

RE-IMAGINING OUR WORLD TOGETHER

CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDIES
ON THE ANGLICAN MARKS OF MISSION
AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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PART 1

INTRODUCTORY MATERIALS



THE ANGLICAN FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FOREWORD

Welcome on a journey as we travel together through this series of Contextual Bible Studies! Journeying together, as we reflect on Scripture and the challenging contexts around us. Journeying together, as we re-imagine our world as a place of justice, peace, and flourishing for people and planet. Journeying together, as we learn how God is inviting us to help shape God's Kingdom on earth. Journeying together, trusting that Jesus travels with us, as with his disciples on the Road to Emmaus.

At the Anglican Alliance we too have been on a journey in the creation of these Bible studies. The process started in 2019, when a group of Anglican and other Christian theologians, biblical scholars and development practitioners met in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, hosted by the inspirational Ujamaa Centre. We are profoundly grateful to our friends at the Ujamaa Centre and others in the writing group. This book would not exist without their vision, creativity, integrity and wisdom.

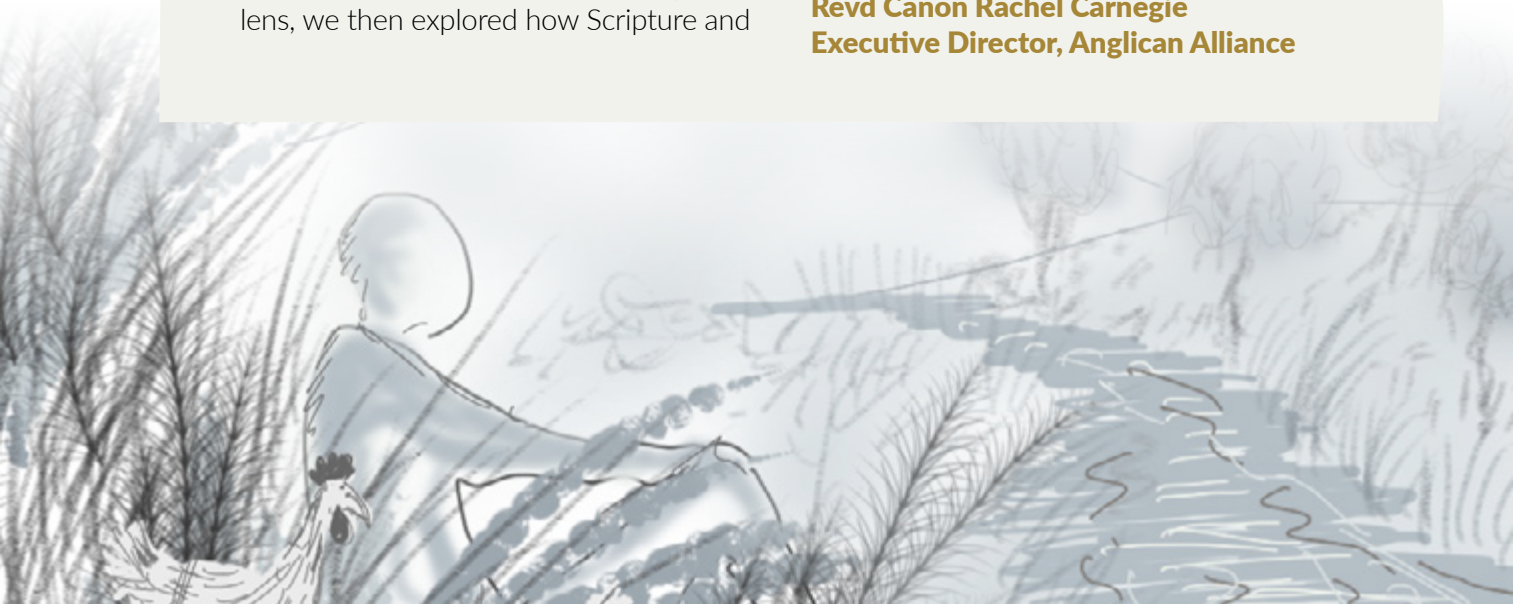
Journeying through Ujamaa's radically transformational process of Contextual Bible Study, we explored how Scripture could deepen our understanding of the shape of the Five Marks of Mission, through which Anglicans seek to join in Christ's holistic mission in the world. Through this lens, we then explored how Scripture and

the Marks of Mission could shape our engagement with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, framing the global agenda to 2030.

Our pathway since 2019 took us through the global Covid-19 pandemic. In those traumatic times, revisiting the drafts of these Bible Studies brought us profound hope and encouragement as we reflected and prayed about how the world could be re-imagined and re-shaped. The pandemic has revealed and deepened inequalities within and between countries, but it had also shown what co-operation could achieve if the world committed to work together for the well-being of humanity and our common home, the earth.

The challenges humanity and the earth itself currently face are not easing but deepening, impacting on the poorest in our communities most of all. What does Jesus' calling "to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18) mean for our world today? Our hope and prayer is that these Contextual Bible Studies will enable us together to look afresh at our contexts, to evaluate them in the light of Scripture, and to respond in faith-filled action – to *see*, *judge* and *act* – with our hearts on fire, like those disciples in Emmaus.

Revd Canon Rachel Carnegie
Executive Director, Anglican Alliance



PROLOGUE

Contextual Bible Study, the Five Marks of Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals

Contextual Bible Study (CBS) emerged as a Bible study method in the midst of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. In a context in which the Bible was used to support systemic racial discrimination, the Church was challenged to discern the ‘good news’ that Jesus proclaimed. Preaching in his own home town among his own people, Jesus proclaims that he has come “to preach the good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). What, we asked in 1980s South Africa, was “good news” to the poor and marginalised?

Amidst the many small groups of Christians struggling to work with God for God’s will to be done and for God’s kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10), we grappled with how we might discern ‘the gospel’ that was good news for the poor and marginalised in the midst of the apartheid state’s discriminatory and destructive theology. How did we proclaim the God of abundant life for all (John 10:10) in the midst of the idolatrous apartheid theology of death?

The South African Kairos Document (1985) called for a ‘prophetic theology’:

“Towards a Prophetic Theology.

Our present KAIROS calls for a response from Christians that is biblical, spiritual, pastoral and, above all, prophetic. It is not enough in these circumstances to repeat generalized Christian principles. We need a bold and incisive response that is prophetic because it speaks to the particular circumstances of this crisis, a response that does not give the impression of sitting on the fence but is clearly and unambiguously taking a stand.”

The notion of theological ‘shape’ became a useful way of understanding prophetic theology. Much of the focus of theological debate in the 1980s South Africa had been about theological ‘content’. What was innovative about the idea of ‘shape’ was that it shifted our understanding of how we might think about ‘prophetic theology’. We began to talk of ‘the shape of the gospel’.

We discerned this prophetic shape in Luke 4:18-19 as Jesus proclaims the manifesto of God’s kingdom:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God anointed me to preach good news to the poor: God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.”

In our understanding, the shape of the gospel is that it must be “good news for the poor”. The content of that good news might vary, as the sentences that follow the first sentence indicate. If we place a colon at the end of the first sentence, what follows is an explication. While the content might vary given the different contextual realities of the poor, what remains is the shape: the gospel must be good news for the poor. If what we proclaim is not good news for the poor, then it is not the gospel.

When we discussed this notion of the prophetic shape of the gospel in a shack-settlement among the poor and marginalised in the late 1980s, one of the participants said, “So the good news is that Jesus is establishing the kin-dom of God”. This was a profound moment of theological insight. Alongside the more well-known notion of ‘kingdom of God’, a Christian living in a shack-settlement understood that God was in Christ constructing an inclusive community, a kin-dom. The shape of the gospel was about constructing an inclusive community in which the poor and marginalised have a pivotal place, guiding what social and theological systems must be transformed in order for God’s kingdom to come on earth as in heaven.

These Bible studies bring Contextual Bible Study into conversation with the Five Marks of Mission. The Five Marks of Mission offer an Anglican understanding of the shape of the gospel. “What,” we ask in these Bible studies, “is the prophetic shape of the Five Marks of Mission? How do we understand the Five Marks of Mission as a coherent and integral prophetic theology?”

Luke 4:18-19 is more than a series of unrelated statements; it is a coherent and integral theological formulation of ‘the gospel’. What is the prophetic gospel according to the Five Marks of Mission? These Contextual Bible Studies are a resource to explore the prophetic shape of the Five Marks of Mission and how this prophetic shape enables us to engage prophetically with the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Prof Gerald West

Professor Emeritus, School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics & Fellow of the University of KwaZulu-Natal & Member of the Advisory Board, Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research



¹ KAIROS: a moment of crisis, opportunity and grace

² Kin – one’s family and relations. Jesus makes it clear that God’s will must be done on earth by those who are his family or kin: “Who are my mother and my brothers?” Jesus asked. And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3.33-35).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to these Bible studies!

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, and face profound global crises with the environment, conflict and food security, we find ourselves again at a Kairos moment: a moment of crisis, opportunity and grace. Alongside the terrible suffering and loss of life, the pandemic has uncovered and exacerbated the inequalities in our world, both within and between countries; gender-based violence has escalated from already unacceptable levels, as have racism, nationalism and tensions based on ethnicity. At this moment, humanity has the opportunity to look squarely at reality and make choices. We can seize the moment to choose a just and sustainable recovery; or, in worse scenarios, we can miss it and choose to build back the same – with the same inequalities, injustices and threats to the well-being of people and our planet. But, together, we choose the future. Together, we can re-imagine our world.

“Our world faces many grave challenges: Widening conflicts and inequality. Extreme weather and deadly intolerance. Security threats – including nuclear weapons. We have the tools and wealth to overcome these challenges. All we need is the will.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary General

For the churches this is an opportunity to listen to God’s voice: what is God telling us about the transformation needed for God’s Kingdom to come on earth – the kin-dom where all live as one human family in one shared home? What have we learnt about the way the world works? And how is God calling us to respond?

Repeatedly in the Book of Revelation we read, “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). This spiritual calling leads us to bear witness to the love of Christ in the world.

Always and eternally Jesus leads us to live the Gospel in God’s World as members of his One Body.

This resource is an invitation to join in the ministry of spreading Christ’s love in the world.

As followers of Jesus we are called to live out what we believe through his commission to share the Good News of the Kingdom. Scripture tells us how God is able to do far much more than we can possibly imagine. Therefore, as people of faith, we pray for the Spirit to be realised within us to help to grow as disciples, loving God and our neighbour, following in the Way of Jesus.

We began developing these Contextual Bible Studies before the Covid-19 pandemic and have reviewed them over this period. The experience of recent years has given even greater urgency and opportunity to re-imagine and reshape our world together.

In this resource we encourage reflection on the theological shape of the Anglican Five Marks of Mission. The first group of Bible studies help us to look again at our context, re-visit Scripture to listen to God and be guided in faith-full action. We then offer a series of Bible studies to bring our understanding of holistic mission into conversation with the Sustainable Development Goals launched by the United Nations in 2015.

We hope that these Bible studies will inspire you to journey together, contributing to a process of reflection, re-imagination and renewal.

“We cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal...”

There needs to be a resurrection of our common life.”

**Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby,
Easter 2020**



The Sustainable Development Goals and the Anglican Five Marks of Mission

In 2015, the world launched a set of goals which would “leave no one behind” in their ambition of ending poverty and hunger, ensuring healthy lives, education, clean water, sanitation, energy and decent work for all, while caring for the environment. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide “a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”, which all 189 member states of the United Nations signed up to. One of the striking features of the SDGs is the breadth of their reach and their holistic nature – the recognition that “ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests” (UNOSD).

For some, the scope and ambition of the Global Goals is challenging. For others, that breadth is not only welcome, but vital – a recognition that this is how life works: as a connected whole, not as independent parts. And many, especially in churches and other communities of faith, perceived in the 17 goals something familiar: an expression of shalom – of wholeness, flourishing and well-being for both people and planet – albeit in secular language.

The Global Goals have particular resonance for Anglicans, who have long held a holistic understanding of what it means to be disciples of Jesus and who share in his ongoing mission. This understanding is expressed in the Anglican Five Marks of Mission, which are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 saying: “Humanity is called to justice, compassion and standing alongside the poor. If we root our response to the afflictions of extreme poverty and other major global issues in these values, we can ensure that the Global Goals provide a vision and a framework through

which all of us can play a part in working towards a more just world, in which all have the opportunity to flourish and where no one is left behind.

“Our response, today and in the years to come, must seek to emulate the sacrificial pattern of love and servant-hearted leadership that is demonstrated perfectly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The powerful are called to serve, the rich to give, and the vulnerable to be cherished, so that they may flourish and stand strong.

