

Prayers for Africa

Angola

Context: Angola is situated in southern Africa with the Atlantic Ocean providing its western boundary. It gained independence from Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, but subsequently plunged into a long civil war. Currently the situation in Angola is calm and, at the time of writing, people are awaiting the elections with much anticipation. The churches in Angola are promoting seminars on peacebuilding, civic education and voting information. The Inter-Mennonite Conference of Angola (CIMA) was formed in 2003 through the initiative of three Mennonite churches in Angola (the Mennonite Community Church in Angola [ICMA], the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Angola [IEMA] and the Evangelical Church of the Mennonite Brethren [IEIMA]) in collaboration with MCC and MB Mission.

Prayer #1

Author: Pastor Garcia Domingos is the Legal Representative of ICMA in Angola, and is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Christian Churches in Angola (CICA). He serves with Mennonite World Conference (MWC) as a member of the General Council and the Peace Commission. He writes, "In light of peace as expressed by the Hebrew *shalom*, which does not only mean the absence of war, enmity, and fighting, but also includes tranquility, security, health, prosperity and wellbeing for everyone that is both material and spiritual, we can pray in the following way."

Lord God, our Creator and Father,

We recognize true peace which is beyond all human understanding,
Which is not limited to merely silencing weapons in the midst of war,
Is not only the ending of conflicts and hostility,
Not only harmony when there are fights.

The peace which our Father gives to His children is beyond all of this.

This peace is a blessing and brings tranquility, security, health, prosperity and material and spiritual well-being for all.

Yes, Father, it is this peace which your people need most, in these days, when many of us have lost trust to live in harmony with others.

Hatred has been the weapon of Satan to separate brothers and sisters of the same church, family, country, and continent, creating situations which lead to division and enmity.

We know Father that the solution to all of this is true peace which the world desires so much, even though we seek it in ways that are often mistaken.

Yes, Father, we your children, come to you in this day in which we celebrate the day of peace, that you might give to us that peace which we desire so much, because this peace overcomes hatred and hostility, and teaches us to love our enemies, so that we can build families, churches, societies, nations, and a world that is more and more pleasing to your eyes.

Amen.

Prayer #2

Author: Gomes João de Miranda is Administrative Secretary of Inter-Mennonite Conference in Angola (CIMA) and is Director of Education Department of Mennonite Community Church in Angola and a faculty of the Higher Institute of Social Service.

Prayer:

Oh eternal God: Omnipotent! Omniscient! Omnipresent!
Oh the Most High, Father of all the universe and of all that there exists,
Your great purpose in the creation of the world: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."
Your image and your likeness reflect love that is infinite, indelible and inimitable.
But the world lacks love!
Be present in anguish and tribulations: wars, hunger, pain and disasters,
So that the cruelty of humans might not affect the innocent.
Pour out your glory on all the nations,
That the pain of one be the pain of another.
Intercede for the ignorance of those who cause war, that your love might transform them.
Embrace humanity and receive those in need, that they might celebrate PEACE,
The PEACE that the world does not give, but that the Lord gives.
May peace be with all, today and forever.
Amen.

Prayer #3

Author: Rev. Domingos Macoxi Panda is Professor of Pastoral Ethics in the Mennonite Higher Institute of Angola. He is also Luanda Regional Secretary of the IEIMA and Assistant General Secretary of CIMA.

I thank you God, the Giver of Life, for the peace that you have given to my country and others.
I ask that you be with those who do not enjoy peace, because they suffer from war, hunger and other atrocities. Bless all people who make such notable efforts, day after day, to promote and maintain peace. Particularly MCC which lends all types of support to people in all the world, without discriminating on the basis of nation or religion.

Train all the humanitarian agencies to cooperate with the local authorities to prevent situations that lead to humanitarian crises and to respond in extreme circumstances of lack of food, clothing and medicines. Train also the churches of all the world, so that they not be indifferent to actions that lead to peace, tolerance and love.

