

Responding to God's Desire for Justice



Each person, however poor, has a right to land, safe water and sanitation. Our local government leaders or the local offices of higher levels of government have a responsibility to ensure that these basic human rights are protected and are met. Their rules and procedures should determine whether people are connected to water, sanitation and drainage network that ensure waste is well managed and that rain water is captured into dams and other storage facilities for year round use.

Sadly in most African countries governance for water and sanitation services has been passed over to international private companies whose major focus is to maximize profit. The African situation is similar to that of Judah when she was under the rule of Babylon. The Jews had to pay Babylon for water they drank and the wood they used for cooking (see Lamentations). When foreigners are in charge of a nation's natural resources they care very little about environmental degradation, climate change and water management. That is why, in the case of Zambia, our government must act quickly on the advice of Norwegian Ambassador, that we renegotiate with the mining investors on the development agreements so that Zambians may also justly benefit from the resources God has given to it.

Judah's severe suffering was because of her disobedience. The hope for her was to call on God and confess her sin. If she did this He would protect her during her captivity (Lam. 3:21-30) and would ultimately restore her as nation.

Justice and happiness have not been enjoyed by young African people because the African elders failed to use their wisdom after independence and now the water, good agricultural and mineral lands are largely owned and controlled by foreigners. If we want our natural resources to be restored to us, our specific actions should firstly be to repent and cry to God that we be restored the blessings of God's covenant of joint stewardship with Him to care for the environment. Second, we must elect leaders at local and national government levels who understand this covenant relationship with God and who, as a result, will establish legislations that ensure people's basic human rights to land, safe water and sanitation are protected and are met.

Third, we need a church that daily promotes righteousness and stresses faithfulness to God's covenant. Churches must be involved in raising local awareness about the injustices of the mining development agreements, land distribution and water and sanitation provisions as well as about environmental damage. People living in poverty ought to know that, just as much as the church is concerned for their eternity it is also concerned that their daily bread is provided. When the church fails to share God's passion and plan for justice it lets the poor, the oppressed and the persecuted believe that life begins at eternity.

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