey after all.

II. CHILD DEVELOPMENT OR WILL BREAKING ACTIVITY

9. Eric Fromm would say that the new born babe enters the world with a cry of independence. The very same moment begins the opposite process of forcing it to submit to the will of the adults.

1. Child Development Theories

10. **Object Relations theory** suggests that the ways in which people relate to others and situations in their adult lives are shaped by experiences during infancy. Children who were abused internalize that experience.

11. **Attachment Theory** speak of the need for a strong emotional and physical attachment to at least one primary caregiver and is critical to child development. The attachment figure is a secure base from which an infant can explore the world. There are ambivalent, avoidant and secure patterns of infant-mother attachment.

12. **Physical Touch** is a matter of life and death in childhood. Without adequate touch, it there was a higher risk of behavioural, emotional and social problems. Studies by James W. Prescott indicate that violence is non-existent in societies where infants and adolescents get plenty of pleasurable touch. Deprivation of pleasurable touch is a significant cause of violence in later life is.

13. **Erik Erikson** identified eight basic psychosocial conflicts that he believed everyone confronts in life. The way we resolve this conflict at one stage influences how we deal with this and other conflicts at later stages.

1. Basic trust vs. mistrust (Birth to 2 years)
2. Autonomy vs. shame and doubt (2-4 years)
3. Initiative versus guilt (5-7 years)
4. Industry versus inferiority (8-12 years)

14. Theories of infancy and early childhood indicate the need of children to establish secure attachments and affection so that they would develop to be balanced adults capable of understanding differences and initiating trustful relationships. Understanding the dependence of infants and children and their agency and with inputs from different theories of child development should have paved the way for more appropriate child care. As a result the present world order would have been transformed.

2. Child Rearing Practices

Good enough mother

15. When the mother satisfies every felt need of the child, the child feels omnipotent, and develops the mental make up for a trusting and secure future. At this stage of absolute dependency of a helpless child, the mother gives herself totally to it. The mother understands the child's equality and her responsibility to be totally available. This is love, servanthood at its best. The mother can never do enough for the child. The point of view that "you have to toughen the child from early on" is just a myth (Galinsky, 2010).

Agency of the Child

16. In the medical model the baby is seen more as an object. In the developmental model the baby is considered a person; the baby is actively constructing his or her own development (Galinsky). Studies have shown that

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children, even those as young as premature infants, have strategies for coping with and managing their own stress. Children continue to stand up for their rights and needs all the time. They protest when their rights are violated. This is often considered indiscipline and the occasion or excuse for punishments.

“Whale Done Parenting” style

17. In *“Whale Done Parenting,”* Ken Blanchard and others show how amazing child rearing can be. With infinite patience the trainers of 10-ton killer whales are able to befriend these huge animals. Seeing the might of the animals, the trainers would never dare to punish them. Instead they set things up for success, ignore failure or redirect them, and appreciate or reward them when they perform well. The same principles work for children. Rather than throw up tantrums children cooperate more. They learn to manage or seek help. They respect their parents as friends and equals, rather than fear them as superiors.

Child rearing in a dominator model of society

18. When parents think of themselves as superior, there is already violence lurking in their attitude. The dominator model, with its structure of inequality, is pitted against children and goes against their best interests. What ensues is a battle of wills. Alice Miller, the Polish psychiatrist who suffered under the Nazis during World War II calls for violence free child rearing. She traces their behaviour to the violence that they experienced in their families during childhood. She said, “Stop violence in families, and there will be no more wars.”

Consequences of violence in child rearing

19. Philip Lichtenberg (1990), speaking of the violence that is perpetrated in the family argues that at the centre of child rearing has been the enterprise of breaking the will of the child so that he or she will become socialized. This activity of will breaking is purely and simply child abuse. This tyrannical behaviour is socially accepted because the parents, who perpetrate this, themselves have been victims once, and do not see anything abnormal in it.

20. Parents punish little, helpless children only because of their physical superiority and lack of personal discipline. Many parents do not realise that children can have their thoughts, desires and plans. They can’t stand their children not submitting to their orders promptly. Such child rearing, with its inbuilt violence, leaves the majority of children traumatised. Punishments leave their share of trauma or psychological injury. Children suffer from psychological deficits, emotional distress, behavioural difficulties, or mental disorders.

III. VALIDATING EMOTIONS, HEALING TRAUMA

Understanding Emotions

21. A universal phenomenon the world over has been the effort to deny emotions and exalt reason. Emotions could, instead, be seen as just different from reason, neither superior nor inferior, each with different but significant roles in the lives of every human being. According to Daniel Goleman (1995) the emotions are the link between the body and the mind. Robert C. Solomon (1993) would go further and say that the emotions are judgements individuals make of the happenings around to protect themselves and their self-esteem and to provide meaning to their lives.