I thank you God, the Giver of Life, for the peace that you have given my country and all other countries.
I hope that you will touch the hearts of those who are belligerent moral authors of armed conflicts, so that they might respect human life.

Bless the persons who individually and as a group have a notable effort, day after day, to promote and maintain peace.
Amen.

Prayer #4

Author: Nlandu João Baptista is a pastor within the IEIMA.

Prayer:

God Almighty, Prince of Peace, Creator of the heavens and the earth –
Lord, you created the world with the objective that all might live in harmony and peace.
Today, however, we live the opposite.
The world has become so turbulent that *shalom* has lost its meaning and place in the midst of our societies.
O dear Father, we implore your grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ so that you restore all things, the minds and the understanding of human beings, as your Father understands.
For this reason we end our prayer asking that your will be done here on earth as in the heavens.
Amen.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo)

Context: In the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), decades-long violence continues to uproot communities and leave thousands of people suffering. In the past year, a new wave of violent conflict has erupted in the Kasai region in central and western DR Congo after the killing of Paramount Chief Kamuina Nsapu. It is estimated that about 1.4 million people have been displaced and this number is increasing as the conflict escalates. There are many Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren families within Kasai and Kwilu provinces. These families are both among the displaced and among those who are hosting the displaced.

Author/compiler: Mulanda Jimmy Juma is MCC representative in DR Congo.

Prayer:

God of love and peace,

We pray for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We pray for those in the eastern region, where decades-long violence continues to uproot communities and leave thousands suffering with the trauma of war and poverty. May the violence and the killing end.

We pray for MCC partners who are working in these eastern communities to provide food, shelter, education and trauma healing. Give them strength, courage and hope for each day. We pray for MCC staff and volunteers as they serve in these difficult circumstances. Grant them the resources they need to be ministers of your love and compassion.

We pray also for the people of the Kasai region of central Congo where recent violence has displaced more than a million people. May those fleeing their homes find food and shelter, safety and comfort. May the violence and killing end so that they may return to their homes.

We remember in a special way our Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren brothers and sisters in the Kasai region. They are among the displaced and also those who are offering shelter. May they experience your abiding love during this deeply troubling time. May they be strengthened through prayers of solidarity.

God of love and peace, grant your peace on the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Amen.

East Africa

Context: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan are all located in eastern Africa. Each country has its unique needs for peace, justice and healing.

Author: Ken and Laura Litwiller are the MCC Area Directors for East Africa.

O LORD,

For Ethiopia, may all peoples find their voice and express it in peace.

For Kenya, may elections serve all peoples and lead to peace.

For South Sudan, may peoplehood and peace emerge and prevail.

For Tanzania, may persons with albinism find safety, well-being and peace.

For Uganda, may hospitality for refugees be blessed and the needs of Ugandans also be met in peace.

O LORD,

Bind us together in peace.

Amen.

South Sudan

Context: The growing economic and food security crisis in South Sudan has worsened this year, with some areas having declared that food insecurity has reached famine levels. However, most South Sudanese have been living with food insecurity for years. In 2011, when South Sudan gained its independence, the country was brimming with hope and joy. Now, six years later, despair and fear stalk its people. A protracted civil war has cost the lives of tens of thousands of people and displaced more than 3.5 million civilians.

Author: Candacia Greeman is an MCC worker in South Sudan, working as a teacher mentor at the Loreto Schools in Rumbek. She writes, “We offer a prayer of hope through the voices of women and children supported by MCC projects focused on education, peacebuilding, school feeding and agricultural development.” Below are quotes from various students at the Loreto schools about the impacts of the conflict, intermingled with prayers from Candacia.