“My prayer today is that all of us would have the courage to live our lives for the common good; to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly in pursuit of a world free from poverty and injustice.”

These Bible studies seek to set up a conversation between the Anglican Marks of Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals. They aim to help Anglicans throughout the Communion explore both – always through a deep engagement with Scripture and always rooted in the lived reality of the participants. They are designed to be formative – to help develop intentional discipleship and further God’s kingdom on earth.

The Sustainable Development Goals are the fruit of extensive and intensive consultation and collaboration and inevitably do not satisfy everyone. However, they are at this time the best – and only – template agreed by the whole world to guide our common future. Support for the Global Goals does not mean we should not also engage with them critically. In particular, the ambition to promote economic growth is questioned by some as being unsustainable for the environment. Our own perspective is that we should not allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good. Rather, we should welcome the life-giving aspirations of the Global Goals, while engaging with them in the light of the gospel hope of abundant life for all (John 10:10).

We hope you will find these Bible studies as exciting to undertake as they were to create. The Primates of the Anglican Communion asked the Anglican Alliance to work with the provinces to produce them and the journey has been exhilarating! We feel truly blessed through this undertaking, sensing the movement of God’s Holy Spirit and seeing the global Body of Christ not simply as a metaphor but in action and as a lived reality.

The process has brought together leading biblical scholars, theologians and development practitioners from across the world, each contributing their expertise, insights and unique perspective. We owe a debt of gratitude to all who contributed and especially to the participants from the Ujamaa Centre, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, whose experience in creating Contextual Bible Studies – and generosity in sharing it – was essential to this endeavour.

In the appendices you can find more about the Global Goals and their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals, and how the Anglican Communion engaged with them.

Below are notes on how to use the Bible studies, a guide for facilitators and notes on the methodology behind the studies.

But for now, we wish you every blessing as you embark on these studies.

The Anglican Alliance, the Ujamaa Centre and the whole creative team.

Please see Appendix 2 to meet the full creative team.

Introduction to Contextual Bible Study

Contextual Bible Study is a way of engaging deeply with Scripture and reflecting on our lived realities to discern what God might be saying – and calling us to do in response.

This way of doing Bible study has a long theological lineage. It was forged in the French Catholic Worker Priest movement of the 1940s and later developed in two particular contexts: South Africa and Latin America. It has been used and developed there with communities living with hard realities, including poverty, inequality, racism and HIV/AIDS, and has brought hope and transformation. One of Contextual Bible Study's key practitioners, Prof Gerald West, describes its origins in the prologue.

The components of Contextual Bible Study

There are three components to this way of doing Bible study:

1. **SEE** – analysing the signs of the times in our particular context (Matthew 16:2)
2. **JUDGE** – re-reading Scripture together within our contextual realities in order to discern God's prophetic perspective on these realities (Mark 12:24).
3. **ACT** – responding in action, working with God to bring about God's will in our context, 'on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6.10).

This threefold process is a useful way of structuring or shaping our learning.

1. SEE.

The first component of the process involves a careful and critical analysis of the particular world in which we live, with an emphasis on the experience of the most marginalised sectors within this world. Analysing our context is a group exercise, involving those who share this lived reality.

2. JUDGE.

The second component of the process involves a re-reading of Scripture as together we discern what God intends for our lived reality. Does that lived reality conform to God's kin[g]dom 'on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10)? The idea of 'kin-dom' is that God in Christ is constructing an inclusive community, where the poor and marginalised have a pivotal place, a kin-dom ('kin' = family, relations). For a further explanation of kin-dom / kin[g]dom, please see the prologue.

3. ACT.

The third component of the threefold process identifies collaborative action for transformation and change. If the lived reality does not match God's vision for God's kin[g]dom on earth, then we must act with God to change the lived reality.

When we have acted to change the lived reality, we must continue with the cycle, reflecting again on our action, what transformation it has brought and what more needs to be done. The threefold process begins again. Indeed, this threefold process is a form of spiritual discipline, a way of life for the person of faith.

The See-Judge-Act process could alternatively be summarised as 'taking in', 'taking stock', and 'taking action'. The terms we use are not important; what is important is the threefold learning process.

This learning process mirrors the narrative of the disciples' journey to Emmaus and then to Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24:13-35). This is explored in the first Bible study.

Facilitating Contextual Bible Study

Whilst the threefold process provides the overall shape to our learning and transformation, careful facilitation is essential for each and every participant to feel safe and contribute fully. Practical guidance on facilitation is provided below.

At the heart of Contextual Bible Study is dialogue. Dialogue binds us in a profound engagement both with each other and with our particular context. Dialogue is more than polite conversation or an educational technique. It is a transformative practice, reshaping our relationships and our contexts. The role of the facilitator is to provide an enabling space for such dialogue.

Contextual Bible Study is most effective when we also engage with our spiritual practice. As we work together for God's Kin[g]dom to come on earth, we should work within faith-full liturgy, whether formal or informal, including singing, praying, and other faith-full rituals.

Luke's narrative of the disciples' journey to Emmaus and their dialogue with the Risen Jesus is a wonderful exposition of the threefold learning process, of facilitation, and of spiritual practice, in this case the eucharist.

Five mindsets are important on our shared journey:

Solidarity – A new way to be and share in life together as we journey towards a new possible world

Dialogue – A traditional way of travelling together

Creativity – A new way to pursue a new society

Sustainability – A new way to live in the world and interact with the whole creation

Prayer/Spirituality – A traditional way to read and meditate on the word of God for transformation

Suggestions for Group Facilitators

These Bible studies were designed for groups. They can be used by an individual, but

their transformative potential comes from a group of people gathering to read, listen and walk together in community.

They were also designed as a series, set out in a deliberate order of progression. However, they can be used separately, according to what the community wants and needs.

The process suggested here will need to be contextualised and adapted to the different realities churches face in different parts of the world. It is vital to listen to each other and to listen to the signs of the times in our own contexts.

In recent years the world has faced the trauma of the Covid-19 pandemic, and ongoing crises in conflict, climate and food security. It is important to reflect on the impact of these crises where appropriate in each context: to give time for lament on suffering and lives lost, to recognise and repent the unjust impact on the poorest and most vulnerable, and to identify the seeds of hope and the call to action.

It is also possible to hold these Bible studies online, as was necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic. You may also wish to gather online to connect with groups living in different places to reflect together on each other's contexts and re-read Scripture together.

You will know best how to accompany your group. We offer here some suggestions people have found helpful for shaping and facilitating the group meeting:



Preparing for the session

- Contextual Bible Study is a participatory and collaborative form of Bible study. Good facilitation is essential, with the facilitator preparing in advance.
- These Bible studies are designed for a meeting of around 1.5 to 2 hours – but can take as long as the group wishes. The facilitator should check the time available and adapt the study as necessary for a good discussion.
- If possible, please have a copy of the sheet showing the Marks of Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals to give to each participant. (See page 4)
- Plan appropriately for the venue; it is important to try to visit and review the venue before you facilitate the Bible study.
- If possible, decorate the meeting place with natural materials, perhaps something to symbolise the theme of the Bible study and candles (where safe and appropriate).
- Where possible, use more than one version of the biblical text as it helps to listen to different translations' perspectives to shed light on the meaning.

Opening the session

- Conduct the Bible study within a spiritual and liturgical environment, in which prayer and work / study (*ora et labora* – from Benedictine spirituality) can meet and intertwine. Liturgy, ritual and symbolism are

important for many participants because they engage people's emotions. This can be as important as the more intellectual work of the Bible study discussion in shaping people.

- A tried and tested scheme is suggested in Appendix 3. It is an offering of ideas, which you might like to use to frame your Bible study. It is up to you to decide how (or if) you use it. For example, you might choose to start your time together with the lament and repentance liturgical elements, then move to the Bible study and return to the liturgical elements of hope and the call to action to end your session. Or, you might prefer to weave the different liturgical elements throughout the Bible study.
- Start by lighting the candle and with a time of silence, prayer and perhaps a song to set the spirit of the time together. The church prayer book or another creative form can be used, as wished. Even if the meeting is online, it is still good to light and display a candle before opening in prayer.
- You might like to use ice breaker activities to create a safe and friendly space for sharing.
- In the opening sharing, it is helpful to pass a symbolic object (e.g. a candle, a flower or a ball) around the group, each participant holding the object while they speak. Holding an object allows the speaker to look at the object rather than the other people, which tends to make the speaker less self-conscious. People can just pass the object if they don't wish to share. You can continue to pass the object between those speaking, if the group wishes.

Running the session

- Every person is important. All are made in the image and likeness of God and each is loved by God. The voice or contribution of everyone is valuable. Ensure space for everyone to speak, although no one needs to feel that they must speak. Encourage those who like to speak a lot to make space for others.
- Help to create a safe space. Encourage everyone to share openly and to listen to others without judgement. With God's help we will over time discover insights together.
- If the group wishes, it can be useful to make a "social contract" for the meetings. What do we want to happen and what do we not want to happen? This gives participants ownership of the meeting and everyone is responsible to abide by the rules agreed. These might include: turn off mobile phones or put in vibration/silent mode, respect the person who is speaking, refrain from interrupting, raise your hand if you want to speak, commit to listening carefully to everyone even when we disagree, and so on.
- After reading the text suggested once or twice, or in different translations, it would be good to split people into small groups to respond to the proposed questions. You might want to provide printed copies of the questions or have them written on newsprint or white/black board or projected onto a wall.
- Sometimes, we suggest a "dramatised" or "dramatic" reading of the Bible passage. By this we mean that different participants take on the voice of a different character in the story, with someone else taking on the role of narrator for everything else. Each person can then bring their character to life, reading their words in a way they imagine their character might have spoken them.
- We recommend that the first two questions are discussed by the whole group. For question 1, the facilitator might encourage conversation and sharing among those

sitting next to each other. For question 2, the facilitator might offer each person the opportunity to say out loud what they think this text is about with the contribution of each person affirmed.

- We recommend the remaining questions are discussed in smaller groups of between 3 and 5 people, as appropriate. Each small group should be given the opportunity to report back to the whole group. Questions can be grouped together before a report-back and then returning to tackle the remaining questions.
- You might like to include a tea/coffee/ water break, which provides a space for informal conversation.

Recording the discussion and closing the session

- It is important to value the reporting back process, by acknowledging the contributions of each person and each small group.
- Where appropriate, it is valuable to record the process, either writing on large sheets of paper on the wall or white/black boards or with voice recordings (with due permission).
- Affirm what has been shared in the discussion and the commitments to action. Confirm next meeting. Invite someone to close the session in prayer.
- The Anglican Alliance would welcome feedback and photos so we can share the groups' experience and their reflections with others. (*email: AnglicanAlliance@aco.org*)

The next section begins with a Bible study which uses the story of the Journey to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35) to reflect on the process of Contextual Bible Study. We pray that you and your group will be inspired, motivated and blessed by your journey together.

PART 2

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM: EXPLORING THE FIVE ANGLICAN MARKS OF MISSION



Notes for facilitators

- Please refer to the general notes starting on page 12.
- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the realities that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously. The “community” might be very local (the immediate area), or it might be wider (state or region). The aim is to find out what is concerning people doing the Bible study.
- In the opening sharing, it is helpful to pass a symbolic object (e.g. a candle, a flower or a ball) around the group, each participant holding the object while they speak.
- The text boxes provide background information for the facilitator.

SESSION 1



LUKE 24:13-35

The journey that transforms

Introduction to the Contextual Bible Study process: See, Judge, Act

This introductory session familiarises participants with the three-step process we will be using in the Bible studies of “Re-imagining Our World Together”, by studying the passage of Scripture which has inspired the methodology of Contextual Bible Study. Luke 24:13-35 is the account of the disciples’ journey to Emmaus and then back to Jerusalem. In it we see how Jesus accompanied his disciples, enabling them to learn and change. Jesus helped the disciples to **see**, analysing their context, to **judge**, rereading Scripture to discern God’s purposes, and then to **act**, in faith-filled action.

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? (See facilitators’ notes)
2. Listen to a reading of Luke 24:13-35. What do we think this text is about?
3. Who are the main characters and what do we know about them? If you wish, draw pictures of the characters.
4. Read verses 13-24 again. What are the disciples discussing? How does Jesus behave when he comes alongside them?
5. Read verses 25-27 again. After Jesus has listened to the disciples, what does he then do? How does he help them to discern God’s purposes for the world?
6. Read verses 28-35 again. With Jesus, the disciples have analysed their context and reflected on scripture. How do they respond?
7. By the end of the story, a sense of hope, purpose and solidarity has been restored. How did this happen? What role do the disciples play in Emmaus and back in Jerusalem?

