



Masvingo Ecumenical Election Covenant

Christians from various churches in Masvingo imagine Zimbabwe's future as that of a God-fearing nation. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29 verse 11). We therefore pray for Zimbabwe to become a nation of laws guided by the constitution; an equal society with not much difference between the rich and the poor; a safe home for our women and girls to thrive unhindered; a land of peace and unity where we solve problems without resort to violence; a prosperous country with enough food and work for all to live well and a blessed place in which we are free to worship and perform Christian service. As we embark on a democratic electoral process to choose the men and women whom the nation shall task to lead, we pray for peace to prevail and for wisdom to make the right choices. We realise that the world is watching, our people are expectant and others like the biblical Sanballat cannot help but wonder, **"What are those feeble Zimbabweans doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"** (Nehemiah 4 verse 2). The work of nation building and economic recovery requires us to have a peaceful, free and fair election.

To those seeking public office:

We ask that in your manifestos and policy frameworks you consider:

- Practical plans to facilitate the alignment of all our laws to the Constitution.
- Decisive action against corruption. This could include legal frameworks and policies to compel elected and appointed public officials to declare their assets before assuming office and account for funds that they receive or use during their term of office.
- Restoration of the honour and dignity of public office. We want to see practical safeguards to prevent Public Officials from using public office to serve personal, political party or any other interest outside of their constitutional mandates at taxpayers' expense.
- Fairer distribution of the nation's material riches, natural resources and economic opportunities to benefit not only the rich and powerful but all Zimbabweans who call this land home. We want to see laws and policies to compel all mining companies in this province to account for their mandatory contributions to Community Share Ownership Trusts. In addition we want to see measures to ensure that mining companies together with other corporations do more to develop the communities in which they operate and reverse the environmental damages caused by their operations.
- A more efficient Road Network and Infrastructural Development. We would like to see strategies to ensure the urgent dualisation of Masvingo Road, the refurbishment of Masvingo Airport and improvement of water and sanitation infrastructure.

To Political Parties:

- We believe that all aspiring political parties and candidates must be given room to campaign freely without repression. Likewise, political parties themselves must put in place measures to insure internal democratic practice and effective sanctions against party members found guilty of perpetrating violence.
- We strongly favour Parties and candidates who make effective commitment towards realizing a balanced society that values women and advocates for girl child empowerment. We also support the call for an increased quota representation of women in parliament and gender parity in the allocation of cabinet posts.
- We would appreciate live television debates on national development and governance issues to help us compare the plans and policies of at least five of the leading aspiring presidential candidates.
- We call upon all political parties to remove the numerous barriers that prevent talented women and girls from assuming political office. We urge you to do your utmost to ensure gender parity in the allocation of campaign opportunities, resources and platforms.

To the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission:

- We pray for all ZEC Commissioners and employees to remain Independent, non-partisan, fair, objective and transparent.
- We ask for democratic and acceptable mechanisms to raise the threshold for political parties intending to contest in future.
- We ask for a detailed Election Calendar and access to electoral information such as location of polling centers, voters roll, voter registration data and voting timeslots.

To the Media:

- We ask all media houses to accord all political parties equal access to media coverage.
- We prefer a professional public media that reports fairly and objectively without fear, favor, prejudice or bias. The truth shall set us free.

To our Security Services:

- We encourage you to remain professional, disciplined and non partisan at all times.
- We expect that members of the Zimbabwe National Army will remain stationed in their barracks during election time.
- We do not expect to see unnecessary roadblocks, curfews or state of emergencies by the security sector during election period.

To our Traditional Leaders:

- We look up to you to safeguard and uphold our traditional values, cultural unity and strong sense of community.

To fellow Christians:

- We expect all church spaces to remain neutral and non-partisan in nature so that all Zimbabweans in need can utilize the church as a refuge and safe space to be heard.
- We encourage all Christians in Masvingo to support and contribute to church-led processes to observe and monitor electoral processes.

'This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances.'" (Isaiah 49 verse 8).

For further information or clarification please contact

Reverend Siwela

Chairman

Masvingo Minister Fraternal

0771266102