The Myth of Emotions

22. Robert C. Solomon (1993) speaks of the myth created about passions and emotions as irrational intrusions into our otherwise meaningful and quite "rational" lives. The purpose of the myth is to cast people into helpless roles battling irrational forces within them. It is this myth that ultimately devalues experience. It sustains the dominator model that refuses to respect the emotions created by inequality and the violence it generates. *The negative approach to emotions in general appears to be a mark of and at the service of a dominator model of society.* There is the need to restore the agency of human beings in the recognition of and response to feelings, emotions and desires which are central to human existence.

Alternative to the Myth of Emotions

23. Given the above understanding, there is the urgency to find an alternative to this myth of the passions. One such alternative is that emotions are judgements, that emotions are also rational and have their own logic. They are ways of seeing and engaging in the world or, in the metaphor of Heidegger, ways of being tuned to the world. Owning our passions we regain responsibility and meaning for our lives, we become active and empowered, we regain our agency. It is because of emotions that life has meaning. It is because we are moved, because we feel, that life has direction and purpose. The passions are the very source of our interests and our purposes. According to Hume, only passion moves us; reason has no such power.

Emotions in a hierarchical world

24. The dominator model of society understands reality in terms of hierarchies. An impression is created that those in higher positions in the hierarchy are endowed with greater power, wisdom and dignity. Though this view has no substance in reality, it is maintained, protected and promoted. Similarly, reason is projected as superior to emotions. Each hierarchy

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influences the understanding in other hierarchies. Thus, as a result of the gender hierarchy, certain emotions are linked with males and others with females, thus creating a hierarchy of emotions. Emotions of sadness, fear, compassion and love, are often considered emotions of the weak. Anger, arrogance and pride as considered emotions of the strong. If the emotions are seen for what they are, it is evident that each emotion has its own reason. Accepting emotions as they arise and responding to them with equanimity keeps people in touch with reality. The artificial world of hierarchy collapses under the truth of emotions.

Emotions show the path to (the truth of) relationships

25. Emotions provide a key to responding to life meaningfully. When people begin to acknowledge emotions, they are in touch with reality and the truth of themselves. They are able to make appropriate decisions without needing masks. When self-worth is linked to place in the hierarchy, maintaining false images becomes essential and emotions will have to be suppressed.

26. Emotions are at the service of protecting one's meaning, self-esteem and existence. This happens whenever one feels angry, afraid, ashamed, attracted, moved or enthusiastic. Being aware of inner feelings and meanings, people recognize their vulnerabilities. It takes courage to accept and acknowledge vulnerabilities. Hence people become open to others who also have similar feelings and vulnerabilities. Gradually differences and hierarchies will break down; equality will emerge more clearly and restore balance in relationships.

Emotions are transformative

27. Emotions triggered by abuse, neglect, loss, violence, exploitation or abandonment trigger distrust in those who are perceived to be the cause of their situation. When it happens in early infancy, it is directed against the whole humanity. *In contrast, healing of emotions and trauma release the pent up energies in which the psyche is trapped and the person opens up to one's full potential.* Further, emotions triggered by experience of equality, justice, human rights have the potential of reversing the impact of suppressed emotions caused by violence and inequality. Healing in the counsellor's chamber will be more sustainable if linked to an ambient free of inequality. Healing and education can contribute significantly more if they go hand in hand with the mission of equality with the practice of human rights.

Experience of Trauma

28. Trauma refers to the condition produced by serious physical, emotional or mental injury or distress or pain or severe anxiety caused from experiences like divorce, rape, death, accident, abandonment, subjugation,

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discrimination, atrocities and so on. Trauma being an extremely upsetting experience can cause disturbance in normal functioning and may have long-lasting effects. Trauma needs to be addressed and healed for a person to get back to normal life. If not, there is danger of psychological and emotional problems setting in leading to conditions such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Trauma of Inequality

29. When people are discriminated against, they feel angry, discouraged, annoyed, sad, even depressed. These feelings are the effect of violence inherent in their experience of inequality. Against this violence they feel helpless. Whenever there is power difference, or inequality, violence is experienced. Both physical and psychological violence are traumatising. When discrimination is inbuilt into the social fabric, such as gender or social discrimination, the trauma becomes chronic. Most often this experience is not expressed. It is suppressed to manage the pain, or it is not allowed to be expressed. In a hierarchical society, violence is the norm and the expression of emotion is inhibited. By tolerating the situation of inequality all contribute to the ongoing traumatising. A hierarchical society is traumatising by its very nature.

Trauma of inequality in childhood

30. *The first violence against children is in not treating them as equal.* They feel the discrimination. The adults, accustomed to the privilege of hierarchy, do not consider the feelings of the children. *This is the beginning, training ground and continuation of the violence in the world.* Something seems seriously wrong with the world!

