

ECCLESIA TODAY

EST 2021



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ISSUE 9
1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Christian Digital Magazine

VOTE RESPONSIBLY

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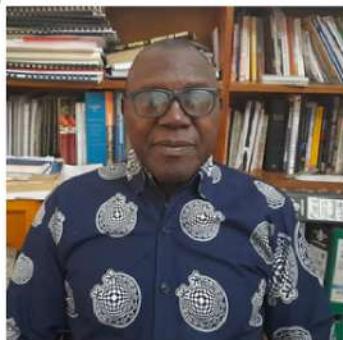
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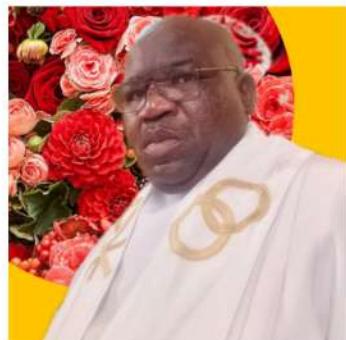
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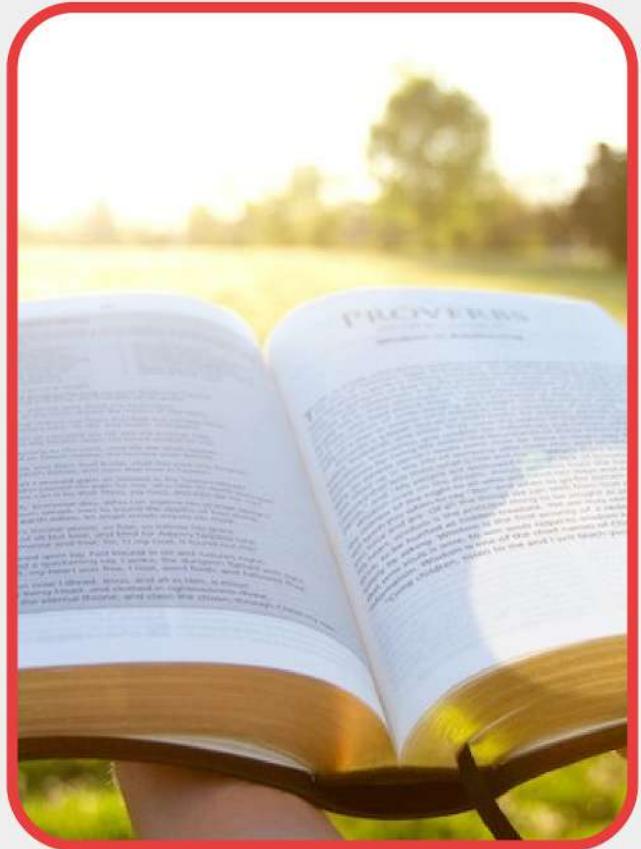
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MAKWALA



DR. ISHEANESU SEXTUS
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ECCLESIA TODAY

MAGAZINE

MANAGING EDITOR

Kimion Tagwirei

About Us

Ecclesia Today (*meaning Church Today*), is a free digital Christian magazine, published quarterly from Zimbabwe, Southern Africa.

We are inspired and informed to advance the integral mission of the Church (*proclamation and demonstration of the gospel in all areas of life*) by John 10:10, which says that “the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy; but I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly”.

We publish inclusive and contextually transformative articles from various contributors in different denominations and countries.

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Editorial Note

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Vote Responsibly

Following the presidential announcement of Zimbabwe's harmonized election date as 23 August, and a runoff, if need arises, on 2 October 2023, **Ecclesia Today** calls all Zimbabweans to vote responsibly.

One of the dimensions of missio Ecclesiae (mission of the Church) – diakonia, mandates us to care for the needy, everything, everyone and advocate for peace, as well as justice, which, together, undergird

inclusive transformation.

Leadership governs development, hence, irresponsible voting is catastrophic as results may give us leaders who will serve themselves at our expense.

Understanding that while heavenly (as Philippians 3:20–21 tells us), we are also (currently) earthly citizens and (positively and negatively) affected by political governance.

Thus, ignoring elections is self-destructive. While we submit

everything to God through prayer, He graciously entrusted electoral choices to us. So, our votes count.

In view of fears of vote rigging which fuels voter apathy, as the Bible tells us (for example, through Daniel 2:21 and 1 Timothy 6:15–16), God is sovereign and in control of everything. When we vote, He can protect us from the vote rigging demons.

Therefore, neglecting voting while praying and believing God for political and economic development is hypocritical. It is like expecting harvest without sowing!

Beloved, responsible voting will not begin and end on the Election Day. It begins now, and ends after the inauguration of leaders. Did you and I check our names in the voters' roll? Do we know profiles (i.e. capacities and integrity) of our contestants? Have we checked their integrity? Do we understand the voting process? What are we (and not) required to have, and do in voting?

