



# SELL CONNECT

SHARING EDUCATION / LEARNING FOR LIFE

DECEMBER 2017

## Transforming Society

**FR. TOMAS O'CONNOR,**  
ST. PATRICK'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY, KILTEGAN

As the SELL Newsletter for 2017 goes to print word has just come through that the US Senate has handed President Trump his first legislative victory with the passage of a sweeping new Tax Bill. The prize winning Economist, Paul Krugman, has labelled it one of the greatest tax scams of all time. In his column for the New York Times on the 27th of November 2017 he wrote the following: *One thing is clear, however: One way or another, the bill will hurt most Americans. The only big winners will be the wealthy — especially those who mainly collect income from their assets rather than working for a living — plus tax lawyers and accountants who will have a field day exploiting the many loopholes the legislation creates.*

This is the new world order in which we live and the world in which SELL tries to make a difference. SELL raises people's awareness of the systems which govern our world and how they

favour an elite, while consigning the vast majority of the citizens of this planet to a life of misery and deprivation.

The work of SELL was never as relevant and as needed as it is today. I congratulate the SELL teams in Ghana and Nigeria for their inspiring work over the last year. They are beacons of hope and light in a world which continues to be darkened and besmirched by injustice, racism, exclusion, the destruction of the environment and the unbridled pursuit of wealth. The work of the SELL team in Ghana is made possible by the generous collaboration of the Presentation Brothers who have been very staunch supporters of SELL since its arrival in Ghana, while St Patrick's continue to encourage the team in Nigeria. I thank the SELL Team and the Presentation Brothers for their wonderful work and wish them every success in 2018.

## Fr. Leo's Christmas Greeting

Christmas greetings to you all as the year ends, thanks for the prayers offered, the messages of encouragement sent and not forgetting the many donations given. Special thanks to our friends in Ireland who produce this newsletter to help promote our work each year. We are reaching about 200 people at present; when each gives a small donation it helps us so much.

Here on the ground in Ghana and Nigeria we continue to do our best to offer opportunities to young adults to reflect on their lives and choices in the hope they are helped towards positive life giving choices. You may remember the motto of SELL is 'think and choose'. Every Christmas gives us all a chance to think and choose afresh. To choose to believe in the power of love over hate and fear.

I often find myself asking: what happened to those who kill and destroy? They were babies born for love and good once, what happened that they lost contact with their true selves,

their goodness. We are not created for destruction we are made for love.

I feel deeply for those in armies who are sent out by governments on missions where they end up taking another person's life; such a heavy burden to carry, no matter the cause or reason.

Here we are celebrating Christmas. The child in the manger is called Prince of Peace. He later gave his life rather than kill. This radical act speaks to our soul. We know deep down within us that Love is the only rational act. We pray that all of us in the world come to our senses and do what we are created to do - Love.



**Have a happy and loving Christmas time**  
- Leo

# SELL Ghana Workshops 2017

## Greetings from the SELL Resource Team

### LOGRE, BOLGATANGA, GHANA

Christmas greetings to you all as the year ends, thanks for the prayers offered, the messages of encouragement sent and not forgetting the many donations given. Special thanks to our friends in Ireland who produce this newsletter to help promote our work each year. We are reaching about 350 people at present; when each gives a small donation it helps us so much.

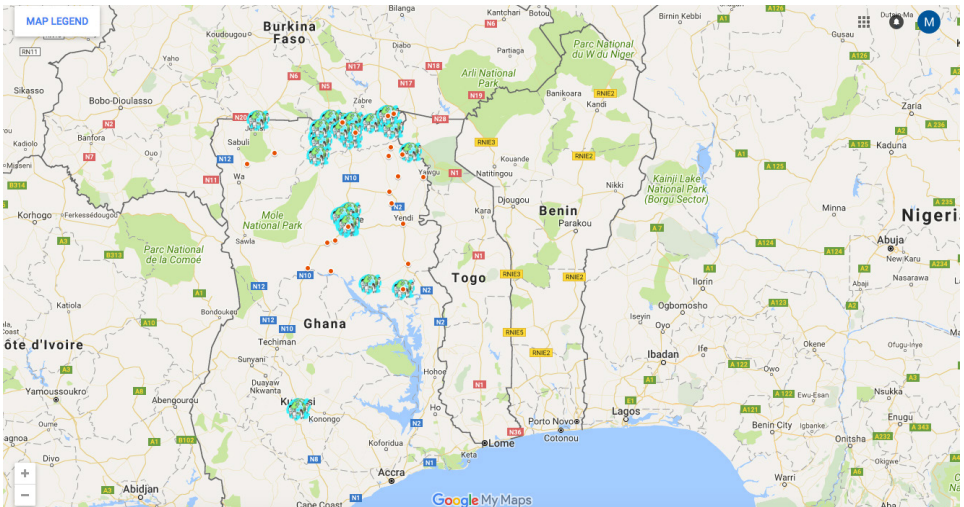
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Many thanks to Irish company PW Mining Ghana, for their donation of a pickup truck to St. Patrick's missionaries to support the work of the SELL team in Ghana.

