

STUDY 4 SALVATION

GETTING STARTED

We are moving into the New Testament. Christians believe that God gives us a new hope even when all seems lost. A hope not only for ourselves but for the whole of Creation.

“Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are Anger and Courage; Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.” (St Augustine of Hippo) All is not lost: ‘For God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8).

A VIEW FROM MOZAMBIQUE

By the Rt Rev'd Carlos Matsinhe, Bishop of Lebombo

Mozambique's geographical location in the south-eastern part of Africa makes this country very vulnerable to the disasters directly caused by global climate change. In the last 2 decades, the country has been damaged by long severe droughts in the central and southern region, devastating cyclones and almost yearly flooding - especially in the central and northern regions. These claim many lives every year, and completely stifle any possibility of significant economic growth. In 2019, Cyclone Idai severely disrupted the lives of over four million people. To this day, many of them have not been able to reconstruct their damaged houses. Many social structures were destroyed, leaving the people more miserable than before. Poverty and hunger have become chronic despite the resilience of the hard-working rural population. Add political conflict, terrorism and corruption to the disruption caused by the climate and ecological crisis and the future for Mozambique looks gloomy, even though the country is resource rich.

In keeping with the Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission, the Dioceses of Lebombo, Niassa and Nampula are actively addressing the climate and ecological crisis. They involve their members on reformation projects, providing education about resilience, participating in crisis response and working in partnership on climate change advocacy with other national institutions. One small example of the church's work is that all confirmation candidates must plant trees as part of their sacrament. Several youth groups are involved in pollution reduction and tree planting.

We are sure that global measures and policies to address climate injustice will restore the integrity of Creation and enable survival, better living and bring the planet into its full potential as a place blessed by God for all Creation. The powers of the world must stop their greed and irresponsible devastation of natural resources to save the future of the planet for all.



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QUESTIONS

- The Anglican Church in Mozambique is responding in practical ways to the climate and ecological crisis. In what ways is your church dealing with it?
- The fifth Mark of Mission is 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of Creation and renew and sustain the life of the Earth'. In what ways does your church prioritise this?
- The Church of England has an environment programme. How much of this are you familiar with? Could you spend time discovering more about it and implementing suggestions?

For more information, please go to: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change>

ROMANS 8:18-30

- ¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- ¹⁹ For the Creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.
- ²⁰ For the Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope
- ²¹ that the Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.
- ²² We know that the whole of Creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
- ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.
- ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?
- ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.
- ²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.
- ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.
- ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
- ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
- ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

QUESTIONS

- In what ways can we see Creation 'groaning as in childbirth' in the current ecological and climate crisis?
- 'For in this hope we are saved.' What is our hope and how can we achieve it individually and as part of a church community?
- How can we be part of a church that is a living example of equity and inclusion, and a powerful advocate for justice and sharing?

CLOSING PRAYER

Our climate is changing, and we are changing it. We confess our carbon footprints, our failure to consider the consequences of our actions, our slowness to react. We are sorry for all the times we knew the right thing to do but chose convenience instead.

Your Earth is exploited, and we are complicit in its exploitation. Species are lost, soil erodes, fish stocks decline, resources dwindle. We confess that many of us have taken too much, and not considered the needs of future generations.

We have become consumers. We have turned a blind eye to greed. We confess our hunger for more, and our failure to appreciate what we already have. We live in a time of unparalleled luxury, and we are sorry that we have not been more grateful.

The poor are left behind, even in this age of plenty. Human rights are pushed aside for profit. Wealth accumulates for the rich while the poorest still do not have what they need. We confess our apathy to injustice, and our haste in judging others.

This is not who you made us to be. We have not been good caretakers of your garden Earth. We have not loved our neighbours. Forgive us, creator God.

Forgive us. Renew us. Inspire us.

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ACT

Give up your car for a week. Instead walk, cycle or take public transport. If this means that getting to places takes a little bit longer use that time to reflect on what you have learnt over the past 6 weeks.

Put the cost of the petrol you have saved into your Lent Box. ■