Let's engage with our incumbent leaders, get well informed, enlightened, prepared and decided to vote responsibly!



Women participating in an electoral process in Zimbabwe

Picture credit: DW

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BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

Let's meditate and reflect on the following Bible references

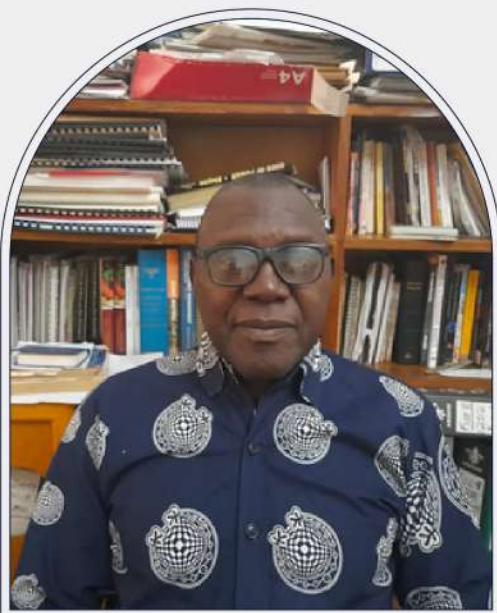
Matthew 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (NIV Online Bible Gateway)

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12, “...we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody” (NIV Online Bible Gateway)

Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone”. (NIV Online Bible Gateway)

GOSPEL REVIEW

PEACE BE STILL: LET'S CALM STORMS OF OUR TIME



BY ELDER HERBERT MAKWALA
IN HWANGE, ZIMBABWE

Elder Herbert Makwala is an administrator and member of the Apostolic council of the Assemblies of God Back to God church in Hwange and Binga. He is also a Missions Live School Coordinator in Zimbabwe.

The second lesson we learn is that we should not try to deal with storm situations in our power. As fishermen, disciples might have tried to deal with the storm, but failed, hence they woke Jesus up and sought His intervention.

As believers in Christ, we need to seek His intervention to avoid devastating storms which can ruin us.

The same story shows us two natures of Jesus Christ at play. The humanity of Jesus demonstrated by his sleeping, and his divine side which calmed the storm.

Likewise, we have such natures as God lives in us. The same Jesus Christ who calmed the storm lives in us! By the same we 'can do all things through Christ who strengthens us' (Philippians 4:9).

Coming home

As a nation we are heading towards an election and we know that some storms may arise. It's time to arise like Jesus did to rebuke such storms by His power, and speak peace. As the children of Issachar, we should understand times (God's people) and what is needful (1 Chronicle 12:32).

Let us intercede for our nation, and speak out peace. We can realize 'quite and peaceable life' that 1 Timothy 2:1-3 speaks of.

In Mark 4:37-39, the life story of how Jesus Christ calmed the windy storm is so relevant for stormy situations that we sometimes face individually and or collectively.

When disciples encountered a terrific storm in the Sea of Galilee, their boat got filled up and while Jesus was asleep.

They possibly tried to handle the situation with no success. They then woke Jesus up. He rose and rebuked the storm, 'peace, be still' and there was great calm. Not just some calm but a great calm.

When Jesus gives a solution, it will be such wonderful because He is Wonderful (Isaiah 9:6). That is why we can't afford not to live without Him as our Lord and personal Savior. We can't leave Him out of our lives. If we try to live without Him, we will die in storms.

Learning points

I don't think this story just helps us to appreciate the miracle that Jesus did. I believe it's a story we can pick some principles or lessons to apply in our stormy situations. Storms in general have devastating effects when they occur and therefore must be dealt with before they get to hurt us.

This is exactly what Jesus did in this story. He is our example whom we must follow (1 Peter 2:21). If Jesus had not dealt with the storm the disciples were not going to reach their mission destination.

The man in the country of the Gadarenes who was tormented by demons which later caused the death of about 2000 pigs was not going to be delivered (Mark 5:8-13). The first lesson to learn from this story is that storms that affect us must be dealt with for purposes of our well-being.

GOSPEL REVIEW

THE PAINS AND JOYS OF BEING A FEMALE PASTOR



BY EVANGELIST SIBUSISIWE CHIDOORI IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

How do you keep going in ministry especially after so much hurt and when you know that you are single and called for ministry in a very big church where you grew up?

Imagine having most family members, relatives and elderly brethren watching you rise, yet you had a child before marriage and ministry you already had a child.

As we read, I am praying that God ministers to us. Being a female

Sibusisiwe Chidoori is an evangelist, highly gifted in healing and deliverance ministry, serving with the Assemblies of God, Back to God church in Zimbabwe. She established Princess in His Court interdenominational ministry through which she mentors, counsels and empowers women in ministry. She ministers beyond AOG, through interdenominational conferences and crusades.

pastor demands one to operate boldly to withstand past and current pains.

Eventually, one realizes that what was meant to destroy us lifts us to high levels of glory.

