

ALMA SUNDAY: 15th July 2007

2007 has been a very eventful year in the life of our link – the first two months brought terrible torrential rains and flooding to Southern Africa, taking life, and destroying harvests and homes in Angola and Mozambique. The incidence of malaria, already a huge burden, increased in proportion to the volume of floodwaters covering the land.

- In Angola 114 people died and 41,000 people were displaced. 2133 houses and 273 schools were destroyed and 84 bridges broken.
- In Mozambique the Zambezi flooded again, cyclone Favio brought more flooding and coastal inundation in the north and centre of the country while there was drought in the South. Several churches and schools lost their roof including the church at Zove.

At the end of February a huge armaments explosion in Maputo killed more than 100 people and injured 400. It destroyed many houses and broke the windows of thousands of others. It badly damaged 2 Anglican churches- St Monica at Malhazine and The church of the Good Samaritan at Zimpeto.

The ALMA Crisis Appeal launched on Ash Wednesday, in parallel with the Diocesan Lent Appeal on human trafficking, raised £18,890 for crisis relief and reconstruction. It was quite a feat juggling two appeals yet entirely consistent with the complexity of our walk of faith: one was a planned Lenten discipline and the other a sacrificial response to tragedy.

March brought a very special occasion for the Angolan church –a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury with celebrations in Luanda and Uige. Less than a week later Bishop Andre and 9 others, including our own Revd Mike Clark (Bishop Andre's Commissary), survived a terrible car accident seemingly unscathed. However, April saw Bishop Andre become very seriously ill with the need for surgical intervention in Luanda. We give thanks for its success and continue to pray for his full recovery as he convalesces at home and begins to pick up his work again.

As we enter the second half of the year, ALMA Sunday will focus on the following themes:

- **A.** What it means to be part of the global body of Christ where 'if one part suffers all suffer with it.'
- **B.** The London Challenge 2012 engagement with the Millennium Development Goals – the goals set in the year 2000 to halve global poverty by 2015.
- **C.** The eight MDGs
 - eradicate extreme poverty & hunger
 - achieve universal primary education
 - promote gender equality & empower women
 - reduce child mortality
 - improve maternal health
 - combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases
 - ensure environmental sustainability
 - develop a global partnership for development
- ALMA Sunday is 8 days after 7/7/7 the midway point on the timescale to realise the 8 goals: none have yet been achieved. We will look at each MDG and at the situation in Angola and Mozambique.

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ALMA SUNDAY LECTIONARY READINGS:

Ps 82 (Ps 25:1-10); Deut 30:9-13; Col1:1-14; Luke 10: 25-37

ALMA SUNDAY THEMES:

A: 'if one part suffers all suffer with it.'

The lectionary readings for 6th Sunday after Trinity, also ALMA Sunday, are a call for justice with a deep resonance for all ALMA partners. The role of faithful companionship, rooted in prayer, as we learn to be neighbours who love each other is underlined.

Ps 82 v3-4: The Psalmist cries out

Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
Maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
Deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Deut 30: 9-14

9: the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings.
10: For the Lord will take delight in prospering you just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors ...because you turn to the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul.
14: the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

Col 1: 1-14

We could read this passage in Angola, London and Mozambique today as **a prayer of thanksgiving for each other**, as a reminder to be faithful in prayer for each other throughout the year and because we all need to be prayed for:

'We, the congregation of
followers of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Angola, London and Mozambique: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may be lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enable you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 10:25-37 Who is my Neighbour? The Parable of the Good Samaritan

As we hold the mirror alongside this most familiar and challenging of parables we want to be the Samaritan, not the Levite or the priest. Yet Jesus tells us it was the outsider, the person of no status who realised his neighbour was the vulnerable stranger, and who gave both practical help and made future provision for him.

Martin Luther King:

'We are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside...but one day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that a system that produces beggars needs to be repaved. We are called to be the Good Samaritan, but after you lift so many people out of the ditch you start to ask, maybe the whole road to Jericho needs to be repaved'.

ALMA SUNDAY THEMES
B London Challenge 2012: Commitment 5

- A We are committed to expressing God's Love in our World City.
- B We will seek a closer engagement with people of other faiths both locally and on a pan-London basis.
- C We will engage with the Millennium Development Goals and build on our existing partnerships with the church in Africa especially in Angola and Mozambique.
- D We will strive to achieve Fair Trade status as a Diocese
- E We will maintain and develop our special relationships with Berlin/Brandenburg, St Petersburg and New York.
- F We will implement the Church of England policy on shrinking our environmental footprint and will play a full part in the debate on ecological matters.

