

# Opinion

## Students need Christian education to instil values



**John Wynand  
Katende**

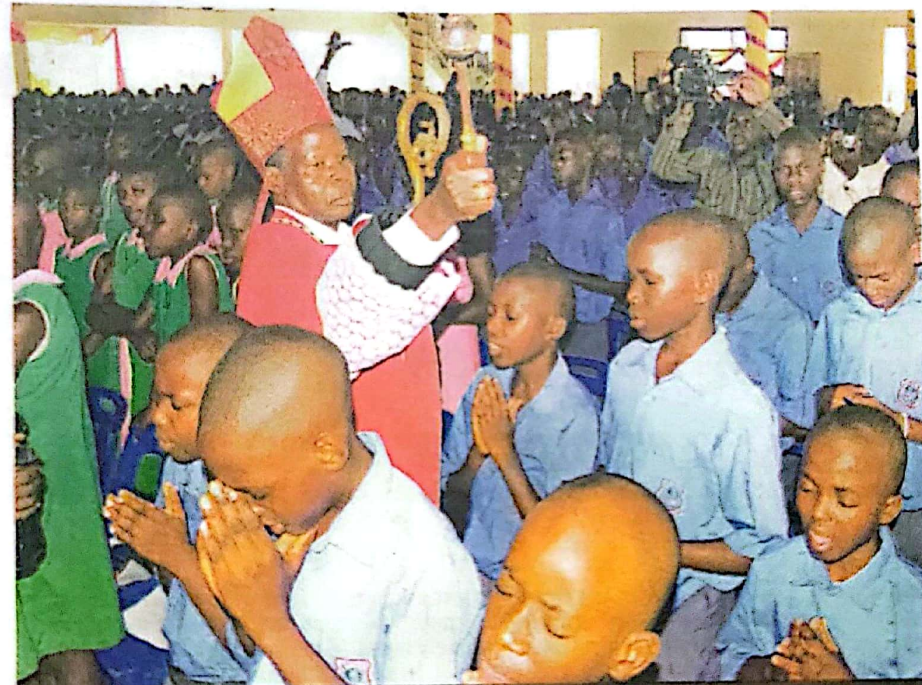
"The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives". With this quotation from educational philosopher Robert M. Hutchins (1899-1977), I wish to join the fraternity of schools that are celebrating 50 years of existence.

In 1967, Uganda's education system was changed from the one that favoured the colonial masters to a more appropriate one for a nation born in 1962.

In answer to the call, the Church founded several secondary schools. But the story of Church engagement in Uganda's formal education dates far back.

Before the arrival of missionaries, education was carried on privately within the various tribal groups. With the beginning of missionary activity, western education became an important part of the process of conversion to Christianity.

Opened in 1901 by the Mill Hill Missionaries, Namilyango College in Kampala became



**Lugazi Diocese Bishop Mathias Ssekamanya blesses Namilyango Junior Boys pupils during a confirmation service. Namilyango is a church-founded school**

the pattern of many other schools. Education is said to be a method, rather than a

set of rules, a dynamic that encompasses one as a human being in front of the whole

world. It is meant to encourage thinking, to reach the values of a loving community and

help individuals develop their potential as valuable human beings.

Maria Montessori, a renowned educationist, believes that education has, likewise, a role to play in the development of world peace.

"Preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education. Allowing children to develop according to their inner laws of development would give rise to a more peaceful and enduring civilisation," she says.

But the curriculum of public education cannot guide students through the deeper questions of life, because it does not use the word of God as its standard of truth.

"The chief concern of a genuine Christian education is to educate the heart of man, just as God made it. This is the only possibility for a faith that can thrive in a world where everything points in the opposite direction of Christianity," Giussani, a renowned educationist, says.

"The heart is the innate and universal longing for truth,

beauty, justice and good, ultimately, God. It is the final standard of judgment," he emphasises. Christian schools strive to challenge students towards allowing God to mould their hearts in submission to Him.

In doing so, students are equipped to recognise the Lordship of Christ in all subject areas of learning and to respond in obedience to His call to be transforming influences in society.

### Christian school setting

In a Christian school setting, parents are assured that every teacher will not only challenge students with laborious academics, but also frame the whole of their curriculum through the lens of Scripture, and openly model the love of Jesus through their actions and words.

The Christian school does not, however, exist to replace good Christian parenting. It functions as an extension of what the parent is seeking to accomplish in the lives of their children. It is, therefore, important that children see God being honoured at home, as well as at school.

The best educator teaches not just the facts, but the value and meaning of those facts to the students. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," Nelson Mandela said.

**The writer is a  
Catholic priest**

**The nominee must:**