



EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI

I pray that they will all be one » John 17:21

A CALL FOR DECISIVE, ETHICAL, SELFLESS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MALAWI

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (Philippians 2: 3-4)

2018
PASTORAL LETTER

ENGLISH

1 PREAMBLE

Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) is an umbrella mother body of 68 Church denominations and 58 Christian organisations in Malawi. EAM has a mission to unite, mobilise and empower churches and Christian organisations for effective and efficient holistic (spiritual and social) transformation of the people of Malawi. We therefore seek to promote greater and effective church's participation in the public arena as the light and salt of the society in addressing ethical, peace, governance and justice concerns so that people live dignified lives to the glory of God.

In view of the above, it should be highlighted that this Pastoral Letter is addressing members of EAM, acknowledging that most members are actively involved in the public and political space of our nation.

2 INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the Evangelical Association of Malawi hereby issue this pastoral letter titled: “A call for decisive, ethical and selfless leadership in Malawi” to all the member Churches and Organisations of the Association.

This letter is aimed at highlighting the major issues that have positively and negatively affected our nation. It recognises that the quality of leaders has a strong bearing on the progress of any people.

3 CRITICAL ISSUES

The Pastoral letter therefore focuses on the following critical issues:-

3.1 The fight against Corruption in Malawi

We would like to remind all our member churches that corruption is evil. God hates corruption. It is therefore our Christian responsibility to resist and uproot corruption in whatever form in our society. This is our biblical mandate.

We are aware that implementation of corruption prevention programs as well as capacity building for institutional integrity committees in the public sector; and the adoption of a comprehensive legal, policy, and institutional framework are some of the progressive steps towards eradication of corruption in the country. There has been an effort to deal with corruption as the courts have been moved to handle corruption cases. We also appreciate the efforts and the role of several parliamentary committees in providing checks and balances.

While we appreciate the above stated developments, we observe that the fight against corruption on the part of political leadership has been wanting. There has been more rhetoric than real action. Political will is critical if corruption is to be dealt with completely in our society. The Executive arm of Government must therefore take the lead spearheading the anti-corruption drive in the country leaving no sacred cows. Adequate resources must be deployed to institutions, which are in the fore front fighting corruption such as ACB and the Financial Intelligence Agency.

3.2 Access to Information Law

We commend the current government for ensuring that the Access to Information legislation is enacted and assented. However, the continued delay to operationalise it is a source of concern. It is in this regard that we urge the government through the Minister of Information to fully support the Malawi Human Rights Commission, which is responsible for the implementation of this bill in ensuring that all necessary measures including the guidelines are put in place.

3.3 Electoral Reforms

We observe with grave dismay how the government systematically frustrated the passing of the electoral reform bills in parliament recently. One of such bills include the 50%+1 system of electing the President. These bills were meant to address some gaps identified in the past electoral processes as far as attainment of free and fair, credible elections are concerned. They were drafted through Consultative process facilitated by a Special Law Commission on the review of Electoral Laws established for this sole purpose. This Law Commission did extensive national wide consultations across the country building on the recommendations from the Constitutional Reviews of 2004 and 2007.

The shooting down of these reform bills is therefore a great insult on the people of Malawi who had invested so much resources and energy in the drafting of the same. It also seriously threatens the future of our democracy in this country, as it dashes hopes of ever having a credible electoral process in this country with the current inadequate electoral systems.

We therefore call upon all Malawians to once again, for the sake of the future of our children, demand the re-tabling of the Electoral bills in Parliament for reconsideration. Any Government that does not support this cause is therefore not a promoter of good governance and democracy in this country.

3.4 The Conduct of Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)

Since the transition to multiparty democracy, MBC as a public broadcaster has always been a partisan machinery, even after the establishment of MACRA as a broadcasting regulator. We are concerned with the conduct of the taxpayers funded broadcaster, which continues to be a ruling party platform to unleash propaganda against the critics of the regime including the Opposition, Civil Society and at times even faith leaders.