8. The journey of the disciples to Emmaus and back to Jerusalem is an inspiration for the three-fold process used in these Contextual Bible Studies: see, judge and act.

See – analysing the signs of the times in our particular context

Judge – re-reading Scripture together with others and relating it to our context in order to discern God's perspective on these realities

Act – responding in action, working with God to bring about God's will in our context.

Where do we see these three elements in this Bible story?

9. Have you ever experienced an encounter when your heart burned within you (verse 32) and you were moved to action? Is something making your heart burn in these present times? How might you be being called to act?

The Road to Emmaus and back to Jerusalem: A Scriptural Basis for the Contextual Bible Study Process

The process used in Contextual Bible Study (CBS) is inspired by the Gospel of Luke (Luke 24:13-35). This narrative account of the disciples' journey to Emmaus and then back to Jerusalem is shaped by Jesus' own way of accompanying and enabling his disciples to learn and change.

See: Analysing context

'Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.'
(Luke 24:13-14)

Through dialogue and a shared journey, the disciples begin with reflecting on their context. They dialogue with their context and with each other, analysing together the signs of the times. The context and its related world are the starting point for doing theology that is relevant and transforms life. In the same way, CBS begins by walking together and sharing stories, including the personal, communal, political, ecclesial, and spiritual.



'While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him.' (Luke 24:15-16)

Contextual analysis and faith-full collaborative dialogue are inhabited by Christ. Jesus comes alongside those who are engaged in analysing their context. An ordinary journey becomes a holy journey; ordinary dialogue becomes holy dialogue. Theology is always contextually embedded; theology is always dialogical.

And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' (Luke 24:17-24)

Jesus matches the pace of the disciples, asks questions, and listens. Jesus demonstrates what is required to analyse our contexts. Jesus begins with where the disciples are, with their understandings of their reality, but then goes on to probe and deepen the analysis through a facilitated dialogue.

Judge: Re-reading Scripture to discern God's perspective

'Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.' (Luke 24:25-27)

Dialogue is not simply polite conversation. Dialogue can be confrontational, though respectful. Jesus re-visits Scripture with the disciples. The Church is often complacent in its understanding of Scripture. We learn from Jesus that it is necessary to re-read Scripture if we and our contexts are to be transformed. Scripture and its interpretation are vital resources as we discern God's perspective on how people and planet can live together and flourish in just relationship. Jesus brings the lived reality of the disciples into dialogue with the prophetic voice of Scripture, transforming their understanding of Scripture and so of themselves and their context. The journey of the disciples becomes a journey of being transformed by a re-reading of Scripture: 'be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect' (Romans 12:2).

Act: Faith-full action

'As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.' (Luke 24:28-35)

The doing of theology leads to action. Contextual analysis and the re-reading of Scripture have changed the disciples. They act. Their first action is to offer hospitality, deepening the opportunity for analysis, reflection and dialogue. Jesus has facilitated the re-reading of Scripture. Jesus has facilitated in-depth collaborative dialogue. The disciples respond, offering hospitality. They have been transformed by doing theology in this way.

But the transformation is incomplete without the practices of faith. It is only in the eucharistic meal that the disciples fully understand. Of course, the meal they share with Jesus is an ordinary meal, an act of hospitality. But it is also sacramental, providing another resource for transformation, and then action. The use of 'reason', an Anglican virtue, is not sufficient on its own. Formation requires both intellectual and sacramental resources. The inclusive sharing of a meal becomes a site of further resources for transformation and action. The first action of the disciples is to offer hospitality. The second action of the disciples is to return to Jerusalem with a new faith mandate to take up the work of Jesus, to build a resilient, committed and missionary community.

The threefold learning process of See, Judge, Act – 'taking in', 'taking stock', 'taking action' – is experienced by the disciples. This process is taken up and shared within this series Contextual Bible Studies on the interplay between the Five Marks of Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals. We pray that these resources will support a careful in-depth analysis of our contexts, a prophetic re-reading of Scripture, and faith-full action to participate in God's mission of bringing good news to the poor.

This material is adapted from **God's Justice: Just Relationships between Women and Men, Girls and Boys** – Study Materials for use by Theological Colleges, Seminaries and Training Schemes in the Anglican Communion.

Notes for facilitators

- This activity helps the group to reflect on the holistic and integral nature of mission. It provides a necessary introduction for the following Contextual Bible Studies which reflect on our context and on Scripture to explore how we can together live out the Marks of Mission, participating in God's mission in the world.
- Each participant / group will need pen and paper.

SESSION 2



Exploring the Five Marks of Mission and the journey ahead

Questions for discussion

1. What is going on in our community?
2. What does the word "mission" mean to you? As individuals or in a group, draw a picture or write down some words and share.
3. Write the Anglican Five Marks of Mission on a board and read them together.

The Anglican Five Marks of Mission are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Note: The Marks of Mission were first adopted by the Anglican Communion in 1984 through the Anglican Consultative Council. They have subsequently been expanded to the current Five Marks of Mission. Together, the Five Marks of Mission express the Communion's understanding of the holistic nature of mission. The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

4. Spend some time reflecting on the Five Marks of Mission. Have you come across them before or are they unfamiliar to you? What stands out for you about the Five Marks?
5. Put your pictures and words alongside the list written on the board. Where is there overlap? Are there any gaps? Where and why?

In these Bible studies, we will be exploring the Five Marks of Mission and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, we will not be looking at each of the Five Marks of Mission individually. Nor will we have a Bible study for each of the 17 Global Goals! Rather, we will be exploring the prophetic “shape” of both – discerning and reflecting on how they cohere and what they look like as a whole (what gives them substance; what is at their heart) – and listening to what they have to say to each other.

Read together the text box below about prophetic shape. It describes how the concept of prophetic “shape” emerged.

The Five Marks of Mission are often seen as five separate areas of mission. We have tended to think of them as five pieces of content, perhaps even numbered in order of importance. However, they are intended to be taken as a whole: they are all part of mission and together bear witness to God’s ongoing love for the world.

In the first mark, ‘proclamation’ is identified with both word and action: sharing the Good News of the Kingdom and living it out in a Jesus-shaped life. The subsequent marks of mission develop and describe this in practical terms.

6. Together, re-read the Five Marks of Mission, this time taking away the numbering and placing a colon at the end of the first mark, so that what follows becomes an explication, as shown below.

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom:

- Teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- Respond to human need by loving service
- Transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Discuss:

- How does this change the way we understand mission?
- How does it give ‘prophetic shape’ to the Marks of Mission?
- How can we live out the Marks of Mission in word and action to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom?



What we mean by “prophetic shape”

When we talk about the “shape” of the gospel, we mean its over-arching narrative. It’s about seeing the big picture – what the gospel looks like as a whole. To use a metaphor, it’s about seeing the forest, not just the individual trees.

By “prophetic” we do not mean predicting the future but listening to God, speaking for God and acting for God in a specific time, place and context. This is what the Old Testament prophets did.

The origins of the idea of prophetic shape

The notion of theological ‘shape’ emerged as a useful way of thinking about the gospel in the midst of the struggle against apartheid.

In the South Africa of the 1980s, the Bible was used to support systemic racial discrimination. Specific biblical content was used to justify apartheid and much of the theological debate focused on such theological ‘content’.

In that context, the Church was challenged* to develop a prophetic theology that opposed the apartheid state’s discriminatory and destructive

theology. The word ‘prophetic’ is used here in its meaning of speaking God’s word into the particular context.

In working towards such a prophetic theology, rather than looking to specific content, we began to talk of the “shape of the gospel”.

We discerned this prophetic shape in Luke 4:18-19 as Jesus proclaims the manifesto of God’s kingdom.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God anointed me to preach good news to the poor: God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.”

Luke 4:18-19 is more than a series of unrelated statements; it is a coherent and integral theological formulation of 'the gospel' or good news. If we place a colon at the end of the first sentence, what follows is an explication.

The content of that good news might vary, as the sentences that follow the first sentence indicate. But while the content might vary with the different contextual realities of the poor, what remains is the shape: the gospel must be good news for the poor. And if what we proclaim is not good news for the poor, then it is not the gospel.

What, we asked in 1980s South Africa, was "good news" to the poor and marginalised?

Prof Gerald West

**In the Kairos document. For a fuller explanation of 'prophetic shape', please refer to the Prologue.*



Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community and context, economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In the opening sharing, it is helpful to pass a symbolic object (e.g. a candle, a flower or a ball) around the group, each participant holding the object while they speak.
- The text boxes provide background information.

SESSION 3



LUKE 4:14-21

The manifesto of Jesus

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community?
(See facilitators' notes)
2. Listen to a reading of Luke 4:14-21, if possible in two or three versions. What do you think this text is about?
3. Jesus says that "the Spirit of the Lord" has anointed him to do five things. What are these five things?
4. Re-read verse 18-19 in a number of different versions. Who are the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the bruised/broken/oppressed in the time of Jesus? Can you find an example of each of these from the gospels?
5. What do these (categories) groups of people have in common?
6. "The year of the Lord's favour" is a reference to the year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25. Read the notes in the box on Leviticus 25. How is the year of the Lord's favour good news?
7. Who are the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the bruised/broken/oppressed in our context? What would the good news of jubilee mean for them?
8. Reread the Five Marks of Mission. How does this biblical text relate and give shape to the Marks of Mission as a whole (their 'prophetic shape')?
9. What will we do to participate in the Good News of God's jubilee?



FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

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- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Year of Jubilee – Notes on Leviticus 25

Leviticus chapter 25 contains the Laws of Holiness about Sabbath Years and Jubilee. Here we read about rights to land and housing, the liberation of slaves and debt forgiveness. Agricultural land is also to be rested – the earth is given time to restore itself. The year of Jubilee is the culmination of seven cycles of seven Sabbath years (7 X 7 years) with the following, fiftieth, year being a hallowed time when “you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants”. It is a super Sabbath.

These are all contemporary themes as well and this Levitical text sheds light on the struggle of those who do not have access to land, housing or freedom. It relates to the exploitation of people and of the earth, all of God’s creation.

The resting of the earth is inseparable from the liberation of slaves and the forgiveness of debts. Together, they provide a “reset” – the restoration of both people and the land to their original condition. The Jubilee provides both a social and economic norm to overturn inequality that reduces land and people into commodities. It is a vision for how we can re-imagine our world.

In proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19.21), Jesus makes the Jubilee project his own, echoing the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2, to restore humanity’s relationship with God, with each other and with the earth and all creation.

We return to Leviticus 25 in more detail in session 14.

Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators' notes on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.