31. Effects of traumatic experiences in childhood linger on because they have not been attended to. They show up as emotional disturbance, behavioural difficulties or even some form of disorder. Often these are interpreted as disciplinary problems and further damage is done to children. Emotions are misinterpreted as problems, rather than as signals or communications seeking urgent response. This approach prevents timely intervention. People carry heavy psychological burdens all their lives.

Contradictory consciousness

32. A teacher slapped a boy for using abusive language. The boy responded, "I shall show you when my moustaches grow up!" The teacher presumed that he is superior and had the power to punish the boy. The boy response indicates that he knows the truth of this injustice and he would make up one day! He knew that the social norms are tilted against him only for the time being. He also understands that the adults had different rules for themselves.

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33. According to Antonio Gramsci, the consciousness of those who suffer inequality is contradictory. It consists of two opposing elements, one autonomous and the other borrowed. The autonomous element is their natural understanding of equality supporting their agency. The borrowed element is the set of values they have been socialised into by the dominant groups. In the face of domination, and their own helplessness, they bide their time. They do not really surrender; they only wait for the appropriate time. The anger they experience and the urge for self-defence will cause emotional turmoil, even trauma.

Danger from unaddressed emotions

34. Emotions we know mirror one's life in relation to the reality around. It is imperative that everyone confronts the truth being communicated through the emotions. If emotions are not addressed they can turn into MOODS. Over a period of time, mood will become HABIT. Habit over a time will turn into CHARACTER. It could become more disastrous as DISORDER. One such disorder is ADDICTION! Healing of emotions is an important mission for all of us.

Addiction and Co-dependency

35. According to Ann Wilson Schaefer (1988) addiction operates within an addictive system and work to trap the person in the system. The addictive system is contagious, and those who live within it become infected sooner or later. Individuals within the addictive system exhibit these characteristics even without abusing drink or drugs. Co-dependence is one such addictive process which according to Charles Whitfield (1991) affects not only individuals, but families, communities, businesses and other institutions, and states and countries. This includes addiction to powerlessness and non-living or living without agency or living fully. There is also process addiction where one becomes hooked on a process such as gambling, sex, work or relationship.

36. Ann Wilson Schaefer (1988) understands the present society as an addict, addicted to power, to a dominator model, to privileges. Addictive relationships are a norm of our society. They maintain the addiction of the addict and all in the system. It has its version of co-dependency. This is like the oppressor and the oppressed, or the dominant person and the submissive one, each needing the other to sustain the system of inequality (Lichtenberg, 1990).

Adults too are in need healing

37. What about the educators who were once children and who are now continuing the system of inequality? Every educator is in need of healing if the traumatising system is not to be perpetrated. The archetype of the wounded

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healer makes sense in this context. The healed adult will not any more traumatise children; instead will become their healer and enabler.

IV. PREVENTIVE SYSTEM AS A PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY

38. The society today is faced with the consequences of trauma and emotional disturbances caused by violence inherent in inequality. Today this violence has reached unmanageable proportions. There is urgent need to evolve a methodology to ensure the reversal of this situation leading to growth in equality and peace in the world.

1. Five Elements of the methodology

39. It is easy to say that the path to equality is complicated, difficult or idealistic. By choosing to initiate changes in gradual, small, easy steps in various situations where change is needed, the process will become simple, easy and practical. The first step is to be the one to INITIATE (1) change. The change envisaged is the restoration of balance in relationships disrupted by inequality. Transformation of relationships is the goal of equality. *Start by relating as equals to bring back the balance in relationships.*

40. A second question of methodology is HOW the change is to be initiated. Equality is inherent to human nature and today it is a recognized right. So a right based approach is inevitable. Inequality is perpetrated by the few privileged that hold power. Those who have power will resist giving it up. Yet the process of change has to involve everyone, the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Thesecond step to equality is a right based approach ensuring the PARTICIPATION (2) of all concerned.

41. A third task to be kept in mind in initiating the mission of equality is restoration of the place of emotions in life and relationships and healing the emotional hurts and trauma of inequality. Without healing change cannot stand.

42. The practice of inequality and domination is an addiction, a process addiction involving addiction to power. The change methodology needs to factor in a process that is conducive to healing of an addiction and the concomitant co-dependency.

43. As Gerald May (1991) would say, and all Alcoholics Anonymous would agree, that recovery from addiction can be had only with God's grace. Hence, if we are to succeed in the mission of equality we need deep spirituality (5). Spirituality of living equality has to be learnt. Spirituality will also integrate all five elements.