Pictured right: Fr. Tommy Hayden, Fr. Leo Traynor, Hagar Bebuur and Vincent Agyei.



SELL Volunteers, Tamale zone.





# Climate Change: An Opportunity for Transformation in Africa

FR. KEVIN O'HARA, SPMS, DISTRICT LEADER IN WEST AFRICA

SELL Nigeria and SELL Ghana have very important topics to share as Learnings for Life. One of the most important is the issue of Climate Change. According to the Africa Progress report 2015, no region has done less to contribute to the climate crisis, but no region will pay a higher price for failure to tackle it. Africa is experiencing earlier, more severe and more damaging impacts of climate change than other parts of the world. In each of these areas the poor will bear the brunt. Left unchecked, it will reduce agricultural productivity, create conditions for mass hunger and reverse human development. All countries stand to lose if we fail to achieve the international goal of restricting global warming to below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels. Africa will lose the most. Africa needs a low-carbon future. It needs to break the link between energy and emissions. This is a Learning for life.

## SELL Programme Leadership Unit:

What can we do to make sure that we protect the elements that sustain all life forms?

Air pollution is causing health problems. An estimated 600,000 Africans die each year as a result of household air polluted by cooking inside houses, half of them children under the age of five. Almost four in five rely for cooking on solid

biomass, mainly firewood and charcoal. There is need for clean cooking stoves. This is a challenge to SELL to train our young people about the importance of clean cooking and protect themselves from emissions. Achieving access to clean cooking stoves, allied to wider measures, could save thousands of young lives a year, liberate women and girls from the drudgery of collecting firewood and generate wide ranging environmental benefits. SELL continues to be an agent for

change in promoting alternative energy and sharing the learnings of the best and most effective ways of protecting our environment and our health.

## SELL Nigeria

FR. PATRICK ESEKON

In its Annual General Reflection, which took place in April 2017, SELL Foundation Nigeria recorded many success stories from SELL volunteers and beneficiaries across the North east of the country and Plateau. In keeping with its objective of respecting the dignity of youth and providing a space for young people to take ownership of their development in the face of multidimensional strife, ranging from social exclusion to dysfunctional systems, the Foundation has taken on some new initiatives. These included training workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship, skills acquisition, lobby and advocacy as well as the effects of drug abuse among young people. The response from the young people has been very positive and the Co-ordinating Team are happy to be able to supplement the fundamental SELL workshop programme with activities that will help young people release some more of the latent potential that lies within them and enable them to be not just participants in civil society but to take on the mantle of leaders and be agents of change.



Setting out is not covering miles of land and sea, or travelling faster than the speed of light. It is first and foremost, opening ourselves to other people, trying to get to know them, going out to meet them.

**'The first duty of love is to listen'**

**Paul Tillich**

It means getting out of ourselves and breaking through the shell of selfishness that can lock us in as if in a prison. It means we stop revolving around ourselves as if we were the centre of everything.

It is possible to travel alone, but the good traveller knows that the journey is human life and life needs company. 'Companion' means the one who eats the same bread. In sharing bread we also share ourselves.

Happy are those who take care of their weary comln a loving way they welcome them, listen to them, encourage them when they lose heart, and awaken in them once more the joy of the journey.

**Helder Camara (bridged)**



Maura McStay, Assistant Headteacher St. Ciaran's College, Ballygawley presents a cheque to the Traynor family for the work of SELL.

## MANY THANKS

to Martina McCarron, Assistant Headteacher, for the invitation to speak at the St. Ciaran's College, Key Stage 10 prize-giving. The theme of 'Think and Choose' which is core to the SELL programme is equally relevant at the many decision points of our lives.

**Orla McCullagh,**  
SELL Connect Ireland.

## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT SELL

Hold the work of the SELL teams in your thoughts and prayers and kindle the spirit of SELL in your communities.

Organise fund-raising activities.

Donate through the website: [www.spms.org](http://www.spms.org) (Select SELL under 'Purpose of Donation')

UK Bank details: IBAN: GB35 BARC 2097 0940 8422; SWIFTBIC: BARCGB22

if you would like to receive our newsletter electronically, (and save on our postage costs), please send your email address to [sellconnectireland@gmail.com](mailto:sellconnectireland@gmail.com)



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