SESSION 4



LUKE 3:1-22

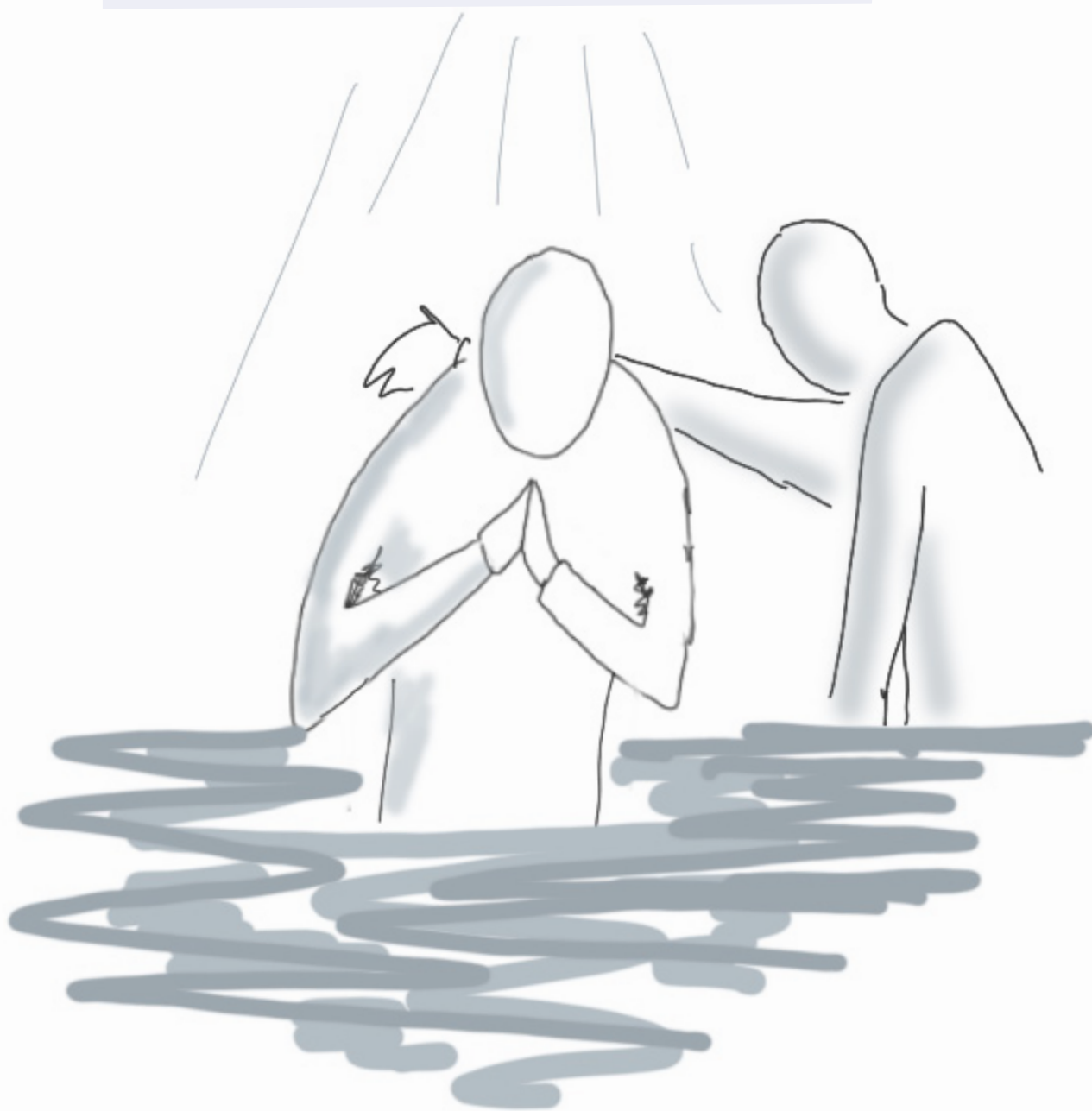
Baptism and whole life discipleship

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object (e.g. candle, flower, ball).
2. Listen to a dramatised reading of Luke 3:1-22. What is this text about?
3. Who are the main characters in this story and what do we know about them?
4. John seems to want to move people beyond belief into actions. What kinds of practices does John criticise, and what kinds of practices does John commend?
5. What are the powers and structures holding the kingdom of Herod together? (Read the box about Herod's kingdom.)
6. What are the marks of the kingdom of God that John proclaims as good news to the people?
7. How is baptism understood in your community?
8. John says that through baptism we are called to act for justice, to actions which are redemptive, liberating and transformative. How does this passage relate and give shape to the Marks of Mission as a whole (their 'prophetic shape')?
9. What does it say about being a baptised disciple of Jesus?
10. What actions will we commit ourselves to practise so that we may produce the good fruit of the 'kin[g]dom of God' (not the 'kingdom of Herod') for those around us?

FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD – THE KIN-DOM OF GOD

The term 'kin-dom of God' recognises that Jesus is building a human community of God's people*. In Jesus, God has chosen us as his kin, his family, a holy nation of God's people (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus makes it clear that God's will must be done on earth by those who are his family or kin: "Who are my mother and my brothers?" Jesus asked. And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:33-35).

The term 'kingdom of God' is a subversive term in the biblical world of empire, because it challenges the notion that the earthly emperor is 'king'.

The Kin-dom

"When we discussed this notion of the prophetic shape of the gospel in a shack-settlement among the poor and marginalised in the late 1980s, one of the participants said, 'So the good news is that Jesus is establishing the kin-dom of God'. This was a profound moment of theological insight.

"Alongside the more well-known notion of 'kingdom of God', a Christian living in a shack-settlement understood that God was in Christ constructing an inclusive community, a kin-dom. The shape of the gospel was about constructing an inclusive community in which the poor and marginalised have a pivotal place, guiding what social and theological systems must be transformed in order for God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven." Quoted from Prof Gerald West.

**Kin – one's family and relations*

Herod's Kingdom and the Roman Power in Palestine

Between 6 and 41 AD/CE, Idumea, Judea and Samaria were ruled directly by Roman governors. These were Romans appointed by the emperor to regions that represented instability for the empire. These governors had civil, military and judicial powers.

In Palestine at the time of Jesus, Rome's might was exercised in three principal ways:

- 1. The military presence in the region.** The main force of the empire was its great army, which was well organised, cohesive and disciplined. The military detachments were called "legions". It is good to keep that word in mind when we read, for example, Mark 5:1-20, as it sheds light on which "demonic occupation" is being referred to by the one who calls himself Legion: "Legion is my name, for we are many" (Mark 5:9).
- 2. The presence of its representatives in the administration.** These could be Roman prefects (governors), such as Pontius Pilate, or even local kings who swore allegiance to Rome, such as the rich Herod family. The decisions made by the local representatives of the empire came from the all-powerful and deified emperor in Rome.

3. The collection of taxes. This was the form of Roman oppression felt most keenly in the lives of the people. The empire demanded that the taxes be paid in Roman currency, thus maintaining the domination of its currency.

The **collection of taxes** due to Rome was done in various ways.

- In Galilee, Herod Antipas extracted tributes from the people directly. A considerable part of it was passed on to the Romans. The Romans demanded this annual contribution to support their legionary soldiers stationed in the region.
- In Judea, direct taxes, which corresponded to personal taxes (according to each person's income) and land taxation (20% to 25% of production), were levied by agents of the empire's tax collection system.
- Indirect taxes were levied through the purchase and sale of all products. Throughout the region, taxes were collected at customs posts, at important crossroads, at city entrances, at tax barriers and in public markets. Publicans and tax collectors were responsible for the collection of these indirect taxes. As a result, they were discriminated against by the more orthodox Jews (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 18:9-14), who considered them contaminated by their handling of impure foreign money. More widely, they were regarded as collaborators of the oppressive empire and thieves. Zacchaeus, for example, was head of publicans and a self-confessed thief, but then converted (Luke 19:1-10). See also Matthew 10:3; 11:19; 21:31-32).

In addition to these Roman tributes, there were temple taxes to be paid. Together, Roman and temple taxes amounted to around 65% of the value of all production. This was a heavy burden and even Jesus found ways around paying taxes to the temple (Matthew 17:24-27).

As we have seen, Roman domination had its allies in Palestine. There was, therefore, a double oppression: one exercised by the foreign empire and the other by powerful families in the region. These powerful people not only collected the taxes owed to Caesar, but also exploited their privileged position to ensure their own life of luxury, benefit their trade and enhance their prestige.



Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- This CBS looks at the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples as recorded in Matthew's Gospel. In churches this prayer is known by different names: Our Father, the Lord's Prayer, Pater Noster. Here we reflect on the prayer in light of the Marks of Mission as a whole.

SESSION 5

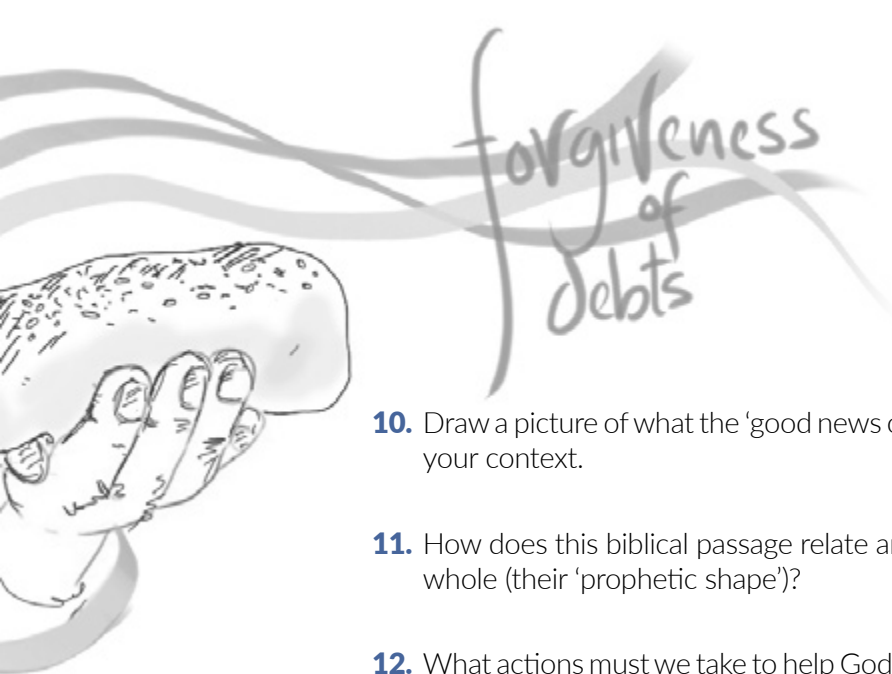


MATTHEW 6:9-13

The prayer that Jesus taught us

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? *Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object.*
2. What is the version of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples (Our Father) that you remember and use? What is the version used in your church?
3. Listen to a slow reading of Matthew 6:9-13. What are the differences between this biblical version of the prayer and the version used in your church?
4. The pivotal verse in the prayer is verse 10. What is the focus of this verse? What are we to pray for?
5. Most early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament did not have punctuation; it was added later by scholars and translators. If we were to place a colon at the end of verse 10, this would signal that what follows in verses 11 and 12 is an explanation of what the kingdom of God would look like on earth. [*ie. 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven: give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.'*] What is the economic connection between daily bread and the forgiveness of debts? What does God's kingdom on earth look like?
6. What does this say about our God, who is particularly concerned about those who are in need of bread for each day and who are trapped in debt?
7. Who in our context needs food for each day? Why do they need food?
8. What systems "on earth" must change for the 'kin[g]dom' of God to be fully present? (See box on page 27 for explanation of the term 'kin-dom'.)
9. What forms of "temptations" and what forms of "evil" (verse 13) prevent us from establishing God's kin[g]dom on earth?



10. Draw a picture of what the 'good news of the kin[g]dom' would look like "on earth" in your context.
11. How does this biblical passage relate and give shape to the Marks of Mission as a whole (their 'prophetic shape')?
12. What actions must we take to help God's kin[g]dom becomes fully present on earth?

FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

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- Teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- Respond to human need by loving service
- Transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Debt and hunger in the time of Jesus

Most of the disciples and followers of Jesus were people who had lost their family lands because of debt. In struggling to survive as subsistence farmers, they had had to borrow money from the money-lenders in the city, and so had fallen into debt.

When they could not pay their debts, the money-lenders would often foreclose on their property, including their land. So many families in the time of Jesus had lost their land through debt and had had to move to the margins of the city and become day labourers, earning their living by working for a daily wage (see the parable in Matthew 20:1-16). This is why Jesus recognises that they would need "daily bread". Jesus is showing them that God understands their economic situation.

Without land they need daily bread; but it would be better if they could be released from their debt so that they could hold onto their land and produce food/bread for themselves.

But Jesus makes it clear that we cannot expect those to whom we are indebted to release us from debt if we are not also prepared to release those who owe money to us! Reciprocity and mutual sharing is required, constructing relationships of sharing and solidarity, while working to transform unjust economic structures in society.

Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators' notes on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.

SESSION 6



MARK 3:1-6

The image of God

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? *Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object.*
2. Listen to a dramatised reading of Mark 3:1-6. What do you think this text is about?
3. Who are the characters and what do we know about them?
4. Jesus and the Pharisees have different theologies. Compare the following:
 - What image do you think the Pharisees have of God?
 - What view of synagogue tradition do the Pharisees hold?
 - What image do you think Jesus has of God?
 - What view of synagogue tradition does Jesus hold?
 - What image of God do you think the man with the withered hand has?
 - What view of synagogue tradition do you think he has?
5. What image of God do marginalised people in our contexts have? Try to be specific about particular forms of marginalisation.
6. What view of church tradition do marginalised people in our contexts have? Try to be specific about particular forms of marginalisation.
7. Why was Jesus angry (verse 5)?
8. How should the church respond to marginalised people? Try to be specific about particular forms of marginalisation.
9. What will we do to assist our churches to be inclusive towards marginalised people? Try to be specific about particular forms of marginalisation.
10. How does this biblical passage relate to the Marks of Mission as a whole (their 'prophetic shape')? What does it tell us about the Kingdom of God?



FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

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- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Jewish Tradition in Jesus' time

The temple was the central core of the hegemonic or ruling expression of Judaism. By extension, the city of Jerusalem was the political and spiritual centre of the Jewish people. In Jesus' time, it had around 50,000 inhabitants. More than a third of them depended directly on the normal activities of the temple and the expansion works.

As the political and religious centre for Israel, Jerusalem had become an important theological symbol. It is the holy city (Matthew 4:5; 27:53). They said that she had been chosen by God (1 Kings 11:13), to establish her perpetual abode there (1 Kings 8:11,13,29). It is no coincidence that the prophet Ezekiel calls it the "centre of nations" and "navel of the world" (Ezekiel 5:5; 38:12).