2. Participatory Methodologies and recurring themes

44. We are familiar with the classical approach to understanding and solving day to day problems. Joseph Leo Cardijn, the founder of the Young Christian Workers had used a 3 step approach, See, Judge and Act. The 27th General Chapter adapted this to Listening – Interpretation – Way Forward. The GUIDELINES (2017) on the Challenges to Religious life after Vatican II, are presented as an exercise of *discernment* to identify issues¹, to *test, with parresia* the *wineskins* made to preserve the new wines the Spirit continues to give to his Church, and to initiate changes through concrete action.

45. From creation to Christ and the Gospels, from the early church to Vatican II and now to Pope Francis and the present times, disapproval of inequality and calling for equality and has been a recurring theme. Every page of The Guidelines (2017) is seeped with the persistent challenge of inequality.² The document calls for a paradigm shift as offered a methodology for it. The methodology is uncannily similar to various participatory methodologies that have become popular since the 1990s and are part of the repertoire of qualitative social science research methodology.

46. Participatory methodologies take into consideration the views and ideologies of everyone in the group. Participation is acknowledgement of equality and negation of inequality. Each one is valued and the contribution appreciated. In problem solving, for instance, everyone connected with the problem are participants in seeking a solution. Such solutions will be satisfactory for all. Cooperative inquiry is appreciated because all contribute to the new understanding. Hierarchical approaches, that do not offer hope for equality but perpetuate inequality, are discarded. Those in leadership roles encourage initiative and elicit the participation of all. The choice of a participatory method is itself initiation of the mission of equality.

3. The participatory methodology of Jesusⁱ

47. Jesus' incarnation is a sign of participation at its best. God comes into midst of his people and lives among them. The Gospels tell about how Jesus formed his disciples. He lived with them, shared meals together, journeyed

¹ Issues to be identified i.e. ("...find unsuitable practices, point out blocked processes, pose concrete questions, ask questions about structures of relationships, government and formation)

² Among the challenges in the Guidelines are: 1. Resistance to change. 2. Serious questions about the formative system. 3. No solid formation of the formators. 4. Attitude of resistance towards the new sensibility to women. 5. Reciprocity between man and women is lacking in the spheres of consecrated life. 6. Vertical concentration of exercising of authority. 7. Need for a generous willingness to give up every form of privilege. 8. Terminology *superiors* and *subjects* no longer suitable. 9. Persistent centralisation of decision making power. 10. Lack of turnover of governments of communities and institutes. 11. A pyramidal and authoritative relational context. 12. Preventing management of resources from being put exclusively into the hands of a few.

together. They observed Jesus as he took sides with the ordinary people, how people could approach him and experience his healing touch. Jesus never healed without their participation. We can notice the following elements in the Participatory methodology of Jesus.

a. Disciples expressing themselves freely as Jesus listened

48. Jesus did not hold himself as the master and the others as servants. Rather he considered them as friends, as subjects in their own right. This finds expression in the way Jesus allowed them to express themselves. In a participatory methodology, the child or the formee or the people are the subject. The educator will allow them the young to express themselves freely. This will result in mutual understanding. The facilitation of expression comes with the important skill of listening to understand, and responding with understanding.

b. Experience of Dialogue with both sides listening

49. When there is freedom of expression and people feel that they are listened to, communication becomes reciprocal. In other words, the stage is set for dialogue. Dialogue is the place where education and transformation takes place. The whole Gospel is full of dialogues taking place between Jesus and the people in need, Jesus and the disciples, Jesus and the leaders. True dialogue is always between partners, among subjects. Without the partners treating each other as subjects, no meaningful dialogue can take place. In genuine dialogue, each partner by listening to the other with openness facilitates the expression of the other.

c. Ability to Negotiate, listening to differences

50. Dialogue leads to negotiation, give and take. Negotiation is on equal terms, between subjects. Both feel free to express their different views and accept each other. Life will now move forward.

Transformation of the hierarchical model

51. There could be a fear here that the role of the educator or formator is being compromised through participation. The educator is the leader. In the Gospel, every leader is a servant. The participatory process has the capacity to transform leadership into the servant model as exemplified for us by Christ.

52. In the hierarchical model authority is exercised vertically, and accountability is upwards. In the Trinitarian model which is replicated in the Gospel, authority is exercised in relationships through participation. Participatory Approach in education, formation, apostolate and governance has the potential to transform them into the Gospel model of exercising

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authority and leadership as servants. As participation increases, leadership changes in terms of servanthood. As authority is shared, accountability will not only be upward, but also downward and horizontal. There will be empowerment of all. As equality becomes clear, self-esteem develops throwing light on the inner strength and authority of the young. They will develop the quality of self-direction.

4. The Preventive System

53. We trace back the preventive system of Don Bosco to his childhood. As a precocious and sensitive child, Mamma Margret taught him to see God's plan beyond the immediate problems. Little Johnny could not understand or accept the discrimination of children who were poor. He could not understand why the teachers would not speak to him and used to complain to his mother. To respect every young person became his life goal. Don Bosco was already opting for equality.

