



## Manicaland Ecumenical Election Covenant

The Christian community in Manicaland, under the umbrella body of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, is praying for and expects to see a free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible election process in 2018. Like the Prophet Isaiah we long **'to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour'** (Isaiah 61verse 2) in Zimbabwe.' But first we believe that the nation must come to terms with itself, its past and with the factors that have spawned poverty, violence, polarisation, oppression and injustice. The 2018 elections present an important opportunity for the nation to do so, if only, we unite and rally together to **'let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream'** (Amos 5 verse 24). Presently our hearts are troubled by the suffering of the majority of our people. Yet in our spirit we are simultaneously hopeful that there shall be times of refreshing and restoration. To this end, our role as highlighted in this Covenant is not only to pray but to advance the goal of a free, fair, transparent, peaceful and credible election through prayerful action.

### To fellow Christians

- We urge you to prayerfully participate in ongoing election processes. Your voices matter.

### To fellow Citizens

- We plead for tolerance. We long to see politics sustained by the free and constructive exchange of different views including those we differ with or are opposed to.
- We ask Politicians not to compel, hire or coerce our young people to participate in political violence or any actions that disrupt the social cohesion of our communities. We are prepared to actively de-campaign any politicians found promoting or facilitating violence, sexual abuse, sabotage and vandalism of public/private property.

### To Political Parties

- We are tired of political parties who come into our communities to sow the seeds of division, polarisation, intolerance and hate.
- We are also tired of patriarchal male dominance in our politics which essentially serves to marginalise the voices and interests of women and girls who are the majority of our potential. We therefore encourage gender parity in the allocation of political opportunities and resources within political parties.
- We long for a more people-centred politics that exalts unity over differences, policies over personalities, capabilities over connections and ideas over force.
- We remind all political parties along with the word of God: 'whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things' (Philippians 4 verse 8).
- We encourage political parties, as they craft their political manifestos and campaign promises, to prioritise: economic frameworks that stimulate growth whilst unlocking the potential of the informal sector and creating jobs for our young people; urgent actions to address the scourge of corruption in all our Institutions; practical steps to give women and girls fairer access to resources, opportunities and public services; laws and policies to give communities greater access and control of their own natural resources and robust reforms to help our local councils to improve social service delivery.
- We expect to see sufficient safeguards and measures to prevent and address inter and intra party violence. We also hope that all parties will bring to account any of their members found guilty of violent conduct.

### To aspiring candidates

- We prefer candidates with: clear ideas about how we can recover our stolen diamond revenue; how we can improve social service delivery; how we can create secure jobs for our young people; and how we can improve the declining standard of living for women and girls as well as other vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses particularly cancer.

### To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

- We pray for you to be and to remain independent, non-partisan, professional and devoted to your constitutional mandate. May God give you strength and wisdom in carrying out this difficult task of managing our electoral processes.
- We expect you to: announce election results not more than 72 hours after elections have closed; ensure that all political parties are represented at all polling stations and to advertise all polling stations in advance so that people know in advance where they will be voting.

### To the Media

- We prefer that you report fairly, without fear, favour or prejudice.
- We request you to create inclusive platforms for non-censored public dialogue and debates so that the electorate can make informed decisions about their voting preferences.
- We ask our public broadcasters to grant equal access to public media to all political parties.

### To the Judicial Courts of Law

- We ask for the establishment of Special Electoral Courts to deal with electoral issues expeditiously- issues such as punishing of political offenders who engage in violence and intimidating people.

'Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you' (1Corinthians 13 verse 11).

### For further information or clarification please contact

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