

The Anglican Church of Kenya

Charge of the 5th Archbishop of Kenya,

*Presented at All Saints Cathedral Church Nairobi -  
Kenya. 5TH JULY 2009*

The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud W Wabukala  
7/5/2009

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, Hon Mwai Kibaki; the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga; members of the diplomatic corps; Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament; members of the Judiciary; Primate, Archbishops and bishops from the Anglican Communion; Church leaders from other churches; Church Partners; Christians from other churches; Clergy and all ACK faithful gathered here and across the entire Province of Kenya; Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are pleased to greet you in the name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ;

– Bwana Yesu asifiwe

We thank God for this day and the great privilege He has given us to serve in His church. We are also sincerely grateful to all of you gathered here today. We cherish your love, prayers and support.

We are thankful for all the strengths that exist in this church due to the sacrifice and vision of my predecessor Archbishops under whom we have worked, Archbishops David Gitari and Benjamin Nzimbi. We have seen the great gift that Archbishop Gitari brought to the church in organization and advocacy for good governance. Similarly, Archbishop Nzimbi has been awesome especially in promoting evangelism, expanding the mission work of the church and engaging society for social transformation. We are indeed indebted for the faithful work that has been done by many other leaders and workers in the Anglican Church of Kenya. It has helped shape our faith and life, and for that we praise God. We are also thankful for the faithful work of other Christian bodies in and beyond our nation, who have contributed to the success of the ministry of ACK.

The work we feel the Lord is calling us to do can be summarized in the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand as recorded in the Gospel according to St. John Chapter six.

From the story we may draw six principles, which will guide our work in ACK as we seek to fulfill our destiny in Christ.

### **First, God is a God of Compassion and Mercy**

When Jesus fed the multitude He wasn't just motivated to demonstrate a sign of kingdom power; he acted primarily out of compassion and mercy for the people.

### **Second, God is a God of Order**

In creation, God created order out of chaos. Order provides an environment in which the power and provision of God is released. We therefore have to think of order and structure as a way through which God's provision is delivered to His people.

### **Third, God desires Unity of Purpose**

Jesus worked harmoniously with His disciples throughout the event of feeding the multitude. There was good organization and unity of purpose between Jesus and His disciples.

### **Fourth, Leadership must be Strategic and Responsible.**

The concern for the great multitude immediately made Jesus to start strategizing on how to meet their needs. He was proactive. He did not wait until there was unrest or until some people in the crowd started pushing for their needs to be addressed.

#### **Fifth, God desires to use what we have**

God takes what we offer Him in faith and multiplies it to meet our needs according to His divine purposes. The size of the crowd did not overwhelm Jesus. He just made the people sit down and multiplied the meager resources the disciples had to feed five thousand people.

#### **Sixth, God works through Faithful Servants**

The disciples were not the source of this miracle, God was. But, He wants everyone to bear and participate in the ministry of the church, which is to lead people into abundant life in Christ. This is the core business of the church.

**Brothers and sisters, God never changes. He still has the mercy and compassion He had two thousand years ago. His heart is moved by the numerous challenges that afflict His people today. This is why He is calling us to bring good news compassionately to a hurting society.**

#### **The need for Compassion and Mercy is real.**

We have people in our congregations and neighborhoods sleeping hungry due to lack of sufficient food. Some deaths have already been reported, like in the case of a poor woman in Yatta who reportedly died of hunger a few weeks ago just after delivering twins; There are sick men and women in their beds at home because they cannot afford treatment; We have underage children offering their labor or just idling because they cannot afford to be in school; there are thousands of helpless internally displaced persons, wasting away in makeshift camps without adequate food, water and sanitation. They feel marginalized and excluded, with very little hope of ever realizing their dreams and potential like most of us seated in here today.

They need compassion. But, some of us might say these are not members of our church or denomination or even tribe; the political leaders might even argue that they are of little political significance at the moment; **yet, brothers and sisters these are people made in the image of God. God cares for them and in the contradiction of our social political dynamics God is decisively on their side. We must do all we can as a church, as a nation and as a people to ensure that the dignity of all our people is restored and safeguarded.**

#### **The need for Order is also real**

1Cor.14:13 says '*For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.*'

We have lately witnessed high levels of disorder in our society. Far too often we get deceived that we can thrive in the midst of such disorder. Unfortunately disorder can only serve the narrow interests of its propagators but with adverse long lasting consequences for society.

Similarly, we cannot afford to lack order and unity in our Province and in our Anglican Communion as a whole, if we are to deliver on the challenging demands of ministry in an increasingly difficult landscape. Christian churches can no longer afford to be in competition with each other but rather work in synergy with each other to feed the sheep.

