

THE UNITED CHURCH OF ZAMBIA

MISSION AND EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT

**UNVEILING THE 2023 THEME: UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND
WHAT TO DO, 1 CHRONICLES 12:32**

Advent greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The United Church of Zambia through its strategic plan has in the recent past adopted a systematic way of embracing Common themes Nationwide that runs for two years with the objective of emphasizing Mission focus and encourage a sense of corporate image. We have had in the recent past themes like; **Revive thy work Oh Lord, Seeking the Church Transformed, Thus Far the Lord has Brought us** and from 2021-2022, we had ridden on the theme, **All One In Christ** which is now our official Tag line.

As we unveil the theme; **UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES AND WHAT TO DO, 1 CHRONICLES 12:32** in our Congregations, we request our Lord Bishops to find a Sunday in January, 2023 where the launch would be done while the rest of the Congregations in their Presbytery will give reflections on the same and launch it for the benefit of all the members of the Church. It is expected that, the following few details may add to the content and context of the reflections as you launch the theme for 2023.

This theme is asking us to read the signs of our time, to understand the needs of the time, the mandate, but more so our relevance as a Church. It is our prayer that, we will continue to discern the voice of God as we run with this theme.

To effectively do Mission, we must understand our mission field, barriers, threats and opportunities. In light of these realities, a critical in-look at the potential we have, our strength, our brand and strategic positioning as a National Church with a rich historical missionary presence and the philosophy on which National unity was founded-**ALL ONE IN CHRIST** and many more provide advantages that must be utilized to evangelize the Nation and beyond and do mission holistically.

Mission as God's activity in and through humanity affects the whole of creation and must be understood as an act of grace. Since mission is ultimately initiated, guided and fulfilled by God, the role of Christians who participate in this mission is to believe that, they have been called by God to fulfill the task of Evangelism. There is need to audit our context through the lenses of the community and apply our faith practically to what God is saying and will do for and through His people to bring about total societal transformation.

CORPORATE IMAGE OF THE UCZ

The United Church of Zambia is a community of Faith that believes in the unity of the Triune God-the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit but it also retains aspects of a living organism that has its own identity and corporate image. It is envisaged that the Vision, Mission statement and Core Value should be printed and displayed in offices, posters and Wall Fences at our premises and institutions.

The following spell out our corporate image and mandate:

(i) **THE VISION OF THE UCZ**

The Total Salvation of Humanity with Spiritual Restoration and Physical wellbeing fully reconciled in Christ the only Savior.

(ii) **THE MISSION STATEMENT**

The United Church of Zambia is committed to spreading the Good News of Salvation to the Zambian people and all Nations in fulfillment of Christ's Mission to the World.

(iii) **THE CORE VALUES**

- (a) Worship of God in Truth and in Spirit.
- (b) Intentionally member- focused and empowering local courts of the Church.
- (c) Uncompromising contextual and respect for environment and climate.
- (d) Strategic Ecumenical partnership.
- (e) Respect for human dignity, rights, economic and social justice

It must be noted and emphasized Synod Bishop and members of this Synod Council that, the above **Vision, Mission Statement and Core Values** of this great Church must be popularized and displayed on bill boards at our Congregations, Institutions and our Offices at our various Church courts.

Here are some areas that we should continue to prayerfully asses in our various contexts:

1. **REMAINING TRUE TO OUR CALLING AND AUTHENTIC IN OUR MANDATE:**

Each one is called to reflect on why we came in the Church, what God wanted us to accomplish for Him through us and how faithful we are to that calling, make your calling and election sure. While education, exposure and growth could play a part in our development, we cannot accuse God of changing His ultimate goal for us-our true calling to mission and ministry.

2. **HEALTH AND RELIGION**

HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Hypertension, Diabetes, Covid-19, life style diseases and many more are still killing our people and God still calls the Church to heal the world.

3. **CHURCH AND POLITICS**

The Church is yet to arm itself with sufficient muscle and stamina to offer alternatives to militarization of politics, review of public order act and interact with global politics that continue to shadow box our sovereignty as a Nation.

4. **CHURCH AND CLIMATE JUSTICE**

Our planet continues to lament for gross destruction without mercy with no hope of renewal and restoration and yet it is the mother and sustainer of our survival.

5. **CHURCH AND WEALTH CREATION**

Time has come for the Church to venture into serious wealth creation for transformational mission. To pretend we don't need the money is being hypocritical, but the integrity of how to acquire that wealth and how much is enough is a moral question for reflection. However, change management and mindset shift is a must if the Church will endeavor to evangelism and offer alternatives to human suffering.

6. **CHURCH AND TECHNOLOGY**, e.g.

Social Media-any organization that ignores an investment into technological advancement, capacities and equipment is preparing itself to be extinct tomorrow. Regulation, permission gates and security logging must be promoted to make both the physical online church rich and meaningful.

7. **CHURCH AND SUICIDE**

Our pastoral counseling techniques are called to the fore, people go through a lot of stress that may not require mere prayers, but counseling that makes their minds clear, armed to solve their own problems and engage into activities that turn around their lives for better.

8. **CHURCH AND ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Whilst maintaining old strategic ecumenical partnerships which have so far helped the Church, there is need to venture into new ecumenical partnerships for specific mission goals both for short and long term strategies e.g. ZNBS.

9. **CHURCH AND PROPHETIC MINISTRY, E.G. ADVOCACY**

The Church must aim not only to speak for the voiceless, but to give the voiceless a voice to speak for themselves and design their own agenda. No one can emancipate another unless the oppressed free themselves. To be authentic, relevant and prophetic, we must invest into research

10 **CHURCH AND YOUTH**

The global reality, internet exposure, information overload demands for the Church to pay attention to the youth and children ministry critically. Their value system, culture, beliefs and faith demand a reprogramming. We are losing the young generation slowly, but surely, one can only imagine the caliber of the generation that will take over the Church tomorrow.

11 THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO EMERGING ISSUES E.G. GREEN ECONOMIES AND LGBTQ

The Church ought to promote Green economies by being such an example in its dealings, and also to theologically reflect on such issue. Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgender Questioning (LGBTQ) is another issue which the Church must not ignore, but engage is not with without being bias and state it solid belief. What will happen the day the state will decide to permit such orientations, what will be our message.

12 CHURCH AND GENDER

We must appreciate that, there are many impediments that lay along the corridors of gender and if left unchecked could lead to the suffering of a particular gender. Reflections around matters of leadership, economic justice, equal opportunities, leveling the playing field, how and when to engage and generally empowerment should become matters of interest to the Church informed by deep Biblical and theological reflections and critical analysis of dominant cultures.

13 CHURCH AND FINANCE

The Church is called to re-look at its understanding and position over finances especially in view of the growing giving fatigue among our members. The demands for mission will continue to increase hence the need to enhance our capacity through alternative and sustainable investments. The Church must take the bull by its horns and sometimes be ready to lose in order to gain. Ordinary traditional means of raisings finds may not ultimately sustain the cost of doing mission.

14 SPECIAL DAYS AND SUNDAY SERMON OUTLINES WRITE-UPS

Please note that, the sub-themes and the readings have been provided on the 2023 Lectionary for write-ups. You may only provide your own where the sub-themes and bible readings are not indicated.