We therefore call upon the Executive arm of Government, through the Ministry of Information to which MBC directly reports, to immediately release MBC to operate independently and professionally benefiting all Malawians, without any political interference.

3.5 Homosexuality and Abortion

There is a global movement worldwide for governments to legalise same sex relationships and abortion. EAM will continue to state in uncompromising ways the following truths: that the union between man and woman is the basic unit of our society; that marriage and sex is Biblically between man and woman within the confines of marriage; that life begins at conception; and that there is nothing like 'safe abortion', as killing is killing. We will not relent in reminding the leaders to be decisive in standing up for life and family.

The laws of Malawi, in the current form, consider homosexuality and abortion illegal. We therefore request our political leaders to come up very clear upholding the Constitution of the land, and not being ambiguous, thus confusing the masses.

3.6 Protection of persons with albinism

We appreciate the efforts government is making on the protection of persons with albinism including the development of the National Action Strategy. However, we demand more action for government to translate this strategy into action in view of the continued killings of persons with albinism. EAM applauds the security agencies for the recent arrests of people implicated in the killings of persons with albinisms. We appeal

to our judiciary and all the relevant security arms of our Government to expeditiously deal with these cases in our courts in the best interest of justice.

3.7 Political violence and intimidation

Following the transition into multiparty democracy, it has been the expectation of every Malawian that political violence would be history and that there would be tolerance among people of diverging political views.

EAM has noted with grave dismay, the nasty incident at the Parliament Building on 4th May 2018, where some members of parliament were allegedly harassed and a Times journalist was assaulted. This happened at the official opening of Parliament in the full view of the Security agents. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, no arrest has been made. This in our view is a public embarrassment to the Head of State and government and other foreign dignitaries present. This is unheard of and unprecedented in the history of our beloved nation since independence in 1964.

These developments are worrisome especially now as we prepare for the 2019 Tripartite General Elections. We want to emphasise that the whole essence of democracy is the accommodation and celebration of different political views and opinions. This is what Malawians chose when they embraced multi party governance in 1994.

While we join many other concerned Malawians in condemning such as acts of violence that brought disorder in our August house, it is wise and proper that DPP, as a political party, should apologise for causing such an embarrassment to the whole nation and our State President, who during the occasion, was disturbed twice in his national duty of delivering the State of the Nation Address.

We further call upon all Malawians to desist from any form of violence before, during and after the coming Elections. We further request that

the police and all the security agents will carry out their duties freely and professionally without any undue pressure or intimidation from any politician or grouping.

3.8 Education

Although Government has publicly committed itself to provision of high quality education, we note with concern the poor quality of education in primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This has been characterised with the increase in private schools and private Colleges of higher learning-where education quality has greatly been compromised. For example, there is serious out cry for the lack of infrastructure such as classroom space, and teaching and learning materials, persistent shortage of teaching personnel, and chronic inadequate funding that is exacerbated by corruption.

It must be emphasised that education is a prerequisite for any meaningful and sustainable development process for any given country. EAM therefore would like to see the Government prioritising the development of education in this country starting from early childhood education to Tertiary institutions.

3.9 Health

Government has clear health policies that are aimed at improving the health delivery system to citizens in the country. Health is key to enjoyment of right to life of every human being.

EAM notes with concern the continuous lack of drugs, equipment and health personnel across the country's health facilities. Additionally, there is lack of health infrastructures across the country. The majority of the rural masses can hardly access health facilities.

We appeal for increase of funding to hospitals and good management of the same. We further urge Government to adopt watertight security procedures in all our health facilities to prevent theft of drugs.

3.10 Substance and Drug Abuse

EAM is equally concerned with the degree of drug and substance abuse in the society. Such and abuse is detrimental to the future of the youth and therefore negatively affect development of our land. Drug abuse will also destroy families and the mental health of our nation.

EAM appeals to the church to be vigilant on predators and report them to authorities. The church should also provide the necessary counselling and rehabilitation for the affected.

