

The Role of Marianist Educational Leaders in the
Inculturation of Marianist Spirituality and Pedagogy:
Case of Marianist schools in Africa

by

Blaise M. Monsego, SM

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter I: Brief presentation of Marianist spirituality of education	3
I.1 Spirituality of Incarnation	3
a) <i>Education of faith</i>	3
b) <i>A holistic-based formation</i>	4
I.2 An inclusive spirituality.....	4
a) <i>Promote family spirit</i>	4
b) <i>Teamwork and collaboration</i>	5
I.3 A pertinent spirituality	6
a) <i>A lifelong experience</i>	6
b) <i>Effective response to the needs of the time</i>	7
Chapter II: Political and cultural context of “Marianist countries” in Africa	8
II.1 Social lifestyle	8
a) <i>Values of African culture</i>	8
b) <i>Inequality of social classes (social group)</i>	9
II.2 Social and political management.....	10
a) <i>Political and economic instability</i>	10
b) <i>Lack of exemplary leaders</i>	10
II.3 Need for a strong quality education.....	11

	1
<i>a) Need for education toward patriotism</i>	11
<i>b) Need for appropriate and adaptive education</i>	12
Chapter III: Marianist education leadership as response to the needs of African culture	13
III.1 Marianist educational culture and African culture	13
<i>a) Area of evangelization.....</i>	13
<i>b) Marianist heritage in African educational institutions</i>	14
III.2 Prototype of an African Marianist educational leader	15
<i>a) Faith in the vision and Characteristics of Marianist Education</i>	15
<i>b) Faith in African and Marianist values</i>	16
III.3 Marianist educational leaders as architects of Marianist culture	17
<i>a) Person resource and coach of Marianist educators</i>	17
<i>b) Educational leaders who inspire a shared vision of Marianist education.....</i>	18
Conclusion.....	20
References	22

Introduction

Educational efforts likely will fail to achieve their goals unless they respond to the real needs of students and the expectations of the whole society. If traditional education lacked the presence of an institutional “master,” an educator has an incommensurable place in the success of formal education. Indeed, students see in their teachers personal models whose presence helps them to grow in their lives. In this sense, teachers have an impact on students’ learning experiences. Likewise, they have to model the educational values of their school and of society. However, we can give only what we have; we can teach only what we know. In this sense, teaching is a continual process of learning experience. And, if it is true that teachers are the first learners in the process of education, it is then evident that educational leaders have an important role in the achievement of the school’s objectives.

There is no doubt the success of educational goals relies on the competence of educators; the motivation of students; the expectations of educational leaders; and above all, the effectiveness of the school culture. Culture can be defined as an ensemble of attitudes and behaviors that determine a specific group and differentiates it from other groups. Accordingly, educational culture constitutes what makes a school unique and different from other schools. Likewise, Marianist schools are particular in the basis of their Gospel-based culture, which is a common element for other Catholic schools. More than that, Marianist schools include people who strive to share in the characteristics of a Marianist spirituality of education. This spirituality is a legacy of the life and inspiration of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, Founder of the Marianist Family. Through his ministry, Chaminade emphasized the values of unity amidst diversity and the sense of Family Spirit. Rooted in the French School of Spirituality, his heritage is a spirituality of Incarnation and calls to a sense of universality of the mission. In this sense,

Marianist spirituality needs to be addressed in the basis of a specific culture. This reality enabled the disciples of Chaminade to spread the Marianist spirituality throughout different peoples, communities, and cultures.