For the Jewish people, the law was an expression of God's will. To please God, therefore, it would be necessary to abide by the law. This is why there was a great concern, among the most pious Jews, such as Pharisees and scribes, to fulfil every law. They said that the law was the light (Psalm 10:9; 119:105), the truth (Psalm 119:30,138) and the way to life (Psalm 119:37,40; Proverbs 6:23).

Some scribes even surveyed all the laws contained in the Pentateuch. They counted 613 laws. Of these, 365 were prohibitions, indicating what should not be done, and 248 were positive orders, indicating what should be done.

The temple, through the Sanhedrin, was primarily responsible for law enforcement. Therefore, questioning the law was inevitably also questioning the entire temple system. Later, when Stephen is sentenced to death by stoning, the charges made to him confirm this point. The synagogue authorities accuse Stephen of blaspheming against Moses and God, that is, against the law and against the temple (cf. Acts 6:11,13).

There were many kinds of laws: ritual laws on behaviour during worship and sacrifices; laws, like the Ten Commandments, to be observed at all times; laws on specific cases; and oral laws or traditions of the elders which were an interpretation of written laws made by the scribes.

Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators' notes on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.
- This text has 6 sections: Introduction: John 9 v.1-5. Scene 1: v.6-12. Scene 2: v.13-17. Scene 3: v.18-23. Scene 4: v.24-34. Scene 5: v.35-41. It will help if the facilitator has these sections written on a piece of paper and clearly displayed.
- Question 9 should only be included if there is plenty of time.

SESSION 7



JOHN 9:1-41

Contending theologies

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object.
2. Listen to a dramatic reading of John 9:1-41. What do you think this text is about?
3. Jesus engages with the man born blind in a number of ways. First read verses 1-7 about the first three encounters between Jesus and the man: Jesus saw him (v1); Jesus touched him (v.6); Jesus spoke to him (v.7).
4. Now read the next three encounters in verses 35-41: Jesus found the man (v.35); Jesus talks with him (v.35-38); Jesus draws him back into community (v.39-41). What do these encounters say about Jesus and his attitude to the man born blind?
5. The empathetic action of Jesus begins a process of change in this man. What are these changes as the man's story unfolds? You may want to draw a picture that represents these changes.
6. The question the disciples ask in verse 2 reveals what they have been taught about sin and sickness. What is this teaching?
7. What Jesus says to his disciples in verse 3 and his subsequent actions reveal an alternative way to see the man's situation. What is this alternative theology?
8. The theology of retribution, which is the theology of the disciples, remains a significant theology in many churches. In relation to this passage, what is your own, and your church's, understanding of the causes of illness and disability? What theology are we preaching in our churches?

9. Four other groups of people also interact with the man born blind: his neighbours and acquaintances (v.8-12); the Pharisees (v.13-17); the Jews (v.18-19, 24-34); his parents (v.20-23). What do these encounters say about each of these groups and their attitudes to the man born blind? What kinds of theology do we discern in each of these group's responses? Do we find similar kinds of theologies in our churches?
10. What will we do to demonstrate Jesus' theology of empathetic action and inclusion in our contexts?
11. How does this biblical passage relate to the Marks of Mission as a whole (their 'prophetic shape')? What does it tell us about the Kingdom of God?

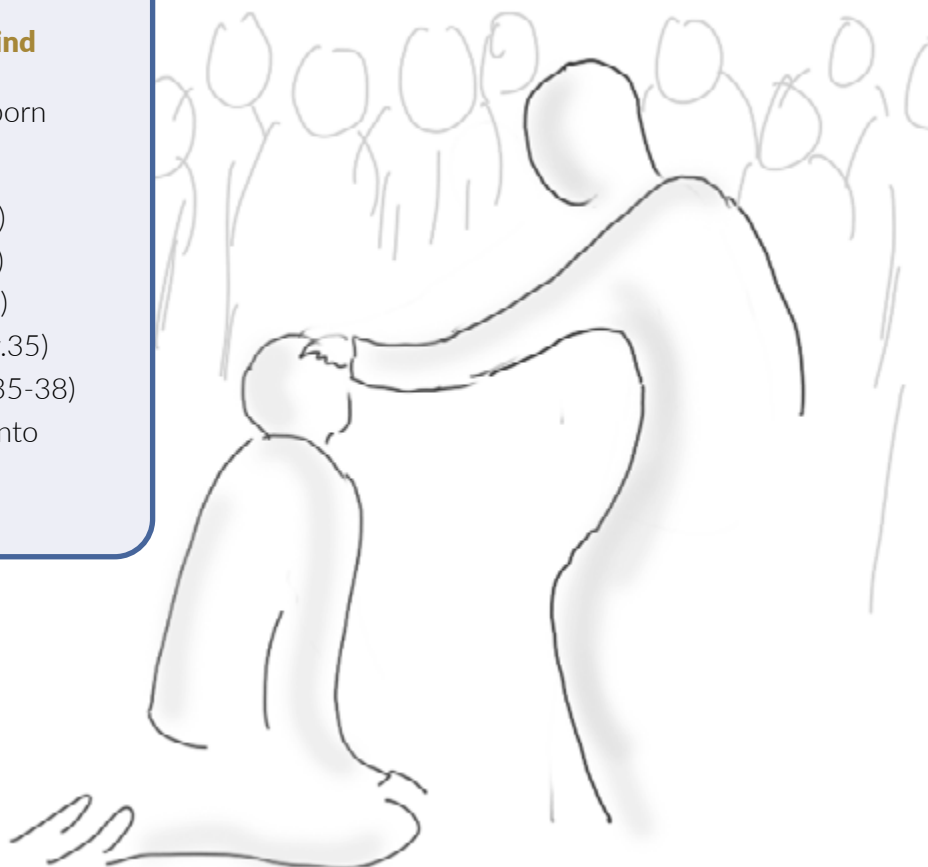
FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom:
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- Transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Jesus and the man born blind

Jesus engages with a man born blind in a number of ways:

- Jesus saw the man (v.1)
- Jesus touched him (v.6)
- Jesus spoke to him (v.7)
- Jesus found the man (v.35)
- Jesus talks with him (v.35-38)
- Jesus draws him back into community (v.39-41)





PART 3

RE-SHAPING OUR WORLD TOGETHER: EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Notes for facilitators

- **PLEASE NOTE:** There is a lot of information in the box about “The world in the 21st Century”. Please decide how much of it to use and how best to use it according to your group and context. You might decide to share it with group members ahead of the session, or perhaps select a few points to read aloud during the session.
- Ahead of this session one copy of the 17 Global Goals is needed. Cut to separate the 17 Global Goals.
- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- The text boxes provide background information. The final text book describes what happened when the Bible study writing team carried out the exercise in this session. You might light to compare notes!

SESSION 8



Exploring the Sustainable Development Goals

This session aims to help people explore the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. It is suitable both as an introduction for people who are new to them, and as a way of exploring them further for those who are already familiar with them.

Please be sure to read the facilitation notes ahead of this session. Preparatory work is needed.

Questions

1. What is going on in our community? *Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object.*
2. There are 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, covering a wide range of subjects. Read slowly through the goals together (see box 1), with each person reading aloud a goal in turn. Pause after each goal to allow space to think about it.
 - What are your thoughts as you read through the goals?
 - Which goal would you most like to see achieved?
 - Do any of the goals connect with what you shared in question 1?
 - Do you think the Global Goals are achievable by the global community?
3. The second box provides a snapshot of the world in the 21st Century. What are your reactions to the information?

4. The 17 Global Goals cover a diverse range of issues from health and climate to industry and equality. This can make them quite difficult to get to grips with. A more memorable framework has been proposed, which groups the goals under 5 headings. These are: *People*, *Planet*, *Peace*, *Prosperity* [Flourishing] and *Partnership*. Use these headings in the following exercise, which will help the group become more familiar with the Global Goals and start thinking about them in more depth:
 - Using the template provided in box 1, cut along the marked lines and distribute the individual Global Goals amongst the members of the group.
 - Spend a few minutes reflecting on your goal(s) and decide which of the five headings you think each should be placed under: People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity [Flourishing] or Partnership.
 - Whoever has Global Goal 1 starts. That person proposes which 'P' heading they think goal should be placed under, justifying their choice to the group. Discuss this suggestion. Does everyone agree? If not, why not? Does anyone have a counter suggestion? Discuss and debate until either consensus is reached or a vote taken to decide the goal's placement.
 - Repeat for the rest of the Global Goals. The aim is that the conversation should help the participants to dig down into each Global Goal, think about what lies at their core and see the relationships between them.
 - When all 17 Global Goals have been placed under one of the 5 P headings, look at your finished distribution. Do you want to change anything about how the groups are arranged in relation to each other?

NB: There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise.

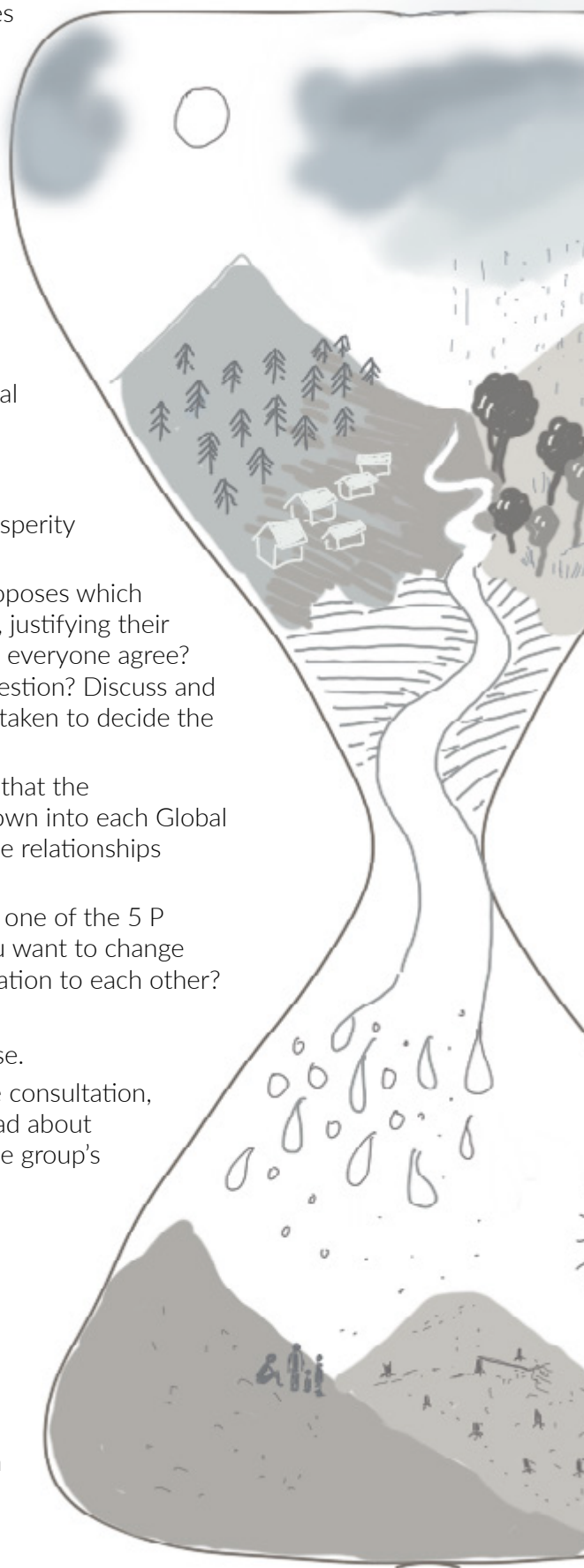
This activity is based on the one carried out during the consultation, which created these Bible studies. You might like to read about what happened on that occasion and how it shaped the group's thinking. See box 3.

5. When you have completed your own shaping of the Global Goals, look afresh at the 5 'P' headings, where you have placed them in relationship to each other and the goals you have placed beneath them.

How do these concepts connect with our faith?

What language would we use for the headings in a faith context?

What passages of the Bible speak to each of the headings?



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO POVERTY 	<p>End poverty in all its forms everywhere.</p>
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	<p>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p>
5 GENDER EQUALITY 	<p>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.</p>
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	<p>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.</p>
2 ZERO HUNGER 	<p>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.</p>
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	<p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p>
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	<p>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.</p>
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	<p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p>

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	<p>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.</p>	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	<p>Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p>
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	<p>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.</p>	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	<p>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p>
13 CLIMATE ACTION 	<p>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.</p>	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	<p>Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.</p>
15 LIFE ON LAND 	<p>Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.</p>	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<p>Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.</p>
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	<p>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p>		

The world in the 21st Century

At the heart of the Global Goals is the vision of abundant life – for both people and planet. This information box provides a snapshot of the current state of affairs. The impact of the pandemic and other current crises in climate, conflict and food security continue to affect these issues.



