

Apartheid

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Four years after apartheid was overthrown, six out of ten schools nationwide still do not have electricity. Student-teacher ratios are often more than 60-to-1 per classroom.

Another recent study of South African education noted that 82 percent of all schools have no media equipment such as televisions, computers, or videocassette recorders, and 72 percent have no library. In many classes, 60 children have to read and learn from only one or two textbooks. Only one black African in 2,000 attends a college or university, whereas the ratio for South African whites is 1-in-30. Because of this educational underdevelopment, it is not surprising that two thirds of all adult South Africans are functionally illiterate.

Pope

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federal capital minister, Lt. Gen. Jeremiah Useni, chairman of the papal visit's organizing committee, praised Nigerians for making the event a huge success.

He said that the government had decided to name an open space at Kubwa in Abuja, where the Pontiff held his second high mass to cap his visit, after him.

A street and a crescent in Abuja were also named after the 77-year-old pontiff, who made the Nigerian tour in spite of discouragement and reports from a section of the Western media that painted a gloomy picture of the country.

The pope's visit was primarily pastoral —

Rampant poverty breeds despair and violence. When people don't have anything to lose, they frequently turn against each other. The former apartheid regime understood this well, and it used fear, poverty and old ethnic rivalries to divide and terrorize its nonwhite opponents.

In the 1980s the apartheid government allowed millions of dollars worth of weapons and drugs into the country, saturating black neighborhoods. Even after Mandela's victory, the flow of narcotics and weapons has continued. Between 1994 and 1997, an estimated 200,000 firearms were stolen or lost in South Africa. In 1997 alone, nearly 20,000 convicted criminals were nevertheless granted licenses to own firearms.

for the beatification of the Rev. Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi, Nigeria's Cistercian monk, who died in England in 1964 at age 61.

The ceremony in Oba, near Tansi's hometown of Aguleri, is the first stage for the attainment of sainthood under the Roman Catholic church's doctrine.

The event, usually performed at the Vatican, pulled one of the largest crowds ever seen in Nigeria in recent times. The crowd for the second high mass in Abuja was equally tumultuous.

Additionally, the pope, known for his strong views on issues such as family unity, freedom and human rights and opposition to abortion, did not disappoint either.

As a result, the violence in the townships is nearly out of control, with 100 or more young black men being murdered every week. In the black townships near Cape Town, tens of thousands of black and colored boys, many of whom are 14, 15, and 16 years old, belong to gangs. The level of violence has become more deadly with the introduction of machine guns and other high-powered automatic weapons.

On the first day I was in Cape Town, the waterfront mall was the scene of a wild gun battle between security guards and two suspected shoplifters. Tourists scrambled to get out of the way of gunfire, and one black security guard was seriously wounded. Violence has now become such a "normal" part of daily life that Cape Town's central business district is virtually

vacant after dark. Private security companies are the country's fastest growing enterprises.

Today's street violence and gang murders in the segregated townships are a by-product of a powerful and corrupt, centuries-old system of white rule.

The day-to-day violence of inferior schools, substandard shelter, malnutrition and poor health care is the root cause of South Africa's crisis of crime. Until and unless millions of black Africans acquire the basic prerequisites for a decent life, the post-apartheid future will descend into an abyss of deadly violence.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University.

He made six public speeches including two homilies at high masses in Oba and Abuja, the Nigerian capital.

"The testimony borne by father Tansi is important at this moment in Nigeria's history," the pontiff said, "a moment that requires concerted and honest efforts to foster harmony and national unity, to guarantee respect for human life and human rights, to promote justice and development, to combat unemployment, to give hope to the poor and the suffering, to resolve conflicts through dialogue and to establish a true and lasting solidarity between all sectors of society."

"Nigeria, like all of Africa, is searching for a way to meet the aspirations of its peoples, to

leave behind the effects of poverty, disputes, wars, and despair, to make proper use of the continent's immense resources, and to achieve political and social stability."

Nigeria has been in political turmoil since the last military regime canceled results of the 1993 presidential election won by millionaire politician Moshood Abiola.

Abiola is awaiting trial for treason after he declared himself president of the country in 1994.

Other notable Nigerians in jail include former head of state Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, and four journalists convicted for their involvement in a 1995 coup plot against the Abacha regime. The names on the Papal list are still unknown.

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