For more than a half century, the first Marianist brothers who went to Africa shared the characteristic traits of Marianist education as a response to the needs of the native people with whom they worked. Yet, the results of Marianist pedagogy in Catholic schools in Africa do not need to be demonstrated. In those countries where injustice, corruption, violence, and war become part of people's lives, Marianist education entrusts students with a spirit of service, justice, and peace; a sense of hard work; and a certain readiness for change. Just as the generation of Marianist pioneers brought the spirituality of Marianist education to Africa, it is now time for African Marianist educators to address, in "African languages," different questions related to Marianist culture in school. Therefore, "as times change, to be able to pursue the mission effectively in an incarnated way, the processes and methods may need to be updated or reformed" (*Principal Characteristics of Marianist Administration*, 2013, p. 11). For this reason, this paper is an effort to find ways in which Marianist educational leaders could help plow African ground on which Marianist spirituality can germinate and hatch to a Marianist educational culture that makes sense in their local communities.

The first chapter of this reflection will focus on presenting briefly what the Marianist spirituality of education implies. The second will be an analysis of the sociopolitical and cultural context of African countries where the Marianist spirituality is lived out. These two chapters will set down a basis that will help to assess the place of African Marianist educational leaders in the promotion of a reliable Marianist educational culture for our schools.

Chapter I: Brief presentation of Marianist spirituality of education

I.1 Spirituality of Incarnation

a) *Education of faith*

As mentioned previously, Marianist spirituality is a particular way of reliving the personal experience of Father Chaminade and his intimate relationship with God. In the midst of the French Revolution and deeply affected by the sociopolitical reality of his time, Chaminade strengthened his relationship with Christ and his mother, and he confirmed his commitment to serve the Church by the gift of his entire life. For him, a harmful consequence of the French Revolution was a kind of religious disinterest, especially among young people. For this reason, back from his time of exile in Spain and inspired by the Virgin Mary, he was drawn to the ministry of education of faith within communities. “Finally, Father Chaminade worked to infuse these communities of faith with a deep sense of mission. Faced with the devastation of the Revolution, Marianist communities of faith aimed at nothing less than revitalizing the Catholic Church in France” (*Characteristics of Marianist University*, 2006, p. 6). Today again, the disciples of Chaminade are called to continue this mission of “education of faith.”

Clearly, faith in the person of Christ is the essence of the Incarnation and the heart of educational activities within a Marianist school. This faith enables educators to believe in students and in their potentiality to grow in their lives. Animated by this spirit of faith, Marianist educators see in students a real presence of Christ. This attitude helps them to celebrate students’ performances and to encourage them in building their own personalities. Also, the experience of education of faith transforms the lives of educators and students and forms them to become, as Glodek (2012) highlighted, “people of integrity, honesty, fortitude, and justice in their personal

and community lives” (p. 13). Concretely, faith engages all educational partners to build, within their school, a warm culture that allows mutual learning.

b) A holistic-based formation

Marianist schools offer an integrated, quality education. Accordingly, Joseph H. Lackner, SM, in an unpublished manuscript, affirmed that “the first Marianist teachers aimed at developing the whole person, his intellectual, physical, moral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (p. 42). Education in Marianist schools should be different from a mere instruction (intellectually focused). Marianist schools provide a holistic education that forms students to face in a better way different challenges in their lives. The unique traits of Marianist education introduce students in a particular relationship with God and build on the respect for one another. To help students reach this point, Marianist educators strive to see their students as an image of God. They develop what Lackner called the ministry of presence, meaning that teachers educate more through the example of their lives than simply by their words.

The goal of Marianist schools is to educate students and to form them to address the real questions of their lives and to respond in a better way to the different expectations of their communities. Because students are considered to be an image of Christ, they are treated with respect and kindness. Hence, Marianist educators celebrate God in the lives of students and form them in the stature of Christ.