Our government also cannot fulfill the aspirations of Kenyans in an environment of disorder. Our national goals as Kenyans will not be realized unless we all unite and work together with zeal to build our beloved nation.

In short, all noble and genuine forces of good must always work together to defeat evil. God is calling us to order. As a church our source of order and real fellowship is rooted in Christ.

### **Our Church and Society also need proactive Leadership that is Strategic and Responsible.**

Fellow Christians and friends, we as a church may think we have taken tremendous steps as revealed by the gains made so far in church growth. However, we believe that God would have us make even more steps by being more proactive and strategic in our leadership.

The worldwide church of Christ needs to place the great commission ahead of personal glory or financial gain. We admonish the leadership of all dioceses in our Province and the Anglican Communion to remain focused on feeding the sheep effectively, with sound doctrine drawn from the timeless truth of the Holy Bible.

Our society has been speaking loudly about sharing of the national cake. However, as much as equitable sharing of the cake is important we need seriously to reflect on whether there is a cake in the first place to be shared. The crises of our land is an inadequate cake for all us. We must refocus our energies towards both equitable distribution as well as a rigorous commitment to production, conservation and economic expansion. This should inform the kind of politics we want, the attitude and culture of work especially for the youth, the quality of laws and lawmakers, as well as issues of peace and security for a stable nation.

On the same note we wish to thank the government for remaining committed to devolve funds to the constituencies. The issue now should be to address the question of effectiveness in the use of the funds even as the government strives to increase the amounts. The ACK's experience over many years of engaging with local communities is that real development can only be realized when there is transformation of the hearts and minds of people. It is imperative therefore, that infrastructural development in the constituencies goes hand in hand with community capacity building. We look forward to a paradigm shift that will see more community involvement in planning, monitoring and implementation of constituency based initiatives. These are areas in which the ACK is willing to share her experiences and avail her grassroots framework for partnership with the government.

**The Anglican Church has learnt a great deal from gathering information about the church and the strategic needs of our society that we can effectively address.**

**We envision a mature, caring church boldly proclaiming Christ. This will be achieved by equipping God's people to reach out and transform society with the gospel of Christ.**

We thank God for helping us to discern the following priorities in our agenda:-

1. **Reforming the church.** The church should always remain relevant in a dynamic societal context without watering down the message of the gospel. We cannot continue to ask the government to reform her governance instruments without the church working to consider reviewing her own structures to match current expectations. In particular we will need to review the church instruments in relation to governance, structure, leadership, worship and sector ministries. This would better enable the church to respond to the needs, tastes and circumstances of not only our faithful but the many seeking God outside the church. We shall also seek to free the church in such a way that all believers including children, youth and the aged play their rightful roles.
2. **Advocacy and National Reforms.** The prophetic ministry of the church is a fundamental role of the ACK. We shall continue to seek engagement with other actors who seek social justice and good governance. The ACK will always hold the government accountable to deliver on promises and obligations to her citizens. In particular we call upon the government to expedite the constitutional review process, resettlement of IDPs and address the Kofi Annan initiated agenda four issues in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Process. We will not shy away from speaking out against social ills or pleading the case of the needy and downtrodden. Nevertheless, we will be faithful in praying for our society and its leaders, and where possible we will support and complement the efforts of government and other players in service delivery. Our church must sustain the education of people on how to demand their rights and to exercise such rights with responsibility.
3. **Healing and Reconciliation.** We are a much wounded society. We have hurt one another in the course of our interaction and fellowship in our churches, our Province, the Anglican Communion as well as in our nation. We call upon all the faithful and Kenyans in general boldly to face and work through our differences in order to build a cohesive religious fraternity and a unified nation. We should promote unity in diversity. When we sit together and talk together, we can always find some common ground. God does not ask us to lay aside principle, but He does ask us to sacrifice some privilege and discretion for the sake of building unity. The unity we should be pursuing should indeed be like that of the three persons of God. The way God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit relate to each other. Their relationship prospers perfectly because it is based **on truth, justice and sacrificial love**. God's unity is perfect because there is no jealousy or maneuvering for power in Him.

However brethren, without **the truth**, unity is at best superficial. At worst it is merely window dressing that is a thin layer of apparent respectability covering situations that are actually toxic. In the Anglican Communion in particular, we are in a state of brokenness because the truth of the scripture has not been upheld in some Provinces. We call on all Anglicans to come together again around the gospel of Jesus Christ.

