Kenyans will be going to vote on the 4th of March when we shall have our general elections. The atmosphere here is, therefore, politically charged with campaigns taking place throughout the country.

The coming elections will be quite different from anything we have had in the past. We shall be voting for a total of five offices: The president, Senators, Governors, MPs, and County Assembly members. The reason for this is the new constitution which changed significantly the way the country is run by devolving governance. Kenya, unlike the past when it has had a national/central government, will now have two levels of government: 47 regional governments (we have called them county governments for which senators and governors will be elected) and a national government. These governments will be distinct but interdependent, and will conduct their business in consultation and dialogue. This is not to say that Kenya has adopted a federal system of government as some have wrongly thought (no governor will be in charge of a state!, but of a county in relation to the national government).

In principle, the national government will be responsible for running public investments (such as ports), national security and defence, legislation, foreign affairs, tax collection and distribution, immigration
and citizenship. It will also be responsible for education curricula and policies, health policies, agricultural policies, development policies, sports policies etc. While the county governments will be responsible for county legislation (so long as it is not in conflict with national laws), licensing of business in the county, and some taxation. They will also be responsible for the regulating of markets within their jurisdiction, and the development agenda of, and its pursuance in, counties. Moreover they will be charged with the implementation of national policies in managing and delivering services in agriculture, education, health, sports etc. For this reason, a minimum of 15% of the annual national budget will be shared by all the counties.

This devolution is a hopeful and ambitious undertaking by Kenyans. It is seen as a God-send because national resources will be distributed more equitably, leading to economic development and the provision of quality services. But I am not as hopeful since the more fundamental issues that
need to be addressed in bringing real change have not been given attention. On the negative side, Kenyan society is characterized by four salient features: 1. a disregard to rules, 2. a bad work ethic (a lazy and dishonest culture), 3. greed and pilfering of public wealth and resources, and 4. ethnocentrism. As I have said before, unless we rid ourselves of these vices our current state of affairs is bound to stay with us. So, I foresee that in devolving government, we have localized the operation of these vices particularly in regard to the pilfering of public wealth, which will subvert the goals of our new constitution.

 The route to sorting out our ills surely must be in significant measure adopting life-giving morals and values, beliefs and attitudes, and habits and lifestyles. Of course, the issues of moral, character, and habit formation are complex. But we believe that the gospel and its living out is an antidote to death and destruction. It is for this reason that we are a mission training institution and are involved with mission through our School of It, Business and Social Studies and through our Centre for Urban
Mission. But the job is really never done till God's Kingdom is established in all its glory.

 That said, pray with us that we shall have peaceful elections.