I.2 An inclusive spirituality

a) Promote family spirit

Throughout his ministry, Blessed Chaminade worked with people from diverse backgrounds. He gathered youth and adults, men and women, teachers and workers, priests and

laypersons, and Chaminade invited them to share in his vision of educating in faith the people of his time, calling them to rejoin the Church. Using the image of the first community of disciples gathered around the Virgin Mary in the Upper Room, Chaminade encouraged his disciples to build a spiritual family in which everyone is valued and respected. This Family Spirit, which animated the first disciples of Chaminade, continues to live within a Marianist educational community. Those who visit the campus of a Marianist school can attest to the visible sense of community which is unique to a Marianist educational culture. If the Society of Mary strengthens the sense of “mixed composition” as its characteristic trait, Marianist educators strive to live out this Family Spirit and community building. They are committed to promote this spirit of family by recognizing the gifts of one another and transforming others into the likeness of Christ. Hence, the sense of hospitality, service, and justice are meaningful in a Marianist educational culture. Willing to promote the trait of “Family Spirit,” Marianist educators aim to form students to improve their leadership skills and to participate in building and transforming their professional lives.

b) Teamwork and collaboration

As presented, in order “to bring and hold his communities together, Chaminade held up the ideal of Family Spirit of religious and lay persons, as well as faculty and students, working together to achieve lasting relationships of friendship and trust, supporting and challenging each other in developing their mutual gifts. Leaders of such communities, religious and lay, must see their work not merely as a job but also as a ministry of love and service” (*Characteristics of Marianist University*, 2006, p. 8). In this sense, the end goal of building community consists in becoming missionary disciples. This effort for doing things together implies the acceptance of diversity and the promotion of teamwork.

Marianist spirituality is all about living and working together for the common good. In this sense, the challenge for Marianist educational leaders is to make visible a collaborative approach of management and the sense of teamwork within the campus. Again, these elements of Marianist educational culture highlight the importance of union without confusion. The riches of Marianist culture resides in the fact that, coming from different backgrounds and holding diverse expectations, people are able to live together and work hand-in-hand for the achievement of a common vision. The beauty of Marianist educational culture is to see that in our time people are able to overcome social, religious, racial, and gender barriers and to live out team spirit. This makes Marianist educational culture become a culture in which people become community builders.

I.3 A pertinent spirituality

a) A lifelong experience

More than just something that can be found in books, Marianist spirituality introduces us into an intimate relationship with God. People who share in Marianist spirituality believe in a God who took the risk of experiencing the human condition in order to introduce humanity to experiencing his divinity. As the Rule of Life of the Society of Mary (2007) attested, “in calling us to be Marianists, God asks us to follow in a special way Jesus Christ, Son of God, become son of Mary for the salvation of all. Our goal is to be transformed into his likeness and to work for the coming of his kingdom” (art. 2). This is true not only for vowed religious but also for all members of the Marianist Family, including those who work to promote Marianist education. Like Mary and following the paths of Chaminade, Marianist educators are called to live out the values of collaboration, community building, courage, and perseverance, and to read with discernment the signs of the time. These values will help them to meet the needs of students and

to build an educational culture that contributes to the personal growth of the entire educative community.

b) Effective response to the needs of the time

It is clear our efforts to promote a Catholic and Marianist education will be meaningless unless they help students to respond to the needs of their entire lives. It is also known that, while western culture is becoming more and more secular, African culture experiences a kind of religious promiscuity. Indeed, seeking for “fast miraculous actions,” people find themselves moving from one religious group to another. As a result, there is a multiplicity of religious sects with the risk of drawing people to lose the true sense of God. It is within such a cultural context that Marianist spirituality of education is expected to flourish, evangelize, and help to create a unique Marianist culture in our schools.

The challenge for African Marianist educators is to live the characteristics of Marianist spirituality of education, which is a call to bring the light of God into the life of young people, to root them in the values of their culture, and to form them in the true stature of Christ. Confident in the fact that Marianist education is about success in life, African Marianist educators need to prepare students to serve the common good and to promote a faithful sense of God in their lives. Responding to the call for becoming missionaries, students who attend Marianist schools will be able to achieve successfully their professional performances and become these effective leaders who are needed for the development of their nations.