All I know is that God empowers those whom He calls.

The heartache and trials we face in ministry are not for nothing, as John Piper's common saying that "God is always doing ten thousand things and more than we can't even see".

It is though our hurts that God teaches us to persevere. When God called me, I had so many painful moments and joys. In my first decade of ministry, I saw His faithfulness.

Let me just mention a few pains and hurts that I came across;

I had been a bread winner in my family and everyone looked up to me. Eventually I woke up one morning breaking, what then appeared as terrible, news that God called me to resign from my job and be a minister of the gospel.

That triggered anger and rejection from my family, especially considering being a woman. In some contexts, women are not accepted as pastors. I experienced that first-hand with my blood brother.

Other family members stood with me.

My church initially only recognised women as workers, and never had female pastors. Courtesy of my spiritual father, the late Reverend GB Mkhwananzi broke it all, discerned what God had deposited in me and allowed it to work in the church.

I was then ordained in 2006 as an evangelist for AOG BTG church.

Furthermore, being a female unmarried pastor was a thorn in my flesh. It was threatening and frightening to serve as some people perceived that I would snatch their husbands. I encountered a lot of name calling and criticism.

Turning point – God turned my pain into joy when He finally opened eyes of the church to realise and recognise my ministry. This was further graced when God gave me a husband who is a pastor who understands and supports my ministry.

It was not an easy road to that marriage because most brethren were jealousy. They tried by all means to fight and ruin my marriage. At times it looked like they had succeeded to pull us apart but because God is God

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GOSPEL REVIEW

THE PAINS AND JOYS OF BEING A FEMALE PASTOR



BY

EVANGELIST
SIBUSISIWE
CHIDOORI IN HARARE

who fights our battles,
He came through and fought for us.

I waited for ten years as my marriage was on line, but God fulfilled Psalms 123:5 by setting a table before my enemies as my husband came back and married me. Today we are happily married and proud parents of two handsome boys that are 20 years apart.

To add to my joy the church has recognised and exposed my evangelism ministry locally and abroad. After 63 years of AOG BTG church history, I recently got elected as a DCC member in a male dominated leadership that oversees

Mashonaland region. Surely "in the fullness of time God will make it beautiful".

So far, I have ministered in many different churches around the globe. Now my ministry is fully recognised, and am freely meeting, sharing big platforms and networking with other great servants of God.

Meanwhile, God has graced me with so many brothers, sisters and children in ministry within and outside Zimbabwe.

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

TITUS 3:1-2 AND AN EXPOSITION OF RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP IN THE ZIMBABWEAN CONTEXT



BY DR. ISHEANESE SEXTUS
GUSHA IN PALMA DE
MALLORCA, SPAIN

The subject of responsible citizenship is a debatable one in Zimbabwe as there are different views among people as to what constitute responsible citizenship.

The word 'citizen' has its roots in the Greek word 'πολίτης' (polites) which means the city and its people. The word can also mean community dwellers. In the Graeco-Roman world, citizens had the following responsibilities; participating in politics, hold a job, promoting democracy, and protecting their city-state.

On top of those responsibilities, they had the following rights; pursuing careers of their choice, voting, trading in their own city-state, and purchasing slaves. Remember these were the days when slavery was still legal.

The bible is often a misused text by politicians when it comes to responsible citizenship because the major emphasis

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone" (Titus 3:1-2)

is on obedience and subject to those in authority. The letter of Titus is one of the Pastoral letters in the New Testament whose authorship remains a subject of debate.

In chapter 3, the author seems to address some of the issues to do with the subject of responsible citizenship. First, citizens are expected to be subject to rulers and those in authority. Second, there are expected to be obedient. The third and most important expectation is for them to be ready to do whatever is good. Fourth, there are expected to be law abiding and not offend anyone. Fifth, there are expected to be peaceful and considerate. Lastly, there are expected to be gentle to everyone.

The overarching expectation is for them to be ready to do whatever is good. What does this mean in the Zimbabwean context as we approach the harmonized elections? Firstly, responsible citizenship participating in the elections by registering to vote as well as voting leadership into offices. Failure to participate in the election of leadership means subverting the principle of democracy thereby leaving few individuals with the role of electing leaders for the entire nation.

Second, responsible citizenship entails electing responsible leadership whose interest is the wellbeing of citizens. These are leaders who takes the mandate to improve people's lives seriously. These are the people who respect the rule of law and protection of citizen's life seriously. Thirdly, responsible citizenship entails promoting peaceful environments in every situation especially during this period of elections normally characterized by violent campaigns and hate speech.

Lastly, it entails respect of fellow citizens regardless of different political views. It is not blind obedience that ignores the bad things from those in authority. Therefore, as we brace ourselves for the general elections let us remember that it is our responsibility as citizens to elect responsible leaders into office regardless of their political belongings.