People

Eliminating extreme poverty is the most basic of the Global Goals. Poverty has many faces and takes many interconnected forms. The internationally agreed definition of extreme poverty is living on less than \$1.90* a day. But, as the UN says, *“Poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making”.*

Progress has been made over the last 25 years but this has been threatened by the pandemic, as well as ongoing climate, conflict and other crises.

Snapshot facts:

- More than 700 million people, or 10 per cent of the world population, still live in extreme poverty today, struggling to meet basic needs such as health, education and access to water and sanitation.
- Hunger is the leading cause of death in the world.
- Eleven countries have eliminated malaria.
- Huge progress has been made in reducing polio, measles and numerous other diseases.
- Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels, particularly for women and girls, and basic literacy skills across the world have improved tremendously.
- However, 1 in 5 children in today's world – 258 million children – do not go to school. Girls are disproportionately affected.
- Few countries have achieved equality of access at all levels of education.
- There have been huge improvements in access to clean drinking water. However, millions of people still die every year from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Most of them are children.
- Globally, one in three people lives without sanitation.
- People routinely face prejudice, discrimination and violence on the basis of gender, race, faith, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political affiliation or social standing, among other criteria.



Prosperity

Globally, *the number of people living in extreme poverty declined* from one in three in 1990, to one in 6 in 2010 and to one in ten in 2015. This is a remarkable achievement and shows that ending extreme poverty is possible.

However, the decline then *slowed down*. Poverty was still reducing globally, but at a slower rate. In 2019 it was projected that around 480 million people would still be living in extreme poverty in 2030, up 44 million from the previous estimate. Climate change impacts are among factors thought to have contributed to the decline. Current crises are impacting severely with price rises and food insecurity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact. As the *UN writes*, “The COVID-19 crisis risks reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty.... The economic fallout from *the global pandemic could increase global poverty by as much as half a billion people*, or 8 per cent of the total human population. This would be the first time that poverty has increased globally in thirty years, since 1990”.

Snapshot facts:

- There are more billionaires than ever before. Together, the world’s billionaires have more wealth than the 4.6 billion people who make up 60 per cent of the planet’s population. The wealth of the world’s 10 richest men has doubled since the pandemic began, while the incomes of 99% of humanity are worse off because of Covid-19.
- Being in work does not guarantee a decent living. In 2018, 8 per cent of employed workers and their families lived in extreme poverty, globally.
- Every day, 10,000 people die because they can’t afford or access healthcare.
- Every year, the cost of healthcare drives 100 million people into extreme poverty.
- The unpaid care work of women is estimated to be worth \$10.8 trillion per year (three times more than the tech industry), but this is largely unrecognised and unvalued.
- Livelihood and food loss, destruction of property, increased tension, family disruption and forced migration are just some of the consequences of climate change





Planet

Our planet provides abundant resources, but we are not using them responsibly and currently consume far more than the earth can sustain. If everyone in the world had the same ecological footprint** as people living in the USA, the UAE or Australia (among others), *we would need more than four planets.*

Climate change, deforestation, loss of natural habitats, land degradation, pollution and unsustainable practices are severely damaging the earth's ecosystems and biodiversity, both on land and below water, threatening the integrity of creation.

Snapshot facts:

- Climate change impacts such as extreme weather events, sea level rise and changed rainfall patterns are severely impacting millions of people across the world.
- Biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate. Species are becoming extinct at a rate vastly in excess of natural background rates (around one thousand times higher). One in eight bird species is threatened with extinction. Forty-one per cent of amphibians are under threat.
- Thanks to conservationists, humpback whales, rhinos, European bison and California condors are among the species likely saved from extinction.
- Sustainable practices in industries such as fishing and forestry are becoming established.
- Responsible investment is becoming mainstream.





Peace and Justice

In every part of the world, people live with discrimination in many forms, violence, abuse, conflict, terrorism, exploitation, persecution, crime, corruption and injustice. Women and girls are still routinely discriminated against in many ways in many places. As a Communion, one of our Marks of Mission is 'to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation'.

Snapshot facts:

- The number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict reached nearly *90 million* in 2021, the highest level recorded by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in almost 70 years.
- The *number of countries affected by armed conflict is very high*. In 2019, there were 54 active armed conflicts in the world, up from 52 in 2018 and matching the post-Cold War peak in 2016.
- *32 armed conflicts* were reported in 2021, a slight decrease compared to the previous year. Most of the conflicts occurred in Africa (15), followed by Asia (nine), the Middle East (five), Europe (two) and America (one).
- *One in three women globally has experienced either physical abuse and/or sexual abuse by an intimate partner*. This rises to over 70 per cent in some countries. Gender based violence, especially domestic violence, has increased significantly during the pandemic.
- *Racism and xenophobia* are prevalent everywhere and *have increased during the pandemic*.
- There have also been widespread movements of protest against racism and *gender based* violence.
- Corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion *cost some US \$1.26 trillion for developing countries* per year.
- There are an estimated 40.3 million victims of modern slavery across the world. Most are women.
- The births of around one in four children under age 5 worldwide are never officially recorded, depriving them of a proof of legal identity crucial for the protection of their rights and for access to justice and social services.



Partnership

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how deeply interconnected and interdependent we are. Responding to the crisis – whether through supplies of PPE or vaccine research and production – has required myriad partnerships and international cooperation. The same is true for achieving the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has said, “I am calling on civil society, grassroot organizations, media, private sector, unions, academia and others to mobilize partnerships like never before”.

The Anglican Communion is a global body, with over 85 million members in 165 countries. Anglican churches are integral parts of their local communities with many local relationships. We also connect across the world through the Communion’s structures and instruments of Communion^{***}, through our member churches, companionship links, official networks, mission, relief and development agencies, the Anglican Communion Office departments and the Anglican Alliance. As a Communion, we are able to connect ecumenically and with other faiths and to bring the voices and experiences of grass roots communities into the highest levels of global governance, including the United Nations.

*These are ‘international’ dollars – a hypothetical currency which takes into account the cost of living (or “purchasing power” of money) in different countries. For a person living in any given country, an ‘international’ dollar would buy a comparable amount of goods and services that a U.S. dollar would buy in the United States.

**A *measure* of the demand human consumption places on the biosphere.

*** The instruments of the Communion are the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates’ Meeting, the Lambeth Conference and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sources: UN Global Goals, UN SDGs 2019 report, SDG Tracker, Our World in Data, Oxfam, WHO, Bird Life International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, UNHCR, Relief web, UNICEF, World Economic Forum, Anglican Communion, data.footprintnetwork.org, UNHCR, Oxfam International, UN Women, *Impact of Covid-19 pandemic & statistical perspective on SDG progress*.



Placing the 17 Global Goals under the 5 'P' headings at the Bible study writing consultation.

The 17 participants at the Bible study writing consultation carried out the exercise as described above. The activity was scheduled to take about 20 minutes, but as it unfolded it became clear we were mining a rich seam and it deserved more time being spent on it, "until it was done" (to use a South African understanding of how much time to allocate to an activity).



The conversation and debate were rich, enabling the participants to dig down into each Global Goal, think about what lay at their core, see the relationships between them and discern theological resonances. Eventually, the 17 goals had been placed under one of the 5 P headings. This is what the group came up with:

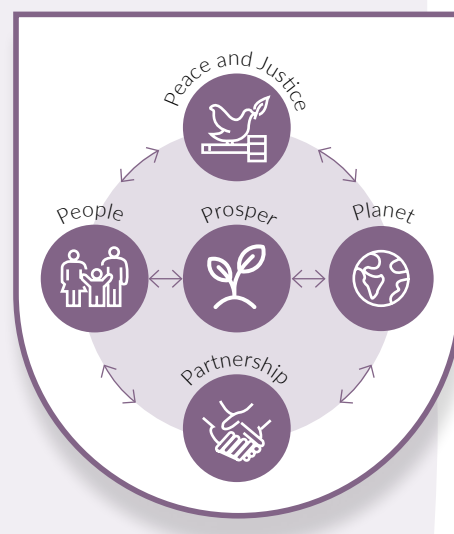
As a result of this conversation and exploration, the group was able to move swiftly into reshaping the Global Goals from the linear pattern of five separate headings (above) into a circular shape of five relational areas, with reciprocal connections and interdependencies:

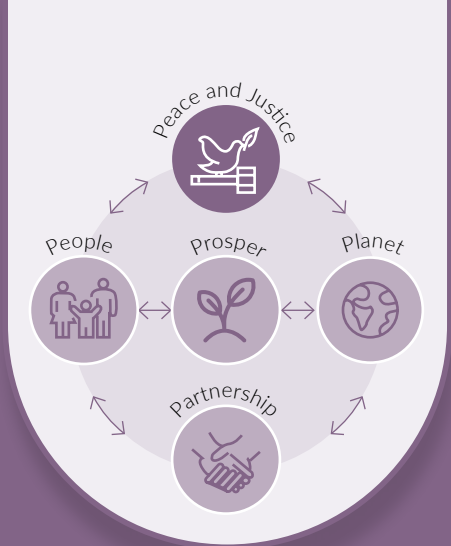
In this shaping, *People*, *Planet* and *Prosper(ity)*, the headings under which we placed the majority of the Global Goals, are on one line. They are not separate but are placed in relationship to one another, with *Prosper(ity)* placed to form a connecting bridge between *people* and *planet*. This emphasises the reality that people and planet are intimately linked, that their prospering (or flourishing) are interdependent. It also allows for a critique of the heading 'prosperity', which we have reimagined as 'prosper' in recognition of the fact that prosperity, in the commonly understood sense of endless economic growth, is unsustainable and detrimental to the planet. In contrast, prosper, understood as flourishing, allows for a richer conversation, is truer to the overall ambitions of the Global Goals and has immediate resonance with our faith heritage.

In this shaping, the *Peace and Justice* heading is placed as an overarching theme which embraces and covers all the other headings. This recognises the struggle we had separating any of the Global Goals from peace and justice and our tendency to want to place every Global Goal under this heading.

Finally, *Partnership* is understood as underpinning everything. It is not a category or activity on its own but the bedrock of all activity and fundamental to success.

Once the shaping of the Global Goals was complete, participants looked afresh at the headings in their new framing, reflecting on each theologically to discern resonances with faith and prayerfully determine Biblical texts that speak to them.





Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously. The “community” might be very local or wider, based on the concerns of the group.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators’ note on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.

SESSION 9



Peace and Justice



LUKE 6:17-28 Children of God

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community? Invite each person to share, passing around the *symbolic object*.
2. Read the text in a dramatised way. If possible, read it in different versions.
3. Who has come to meet Jesus and what were they looking for? Why do you think Jesus chooses to meet them on the plain – on the same level?
4. Read v.20 in different translations. Who is Jesus addressing in the verses that follow? Why is it important that Jesus’ disciples understand this teaching?
5. What do you understand by the word “blessed”? How else could we understand it?

Blessed

The Greek word used in the Beatitudes, translated as “happy” or “blessed” in English, is μακάριος (*Makarios*). In Greek understanding, *Makarios* was associated with the privileged people of society and deities, with having possessions and power, and with being free of care. But Jesus turns this idea upside down and pronounces God’s favour is with ordinary people facing grief, poverty, injustice and hunger, echoing Mary’s song, the Magnificat.

6. Jesus says that the Kin[g]dom of God is situated with the poor. What do these sayings of Jesus tell us about God's Kin[g]dom of justice and peace? How does Jesus create the Kingdom of God amongst the people gathered on the plain?
7. Why are people poor and hungry in our world today? What does inequality do to people – both the poor and the rich?
8. How does the world today look in comparison with Jesus' vision of the Kin[g]dom of God?
9. How can we join Jesus in bringing the transformation of God's Kin[g]dom of justice and peace on earth – starting with changing ourselves as his disciples?

Note: The Bible is full of visions of God's Kingdom of Justice and Peace. Isaiah 65:17-25 is a particularly beautiful one.

