



01-B-05

DE LA SALLE TODAY IN UPPER VOLTA

I - TO SERVE YOUTH AND WHICH YOUTHS?

The facts: on 6 July 1983:

- 20,000 boys and girls who completed primary school passed the competitive exam for admission to secondary school.
- The Ministry will admit... 2,000 of them; and the 18,000 others?...
- And all those who have never attended school: 85% of the children under 15 years of age.
- And all those who will never enter secondary school...

Our responses:

These questions must always be present to those who work to educate the young people of Upper Volta...

These questions must influence our work and our commitments.

These questions must be faced continually.

But these questions must stimulate and challenge us:

- Only a minority attends school...
- Only a minority succeeds in school...
- The school must not be allowed to function as in an established society.
- The school must become part of another world...

What do Upper Volta and its youth need for tomorrow?

However, the classes are full: 45 or 50 students, at times even 100 in an elementary class...

However, the educational system is very costly...

What shall we do when everything is so urgent: health care, education, water, food, and announcing the Gospel...

Brothers of the Christian Schools, we try to respond to one need among others: the Christian education of adolescents in primary and secondary schools.

We do not forget the others, all the rest, but this is the work to which we are called and sent, with our limits our deficiencies, our errors...

our Faith and our Zeal...

and also with the appeals and the image of the youth of this country, with the hopes of a very young Church...

Because here as elsewhere, the young people demand from their elders that, without reservations, they help them to develop and to become men and women such as are needed by their country and by the Church.

Because everywhere the Good News of Salvation must be heard, among farmers as among the unemployed, as well as among young people and students.

Because 300 years of experience in the education of youth gives us a certain expertise in this area.

II - LOOK AT ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Seventeenth century France was 80% rural, but John Baptist de La Salle established his communities in the cities. He did not hesitate to choose.

He wrote *La Civilité Chrétienne* for poor students.

He made the son of the inkeeper and the son of the water carrier live together. The school was open to all because the salvation of God is for all.

Generally, he worked within the school system which already existed:

- but he radically changed the programs and the methods,
- but he went beyond the rudiments because he wanted to be helpful to the young in their world and in the one in the process of developing,
- but he consecrated himself entirely to this task, he and his Brothers.

III - COMPONENTS OF A PRAYER SERVICE

You call us

You call us to love you by loving the world to which you send us.
O faithful God, grant us, that in loving the world, to love only you.
Go on your way, proclaiming my Gospel.
Go despoiled of everything, sharing your joy.
 Make yourself worthy of love, of peace and of tenderness
 Have the heart of a child, be simple and true.
 So as to be my witnesses, watch in prayer
 My kingdom is within you, it seeks your heart.
 The Spirit will lead you in new ways
 Go, fear not, I remain with you.

If you know how to see the earth

If you know how to see the earth, you will see the presence of God
If you know how to see your Brothers, you will see the face of God.
Look at this poor man, in his pain he calls to you
You will see the presence of God,
And receiving him into your comfortable house
You will see the face of God.
 Look at those eyes enlightened by a beautiful love
 You will see the presence of God
 In their smile and their sweet light
 You will see the face of God.
 Look at these men with great hearts
 You will see the presence of God
 If you know how to fill them with hope
 You will see the face of God.

Readings

Meditations for the time of Retreat: 1,III; 10,III.
Founder's Meditations: for the Feast of St. Louis 160,III.
Founder's Meditations: for the Nativity 86.

Questions

- What is the role of the local Church in the field of Christian education?
- Who chooses individuals for this work and on the basis of what criteria?
- To what extent do the parents, the youths, the laity, the Christian Community participate in this educational activity?
- To what extent is it identified with the country?
- How can the Brothers' schools be schools for pedagogical, spiritual, cultural, evangelical renewal...?

IV - WHAT THE CHURCH OF UPPER VOLTA SAYS

Letter of the African Priests to Educators (12 August 1974)

"they threaten to close the schools. Ask yourself if there is still an opportunity to teach rather than to dig wells. In brief, to close or to continue, to educate men or to feed them?

There are so many real questions which are so visible in the right eye and the left eye of the poor that we must consider them.

That is why we come to you who have consecrated yourselves with devotion and competence to this work. And going beyond you, as individuals and as teams, we address ourselves to your superiors and to all individuals in the diocese and elsewhere — as far as our fraternity can reach — to plead the cause of a promising future for youths with a Christian spirit who are prepared to reconcile the faith and their African culture.

This future depends above all on your understanding and our collaboration, but more immediately it depends on the humble and persevering devotion of innumerable teachers who accept their vocation as educators.

V - ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION OF OUR EDUCATION

1) In our country the Church is present in the midst of an illiterate population, and she cannot forget that the lack of instruction is one of the unnamed miseries in the world today.

2) The basic problem is to give these youths an ideal, and the ideal assumes a concrete form in the harmonious and lived relation between faith and culture.

"The Diocesan Community must state clearly that it considers the tasks and the mission of teaching one of the highest priorities of evangelization."

Brother Jean Louis Schneider
Collège de Toussiana
B.P. 312 Bobo Dioulasso
Upper Volta