Prayer:

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

- Micah 6:8 (New International Version)

“In 2016, there was fighting in Juba which erupted on 9th of July. This greatly affected us in a way that many lives were lost, homes looted, women raped, many people [internally displaced], to date many have been rendered homeless and the economy of the country is worsening every other day. Everything is very expensive in the market because of the insecurity. This made people bitter, including myself. However, attending peace club activities has made me to be able to forgive and stop desiring to revenge and hope that all people desire peace and work around peaceful techniques of solving conflicts.”

- Sarah Abui, female high school student in Rumbek, South Sudan

“My home was recently burnt, and in my community houses were demolished and we were told to burn down our own homes. Things we cultivated were destroyed. If you keep all the bad things that happen to you in your mind, you will run mad and you will die. I learned to put things in my mind that will cause me to have hope.”

- Amer Ghor, female gardener in Rumbek, South Sudan

Let us pray: Our Prince of Peace, we pray for changed hearts that seek peace and work for justice for all South Sudanese. We give you thanks for those who are already working for peace in their communities.

“There are 13 at home in my family now. Gingera (beans) is my favourite because it gives me blood [energy]. There are no beans at home and things are not good there now. I have only little food at home now, and when I am coming to school I am eating here. When you have not eaten you are not happy, but when you have, you can do what you want – you can learn.”

- Simon Matur, primary school student in Rumbek, South Sudan

“For the small children the food is very important, and they can’t be getting [fed] at home now because there are too many. If the small children are not being at school then they aren’t getting [food] at home. If they are coming to school and eating, then they will read and understand, and something will go into their head.”

- Martha Anhiak Madut, primary school student in Rumbek, South Sudan

Let us pray: Our Provider and Comforter, we pray for food, shelter and medicine for those displaced and those fleeing conflict in their home communities. We pray that those who go to bed hungry will be fed and that those who are suffering will be comforted and made whole.
Amen.



Participants in a peacebuilding and trauma healing workshop in Rumbek, South Sudan. Photo courtesy of Candacia Greeman.



Primary school children enjoying a school meal in Rumbek, South Sudan. Photo courtesy of Candacia Greeman.

Zimbabwe

Context: Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in central southern Africa, which gained independence from Britain in 1980. Formerly known as Rhodesia, Zimbabwe lives with the legacy of colonialism and a class system resulting from many years of dominance by white settler leaders. Its struggles are compounded by bad governance, bad economic management and corruption. The major challenges today are land redistribution and a fair distribution of resources. More than 300 Brethren in Christ (BIC) congregations exist in Zimbabwe.

Authors: Monica and Gopar Tapkida are MCC representatives in Zimbabwe.

Prayer:

- **Economic recovery for Zimbabwe:**

The Zimbabwean economy has been struggling for the last two decades. This has forced a lot of people into poverty, unemployment and over four million Zimbabweans to leave the country in search for greener pastures. We pray for the recovery of the economy.

- **Good rains:**

Zimbabwe received a fair amount of rainfall during the most recent rainy season after years of drought. The persistent droughts over the years had affected many communities as people were mainly relying on food assistance. We pray for good rains so that people are able to harvest for survival.

- **BIC Church in Zimbabwe:**

The BIC church in Zimbabwe has continued to witness significant deaths these past few months. The causes for the deaths are numerous – ranging from natural causes, illnesses and accidents. This has weakened and demoralized the church. We pray for strength, comfort and grace for the leadership as they go through such difficult times.

- **MCC Staff in Zimbabwe:**

Currently, MCC staff in Zimbabwe is made up of personnel from Canada, the U.S., Nigeria, Lesotho, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It also includes YAMENers (participants in the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network) from Bangladesh and Cambodia. Most of the staff are young people with lots of energy. We continue to pray for team unity and good health, and for all of us to remain committed to MCC's vision and program in Zimbabwe, even as we work with MCC partners in the country.

- **2018 Elections:**

There will be elections in Zimbabwe in 2018 and, as a result, the situation in the country is tense. The past elections have witnessed significant violent activities that have caused many injuries and deaths. We pray for peaceful elections and for God-fearing leaders.

Amen.