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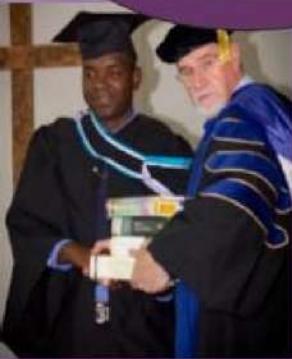
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THE COST OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Privilege Tafirei is pursuing his Master's studies in Theology, in South Africa

Currently in Zimbabwe, personal development is among the top trending issues that people are engaging in.

Some people are going back to school, others are picking up different online courses, and recently a friend who is a driving instructor told me that there has been a sudden rise in the number of women training to be truck drivers.

Many, of such people, are seeking ways to improve themselves. It is intentional growth as one pursues self-development with the goal to realise one's full potential. Many young people have drawn inspiration about the value of personal development from older generations. However, not much has been said about the cost of personal development.

As I look back on my own journey of personal development, am convinced that while personal development holds numerous benefits, it is a costly process. Hence, I decided to share three costs, hoping that this can be an encouragement to someone

on eyeing development.

Personal development is all about growth and growth is a costly process. In most cases the cost is far from a monetary cost but more emotional and or spiritual. The first cost I realised early in my journey was that personal development costs you yourself. Self-sacrifice is the greatest cost one must pay. You will never develop as a person if you don't sacrifice yourself and let go of your passions and desire and surrender to a higher call.

Many times, a number of people never make it far in the journey of personal development because they allow themselves to be mastered by their passions and desires. What I have learnt over the years is that personal passions and desires are blind to the future, all they see is the now.

In other words, they usher one to their grave and not to their growth. Personal development is all about growth, and growth is futuristic but built and lived in the now. Therefore, personal development will cost you yourself. Jesus, while addressing a group of man and woman following



PRIVILEGE TAFIREI

him declare, "If any man desires to follow after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me daily." [Luke 9:23]

The first advice that Jesus gives those who wanted to grow to be his disciples was to first deny themselves, in other words let go of their passions and desires. However, that's not the only thing, secondly and very linked to the first one, they must take up their individual crosses. In the Bible the cross symbolises death, so after denying oneself one must be ready and prepared to crucify oneself! Over the years I have come to realise that real and lasting growth only exists in Jesus. And for that to happen we ought to yield and surrender our desires and wills to Jesus. It requires us to let go of

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our old ways and embrace the transformative power of Christ in our lives. As Christians we understand that personal development requires the Holy Spirit's guidance to reveal areas in our lives that need transformation and healing.

Another cost of personal development is discipline. It takes discipline to stay on track with our goals and commitments. It means saying no to distractions and temptations that can pull us away from our focus. It means making intentional choices about how we spend our time and energy. Not only that but also, who do we spend time with. This is very painful and costly because it's not easy to let go some people however at times that's the way to go. Just like the analogy in John 15 where Jesus says as the vine dresser, he prunes every branch so that it can bear more fruits. As a principle I have seen in my journey that at each stage I had to be ok to let go some people so that I could grow a step further. If we want to grow, we may have to give up unhealthy habits and relationships that may hinder our growth.

The third and final cost is accountability. Personal development requires vulnerability and humility. It means being willing to admit your weaknesses and shortcomings and seeking help from others. This is one of the hardest things in personal development. As human beings we are wired to naturally want to repel criticism.

Nonetheless, if we are to grow, we must be open to constructive criticism and feedback. I have heard people say no one knows you more than you know yourself but in the journey of personal development I had to swallow my pride and

CHURCH, ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

THE COST OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



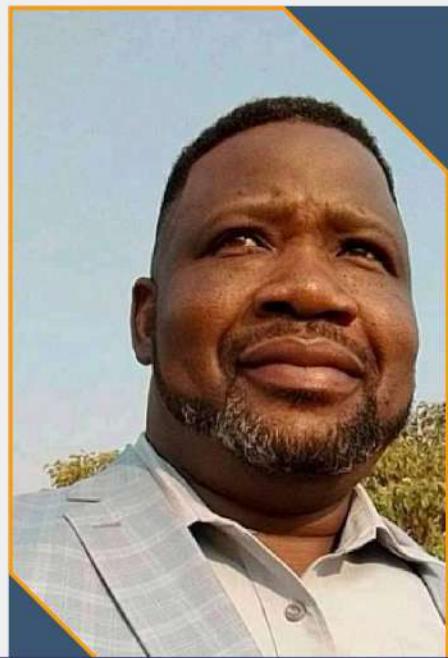
PRIVILEGE TAFIREI

equip myself with the mentality that the next person sees something I am prone to miss about myself. I like the saying that if you stay more than 5 minutes in a smelling room you are more likely to adjust and you stop smelling the smell, it will need someone to come and tell you that the room is smelling. That the same with personal development, it's so easy that you get used to the process that start missing some important components of the journey, **SO YOU NEED SOMEONE TO CALL YOU OUT!**

In conclusion, personal development is a crucial aspect of everyone's life. Though costly, the benefits of personal development are immeasurable. As we grow and become more like Christ, we are better equipped to fulfil our calling and impact for God's Kingdom. Therefore let us commit to investing in our personal development and pursuing the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

DISABILITIES & CONDITIONS

DECONDITIONING OURSELVES FROM DISABILITIES



BY REV. DR. CLEOPAS TAGUMA
NEUSO IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Rev. Dr. Cleopas Taguma Neuso is a pastor with the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe; Business lecturer with Trust Academy (in affiliation with Midlands State University); Disabilities theologian and philanthropist.