Chapter II: Political and cultural context of “Marianist countries” in Africa

II.1 Social lifestyle

a) Values of African culture

It is unfortunate that most media misuse the image of Africa, mostly sub-Saharan Africa, by focusing only on political conflicts and the fragile social lifestyle of its population. A deep analysis of African culture shows the beauty and life-giving dimension of its people. Those who visited different countries in Africa can attest to the importance of values, such as a sense of community, respect for sacredness of life, a spirit of hospitality, and the respect for the authority and elders. Accordingly, in his efforts to explain the African culture, Mutugi (n.d.) affirmed that Africans believe in the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, and hospitality, putting you out on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness, and recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together” (p. 3).

In African mentality, there is no room for personal or private space. When you are the lastborn of six or nine children and live in a small house with two bedrooms, you just do not know what personal space means. This shows the sense of living together, being together, doing things together. In this sense, family means more than just “a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household.” An African family might include cousins, nephews, nieces, and even the neighbors. In fact, in most of local African languages, there is no specific word that means cousin, nephew, niece, or stepsibling. They are all brothers or sisters. Thus, family has an important role in the developmental life of individuals and communities.

b) Inequality of social classes (social group)

While many positive things can be found in the daily life of African society, there remains some areas of life that need improvement and change. Behind the beautiful image of family, African society also is affected by a certain social inequality. This includes the inequality of gender and social class. Indeed, if it is true that Africans have a sense of being human, it remains that most of African cultures relegate the role of woman to second place. For example, research led by the Institute of Development Studies in Kenya (2012-16) shows that women's political representation in leadership in this country is below the global average, despite improvements in the recent election, triggered by the 2010 Constitution. In 2010, the Kenyan parliament had only 10 percent women representation (<http://interactions.eldis.org/unpaid-care-work/country-profiles/kenya/social-economic-and-political-context-kenya>). Obviously, in the majority of African cultures, women do not have a say in important family decisions. Their principal role is reduced to housekeeping and the education of children. In worse cases—due to financial difficulties—when parents have to choose between their sons or daughters who should go to school, they usually prefer the son assuming that he will take care of them while his sister is destined to get married and belong to her husband.

Another social issue common for most countries in Africa is an unequal distribution of resources. There are a few groups of people who become richer, while the majority of the population lives under the minimum wage. Such a reality is visible in different areas of life, such as education and health. The majority of people do not have access to decent health care and the educational system does not meet the real needs in those countries. This might be a main cause for the frequent migration of young Africans to western countries where they hope to find a decent life.

II.2 Social and political management

a) Political and economic instability

The history of countries of sub-Saharan African is related to their colonization and independence around 1960. Since then, those countries suffer to create a strong system of democracy where freedom of speech and the sense of equality can become a reality. As Mbaku (1988) pointed out, “Between January 1, 1956, and April 30, 1984, fifty-six coups took place in sub-Saharan Africa. Lack of political stability appears to have contributed significantly to the poor performance of many of the economies in this part of the world” (p. 1). Since this period, while the number of coups d'états has increased, this part of the continent experiences a multiplicity of tribal fights and rebellions.

While there are some efforts for settling an effective system of democracy in countries like Ghana, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa still experience a kind of “crippled democracy.” The majority of these countries see their constitution reviewed for the simple reason that their political leaders, while in charge, rule as imperial kings. Therefore, because of the lack of an alternate way of governing these countries and due to the lack of freedom of speech, other people rely on rebellions as the only way of changing the political system. Unfortunately, once in charge these former rebels act in the same way, if not worse, than the people whom they criticized. This situation draws sub-Saharan African to experience a dark time in its history.

b) Lack of exemplary leaders

It might be said that one of the biggest mistakes of Africa was to embrace the values of democracy which, somehow, do not match with the traditional values of African tribes, values deeply rooted in a sacred respect (fear) of authority and elders. The truth is that the history has

changed the reality of life, and people have to cope with this new reality. In this sense, current political leaders have no excuse for abusing their power, ransacking the wealth of their countries, violating human rights, and drawing their people into an unacceptable poverty.

