

Strategic Plan for Growing the Church in the Diocese of Niassa: 2010-2015

God has been working in a new way in the Diocese of Niassa in Northern Mozambique!
Great organic growth has occurred in the last 5 years:

Congregations have grown from 250 to about 500

Parishes have grown from 20 to 30

Numbers of priests have risen from 18 to 45

Archdeaconries have grown from 4 to 5

Church members have grown from 30,000 to about 60,000

Mother's Union members have grown from 110 to 230

From 1 staff member, a diocesan structure has been put in place

There is hope that this growth will continue, with God's grace and help, for the next three years, and that our members will double from 60,000 to 90,000, with catechists needing to increase from 600 to 900.

Four challenges have arisen:

1. The urgency to provide good discipling to new adults and new leadership (both male and female) to congregations and small groups to sustain this growth
2. The need to move from organic to strategic church growth with limited resources, allowing for the strategic to build around the organic growth.
3. The necessity to teach, right from the birth of each new congregation, what it means to be church:
 - Servant leadership
 - All member mutual ministry: the seeking, using and stewardship of our gifts
 - Integrated mission: to be church is to be reaching out.
4. The need to train priests in their choice of local leaders (men and women), and to understand the characteristics of a godly leader.

In order to cope with further growth, these challenges need to be addressed through training at every level: at diocesan level, training of the trainers for the local parish level is needed, so that our grass-roots momentum is supported within the diocesan structures and organization. The training programme should address all four of the above challenges, with 'Rooted in Jesus' as the discipleship material and within the diocesan vision of our direction

into 'a communion of communities in Christ Jesus' and the development of Small Christian Communities. At the foundation of our training is the belief that every member, whether male/female or young/old, is called into full participation of church life, and that bridges need to be crossed between clergy and VIDA groups, ministry and mission. We want to involve the whole community in the life of the church, and paint mission as part of the personality of the community. If we only look at Sundays as the day of our participation as church, then we are not being church in that place. And, if each member was to bring one more member per year to their church community, the growth would be phenomenal for the church and for the upliftment of communities as we all join in with what God is doing where we are!

Action plan:

Presently, the diocese has about 600 lay readers (catechists). These numbers will need to grow alongside the church growth, so that after three years our diocese will have 900 catechists trained as trainers in their communities.

To train the trainers over a three year period, our 30 priests in 30 parishes need to be given the materials and confidence to train in areas of 'Rooted in Jesus', VIDA, leadership, Anglicanism and church structure, evangelism, church growth, trauma healing, Diocesan vision, sacraments, liturgy, preaching, stewardship, servant leadership and gender. Our priests can then pass on their training to their parish catechists. These trainings will take place in annual 30 day trainings in Lichinga.

With the priests motivated as trainers in this way, the archdeacons will become the supervisors and managers of the trainers in each district, with monitoring, evaluation and resourcing by the Diocesan Director of Ministry.

Funding:

Travel costs for participants in Lichinga training centre: 2000 mts per person, so 60,000 mts for 30 participants.

Each course to be for 30 participants for one month annually, at 100 mts per person per day, so one course will cost 90,000 mts total.

The provision of a bike (approx US\$100 each), a Bible and a Prayer Book will need to be supplied to each catechist, though the parishes will be asked to pay for half the cost of the bike. Diocesan monitoring and evaluation visits to the districts, administrative costs and production of manuals will also need support, as outlined in the proposed budget.

The communities will contribute to these costs by financing their meetings and travels at parish level, as well as raising half the cost of the bikes. Each parish faces a different reality, so the manner of training will vary. Those priests working in any of the new and vast parishes, such as Mecanhelas, Milange, Mongue, Molumbo, Mecuba, Mecuburi, Shire, Tete,

Morrupula, Malema and Murrumbala, cover distances in their one parish equal to the distance of the entire Lakeshore (the older, established part of our Diocese), and may have as many churches in their one parish as the Lakeshore has in its ten parishes. The Lakeshore parishes are also expanding as priests take hold of the Diocesan vision. The support needed for each varies. One priest may need to travel more frequently to meet, so will require fuel for his motorbike; another may have to accommodate parish members overnight; another, in one of the newer areas of the diocese, may have to contribute more to the initial provision of Bibles and Prayer books.

Desired Outcome:

- 30 priests as trainers for 30 parishes over three years
- Each trainer will systematically train the catechists within their parish following the training session in Lichinga
- Our 5 archdeacons will be trained to supervise, manage and report on the work of the priests in their districts
- 900 catechists will be trained in 3 years to reach and teach 90,000 members
- At least 10% of the trained catechists will be women after the three years of training, and 5 women will be identified for vocational training
- The Director of Ministry will visit each district once a year for monitoring and evaluation, resourcing, training the trainers in their context, and liaise with the Archdeacons as the supervisors of this district work.

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