This article is going to decondition disability as a charity case. This is not to discredit or discount all acts of love, benevolence and giving towards the less privileged and vulnerable people in society.

Many lives have been transformed by genuine and generous giving by individuals and organizations. Disability has not only been taken as a charity case for profiteering the purse of those people taking advantage of the impoverished situations of people with disabilities but as a liability that requires to be taken care of as a charity case.

The mentality of perceiving disability as a hopeless situation has misled and misguided some people to think that there is nothing good or beneficial that can come out of people with disabilities.

Power and strength has given some people a false sense of security of thinking that they can do whatever they want whenever they meet people with disabilities.

Yes, people without disabilities may have power and strength over vulnerable people, but it's temporary. Some church leaders and politicians are the most culprits here in abusing their superior positions to feel for the less privileged and vulnerable.

Some of their acts of benevolence are not genuine but are done to secure

their positions and political aspirations. Such manipulative practices should be stopped hence forth. This can only be decisively stopped if the vulnerable people are made aware of the shenanigans of these scammers and mentally emancipated on not regarding themselves as always receivers, and charity cases.

When organizations and individuals extend a giving hand towards people with disabilities, they should not do it from the stand view of superiority and power for the inferior, weak and helpless, no, but from the position and understanding of being blessed to bless others. These wicked and scrupulous people are at the receiving end of this verse, "Cursed is anyone who leads the blind astray on the road." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" (Deuteronomy 27:18). Genuine and total Gospel should be ministered to the total person not just focusing on one aspect. Yes, handouts can be timely interventions but long lasting and self generating projects should be advocated for.

Pity is an emotional state of being that has resulted in most persons with disabilities being regarded as charity cases. I am saying so because people with disabilities are perceived

by benefactors as the least of these who are in needy, helpless, hopeless, and cannot offer anything in return.

Out of pity, these people with various impediments are regarded as though they can't do anything for themselves for survival, they can't help themselves hence charity cases. Feeling pity for persons with disabilities disempowers them. The benefactor is perceiving the condition of person with disability from his or her own view not that of the receiver. At times, what the receiver want is not a handout but a hand up to be taken off the dangerous streets. Feeling pity for someone can be equated with being sympathetic, benefactors should be empathetic and compassionate. Jesus was always compassionate towards the less privileged and vulnerable people. Whenever Jesus encountered persons with infirmities, he would never leave them the same, whether healed physically, emotionally, or socio-economically. At Bethesda, Jesus asked a question that should be on the lips of many benefactors, "Do you

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DISABILITIES & CONDITIONS

JOHN 5 VS 6

**BY REV. DR. CLEOPAS TAGUMA
NEUSO IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE**

DECONDITIONING OURSELVES FROM DISABILITIES



want to get well? (John 5vs6), of which many people rarely asks that question they just give handouts. That empathetic and compassionate question was unfortunately wrongly responded to by the man who had been blind for thirty eight years. I believe despite this seemingly common response from the less privileged and vulnerable people, the invalid man wanted to get well but unfortunately he had now conditioned himself to put his trust and hope in people instead of in Jesus or he had given up hope of being healed. At times desperate situations result in wrong mentality. The followers of Jesus need to do likewise when they meet the needy. Be compassionate towards the needy. The benefactor does not have to be the center of attraction when a need arises but the transformation of the needy. In all this life changing encounters through the benevolence acts of the benefactors, all the glory and honor should be directed to God who enables us to advance his mission on earth through practical theology. Poverty has made people with disabilities susceptible to be treated as charity cases and open for abuse by scammers. Persons with disabilities are poverty stricken so that they are not better positioned to decipher the genuineness of benefactors. These benefactors are taking advantage of the socio-economic challenges in Zimbabwe to come up with charitable organizations dangling donations to the unsuspecting less privileged groups. At times these persons with disabilities have no option but to accept whatever they are being offered in the name of donations but not out of genuine love. A poor person has no bargaining power and has got limited choices.

It is recommendable for the government to come up with effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to regulate the operations of foundations, trusts and private voluntary organizations, and non governmental organizations. The Church should also proclaim the Gospel of honesty, integrity and transparency because there are also some para church organizations that are not towing along the lines of true Gospel.