More than ever, there is a real and urgent need for a new style of leadership in sub-Saharan Africa. This part of the continent seeks leaders whose vision brings hope in the life of others. Africans need exemplary leaders who have the sense of justice, peace, and respect for the human being. Such types of leaders are expected to bring people to work together for a common good and the welfare of all. Without a doubt, unless African political leaders promote a sense of teamwork and inspire in people the values of hard work that enables them to make their communities a productive place for all to live in, there will not be a place for any kind of development.

II.3 Need for a strong quality education

a) Need for education toward patriotism

Education is an area of social life that is deeply affected by the poor political management in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Because of a lack of decent jobs and sufficient salaries, people slide into a system of corruption. Sometimes, students are forced to go through this experience, otherwise they will fail the class. Thus, having invaded the mentality of people, corruption becomes part of the normal life for many. Accordingly, young people recede more and more from the African values of community and the heritage of ancestors when they search for personal and easy gains. Therefore, there is an urgent need to educate young people to the values of common good and the sense of patriotism. Indeed, without a true love for their countries and a spirit of sacrifice for their development, African people will dig the tomb of this continent's death.

b) Need for appropriate and adaptive education

As analyzed previously, education seems to be one of the best ways to pull Africa out of this situation of diverse political crises and economic difficulties. The problem is that most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have educative systems copied from the western educational system (during colonization). Sometime, this system does not match the reality of the moment and does not meet the real needs of communities. It is then time to promote an appropriate system of education that will help young people to excel in their professional lives and will prepare them to face different changes in their lives.

Obviously, an appropriate educative system should be based on the cultural realities of the community and the needs of people to respond effectively and accurately to what occurs in their lives. As such, there is a pressing call for young people to take an active part in their education and to build their aptitude for critical thinking and problem solving. For this end, educational leaders need to create appropriate and effective cultures that will help students to address different issues of their lives and to respond accurately to them. Without an environment that enables young people to think critically and to take responsibility for their lives, without any formation to the sense of servant leadership, without a strong and effective educative system, African communities are at the risk of perishing.

Chapter III: Marianist education leadership as response to the needs of African culture

III.1 Marianist educational culture and African culture

a) Area of evangelization

Culture previously was defined as attitudes, beliefs, customs, and behaviors that determine a specific group and differentiates it from other groups. In the same way, Glodek (2012) highlighted that “culture can be understood...as the learned and shared values, beliefs, and attitudes which shape and influence both perception and behavior” (p. 2). Such understanding of the concept of “culture” is similar to the one of spirituality. According to Hakenewerth (2000), “a spirituality is a set of principles, guidelines, and methods we follow in order to live the life of the Spirit of Jesus in our own life” (p. vii). In this sense, it can be said that spirituality is a way of living in a specific culture. Accordingly, those who share in Marianist spirituality strive to highlight the sense of “being together” and working, as equals, in the mission of the Church which is making the presence of Christ visible and worth living in our midst. In addition, Marianist spirituality introduces us to a Marian experience of becoming those missionary disciples who live with courage, patience, and discernment the intimate relationship with Christ. Living as such, Marianist spirituality can contribute to the improvement of African culture.

Rather than willing to empty African culture of its authentic values, Marianist spirituality can be lived as a mirror that enables a self-discernment of those Africans who get in touch with the Marianist educational tradition. Already, African culture educates people to the values of hospitality, the sense of community, and the respect for the sacred. These values constitute an effective basis which facilitates the understanding and appropriation of the principles of

Marianist spirituality. There remain some areas of life, as lived in African context, that need to be questioned. Therefore, it is important for those who experience both, the Marianist culture and African culture, to address different questions including the adaptability to change, the expression of faith in people's daily lives, and the equality of gender, social class, and tribes. And it is clear that "one of the best places for a dialogue between faith and culture or, more accurately, a conversation among people who have faith and who work at the development and content of the academic disciplines, is at a Catholic school" (*Characteristics of Marianist University*, 2006, p. 15). For this end, Marianist schools in Africa are the best environment for the inculturation of Marianist spirituality and the evangelization of African culture.