Four parts of London Challenge 2012 Commitment 5 directly impact on our partnership with Angola and Mozambique:

- A In our world city we want to express God's love and show friendship to the Angolans and Mozambicans who are living in London.
- C As ALMA we engage with the Millennium Development Goals because they are a critical tool in tackling structural injustices and achieving the far-reaching poverty reduction so desperately needed in Angola and Mozambique. See ALMA SUNDAY THEMES: section C for further information.
- D Fairtrade is something we can do **NOW**, by using our purchasing power as Christian consumers, to help the poorest communities and producers to develop community infrastructure by ensuring they are paid a fair price for their produce. Is your church a fairtrade church? Will it be by ALMA Sunday 2008? All the information you will need is available on the London Diocese fairtrade website: <http://fairtrade.london.anglican.org/>
- F We are challenged to shrink our environmental footprint and cut our carbon as individuals, as churches and in our workplaces. Our relationship with Angola and Mozambique makes this imperative: the impact of climate change hits the poorest first. The extremes of weather experienced in Southern Africa this year is an example. Christian Aid comments that

'Climate change is not just an environmental and economic crisis in the making – it is a global injustice on a scandalous scale. It is the world's poorest communities who are the most vulnerable to climactic extremes, who are already suffering and who are likely to suffer the most in the future, even though they contribute so little to the carbon emissions which are precipitating them'.

For the Church of the 21st Century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is therefore central to what it means to be a Christian.'
Archbishop Rowan Williams

See <http://www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org/>

ALMA SUNDAY THEMES

C The Millennium Development Goals: Angola, London and Mozambique:

'Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will be a major challenge for Angola' (DFID)

1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

In the 2005 human development index report (<http://hdr.undp.org/>)

Angola is 160 out of 177 countries

Mozambique is 168 out of 177

United Kingdom is 15 out of 177

Angola: 95% of the population live in poverty (under US\$1 per day)
68% of the population live in extreme poverty (less than 76 cents a day).
All the socio-economic indicators are among the worst in Africa (DFID)
Life expectancy: 39 years (men), 42 years (women) (UN)
Average age of Population: 18.12

WFP (World Food Programme) reported at the end of 2004 that there was still a 47% food security deficit, and 1.1 million people still needed emergency food supplies. This dire situation has since improved to the extent that WFP reckons over the 2006-2009 period that less than 500,000 Angolans will need some food support.

Mozambique

The proportion of Mozambicans living in absolute poverty fell from 69% in 1997 to 54% in 2003 (DFID)

Life expectancy : 39.9 (men) 40.75 (women)
Average Age of Population: 18.29

2. Achieve universal primary education

Angola

Nearly 60% of the population is illiterate

Primary school enrolment is only increasing slowly, from 72% in 1995 to 74% in 2000

Mozambique

Statistics vary but: The number of children in school rose from 44% in 1999 to 76% in 2004 (DFID) This achievement has been all the more notable in a country where, during 16 years of civil war, many schools were reduced to rubble

- Primary school population more than tripled in Mozambique from 1.3 million in 1995 to 3.8 million in 2005.
- The first seven years of school are now free.
- One million children still do not go to school, most of them from poor rural families.
- Girls' enrolment increased from 3 million in 2002 to 4.1 million in 2006 while the completion rate increased from 31,000 to 90,000.
- Almost half of all teachers in Mozambique are still unqualified.

United Kingdom:

2000-2005: Net primary school enrolment/attendance 99% (UNICEF)

3. Promote gender equality & empower women

Unequal treatment of women by the state, in the market, and by their community and family puts them at a disadvantage throughout their lives and stifles the development prospects of their societies.

HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS target: Overcoming the social and economic obstacles that stop parents from sending their daughters to school. For many poor families the economic value of girls' work at home exceeds the perceived returns to schooling. Improving the accessibility of schools and their quality and affordability is a first step. (World Bank)

4. Reduce child mortality

Angola:

1995: 172 per thousand
2003: 154 per thousand (DFID)

Mozambique

1997: 219 per thousand
2003: 178 per thousand (DFID)

United Kingdom

2005: 4 per thousand (UNICEF)

5. Improve maternal health (access to clean water also impacts on this)

Angola:

1241 women per 100,000 births died.

Mozambique

1997: 1000 women per 100,000 births died
2003: 408

ie maternal mortality rates have fallen by over 50% since 1995.

NB: Malaria contributes to Mozambique's high maternal mortality rates:

Developed world:

fewer than 10 women per 100,000 live births died (World Bank)

NB: Because women in poor countries have more children, their lifetime risk of maternal death may be more than 200 times greater than for women in Western Europe and North America. What makes maternal mortality such a compelling problem is that it strikes young women experiencing a natural function of life. They die because they are poor. Malnourished. Weakened by disease. Exposed to multiple pregnancies. And they die because they lack access to trained health care workers and modern medical facilities (WB)

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases

Angola

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has increased from 2.1% in 1997 to 5.74% in 2004. Rising HIV infection rates will make it even harder for Angolans to rebuild their country. The war restricted people's movements so the illness did not spread over great distances as fast as it has in neighbouring countries. Now people can travel more freely, there is a very high risk that HIV infection rates will increase. (Christian Aid)

Mozambique

At 13.6%, the prevalence of HIV infection, while high, remains lower than the regional average. (DFID)

- More children die of malaria in Mozambique than of any other disease, with malaria accounting for 60% of child paediatric hospital admissions and 30% of hospital deaths.
- The climate of Mozambique favours year-round transmission.