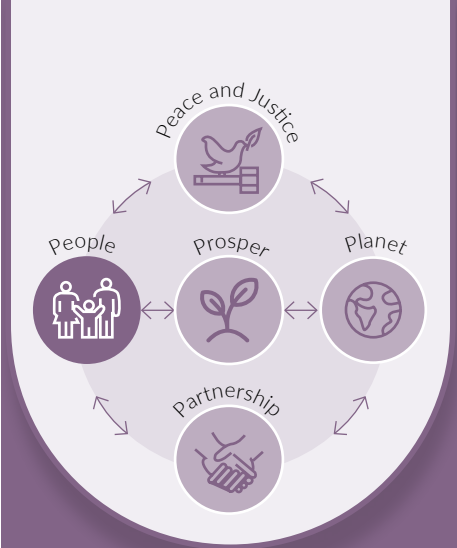
What we are thinking about in the area of Peace and Justice

"The Sustainable Development Goals rightly note that 'There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.' Therefore, they set out goals to foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

Justice underpins the success of the SDGs: from ending poverty and inequality to ensuring no one is left behind."

Source: UN Foundation.





Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators' notes on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.

SESSION 10



People



MARK 6:30-34

A sharing community

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community?
2. Listen to a dramatic reading of Mark 6:30-44. What is this text about?
3. Who are the characters in this story, where are they, what do we know about them, and what are the relationships between them? Draw a picture that represents the characters, their relationships, and their location as indicated in the story.
4. Re-read verses 33-37 and the text in the box about the importance of place. Why do you think Jesus chose a place between the city and the villages to feed the crowd? Why do you think Jesus rejected the disciples' suggestion that the crowd go into the villages to find food? Why do you think Jesus insisted that the disciples give the crowd something to eat?
5. From this story it is clear that Jesus wants to build a particular kind of community. What kind of community does Jesus want to build?
6. What are the 'spiritual' characteristics and 'material' practices of this alternative community?
7. Who participates in the building of this alternative community? Identify the different kinds of people involved.
8. What kinds of community bring people together, valuing the dignity and contribution of each person? Give examples from your own context.
9. What actions will you take to identify new locations for the construction of redemptive communities in your contexts.

The importance of place

The gospel of Mark gives careful attention to place. In this story we are told that Jesus feeds the crowd in a “secluded place” (32) between the city and the villages.

In the time of Jesus, cities were often associated with economic oppression. The elites who lived in the city made up less than five percent of the population, yet they consumed the vast majority of the available resources. These elites, which included religious elites, often exploited the villages around the city. City elites extracted economic resources from the villages around them in the form of taxes, tribute, and tithes. The crowd that followed Jesus would have been aware of the exploitative economic relationship between the city and the villages.

What we are thinking about in the area of

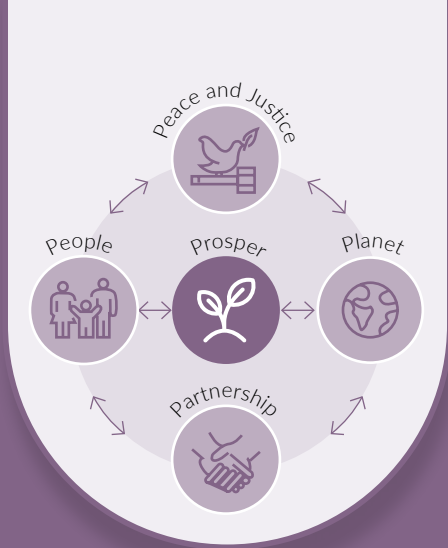
People

“The Sustainable Development Goals declare the world’s determination ‘to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.’”

Source: UN Foundation.

“Leave no one behind” is a fundamental principle of the Global Goals.





Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- In this Bible study, we suggest a dramatised reading of the passage. See the facilitators' note on page 14 on how to do a dramatised reading.

SESSION 11



Prosper(ity)



GENESIS 2:4-15 A flourishing world

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community?
 2. Listen to a dramatic reading of Genesis 2:4-15. Have four readers, each reading a section: 4-6; 7-9; 10-14; 15.
 3. What is this text about?
 4. What elements of creation are named in this text? Draw a picture of the relationships between these elements.
 5. In verse 7 there is an explicit link between 'the ground' and the human creature that God makes from the ground. The Hebrew word for ground is *ha-adamah* and the Hebrew word for 'human' is *ha-adam*. So an appropriate translation of *ha-adam* would be 'ground-creature'. Re-read this text using the translation provided here. How does this understanding speak to you about the relationship between "God", "the ground", and the "ground-creature"?
- 4** This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.
- 5** *Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no ground-creature to cultivate the ground.*
- 6** *But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.*
- 7** *Then the Lord God formed ground-creature of dust from the ground, and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life; and ground-creature became a living being.*
- 8** *The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there the Lord God placed the ground-creature whom God had formed.*

- ⁹ Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- ¹⁰ Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.
- ¹¹ The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
- ¹² The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.
- ¹³ The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush.
- ¹⁴ The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
- ¹⁵ Then the Lord God took the ground-creature and put it into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

6. What is the connection between the ground-creature and the other elements of creation (verse 9; see also v. 19a)?
7. We are told twice in this text what the task of the ground-creature is. What is the task? (Re-read the relevant verses in as many translations as possible.)
8. This creation story refers to both agricultural, mineral, and water resources. What does it mean to cultivate/till/tend/serve/work and keep/watch/preserve these resources in a sustainable way so that all elements of creation can prosper together?
9. What happens when we forget our connection and responsibility to the ground and the other species and elements of creation? Share a story from your context.
10. What will you do to become a more connected and responsible 'ground-creature'?

What we are thinking about in the area of

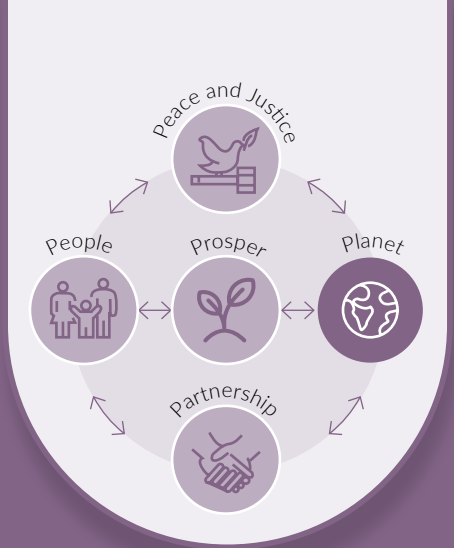
Prosper(ity)

The Sustainable Development Goals aim to “ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

“Inequality is one of the defining issues of this generation and requires a commensurate focus that, to date, has been lacking.”

Source: *UN Foundation*.

As described in the introduction to this section, we are reimagining ‘prosperity’ as ‘prosper’ in recognition of the fact that prosperity, in the commonly understood sense of endless economic growth, is unsustainable and detrimental to the planet. In contrast, prosper, understood as flourishing, allows for a richer conversation, is truer to the overall ambitions of the Global Goals and has immediate resonance with our faith values, seeking the well-being of humanity within all God’s creation.



Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context/setting for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.

SESSION 12



Planet



JOB 12:1-13 Learning from creation

Bible study questions

- What is going on in our community? *Invite each person to share, passing around the symbolic object (e.g. candle, flower, ball).*
- Listen to a slow reading of Job 12:1-13 using different versions of the Bible and in different languages.
- What is this text about?
- Who are the characters (human and others) in this passage? What do we know about them?
- What is the role they play within this story?
- What does verse 10 tell us about humanity's relationship with all creation and God?
- Job understands that God has appointed creation as a teacher to humanity (animals teach, birds tell... verses 1-8). What is nature teaching us through its suffering at this time (although it is blameless, like Job)?
- Read the box about what God says in the final chapters of Job. What can we do to help all of God's kin[g]dom* (all living things / creation) flourish in harmony?

*Kin[g]dom = the life of every living thing in the hand of God (v 10b)



The final chapters of Job: God speaks

In the final chapters of the book of Job, God proclaims the glories of creation in a series of questions. God's intimate knowledge and passionate care are clear. God sees not only earth's creatures but also its physical structures and systems.

The Lord said to Job:

'Where were you when I laid out the earth's foundation (38:4)... while the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy? (38:7)

Have you entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? (38:16)

Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? (38:18)

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? (38:33)

Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer? (39:1)

Does the eagle soar at your command? (39:26)

Who has first given to me, that I should repay?

Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. (41:11)

What we are thinking about in the area of

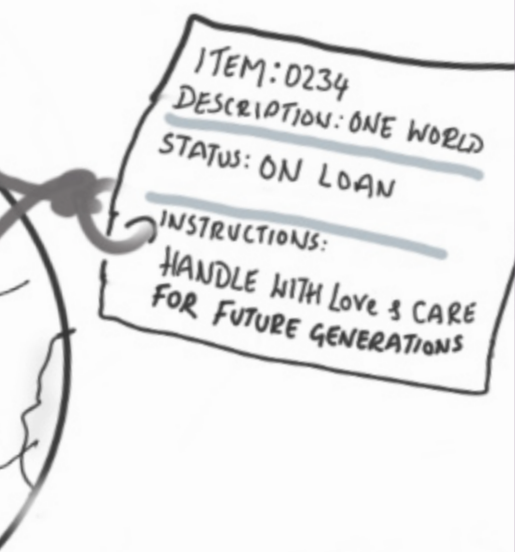
Planet

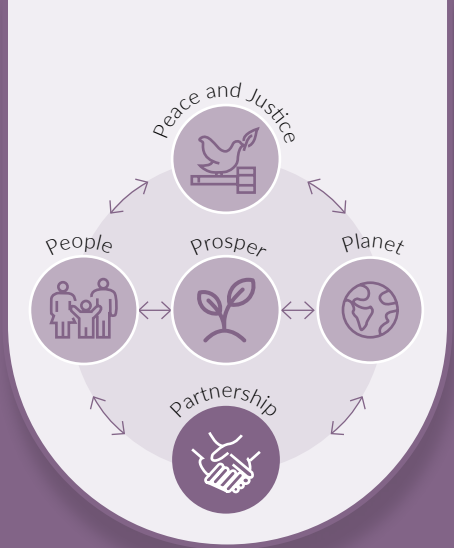
"The Sustainable Development Goals set a goal to protect the planet 'so it can support the needs of the present and future generations.' Nearly every day we are seeing just how connected – and fundamental – climate change is to global development.

"Climate change is a roadblock to achieving the SDGs and has disproportionate effects on the poor. Without concerted action, it could drive *100 million more people into poverty by 2030.*

"The world is also facing dire challenges in addressing biodiversity and environmental protection. Human actions have already significantly altered *three-quarters of land and two-thirds of marine environments.* Today, around 1 million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, which is the highest number in human history."

Source: *UN Foundation.*





Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion that will follow. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.

SESSION 13



Partnership



ACTS 4:32-37 A new community

Bible study questions

1. What is going on in our community?
2. Listen to a reading of Acts 4:32-37. What is the text about?
3. This is a continuation of the story that begins in Acts 2:44-47. In groups of two, read Acts 2:44-47 and then 4:32-37 again. Share with each other how these texts have been used in your context.
4. Both these texts link the 'spiritual' to the 'material'. How does each text make the connection between spiritual characteristics and material practices?
5. Both these texts are about the building of an alternative community. What are the characteristics and practices of this new community, and how do these characteristics and practices make this new community?
6. Both these texts emphasise economic need. What is the relationship between those who have economic resources and those who lack economic resources?
7. Re-read Acts 4:35. What are your understandings of the phrase: "to each according to their need"?
8. What strategies does the text offer for addressing poverty and inequality in our community?

9. Who are those in economic need in our context? Name them and reflect on why they are in economic need.
10. What forms of partnership will you become involved with in order to ensure that each person has access to economic opportunities and receives resources according to their need?

Optional additional question:

In 1 Corinthians 12, we read “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ” (verse 12) and “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honoured, all the parts are glad” (verse 26). See also Romans 12:4-8. What does the idea of the global Body of Christ add to your conversation? What does it mean in the context of partnership in the Global Goals?