b) Marianist heritage in African educational institutions

Presently, the Society of Mary is involved in the field of education throughout eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Republic of Congo, and Democratic Republic of Congo. In their schools, like in other Marianist schools throughout the world, Marianist educators "attempt to create an atmosphere in their educational work, both formal and nonformal, that allows the Gospel to be taught and practiced" (Glodek, 2012, p. 1). Those who are involved in Marianist education in Africa are engaged in living out the characteristics of Marianist culture. They work on forming students to the values of Christian faith and provide an integral, quality education with an emphasis in the sense of building community. African Marianist educators commit themselves to create an educational culture that promotes the values of excellence.

However, there is a constant need to help students address the question related to service, justice, and peace, and to act accordingly. Also, based on what occurs in the daily life and social context of African culture, it is necessary to strengthen the formation of young people for

adaptation and change, and to prepare them to become effective servant leaders. Thus, students are not considered as empty receptacles that need to be filled with knowledge. Students are called to have an active part in the process of their formation. To reach this point, Marianist educators have a tremendous role of living and shaping in their lives the values of what they are expected to teach. They need the presence of effective leaders who will inspire them and draw them to clearly embrace the vision of the Marianist culture of education.

III.2 Prototype of an African Marianist educational leader

a) *Faith in the vision and* Characteristics of Marianist Education

A school cannot aspire to achieve its goals without the involvement and commitment of its leaders. However, Bolman and Gallos (2011) believed that the effectiveness of educational leaders requires both self-knowledge and intellectual tools which enable them to understand and decipher the ambiguous situations they regularly face in order to make sensible choices about what to do (p. 1). In this sense, the quality of life of Marianist educational leaders, their capacity to reflect of their experiences, their love for the school, and their commitment to its vision are important elements that will help leaders in the construction of a strong and effective Marianist culture within our schools in Africa. In the sense, unless school leaders embrace the Catholic and Marianist vision of education, Marianist schools will not be different from any other public or private school. “Visions,” as Kouzes and Posner (2012) pointed out, “are reflections of one’s fundamental beliefs and assumptions about human nature, technology, economics, science, politics, art, and ethics” (p. 105). The vision of Marianist education is rooted in Marianist spirituality and the teaching experience of the first Marianists educators. What we share today has been proposed to us as a legacy of the first Marianists who, inspired by the experience of

Chaminade, lived out a particular way of interacting with their students and other partners of education. And, as Glodek (2012) noted, Chaminade's understanding of education was not only about a method of teaching but also about the attitudes of heart and faith which a teacher needed to have (p. 31). In this sense, the vision of Marianist education introduces educational leaders into a dynamic of hope in their collaborators and a sense of mutual trust within their community of life, including the school.

Because they believe in a Marianist vision of education and live out its content, Marianist educational leaders will be able to teach through the example of their lives and to associate teachers, students, and parents in building the Marianist culture of their school. By developing a Marianist educational culture and implementing the *Characteristics of Marianist Education*, Marianist educational leaders can hope that the students who are formed in their schools will be whole persons, steeped in faith and capable of community and service (Glodek, 2012, p. 11). As such, Marianist schools in Africa will become real communities where students, experiencing Family Spirit, will grow in personality and will be ready to bring changes for the advent of a "new Africa."

b) Faith in African and Marianist values

It is clear that students learn better when they trust their teachers and believe in their competences. However, several factors can contribute to teachers' motivation, including the attitudes and behaviors of their administrators and the way they build relationships at school. In this sense, effective leaders should be more people oriented than organizational goal oriented. And, as Bolman and Gallos (2011) added, leadership works when relationships work, and fails when they do not (p. 46). Therefore, it is important for Marianist educational leaders to care about people they work with and to be aware of what is going on in their lives. Without a doubt,

it is difficult, if not impossible, for leaders to help their followers unless they have a good knowledge of their culture. In turn, teachers will be encouraged to apply pedagogical methods and educational contents that make sense in the life of students and help them to grow in their lives. Knowing that Marianist spirituality of education is a spirituality of Incarnation, Marianist educational leaders will invite teachers to trust their students and to promote the values of their authentic cultures.