Climate change has also seen a marked increase in intensity and frequency of diseases like malaria, according to Andrew Githeka of the Kenya Medical Research Institute. (IRIN)

United Kingdom:

There are now about 50,000 people living with HIV in Britain, almost a third of who have not yet had their infection diagnosed. (BBC) This is 1.2%

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

Angola

is also endowed with large expanses of prime agricultural land but the proliferation of land mines during the war (recent estimates put the number laid at 4 million) has been one of the main reasons for the reduction in the area under cultivation to 3%. Once the bread basket of Angola, the Central Highlands has reverted to subsistence agriculture.

Mozambique:

has been affected by drought and floods every alternate season and will potentially lose 25 percent of its food production on currently cultivated land. The irony is that Mozambique has not itself contributed to climate change because it only produces 0.1 tons [of carbon dioxide emissions] a year, compared to the developing countries' average of two tons and an OECD average of 11 tons. (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200301230608.html?page=2>)

Africa needs urgent assistance to adapt to climate change if its people are to thrive in the 21st Century. The Inter-governmental panel on climate change predicts that an increase in greenhouse gas emissions will see up to 1.8 million more people in Africa without sufficient clean water, an increase in arid and semi-arid lands, poverty and an increase in pandemics like malaria, cholera and Rift Valley Fever (RVF).

"Temperatures are due to increase by up to 5.8 degrees [Celsius] before the end of the century in arid or semi-arid areas that are prevalent in Africa. The implications of such an increase are multiple and include: rise in sea-level, increased droughts or floods, less access to water which will beget health and agricultural problems," said Anthony Nyong, senior programme specialist with Climate Change Adaptation in Africa, during the launch.

Source: World Bank (<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/gdmis.do?siteId=2&goalId=7&menuId=LNAV01GOAL3>)

8. develop a global partnership for development

The first seven goals focus on changes which can be measured in the developing countries, they cannot be achieved without Goal 8: the creation of global partnerships for development. For poor countries to achieve the first seven goals, rich countries must deliver their end of the bargain in advance of 2015 with more effective aid, more sustainable debt relief and fairer trade rules. (Duncan MacLaren: Dominicans working for the MDGs)

"Response to climate change is interdependent and Africa cannot cope on its own; this makes it the main test of people working together to adapt to the impacts of climate change," said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the [UN Environment Programme](#)

Further Reading

Dominicans Working for the MDGs –an excellent speech by Duncan MacLaren

http://www.millenniumcampaign.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=grKVL2NLE&b=980847&content_id=%7B3B11A5EF-5D29-4225-B9FC-50BEFBA34E5E%7D¬oc=1

Report On the Millennium Development Goals Mozambique 2005

(http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMOZAMBIQUE/Resources/undp_mdg_rptpdf.pdf)

World Bank Summary MDGs in Angola

(<http://devdata.worldbank.org/idg/IDGProfile.asp?CCODE=AGO&CNAME=Angola&SelectedCountry=AGO>)

ALMA SUNDAY PRAYERS:

The ALMA Partnership Prayer: Bishop Dinis Sengulane

God our Father,
the source of all gifts,
give us humility to receive,
honesty to ask and generosity to give,
in order to bring each other up
to your honour and glory.
We ask this through the merits of
Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

From the London Diocese 2007 Lent Appeal Launch: Bishop Pete Broadbent

Abba, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:
you have graced us with the spirit of freedom,
and the privilege of calling upon you by name.
May we use this precious freedom
to give a voice to all who are enslaved
by poverty or persecution,
held captive by discrimination or disease.
Grant us courage to name injustice wherever it appears,
and to speak your Word of truth,
sure that the love of God in Christ Jesus has power
to set all people free,
enabling them to live in glorious liberty,
as your cherished sons and daughters. **Amen.**

Christ our partner,
you invite us to bear your yoke,
so that in sharing your work,
we may find our real selves in relationship with you
and with our brother and sisters in Angola and Mozambique.

WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

-Using African Choir Music - perhaps during the Eucharist.

-Taking an African style of offertory - with people dancing and bringing money to the front in a long conga and dropping it into a coloured plastic bowl

-Mozambican Acclamation:

Leader	GOD IS GOOD
People	ALL THE TIME
Leader	ALL THE TIME
People	God IS GOOD