

Responses from the participants in Lilongwe discussing the theme "Crisis on Social and Relational Struggles," structured according to the three questions they addressed:

1. What is the role and place of the church in Malawi in responding to the Crisis on Social and Relational Struggles?

- The church is seen as pivotal in fostering love, reconciliation, and understanding among its members and the wider community. The primary role highlighted was teaching and promoting Jesus Christ's principles of love and reconciliation. Participants emphasised the church's responsibility to create environments that encourage interaction and understanding among individuals, which can help heal and resolve social and relational conflicts.

2. What are three practical steps that the church in Malawi can take to respond to the Crisis on Social and Relational Struggles?

- **Marriage and Relationship Seminars:** Organise seminars to educate couples and singles on Christian perspectives on relationships, aiming to provide foundational skills and knowledge for healthier personal and social relationships.
- **Continuous Teaching:** The church should persistently teach its doctrines on social and relational norms, focussing on aligning members' behaviours with Biblical teachings. This involves regular, reinforced messaging to ensure teachings are retained and applied.
- **Create Inclusive and Accommodating Environments:** Encourage churches to be more welcoming and open, providing safe spaces for individuals, including those not typically embraced due to different life choices or statuses, thereby promoting inclusivity and support.

3. What are three practical steps that your church community can take to respond to the Crisis on Social and Relational Struggles?

- **Strengthening Family Units:** Emphasise the importance of strong familial relationships, including parenting roles, to ensure children grow up with the right values and are prepared for future relationships.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs to guide young people personally, providing them with reliable and appropriate advice on handling social and relational issues, which is particularly crucial given the misinformation prevalent on social media and the internet.
- **Community Engagement and Tolerance Promotion:** Teach and encourage community members to be tolerant and forgiving, recognising that everyone makes mistakes and deserves grace. The church should actively engage in community activities that foster interaction and understanding among diverse groups.

These steps reflect a comprehensive approach where the church not only addresses spiritual needs but also plays a critical role in enhancing social cohesion and resolving interpersonal conflicts through education, community involvement, and promoting inclusive values.