Moreover, willing to promote the spirituality of Marianist education, African Marianist administrators need to have a clear and strong vision of their institution and a good understanding of the Marianist tradition of education. They must be trained to live out the characteristics of Marianist education and apply them as the foundation of their approach to leadership. More than that, they must be able to use Marianist language in their relationship and to work actively on the achievement of the Marianist vision of their schools. Being truly present to their teachers and students, and celebrating their success, African Marianist educational leaders likely will contribute to creating an educational culture capable of forming young Africans to become servant leaders for the development of their communities.

III.3 Marianist educational leaders as architects of Marianist culture

a) Person resource and coach of Marianist educators

It is clear that, despite the number and competency of its company, a ship needs the presence and expertise of its captain; otherwise, it will likely capsize. In a similar way, no matter how experienced or trained they can be, educators need the presence of someone who can inspire them and draw them to share in a common vision of their schools. The fact is that, very often, people turn to their leaders when it comes to making important decisions or getting the

institution out of crisis. It is known that the success of educational activities and the achievement of educational vision depend on the quality and effectiveness of the leadership style. As Bolman and Gallos (2011) pointed out, educational leaders “are analysts who, carefully, study the institution’s production processes; and they are institutional architects and systems designers who develop the rules, roles, policies, reporting relationship, and procedures that align efforts with campus goals” (p.51).

However, in order to design an educational culture that synthesizes the Marianist spirituality and the African culture, Marianist educational leaders must bring people together and encourage them to work for the common good. African Marianist schools seek for educational leaders who are able to connect with other educators and help their personal growth, rather than those who act as chief executives. As Kouzes and Posner (2012) suggested, effective educational leaders must model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart” (p.15). Because of a misinterpretation of the role of leader, due to negative examples of political leaders in Africa, Marianist educational leaders are called to become models of servant leaders who, through the example of their lives, coach others and encourage, challenge when necessary, and inspire educators to share in the Marianist vision of education.

b) Educational leaders who inspire a shared vision of Marianist education

According to Hakenewerth (2000), Marianist educational leaders get their identity from their Marianist spirituality. It shapes their spirit and forms their personality (pp. vii-viii). On the other hand, this particular spirituality introduces them into a special and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of all (Marianist Rule of Life, § 2). Likewise, Marianist educational leaders are called to live a life in conformity with

Christ. Such a commitment requires a profound practice of prayer and discernment. Their personal experience with Christ will help them to build an educative culture which introduces educators and students in a dynamic of the Spirit of Family. Moreover, these leaders are to their educative community what a shepherd is to his sheep. And, like Jesus said: “My sheep here my voice. I know them, and they follow me” (Jn 10:27). Our schools, like the flock, need leaders who are competent, trustworthy, good listeners, and community builders. Such leaders likely will become a source of motivation for students and educators and will inspire hope in their lives.

On the other hand, Heifetz (1994) believed that “leadership means taking responsibility for hard problems beyond anyone’s expectations” (p. 205). Yet, history presents the image of persons like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Indira Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela as examples of effective leadership. What is common to these three emblematic figures is their boldness to live their dreams. African culture needs these leaders who can propose, with courage and humility, something meaningful, something that can make a difference in people’s lives. Like Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated, “people want to follow only those who can see beyond today’s problems and visualize a brighter tomorrow” (p. 124). Thus, African Marianist educational leaders must encourage others to foster, anticipate, and master changes that occur in their daily lives. They must be attentive to the signs of the times and be aware of their followers’ lives. Their role consists in creating an atmosphere that gets people together and prepares them to face different challenges in their lives. Such leaders see the world beyond the cultural barriers and are able to help people to write their own stories. Doing so, they will create an effective culture, unique for Marianist schools of Africa—a culture that brings hope in the lives of peoples and lifts them to higher levels of motivation and morality.

