



THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF CENTRAL AFRICA
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN BOTSWANA, MALAWI, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE

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Statement of Solidarity

‘I came that they may have life and have it abundantly’ (John 10.10).

The Anglican Church of the Province of Central Africa met to conduct its Synod business from 30th October to 4th of November 2023 at Mount Soche, Blantyre in the Diocese of Southern Malawi.

Over 100 delegates - both the laity and the ordained members - came from across the four countries that form the Province namely, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Inspired but also challenged to deliberate and reflect on the theme “Growing the Church in the Broken World”, Synod delegates reflected deeply on the scriptures to find meaning of life and to understand their wellbeing as a Church in their context and how as a Church can grow in a world ravaged by violent conflicts.

A broken world is where the Church finds itself in but refuses to be consumed by the realities of brokenness, stress and trauma. The Church through the sacrament of reconciliation holds the oil of healing. We whom the spirit lights give light to the world.

Brokenness means fragility through fragmentation. Fragmentation of families and communities is the opposite of the life-giving values of the kingdom of God.

The Church of the Province of Central Africa recognizes the magnitude of the devastation that cyclone Fred caused to the communities of the very country at which Synod is gathered, in Malawi. The presence of the Provincial church members in Malawi offers the faithful an opportunity to practically use the space to support the hosting nation and its communities both materially and in prayerful solidarity.

The reality of waking up to the devastating news of war and the deterioration of situations of conflict cannot be accepted as normal. The Church calls the international community to decisive action to stop this wanton destruction of life.

Members of Synod express their disbelief and dismay at how the resources of the world are wasted. The God given resources to reverse and reduce environmental damage and mitigate climate change is instead used to traumatize, maim, disfigure and displace families. This is poor stewardship and it is the cause of disharmony. It is believed that Africa's problems are numerous and far too complex to tackle but the Church calls for social justice through equitable distribution of the world's resources to improve the lives of the vulnerable. The Church, therefore, stands alongside and prays for the suffering communities in the countries of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan. The Church urges the involved countries to assist those affected nations in turning their spears into pruning hooks. And the members of Synod urged leaders in the sub region to arrest the escalating high cost of living that is adversely affecting many families as well as high unemployment levels among the youth. This is making peace elusive in many homes.

Outside our continent, the ever escalating Russia-Ukrainian war is taking away hope there is in the world. Furthermore, the hostility between Israel and Palestine and the war that has broken out in Gaza is most unfortunate and deeply regrettable. It brings out the reality and evidence of how broken the world is.

It is inconceivable that in the 21st century people of race, religion and ethnicity can still fail to recognize the humanity in the being of the other. How then can people co-exist? The killing of one's enemy does not end war but rather the recognition of humanity in the face of the enemy does. There must be a recognition that we are all created in the image of God and therefore all have the right to exist.

At the closing of Synod, the Church affirmed the words our Lord Jesus – 'I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance'.

Members of the Church of the Province of Central Africa pray and stand alongside all those suffering violence, poverty, rejection and are in areas of conflict. Christ is invited to give life not just life but the life he promised, life in abundance free from violence, hunger and hatred. The life of peace.

God bless his creation.

Signed:

Archbishop Albert Chama, Primate and Bishop of Lusaka

Bishop Metlhayotlhe Beleme, Botswana

Bishop Francis Kaulanda, Lake Malawi

Bishop Fanuel Magangani, Northern Malawi

Bishop Alinafe Kalemba, Southern Malawi

Bishop Derek Kamukwamba, Central Zambia

Bishop William Mchombo, Eastern Zambia

Bishop Robert Mumbi, Luapula

Bishop Ignatios Makumbe, Central Zimbabwe

Bishop Farai Mutamiri, Harare

Bishop Erick Ruwona, Manicaland

Bishop Osiward Mapika, Masvingo

Bishop Cleophas Lunga, Matabeleland.