Having said all that about disability not being a charity case, we need to take cognizance of the fact that there should be respect for those individuals and organizations who are genuinely into philanthropic activities wholeheartedly. At the same time we need to be wary of wolves in the sheep's skin, who are taking advantage of the less privileged and vulnerable people to enrich themselves.

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LIFE SKILLS & DEVELOPMENT

ESSENTIALS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A NEW PERSONAL COMPUTER



BY BENSON MADZANIRE IN
MILTON KEYNES, UNITED
KINGDOM

The digital boom has seen almost every person owning a computer or planning to own a computer as everything is done online these days.

While the idea of owning a personal computer is a good one, many people do not know what to consider when deciding which computer to buy among the host of brands available on the market.

In this article we will discuss and explain the essentials to consider when one is planning to buy a personal computer.

The first and crucial consideration is speed of the computer. Before purchasing the computer check the processor speed of the computer and the random-access memory. An acceptable minimum processor speed must be 2.0 GHZ and the minimum random-access memory must be 8 gigabytes.

The second important checkpoint is to check whether the computer is compatible with

Benson Madzanire is the Director of Kalahari IT Solutions and Software Quality engineer. He writes on his own capacity.

the latest operation systems for example does the computer work well with windows 11 which is the latest operating system from Microsoft. The other important issue to consider the upgradability of the computer, checking if the computer can be upgraded in future to meet revolving requirements is very important for example the computer must have some free random access memory slot which can be upgraded to increase the speed in future. If the laptop is not upgradable it's not wise to buy it. The other important consideration is the cost of maintenance check the affordability of the parts like screen, motherboard if they are affordable to replace in future when they become fault. If the maintenance is high, you may decide against buying such a computer. Integration of the computer with other devices is important so it will be very advisable to check if the computer has enough USB and HDMI to connect to other peripherals like printers and TVs. On the internet there are reviews from previous buyers of the same computer it's very wise to check those reviews before deciding to purchase the same computer. Those reviews will tell you about the rating for the computer so if the rating is low don't buy and if they are high, you can buy and on the reviews the reviewers point out the weaknesses and strength of the computer which alerts you when you decide to buy the computer. In conclusion it is not advisable to buy a computer like the way we buy groceries whereby we consider price only. When buying a computer consider technical issues first before price.



SOCIAL LIFE

WHEN PEACE REIGNS



in Gweru, Zimbabwe

The once blossoming, youthful, matrimony agonizingly turned sour as tempers flared amid accusations of infidelity and gross mistrust. In a fit of rage, Edward frantically ran amok and butchered his bedroom invader in what was later described by many as gruesome murder. As if he was demon-possessed, and wasn't done, the uncontrollable man also vented his total anger on Sharon (his estranged wife) and tormented her like he was in a boxing ring.

All hell had broken loose. No one was able to restrain this wild guy except watching in vain as he mercilessly tortured his antagonist. After about thirty or so minutes of live action, a dozen of heavily armed cops arrived in a supersonic speed from the local police station and managed to apprehend him albeit after a vigorous struggle. The injured, helpless, victims were rushed to Gweru Provincial Hospital where Sharon's beau was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Casualty Department. Sharon was hastily whisked to the ICU department where the nurses and doctors endeavoured their highest level best to resuscitate her but their efforts were a little less acute.

Honestly and professionally, everything was done to save her life from the impending

peril but to no avail. They tried with bleeding hearts to help her see another day, but hope for survival was very slim. Unfortunately, the woman eventually succumbed an hour later, following the trek which was taken by her partner earlier before.

Edward was subsequently charged with two counts of murder as read with section 47 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23]. He neither denied nor rubbished the allegations when the warned and cautioned statement was recorded from him by the Investigating Officer.

On his initial court appearance, the bloody-killer did not waste time as he readily accepted his charges. He was remanded in custody for the continuation of trial and subsequent sentencing. When the High Court panel from Bulawayo checked on his indictments, two years later, the guy was found guilty of murder with actual intent and sentenced to an effective thirty-year-jail term.

That was the end of his road as he could not sustain the pressure of losing his marriage and the accounting job. After serving a quarter of his sentence at Chikurubi Maximum Prison, where he was detained, Edward was one day found dead in his prison cell by the wardens early in the morning. His death left behind sorrowful memories in

the minds of his relatives who could not really cotton onto the meaning of all these mishaps in their lives.

What am I saying ladies and gentlemen? No matter how grieved you are, try by all means to observe peace, all the times. Yes, your rights may be violated in one way or the other, as you would conclude, but violence should be the last thing to think of. We are human beings who are much better than animals in terms of reasoning. If baboons unite to save each other from the jaws of a cheetah, why can't we do the same? We should use the brain when and where it matters most. The sanctity of human life should be respected. Shedding one's blood, no matter why, is not the ultimate solution to our problems. Peace should always prevail. Where there is peace there is progress. If you have peace of mind, most assuredly you are guaranteed for victory. A peaceful nation has a healthy citizenry. It's not difficult to detect a peaceful family only after seeing the progress it makes. Peace relates to unity, hence the old adage says united we stand but divided we fall.