4. **Promoting mission work.** The intended mission of God into which we are called by Christ Himself is the conversion of the lost; the establishment of the church; stewardship of creation; pastoral care and the worship of God in spirit and truth. It is not enough to speak about the church of tomorrow without programs that will critically address the youth, who form over 68% of the Kenyan population. All people will be made to feel a part of the church and their place affirmed through relevant programs. Our duty to prepare church workers through relevant and adequate training will be high on the agenda.
5. **Growing Resources for Ministry.** We have often grappled with insufficient resources for ministry. However, once we have heard from God what to do, we begin ministry by looking at what is in our hands and offer it to God to multiply, just as He multiplied the loaves and fish to feed so many.

Looking through our institutions and congregations we can always find something to offer God in order to multiply it for His glory. We could offer Him dedicated servant leadership of the bishops; the devoted hearts and selflessness of our clergy; the tremendous intellect, professional skills and faithful service of laity. If we offer this little resource to God in faith and obedience then we shall see God's miracles and His abundance.

6. **Promoting our involvement in education.** We are in a society where our education system has produced many people who seem to have little regard for human life and property. Might it be possible that we have left out values which form an important ingredient in our education planning? Our involvement in education will promote values that seek reconciliation with God, reconciliation with each other and reconciliation with the environment in which we live. We urgently need a curriculum which will promote high moral values and a God fearing society. The ACK will join with other churches that have schools they sponsor, to seek engagement with the Government and other stakeholders in reforming the current school curriculum as an ongoing process. In addition, we request the Government to recognize and support school chaplaincy as a standard and integral part of our learning institutions. The ACK and other sponsoring churches are keen to work with the government to prepare, second and support chaplains once a facilitative framework with commensurate incentives is in place.
7. **Spearheading Social Transformation:** The ACK has 9 Christian Community Service (CCS) regions spearheading social transformation at the grassroots. We do this through community mobilization and capacity building for empowerment. The CCS model of the ACK is a shining example of sustainable development that is driven

by community participation and ownership. We shall continue to encourage programs which will enhance food security; good health and wholeness; disaster risk reduction; water and environmental conservation; climate change awareness and adaptation. The church will also step up the fight against HIV and AIDS. We shall continue to contribute towards the achievement of Kenya's vision 2030 as well as the UN Millennium Development Goals.

### **All Saints' Cathedral Diocese**

The responsibility of being the Archbishop of Kenya includes being the Bishop of All Saints' Cathedral Diocese. We are grateful to our predecessors for laying the foundation for ministry in this diocese. As we begin to serve, we are aware of the diverse needs of the membership of different congregations. Our national and international duties may appear to detract our attention in the diocesan service. We shall however endeavour to brainstorm with all the parties involved and ensure the diocese gets its rightful attention and pastoral oversight.

As we come to the city, we are also aware that the dynamics of congregational worship are changing. There are challenges posed by new expressions of faith. We shall therefore encourage Christian nurture for all age groups.

Most of the congregations in this diocese are found in the informal settlements, while the other part is found in the more affluent part of the city. Our Christians are confronted by a combination of material and moral poverty. This makes the context of mission very demanding. In order to overcome these challenges, we shall endeavour to strengthen our congregations by encouraging them to partner in mission. We shall specifically encourage the All Saint's Cathedral church to do all they can to be the epi-centre of mission in the Diocese, the ACK and the Anglican Communion as a whole.

Christians who are willing to share their talents, gifts and professional skills are our greatest resource. We shall seek to motivate and encourage effectiveness in this diocese by promoting faithfulness in service and good stewardship. We shall seek to interactively sharpen the skills of everyone who is involved in church ministry. This will enable us to work as a team as we play our roles in Christ's vineyard.

The All Saints' Cathedral Diocese has initiated mission outreach outside the city of Nairobi. We believe time is ripe for a keen listening, engagement, which will be prayerful, so that our Lord may guide us on how to take this work into the next level effectively and sustainably.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we continue to marvel at Christ's strategy in using so little to feed the five thousand, informed by His compassion and mercy for the crowds.

While the ACK under our charge will undertake all the mentioned initiatives we invite us to pray that God quickens our sensibilities. We invite our political leaders to demonstrate ever more explicitly that they are aware of the cries, needs and concerns of the ordinary *mwananchi* and are acting on them.

Church leaders at all levels need to identify with the words of Micah 6:8, *'And what does God require of you?; To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'*.

We all therefore must embrace compassion, humility and service without unhealthy competition in a new paradigm of alternative lifestyle and leadership.

Like Jeremiah let us all hold to this one promise; *'for I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'*.

May God bless you all.

**In the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – AMEN.**