54. In his search to find an alternative to care for children, Don Bosco discovered the preventive system that had been around from time immemorial. This system was radically different from the repressive system with which it co-existed. As a friend of the young, and knowing their needs, he opted for the preventive system. In this spirit of understanding, rather than suppressing the young, he provided them an outlet for their unbounded energy. They learnt from him and became partners of his enterprise. A new movement was born, a movement of young people and those willing to be their friends. It was the beginning of a paradigm shift, *as opting out of the repressive system, as pedagogy to educate the young and as spirituality of equality.*

55. The preventive system, with its participatory approach to the young, meets all the five criteria, we have proposed. We are today challenged to make the preventive system of Don Bosco come alive. Don Bosco initiated a process. It needs to be taken forward from where he left off.

V. AS OPTING OUT OF THE REPRESSIVE SYSTEM

We Practice a Composite Preventive-Cum-Repressive System

56. According to Pietro Braido (2000), the preventive system and repressive system are two real and relatively distinct educational systems that have been practiced throughout history, in diverse ways, both in families and in institutions. Both have their justification. Both boast of being productive approaches, yielding positive results.

57. Preventive system is based on the child, and his or her limitations of age. This requires a consistent, loving assistance on the educator's part. The educator is present, advises, guides and supports in a paternal or maternal way. The educational system that evolves from these principles has a family style orientation.

58. The repressive system is more directly pointed towards the goal to be achieved. This system tends to see the young person as the future adult. As a consequence, the child is treated with this in mind from the earliest years. As a consequence, also, the educational system is more austere and demanding. We have this in schools which strictly follow the rules with regard to law, relationships and measures which stress responsibility.

59. Braido's reference to the family style needs to alert us to our earlier discussion on child rearing. He knows that that most families could be repressive. Preventive system practiced in the school has the potential of transforming the repressive family system.

60. For centuries of historical experience, both theoretical and practical, both systems have existed in a profusely composite version. Don Bosco was aware of the different paradigms the two systems operated from. He opted for the preventive system. He knew the preventive system was less in vogue, but he considered it more in keeping with the times and the needs of the young. He knew the danger of people reverting back to the repressive system. The danger will be lurking even today unless the recovery is accomplished.

61. The choice between the preventive system and the repressive system is an ongoing choice. It is the same call of Jesus to be servants. The moment one chooses not to be the servant of the young, the option for the repressive system is being made and the preventive system is being abandoned. We speak of brand Don Bosco. Just as the disciples found it difficult even to understand the call to be servants, we too find it difficult to be servants of the young. We prefer to provide service, do activities FOR them.

Attractions of the Repressive system

62. "Do no harm" is a foundational principle of ethics. It is stated as the Golden Rule: Do to others as you would want others to do to you. Preventive System is meant to be an epitome of this universal ethical injunction carried out in the educational field. The challenge is to resist the opposite impulse in human nature to dominate.

63. For the dominator model of society, the repressive system is more attractive. Educational system that is result oriented and driven by competition follows the repressive system. Admission is not geared to the needs of the child, but to the performance of the school. The entire

educational processes will be geared towards results, standards and competition rather than the actual needs and the agency of the child.

A Rights Based Approach

64. Pope Benedict had in 2008 declared Human Rights as being enunciated by the UN in the UDHR and other instruments like the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, as genuine expressions of the Gospel values. With the 2009 International Congress on Preventive System and Human Rights, a rights approach has been accepted as integral to the practice of the preventive system. Equality is one of the most important rights. Right to participation is the right that ensures equality and most other rights.

65. There are religious and priests who still think that a rights approach is not consistent with the church or religious life. This exposes the persistence of the hierarchical approach in the Church and Religious congregations, one of the most significant challenges of the post Vatican Church. The secular state, even authoritarian ones, recognise the UN mandate and have integrated human rights into the law. The Church takes advantage of these laws. But there are laws today that mandate that Church institutions also follow the rights approach, in effect mandating the practice of the preventive approach.

Practice of the Preventive System today

66. Some young Salesians say that Preventive System does not work. They hold up the example of their animators who speak of the preventive system, but do not practice it. In a scathing comment about formation houses, the Guidelines (2017) say that formation needs to be a work of art, not a police action (N. 34). It agrees that more of repressive system is being practiced, be it in education, formation, administration, governance or pastoral work. Authoritarian ways of decision making are common. When the equality of children, or of the formees or of the people or of the confreres is not accepted, it would not be wrong to say that the repressive system is being practiced.