Let's pray for peace as a nation. Let's encourage unity for the growth

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SOCIAL LIFE



WHEN PEACE REIGNS

and advancement of our universe despite our different nationalities. Gone are the days when people used to rival each other because of their differences in religion, race or creed, tribal background, political affiliation or personal interests. Some people hate each other to the core solely because they vie for different football clubs. Others do not look face to face only because of politics. This should be a thing of the past!

When peace reigns, you have that particular feeling for others. You have that zeal of consideration for others. You don't have any reservations. You don't just jump to ridiculous conclusions

that cost you on the morrow, but rather spare a thought. When you set your mind-set on the foundation of peace, there is no way I can be your enemy even if we view things differently. In fact, it should be borne in mind that everyone is entitled to their own opinions. So there is no need to blast you because you don't support my favourite, boyhood, political party or football team. I should not despise you because you don't go to my church. I should take you as my brother or sister.

Why should you begrudge someone for a long time as if you do not know how to forgive? The word of God says forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. The idea is about promoting peace amongst ourselves. When peace reigns, oneness is enhanced.

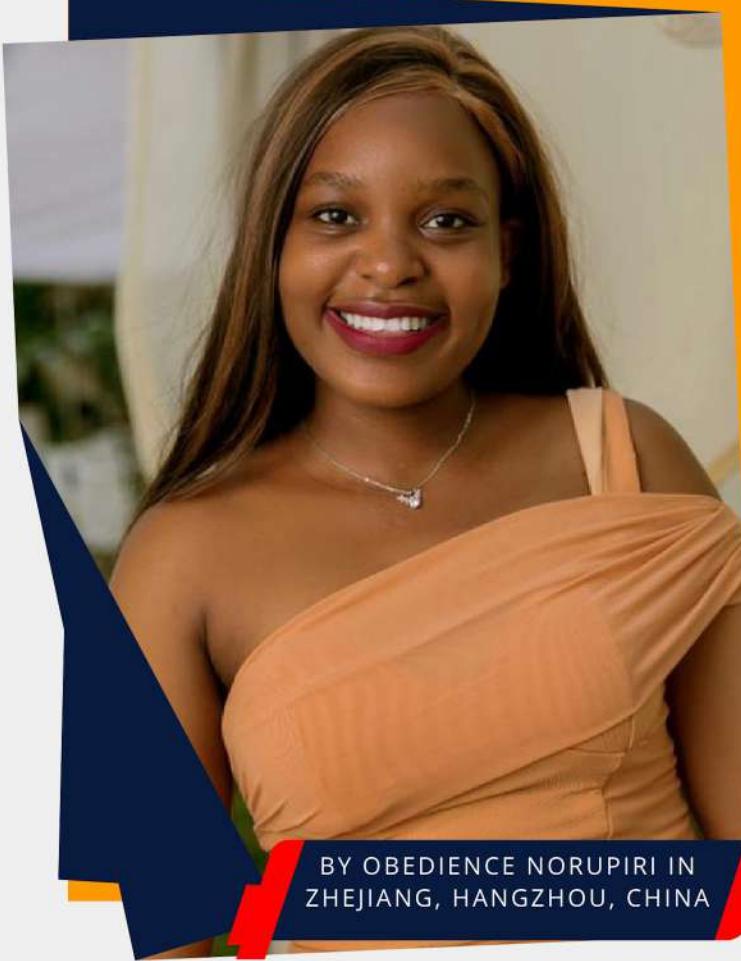
Bear in mind that the moment you flash out peace from your mind, you shall live like a slave, tormenting yourself for ever. The burden you carry will be unbearable. For example, you have to change your way to avoid meeting your enemy coming from the opposite direction. You spend a lot of time worried about that enemy. Yet that time should be used productively. Instead of wasting your time on negative things, you will realize how it works if you promote peace. Definitely, peace opens more prospects in life than shutting the door to your success.

Lastly, ladies and gentlemen, be reminded that peace begins with me, peace begins with you, and peace begins with all of us. Let's preach the gospel of peace wherever we are. Not forgetting that Jesus said: Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called sons of God—Matthew 5:9. May the God of abundance bless you abundantly. Peace be with you! In the Mighty Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



SOCIAL LIFE

PAINS AND PLEASURES OF DIASPORAN LIFE



BY OBEDIENCE NORUPIRI IN
ZHEJIANG, HANGZHOU, CHINA

People from all over the world are living in neighbourhoods, attending the same schools or working at the same companies. These people in transition and change, are frequently more receptive to the gospel.

The Bible commands God's people to take advantage of chances for loving service (John 13:35), proclamation of the gospel in all circumstances (1 Timothy 4:2; Acts 8:4-5), and discipleship (Acts 11:26; Philippians 4:22; Genesis 39:2, 41, and 50:20).

