

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES TO THE
INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT OF MABONWA PARISH IN LIGHT OF
*POPULORUM PROGRESSIO***

B.A SPEDUC (M.U.K)

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ABSTRACT

In *Populorum Progressio* no.1, Pope Paul VI declared the intention of the encyclical: *The development of those peoples who are striving to escape from hunger, misery, endemic diseases and ignorance; of those who are looking for a wider share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are aiming purposefully at their complete fulfillment.* Such aspirations are exhibited by the people of Mabonwa Parish. They have employed a number of methodologies and plans to realize true quality human life. In their struggle to achieve integral development, some have succeeded and, or failed in one way or the other. This is so mainly due to lack of sufficient awareness as regards development, education, health and sanitation. There is no proper planning for development in most households since there is no sufficient knowledge about authentic development which is integral. Even though most households have reasonable acres of coffee plantations, the proceeds have not been fully utilized to cause transformation in their life and homes as some spend the proceeds from coffee to drinking joints, thereby causing double trouble in homes. Some do not take education seriously and many children drop out of schools and they get married at an early age (especially girls). There is increased domestic violence especially against women and children, production mainly for consumption and the situation is heightened by large families that put pressure on the already existing scarce resources.

The general objective of this study therefore was to establish the relation between *Basic Ecclesial Communities'* activities and integral development in Mabonwa Parish, Mbarara Archdiocese. Having noticed peoples' positive attitude for *BECs* in the Parish, the researcher was interested in establishing how they can be used to realize integral development of all.

It can therefore be concluded that *BECs* as a pastoral strategy is key in the realization of integral development and in making the church local. *BECs* have the capacity of bringing together Christians to know and have concern for each other's need. All the activities carried out in *BECs* as given in chapter four are tools for integral development when taken seriously with caution. It should be noted that *BECs* are channels for many people to come into the church. They allow full lay participation in the life of the church and also they provide an essential catholic presence among the people. In all, proper pastoral planning is very important for the proper ordering of the Christian community.

The family as the foundation of any human society, should ensure that peace prevail within and among all the family members, which in turn will be shared by all *BECs*, the parish, Diocese and the universal church. The parish priest and all other priests in the parish have the duty of making sure that true doctrine is maintained in all *BECs* so that they remain real witnesses of the authentic Gospel.

Therefore, the formation and promotion of *BECs* should be adopted as a pastoral strategy for the church and should be included in catechetical formation at all levels. It has to be regarded as a means of renewing the local church. Thus, the formation of *BECs* is not an option. It should be the obligation of the Bishop, the clergy, religious and all lay faithful in the Archdiocese of Mbarara to form and promote these communities.