Discipline and Punishments

67. The simple logic about punishments is that the powerful and the strong punish the weak. Such punishments, whether by the parents at home, or the teachers in schools, or the government in civil society, is an indication of domination and repression. They believe that only repression can bear fruit. This is the logic of retributive law and punishments. This is the law of war. Often, it is the same retributive law that is being practiced in educational institutions and families. The preventive system with the understanding of equality of persons has the potential to bring about social transformation only if it is practiced without dilution.

Discipline as repression

68. Discipline comes from the Latin word *discere* meaning “to learn.” Discipline is an art helping young people to learn to do in a systematic or meaningful way. Unfortunately, discipline has deteriorated into keeping someone under check. Children are punished frequently and severely throughout their childhood. M. Scott Peck (1978) called this meaningless discipline because it is undisciplined discipline.

Adults need healing and support

69. Psychologists tell us that punishing a child is never the need of a child, rather the need of the teacher or adult whose life is in shambles, with low self-esteem, struggling to manage difficult emotions or lacking in imagination to create alternatives to physical violence. Such adults are easily upset and are afraid of losing control. Rather than deal with their own emotions and frustrations, their anxiety and anger, they project them on to vulnerable children. The result is very dangerous for the little ones. The child needs understanding, not punishment; the adult needs to learn of ways to communicate with the children. They need support to deal with their own difficult emotions and to grow in self-esteem.

Teachers' and children's rights

70. Vernor Muñoz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education during the International Congress on Preventive System and Human Rights had this to say. Teachers may argue that respecting the rights of children diminishes respect for their own rights or makes it more difficult to maintain discipline. The assumption is that rights represent a fixed quantity of entitlement and that giving more to one necessarily deprives the other. It also derives from an authoritarian understanding of the teacher-child relationship. Respecting the rights of children does involve some transfer of power, not the loss of rights on the part of the teacher. Creating a school environment in which children's rights are respected is more likely to enhance respect for the role of the teacher. Children will be empowered.

VI. AS PARTICIPATORY PEDAGOGY FOR TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

71. Having made an option for prevention rather than repression, Don Bosco started applying preventive system to all his activities. In his care of the young people it became pedagogy. He wanted it be applied to relationships among his Salesians, in the way they worked with children or dealt with

people, in the way administration was carried out and in the way the society was governed. Opting out of repression, everything he did was transformed.

72. Many children who come to us come mostly from situations of repression or a composite system, as Braido would say, with their wills broken and their spirits crushed because of abuse, violence, abandonment or neglect. They need healing from their trauma, and they need to be put back on the path of human development. Some occasional programmes of healing will not suffice.

73. The children, and people at large, need a paradigm shift from their being victims of repression to a path of meaning in life, belief in themselves and in their agency so that they can become protagonists for their destiny. Like for Don Bosco, everything in the educative ambient needs to be permeated with the preventive system. The education ambient can be transformed from a composite of the preventive and repressive to being totally preventive. Only then can there be healing of the trauma of inequality.

Participatory Methodology

74. The approach to initiate a paradigm shift in the educational practice needs to be participatory. The principles of a participatory methodology that find expression in the life and teaching of Jesus and as proposed by Don Bosco in the preventive system and spirit needs to be actualised systematically in the educational ambient. The child is the centre and purpose of the educational enterprise. The educators and all the adults in the system are at their service as servants. Yet, without their agency in the educative or formative process, the result will be just a mask.

75. If the trauma of inequality is to be healed, if an ambient of equality and agency has to be created, and if education is to be transformative, it has to happen at three levels: cognitive, emotional and behavioural.

a. Cognitive or attitudinal transformation

76. Education, besides imparting information, must facilitate thinking by children. Cognitive development, to use Jean Piaget's terminology, is about the development of cognitive structures. It is not enough that the children assimilate knowledge; they need to be able to make meaning of new situations and accommodate them in their understanding and meaning making. New attitudes have to be formed and new values learnt. One significant attitude that needs to be communicated is that of equality. Being victims of the repressive system, their cognitive structures would not have developed adequately, or would have got stuck in the values and attitudes of the same system that they would have come to hate. New attitudes are imbibed from the atmosphere that is created and from the lives of the educators they meet. As a rights approach is followed, children will easily understand and learn equality.