The law needs to take its course on this issue, with an expectation that there should be no selective application of the law.

3.11 Tribalism and Nepotism

While we appreciate the rise of the tribal groups for cultural identification of any people, the practice of favouring leaders' relatives and clones into public positions without required qualifications, experience and skills has become a common practice and a huge impediment to right to participation to development of the nation. This trend has been on the increase since the coming of multiparty democracy in the country and has seriously worsened in the recent past.

EAM condemns nepotism, tribalism and regionalism as evils that are cancerous and damaging to our unity as Malawians. We call for merit in recruitment of people in public institutions without any discrimination or bias. Malawi belongs to us all, irrespective of race, gender, tribe or religion.

4 CHARGE TO MEMBERS

4.1 Remain prayerful

We therefore urge the churches to remain prayerful. Asking the Lord to forgive us and heal our land. Asking the Lord to have mercy on our nation and take Malawi through a path of progress and prosperity for all. (Jeremiah 33:6).

4.2 Participate in the political and public space

We further encourage, men and women, and young people with integrity to take up positions of leadership in party politics. We believe the Lord will bless our nation with a God fearing, selfless, and servant leadership. (Matthew 5:13-14)

4.3 Spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice

We call Malawians to learn to love our country and be ready to sacrifice for the sake of the common good. This spirit of patriotism, as demonstrated by our founding political leaders in the sixties and seventies, is seriously lacking in our midst. The consequences have manifested in many ways increase the increase in corruption, destruction of public infrastructure, nepotism and politically motivated violence. (Nehemiah 1:4)

4.4 2019 Tripartite Elections

Guided by the Word of God, we ask the membership to consider what the Lord stated in Deuteronomy 17:14-20

- 4.3.1 *We charge all members to participate in the electoral process to choose their leaders: Participating in an election is DUTY and a Constitutional right of every Malawian (Deut.17:14)*
- 4.3.2 *We charge members to vote for godly leaders in all positions of authority: - Ward councillors, Members of Parliament and Presidency (Deut.17:15)*
- 4.3.3. *We charge members to discern and vote for selfless leaders (Deut.17:16)*
- 4.3.4 *We charge members desist from voting for greedy and selfish leaders (Deut.17:17)*
- 4.3.5 *We charge members to vote for leaders who will promote biblical principles and values (Deut.17:18)*
- 4.3.6 *We charge members to vote for God-fearing and transformational leaders (Deut.17:19)*
- 4.3.7 *We charge members to vote for leaders who will be committed to the rule of law and good governance (Deut.17:20)*
- 4.3.8 *We charge all member clergy to remain nonpartisan, and not*

*allow to be used or influenced by politicians and their agents
(2 Chron. 18:12-20)*

*4.3.9 We charge all member clergy desist from abusing Scriptures or the
gift of Prophecy with a view of getting favours from politicians
(2 Chron.18: 12-20)*

*4.3.10 We charge the youth to desist from political violence and party
exploitation of any form (1 Timothy 4:12)*

5 CONCLUSION

EAM observes that while there have been some few promising signs in as far as improving the state of democratic governance in the country is concerned, there have also been some gaps. The overall picture, however, seems to be mostly negative in a sense that Malawi is sliding back to bad governance. The situation is further worsened by the lack of decisive, ethical and selfless transformative leadership in strategic positions of authority and influence at all levels in our country.

We encourage the church and all Malawians to continue practicing active and responsible citizenship. We should all demand accountability of duty bearers at all levels to ensure that the issues raised herein are addressed.

Lastly, we ask all member churches of EAM to continue praying for our country, especially as we approach the tripartite elections, and to register and vote wisely in May 2019. We strongly believe that through prayer and voting, the nation will have decisive, ethical, selfless and transformational leaders.

God bless and prosper Malawi our beloved nation and keep it a land of peace.

Signed by:



Rev. Dr. Chatha Msangaambe
BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Signed by:



Rev. Francis Mkandawire
GENERAL SECRETARY