God's people in the host nations as well as in Diaspora groups are being called. These are some of the potential outcomes of the Diaspora's creative ferment.

People are most vulnerable at times of transition because they are also the most in need. In order to fulfil the Biblical command to care for and welcome strangers in our midst, diaspora exposure offers opportunities to satisfy the felt and spiritual needs of

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their new neighbours.

Fellowships and Bible studies have proven to be crucial tools for Christians. Cultures can develop in mutual understanding and Christ-likeness when they interact and communicate with one another. Christians have the chance to connect with their new neighbours and understand their cultures.

The Diaspora communities, on the other hand, may have an impact on the host culture. When people leave nations that are hostile to the gospel, hence they are more receptive.

Walls were constructed rather than demolished. International students may encounter prejudice without support when the church is silent about the weak. The church's unwillingness to cooperate, lack of infrastructure, and sustainability are among the difficulties faced by diaspora churches. Believers from the diaspora are frequently a minority inside a minority. They are a racial minority, and they are a religious minority within their own ethnic group. They could thus be reluctant to share their beliefs with others, especially those from the host culture. Rejection experiences cause a phobia of social interaction and more rejection. Communities in the diaspora frequently have an inward gaze. Cultural ghettos have been created as a result of excessive attempts to preserve cultural identity. Reaching out to underprivileged groups and other ethnic Diasporas is made more difficult for the Diaspora church by its inward-looking behaviour.

Recommendations

It is recommendable for Christians to balance the obligation to spread the gospel with their dedication to religious and moral freedom. We must maintain

SOCIAL LIFE



OBEDIENCE NORUPIRI IN
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CHINA

PAINS AND PLEASURES OF DIASPORA LIFE

both an unwavering devotion to spreading the message of Jesus and an equal commitment to everyone's right to freedom of expression, religion, and conscience.

Christians must emphasize the importance of making a personal and relational commitment to Christ that alters every aspect of their lives, both personally and collectively. A developing Christian will show more and more Christ-like traits, attitudes, and objectives. People with backgrounds in other religions are inclined to believe that becoming a Christian just entails attending church or using the label "Christian." We must present a clear explanation of the gospel and proclaim the truth.

Christians must remain steadfast in their devotion to Christ and proclaim only what is permissible in Scripture within their own family, community, and culture. They must also

respect what is biblically permissible in other cultures. Christ-following is frequently equated with identification. People often believe that following Christ entails relocating to a new community. Efforts must be made to combat this misperception.

Christians must embrace individuals of different religions while reaffirming the singularity of Christ. Christ is exceptional because he has addressed the enduring issue of sin. All are welcome, regardless of background or needs, since He died for all. On the same basis of God's free grace, everyone comes to a saving knowledge of Him.

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BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

LET'S MEDITATE AND REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING BIBLE REFERENCES

JOHN 15:12-17

John 15:12–17, “12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other” (NIV Online Bible Gateway)

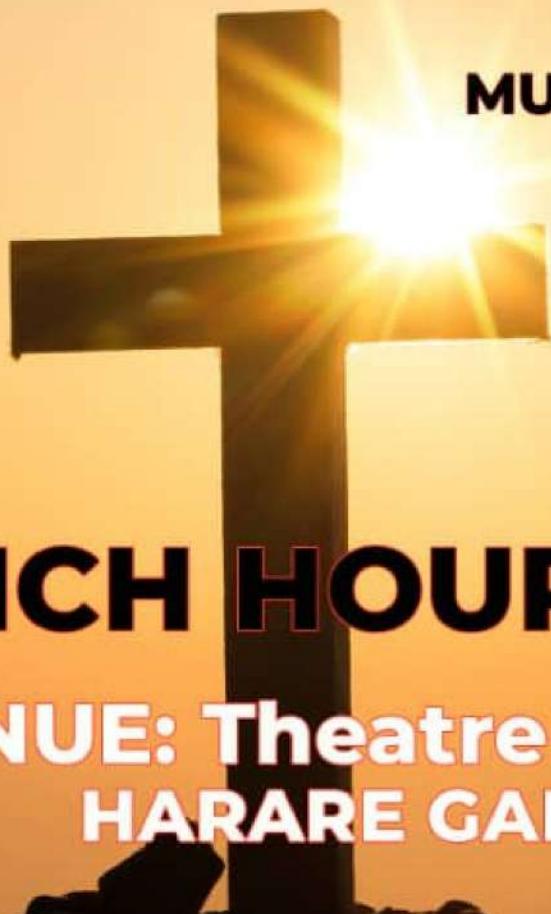
MATHEW 5:13-16

Mathew 5:13–16, “13. You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (NIV Online Bible Gateway).



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
HARARE CITY CENTRE

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LUNCH HOUR PRAYER

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HARARE GARDENS**

**Time: 1300hrs-1400hrs
(Mon-Fri)**

Host: Pst Danie

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