"We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it." (Ephesians 2, 10)

b. Emotional Transformation

77. The emotions are a much neglected element of education. Children are taught to respect all and every part of their being. There is no part that is inferior or superior. Healing is also about acceptance of those parts of the self that have been denied, suppressed or neglected. As a result of the dominator model of society, people have learned to suppress their emotions rather than express them. Education is the time to facilitate processes for emotional healing to take place. Children are helped to build up self-esteem and provided with a conducive ambient to express emotions appropriately. Children will need opportunities for counselling and therapy for their specific psychological problems and needs and the healing of past traumas. Younger children are provided opportunities for play therapy. All are helped to complete the unfinished business of their earlier stages of development.

c. Behavioural transformation

78. A third area of transformation is behaviour. Attitudes and feelings affect behaviour. Behaviour in turn will affect thoughts and feelings. Change in one area will effect change in other areas. New behaviours have to be learnt and opted for. Efforts are made to change unhealthy behaviour become easier when all the three dimensions are addressed. Often, efforts are made to change the behaviour of children through harsh disciplinary measures and new behaviours are enforced. This is how the dominator model functions. The opportunities for children to express views, to dialogue and to negotiate will help to bring about the desired change. The educators need to develop the skill of listening. Understanding children will ensure better response from them.

79. A behaviour that needs transformation and needs special attention is addiction. Young people may have already have some addictions. After all, it could be said that we are part of an addictive system. Transformation needs all the special attention that a recovery programme envisages, the young people and the adults together, similar to family therapy.

Psycho-Social Facilitation

80. Shift from a repressive system, and transformation at all levels, and following a participatory methodology calls for the concerted efforts of all concerned in the educational enterprise. There is need for coordination of the various processes so that education remains integral and transformative. Every child needs to be accompanied in this process. Everyone needs to participate. This task could be entrusted to the Psycho-Social Facilitation team.

81. This team will have counsellors and therapists, human rights education coordinators with representatives of the management, parents and children. They will coordinate and ensure that the children, staff and management on the one hand and the parents and others get connected with the transformative educational process and be integrated with the regular curriculum and activities. In this way, the healing process initiated will be sustained and a child directed ambient will be the result, in the campus and outside, and will gradually transform also the ambient of associated families and the larger society.

VII. AS PARTICIPATORY SPIRITUALITY OF INITIATING EQUALITY

Balance in Relationships

82. Spirituality is about life. Spirituality is about the how people think, speak, feel and act as human beings. Spirituality is about how God's own image in human beings is being reflected in their relationships, the basic unit of life and existence. Spirituality is, therefore, about restoring original relationships free from the shackles of inequality and hierarchies that maintain them. A shift from a repressive way of thinking, feeling and acting to an enabling way requires a transformation in the values and structures of the existing system. The following elements could contribute to the creation of such spirituality that can form the wine skins into which the new wine is poured.

Spirituality of Agency

83. Even in the worst situations of inequality, the inclination to equality and one's own agency is not lost. The young need to be accompanied as they move from total dependency to greater agency and autonomy, and establish energetic interdependent relationships that are characteristics of a healthy spirituality. As against the past of dependency and submissiveness, agency and assertiveness are the characteristics of this new spirituality. Young people formed this way will become change agents. Together we can facilitate the process of getting out of the vicious circle humanity is caught up in. Spirituality is about getting on a path of equality without turning back.

Spirituality and emotions

84. Emotions are the human link with reality and so to God's plan for humankind. They are the primary alert or signal to people as to whether what is happening is according to God's purpose or not. Belittling emotions and preventing their expression goes against the integrity of creation and human life. Emotions alert us against the practice of inequality and open up paths to equality. Spirituality in turn challenges us to restore the original style of

human life destroyed by the striving for domination. It regenerates in everyone the yearning for equality and the will to respect and safeguard it in others. Spirituality is healthy when emotions are also integrated into life.

Spirituality of celebrating differences

85. Differences among people are natural. Differences in age, gender or other natural differences are to be accepted and celebrated. Often the spirits of the younger or those lower in the hierarchy are subdued by force. There is exploitation of relationships, suppression of wills, minds, emotions and even bodies of other human beings for the satisfaction of those who dominate. Gender difference leads to gender exploitation. Domination leads to the destruction of relationships that are the basic unit of life. When natural differences are accepted, sharing of resources will replace monopoly, discrimination and exploitation, and authentic spirituality will be formed.

Initiating the Journey to equality

86. Spirituality increases the awareness of equality and cause discomfort in the status quo of inequality. It would not be wrong to say that spirituality and the attitude of equality are co-terminus. To deny equality is to opt for the repressive system. Equality and the resultant balance in relationships is the goal of all we do (child care, education, formation, administration, governance, apostolate, social work and life together).

87. The dalits (erstwhile untouchable people) of India have blue as their colour of their identification. One of the reasons for choosing the colour is that it is the colour of the sky. And under the blue sky, all human beings are equal. All human beings are called to flourish into the “fullness of humanity” like Christ, “for he is the authentic human being whom we are called to be”³.