Conclusion

If it is true that Marianist spirituality is a spirituality of Incarnation, it is obvious that this experience with the Spirit can be manifested in a particular culture and land. Marianist spirituality introduces people into a particular relationship with Jesus Christ, son of Mary. Strong in their faith, members of the Marianist Family, lay and vowed religious, commit themselves to helping Blessed Mary in her mission of bringing Jesus into our world. “This Marian inspiration, grounded in community, based on faith, aware of the need of others, bringing the message and person of Jesus to others, has informed the spirituality and philosophy of Marianist education to this day” (*Characteristics of Marianist University*, 2006, p. 7). Likewise, more than a simple theory, Marianist spirituality can be adapted and applied in all domains of our lives, including the field of education. As disciples of Chaminade, we utilize the school as an appropriate milieu where faith can be received to reach different groups of people. This commitment addresses the question related to the role of educational activities in the new evangelization. Thus, this paper consisted in reflecting on diverse aspects of the spirituality of Marianist education and how its application in Marianist schools in sub-Saharan African can help students to address the real questions of their culture and their communities.

Obviously, there is a need for creating an educational culture that reflects both the unique character of African culture and the specific traits of Marianist spirituality. Our schools in Africa should become a safe place where students feel at home and share the values of their authentic culture. Together, students and educators must then create a culture based on the values of faith oriented toward the search for improvement. Such efforts will be made effective through the inculturation of the Marianist charism in the life of people who constitute African Marianist schools.

A simple surf in Google and other Web sites shows the effect of a poor political management of people's lives throughout Africa. The only figures of leaders that young Africans have are those of presidents and ministers who have been in charge for a long time and who abuse their power in detriment of the minority and poor people. For them, the use of military force (rebellion) remains the only way for promoting democracy. For this reason, it is important to educate young Africans to the true values of leadership. Thus, the best way of teaching students the values of servant leadership is to promote at school the role of effective and exemplary leaders who, by the example of their lives, can inspire their educative community and encourage everyone to participate in building the Marianist culture that meets the expectations of young Africans and the needs of the entire society. Doing so, our students will not only be able to ride the waves of change but also be able to make the waves that others will ride.

References

- Bolman, L. G. & Gallos, J. V. (2011). *Reframing Academic Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Characteristics of Marianist University*. (2006).
- Glodek, S. (2012). *Marianist Praxis: Building Marianist Educational Culture*. Dayton, OH: North American Center for Marianist Studies.
- Hakenewerth, Q. (2000). *A Manuel of Marianist Spirituality*. Dayton, OH: North American Center for Marianist Studies.
- Heifetz, R. A. (1994). *Leadership without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- <http://www.textnow.com/logout> *Holy Bible*. (1971). Michigan, GR: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B.Z. (2012). *The Leadership Challenge (fifth ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lackner, J. Unpublished manuscript, "Marianist Charism and Educational Mission."
- Mbaku, J. M. (1988). Political Instability and Economic Development in sub-Saharan Africa: Some Recent Evidence. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 17(1), 89-111.
- Mutugi, J. G. (n.d.). African Hospitality: Is it Compatible with the Ideal of Christ's Hospitality? Part 1. *Churchman*, 39-56.
- Principal Characteristics of Marianist Administration*. (2013).
- Rule of Life of the Society of Mary*. (2007).
- The Institute of Development Studies (2016). *Social, Economic and Political Context in Kenya*, Retrieved from <http://interactions.eldis.org/unpaid-care-work/country-profiles/kenya/social-economic-and-political-context-kenya>