

Detailed Report: Discussions Held in Lusaka

Introduction

The gathering in Lusaka brought together church leaders, community representatives, and organisational stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions about how the church can effectively respond to crises and foster resilience within their communities. The event focused on defining key concepts, exploring various thematic areas, and encouraging participants to reflect on the challenges they face in their respective contexts. The outcomes of these discussions provide valuable insights and guidance for future actions and strategies.

Definition of 'Resilience' and 'Crisis'

During the discussions in Lusaka, participants defined 'resilience' and 'crisis' based on their personal experiences and the challenges they face in their communities.

Resilience: In the context of Lusaka, resilience was defined using the following words: Trust, Believe, Holding on, Patience, Faithfulness, Courage, Be strong, God is with you, Keep going, Listen to God and others, Slow down, Humble, Humility, Brave, and Wise. The definition that emerged from these discussions is as follows:

- **Resilience** is the ability to hold on with trust and patience, guided by faith and courage, remaining strong and humble in the face of adversity, while continuously seeking guidance from God and others.

Crisis: Participants also provided words to define 'crisis,' which included: Loss, Pain, Stress, Failure, Hopelessness, Not reaching the goals, Disappointment, Shame, Panic, Fear, Overwhelmed, Confusion, Cruel, Frustration, Lack-off, and Uncertainty. The definition that emerged is:

- **Crisis** is a state of overwhelming difficulty marked by pain, fear, and uncertainty, where goals seem unattainable, and individuals or communities are engulfed in stress, disappointment, and confusion.

Thematic Discussions

The participants were divided into groups to discuss four key themes: Leadership and Mentorship in Crisis, Family and Community Values, Crisis of Resilience, and Infrastructure and Systems in Crisis. Each group provided insights and practical steps that the church in Lusaka and Zambia can take to address these themes.

1. Leadership and Mentorship in Crisis

- **Role and Place of the Church:** The church should serve as a guiding light in leadership, offering mentorship programs, and fostering ethical leadership that aligns with Christian values. The church must also encourage young leaders and provide platforms for them to grow and serve.



- **Three Practical Steps for the Church in Zambia:**
 1. Establish mentorship programs that connect experienced leaders with younger or emerging leaders.
 2. Conduct regular leadership training workshops that focus on ethical and value-based leadership.
 3. Create platforms for youth engagement and leadership opportunities within the church.

- **Three Practical Steps for Local Church Communities:**
 1. Identify and mentor young potential leaders within the congregation.
 2. Encourage open discussions about leadership challenges and successes.
 3. Develop community-based leadership initiatives that address local needs.

2. Family and Community Values

- **Role and Place of the Church:** The church plays a crucial role in upholding and promoting family and community values. It should be a source of moral guidance and support, fostering a sense of belonging and unity within families and communities.

- **Three Practical Steps for the Church in Zambia:**
 1. Organize family counseling and support services to strengthen family bonds.
 2. Promote community-building activities that encourage social cohesion and mutual support.
 3. Advocate for policies that protect and promote family values in society.

- **Three Practical Steps for Local Church Communities:**
 1. Offer regular workshops on family values and healthy relationships.
 2. Create support groups for families facing challenges such as divorce, domestic violence, or financial difficulties.
 3. Encourage community involvement in church activities that promote unity and support.

3. Crisis of Resilience

- **Role and Place of the Church:** The church should be a beacon of hope and a source of strength, helping individuals and communities build resilience in the face of adversity. The church must offer spiritual and emotional support, helping people to find meaning and purpose in their struggles.

- **Three Practical Steps for the Church in Zambia:**
 1. Provide counseling and mental health support services to help individuals cope with crises.
 2. Develop community resilience programs that teach practical skills and strategies for overcoming challenges.
 3. Foster a culture of mutual support and encouragement within the church.



- **Three Practical Steps for Local Church Communities:**
 1. Offer regular prayer meetings and support groups for those facing crises.
 2. Encourage community members to share their stories of resilience to inspire others.
 3. Develop practical workshops that teach coping strategies and stress management.

4. Infrastructure and Systems in Crisis

- **Role and Place of the Church:** The church should advocate for better infrastructure and systems, working with local authorities to address systemic issues that affect the community. The church can also play a role in mobilising resources and providing practical support where needed.
- **Three Practical Steps for the Church in Zambia:**
 1. Advocate for improved infrastructure and services through community engagement and partnerships with local authorities.
 2. Develop church-based initiatives that address immediate infrastructure needs, such as water supply, energy, and transport.
 3. Collaborate with other organisations to improve systems that affect the community, such as healthcare and education.
- **Three Practical Steps for Local Church Communities:**
 1. Identify and prioritise local infrastructure needs that the church can help address.
 2. Mobilise community members to contribute to small-scale infrastructure projects, such as repairing roads or installing water systems.
 3. Work with local leaders to advocate for systemic improvements in infrastructure and services.

Key Takeaways for Further Reflection

- **Leadership and Mentorship:** The church must invest in the next generation of leaders, providing mentorship and training that foster ethical and value-based leadership. This will ensure that the church continues to have a positive impact on society and that future leaders are well-equipped to handle crises.
- **Family and Community Values:** Strengthening family and community values is essential for building resilient communities. The church must continue to promote and uphold these values, offering support and guidance to families in need.
- **Resilience:** Building resilience is a collective effort that requires spiritual, emotional, and practical support. The church should play a central role in helping individuals and communities develop the resilience needed to overcome challenges.
- **Infrastructure and Systems:** Addressing systemic issues requires collaboration and advocacy. The church must work with local authorities and other organisations to improve infrastructure and systems that affect the community, ensuring that basic needs are met.



Questions for Further Reflection

At the conclusion of the gathering, participants were asked to provide questions for further reflection. These questions are crucial for guiding future discussions and actions:

1. How can we effectively mentor the next generation of leaders within the church?
2. What are the most pressing family and community values that need to be addressed in our context?
3. How can the church help individuals develop the resilience needed to face ongoing challenges?
4. What practical steps can we take to address the infrastructure and systemic issues in our community?
5. How can we ensure that our leadership remains ethical and aligned with Christian values?

These questions serve as a starting point for deeper reflection and continued engagement with the themes discussed during the gathering.

Conclusion

The Lusaka gathering provided a valuable platform for church leaders and community representatives to come together and discuss critical issues affecting their communities. The insights gained from these discussions will inform future actions and strategies, helping to build more resilient communities and stronger leadership within the church. As we continue to reflect on these themes, it is essential to keep the questions raised in mind and work towards practical solutions that address the challenges identified.