Equality and servant spirituality

88. Every democratic society in the world glorifies servanthood. Unfortunately, the present democracies are like the butterflies that have been forced out of the cocoon without giving the people the dignity to evolve their own specific ways. The history of colonisation has disturbed the development of peoples and cultures. The same is true of evangelisation. Churches have been established in a spirit of competition, rather than as a call to repentance. The paradigm shift needed in accepting the message of Christ was not offered or accepted. Father William Grimm, MM, of ucanews.com based in Tokyo, wrote on March 22, 2018 that Asian Christians can save Christianity from Christendom. Clearly the call is to give up a dominator model and choose the Kingdom model.

³ Dominic Veliath, Theological Perspectives in Spirituality, Unpublished article.

89. Ultimately, the servant is the one who knows the way, one who knows how to do and finally is capable of leading. Jesus led by example. The spirituality proposed by Jesus is simple– start from self. It is a call to step down to equality, giving up privileges. The practice of equality makes all actions transformative. By practicing equality, we grow in spirituality.

CONCLUSION

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The participatory methodology of Jesus

Jesus' incarnation is a sign of participation at its best. God comes into midst of his people and lives among them. The Gospels tell about how Jesus formed his disciples. He lived with them, shared meals together, journeyed together. They observed Jesus as he took sides with the ordinary people, how people could approach him and experience his healing touch. Jesus never healed without their participation.

People need could not be stopped by the crowds who tried to dissuade them from disturbing the master. Bartimaeus shouted louder when the crowd tried to restrain him. Those with leprosy, broke existing rules of exclusion, and walked boldly through the crowds of disciples to receive healing from Jesus. Zaccheus climbed the sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Jesus was available, always ready to help.

Jesus invited the disciples to be compassionate towards the people who were like sheep without a shepherd. Whereas the disciples wanted to send people away, Jesus asked them to feed them. He used the little boy with the fish and loaves to set an example for his disciples and the people to follow: to share whatever they have so that no one goes hungry. Everyone learnt from the child to give, a greater miracle than the miracle of the loaves.

Taking up challenges, Facing Confrontations

Jesus expected the disciples to think for themselves and to find answers for themselves. He wanted them to decide what to give to Caesar and what to the temple. He wanted them to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees. They were to preach what they practiced, and not become whitened sepulchres. They were to address the sufferings of people than merely obey human laws.

Jesus was a friend of the little ones. He respected women and accepted them as part of the group of disciples. He allowed them to contribute to his task of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Yet he challenged them to follow the will of God above family affiliation to their families or ethnic or religious identities.

Jesus taught his disciples not to seek the first place at banquets and in the synagogues. He invited them to value the humble prayer of the publican and avoid the ostentatiousness of the Pharisee. He showed the Samaritan as the one who understood what it means to be a good neighbour.

Jesus sent the 12 apostles and 70 disciples on a mission of their own, to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. He gave them instructions on how to go about it. They went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases. On their return they told him all they had done. They withdrew to Bethsaida to be by themselves and reflect on their experience.

"We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it." (Ephesians 2, 10)

Prophetic Role: Servant Leadership

In spite of all his efforts, Jesus could see that his disciples followed the path of the Jewish leaders of the time. Like the leaders of the day, the disciples too missed the real teaching of the prophets. Whatever he taught, whatever example he showed, this misunderstanding persisted. It was not easy to correct the hard heartedness that they had inherited from their ancestors. They had killed the prophets. He would be the next.

Jesus was not surprised that the disciples did not understand his prediction of his passion and death. He was disappointed when he found them soon after argue among themselves as to who would be the greatest among them. He exhorted them to be the servants of one another. The greatest among them was to be the servant. He demonstrated it by washing their feet.

And their response to him in the end was shocking: One betrayed him, another denied him, others ran away when he was arrested and taken to the authorities. The disciples were disappointed that their expectations had been shattered. They felt that their hope had been misplaced.

The Mind of Christ

The disciples had the greatest difficulty in understanding the mind of Christ even though he constantly revealed to them his inner thoughts and feelings. After the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, their resistance to change started to melt. They began to understand what they had seen their Master do these three years. Jesus had involved them in all he did. They in turn had taught what they learnt from him. They too had worked miracles and healed the sick. He had listened to them and responded to them. He had tolerated them, endured their lack of understanding, and even allowed them to fight for the first place among themselves. He never judged them, rather challenged them to new ways. Their mistakes were opportunities to reflect together.

Jesus never imposed his views on them. Jesus did not teach any rigid doctrine. He taught them to look at people with the compassionate eyes of the Father, to “be merciful like the father.” He taught them using parables enabling them to have their own thoughts and feelings. His teaching through the parables helped the disciples to think on their own, to argue among themselves and to seek clarifications from him. As a result these same disciples were able to face new situations and find relevant answers by themselves. We have, for instance, the starting of the ministry of deacons, accepting all food as clean, removing the division between the Jew and the gentile, male and female, accepting non-Jews into their ranks, and to face persecution, suffering and even death.