What we are thinking about in the area of

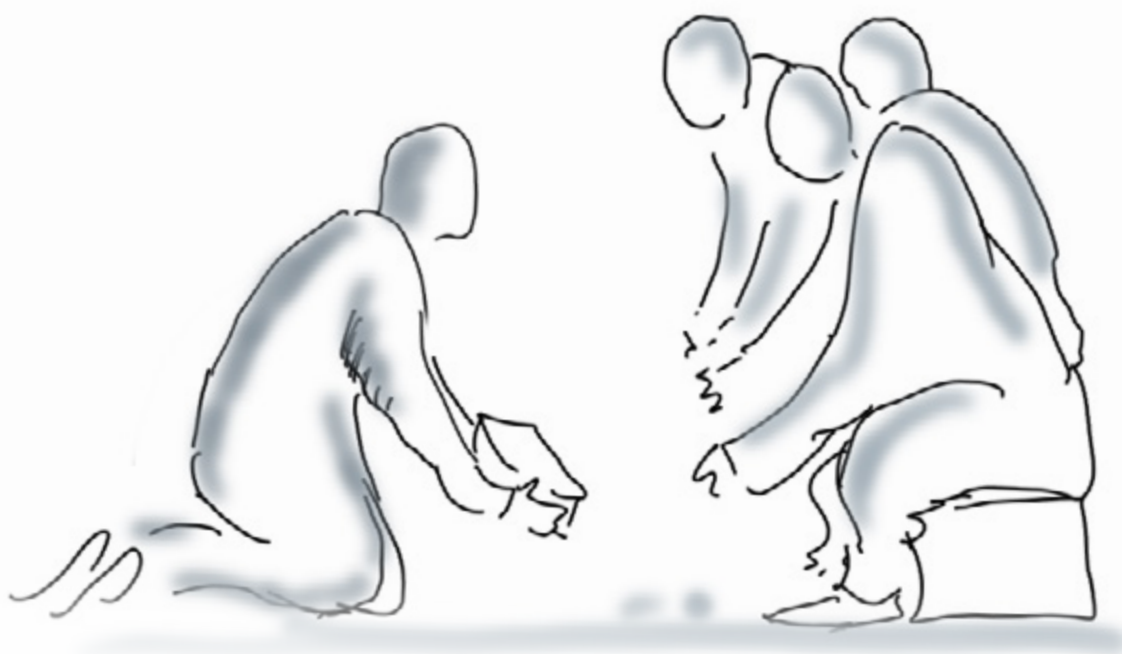
Partnership

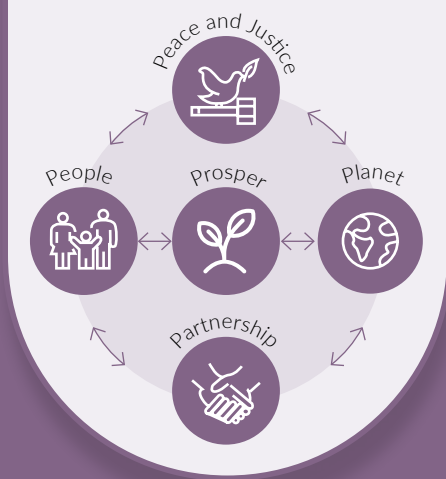
The Sustainable Development Goals call for “a spirit of strengthened global solidarity. Problems that cross geographies and sectors require collaboration that does as well.

“The good news is that we’re seeing a variety of players step up for the SDGs, from youth activists striking for climate action to cities embracing sustainable living conditions to corporations embedding sustainability into their core plans.

“This is important, but more solidarity is needed, especially when it comes to mobilizing financing and reaching the furthest behind.”

Source: UN Foundation.





Notes for facilitators

- The opening question establishes the context for the discussion. Help the group draw out the things that are impacting the community economically, socially, politically and religiously.
- This is a long Bible study. You might choose to follow it over two sessions.
- There are facilitators' notes on the passage on page 60.

SESSION 14

Bringing it all together



LEVITICUS 25 Proclaim liberty throughout the land



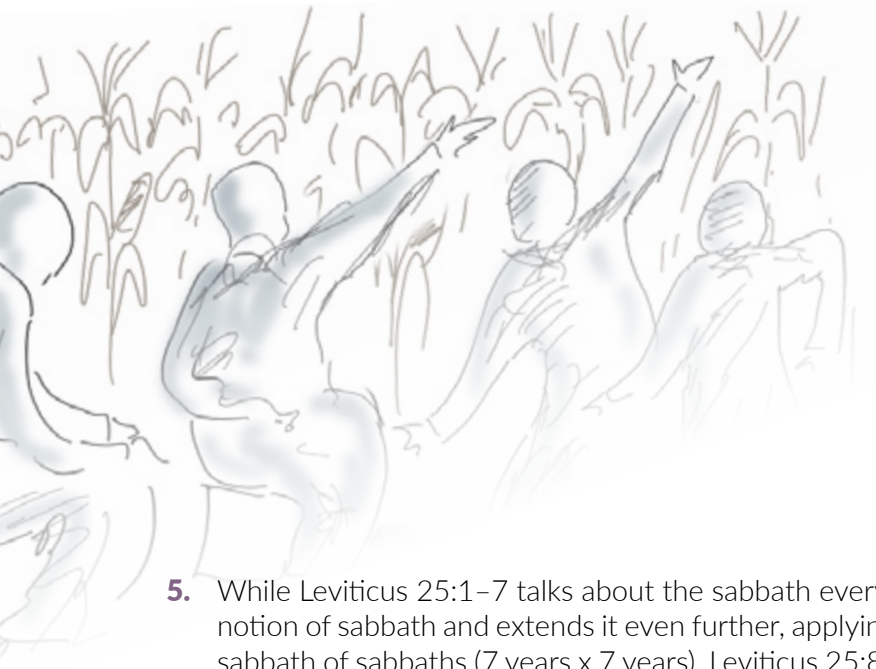
Introduction

This Bible study brings together all the themes we have been thinking about in this section: people, planet, prosper(ity), peace and partnership. It also connects back to Part 1, where we explored the Five Marks of Mission and how, together, they embody Jesus' proclamation of the Kin[g]dom of God, which is Good News for the poor.

This session ends with the opportunity to reflect on how we have been shaped by these Bible studies and how we will help to re-imagine and reshape our world, together.

Bible Study Questions

1. What is going on in our community?
2. Leviticus 25 expands on the notion of 'sabbath'. What do you understand by 'the sabbath'? What is different about the sabbath in your community?
3. Read Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. These laws provide for a weekly sabbath in which humans and domestic animals were to rest from their work. Who is included in these sabbath laws?
4. Leviticus 25 shifts the notion of a sabbath from days to years. It provides for a sabbath for the land, the cultivated earth, every seventh year. The land is to rest from its work once every seven years. Read Leviticus 25:1-7. Why do you think God makes provision for a "complete rest for the land"?



5. While Leviticus 25:1–7 talks about the sabbath every seven years, Leviticus 25:8–55 takes the notion of sabbath and extends it even further, applying it to a radical rest (a reset) every fifty years, a sabbath of sabbaths (7 years x 7 years). Leviticus 25:8–13 summarises the focus of this Jubilee year. Read Leviticus 25:8–13. What is to happen every fifty years? What do you think means that each person “shall return to their own property” (10, 13)?
6. Read Leviticus 25:23–28 and 25:35–41. These verses seem to clarify what it means for each person “to return to their own property” (27, 28, 41). What is the Jubilee year trying to do?
7. Read Leviticus 25:42–43 and re-read 23–24. These verses provide the theological justification for a Jubilee year. Also look again at Exodus 20:8–11 and Deuteronomy 5:12–15. Why does God require Sabbath and Jubilee?
8. Does your context need a Jubilee? What would a Jubilee look like in your context?
9. Now read Leviticus 25:44–46. It seems that the Jubilee is not for everyone! In the midst of a law of liberation we find a law of oppression. What is this law of oppression? Give examples from your own context where certain groups are excluded from laws or systems that lead to prosperity for some. For example, in South Africa the laws of apartheid provided prosperity for White South Africans but condemned Black South Africans to oppression.
10. The Jubilee provision of Leviticus, a time “to proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (v.10), foreshadows the greater liberation and redemption that Jesus brings and which he proclaims in Luke 4:16–21. As we have seen throughout these Bible studies, Jesus makes clear through word and action that God’s redeeming love and liberation extend to all. The vision for the Global Goals is that ‘no one is left behind’ and, like the Jubilee provision, they offer a once in a generation opportunity for a radical reset. Where do we see the five Ps of the Global Goals – People, Planet, Prosper(ity), Peace and Partnership – reflected in the Jubilee and Sabbath provisions of Leviticus? What do we need to do to ensure that rolling out the Global Goals brings liberation and not oppression, and allows for human flourishing which is not at the expense of the earth?

11. Final reflection

Take some time to reflect together on your shared journey through these Bible studies. How do you now see the Good News of the Kin[g]dom and the Five Marks of Mission reflected in the five Ps of the Sustainable Development Goals? What actions have you decided to take? Please share your experiences with us, using the feedback form provided. (Please send to Anglican.Alliance@aco.org)

Jubilee vision

In most Christian churches the most widely read part of Leviticus is the Law of Holiness, especially chapter 25, which contains the laws about the Sabbath Year and Jubilee. Here we read about rights to land and housing (verses 23 – 34), the liberation of slaves and debt forgiveness (verses 35 to 55). We read about complete rest for the land every seven years (verses 1-7). And we read about the hallowing of the fiftieth year as a jubilee (verses 8-24), when “you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (verse 10).

These are all contemporary themes as well and this Levitical text sheds light on the struggle of those who do not have access to land, housing or freedom. It also directs us to a position on the issue of international debt of the world's poorest countries and its serious consequences for people living in these times of extreme inequality. Leviticus 25 also addresses the need of the land for rest and restoration for the good of all creation.

One sorrow of this text is that it does not call for the liberation of foreign slaves. As ever, we need to read the Old Testament through the redemptive lens of the Gospel of Jesus, who announced the freedom of all people from oppression (see Luke 4).

As we saw in session 2, in proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:8-19.21), Jesus makes the Jubilee project his own, echoing the prophet Isaiah (61:1-2).

“When you enter the land...”

The chapter starts with instructions for a sabbath rest for the land. The author of Leviticus attributes to Moses and the Lord this institution of a rest for agricultural land every seven years. This rest is a well-known practice of farmers who cultivate smaller plots of land to maintain its fertility. But the practice Leviticus describes or invents is peculiar. It is not about crop rotation and leaving fields fallow in turn, but a practice to be observed every seven years that encompasses the entire land.

The text is markedly theological, teaching a vision of God and about God. This time of resting derives from, and is dedicated to, the Lord, who will be in charge of feeding his people, as he did in the wilderness (Ex 16). In a grand and daring vision, the author unifies the Lord’s rest (Gen

2:2), the rest of people and animals, and the resting of the land. In this deep respect for the earth, with its rights guaranteed by God, this text sounds an ecological note in modern times. God’s people must recognise and respect the requirements of their land, which is God’s land.

Jubilee

The important thing is to see that the resting of the earth is inseparable from the liberation of slaves and the forgiveness of debts. Together, they provide a “reset” – the restoration of both people and the land to their original condition. The Jubilee provides an efficient way of preventing the accumulation of land and wealth, as well as the enrichment of a small group at the expense of the majority. In the moral and economic values underpinning the Jubilee provisions, we find a prophetic denunciation of such practice and exploitation.

This chapter is deeply concerned about not harming others or the earth. The earth belongs to God and is given to humanity to care for and cultivate (Gen 2:15). We are supposed to take care of all forms of life, but our economic activity has destroyed the habitat of many animal and vegetable species. Besides that, because of the sin of society’s structures, people are exploited and forced to negotiate away or sell their land to pay debts.

Behind the Jubilee laws is the memory of rescue – of both the earth and God’s people ...of God restoring them to freedom. The Jubilee provides both a social and economic norm to reverse inequality that turns land and people into commodities.

God is the God of deliverance. This memory is fundamental to understanding this text.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

Appendix 1

How these Bible studies came about

At a meeting of the Anglican Primates, the Anglican Alliance was asked to work with the provinces of the Communion on theological resources and Bible studies to connect the Sustainable Development Goals with our understanding of holistic mission and to identify and share the most effective approaches. In essence, the Anglican Alliance was asked to listen and learn from across the Communion on how churches are engaging with the Global Goals in the context of their own vision of mission. This inspiration led to creating materials that seek to set up a conversation between the Anglican Marks of Mission and the Global Goals – a resource that would help people explore the question: how do we generate a new kind of narrative that sees key theological ideas such as prophecy, discipleship, mission, justice, liberation, jubilee, abundance, lament, repentance and restored relationships at the heart of our discourse about the goals?

Contextual Bible Studies are a powerful way of engaging people in reflecting on their current context in light of Scripture. The Anglican Alliance therefore sought out a partnership with the Ujamaa Centre based in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which has pioneered the work of Contextual Bible Study. Its approach and commitments draw on strands of liberation theology, particularly South African Black Theology and South African Contextual Theology. Working with communities of the poor, working class and marginalised, the Ujamaa Centre uses biblical and theological resources to catalyse social and individual transformation. Central to their approach is the concept and practice of praxis – the cycle of action and reflection.

The Anglican Alliance also reached out to theologians, biblical scholars and development

practitioners across the world to gather for a meeting, co-hosted with the Ujamaa Centre. The group met in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa in September 2019 and continued to work together online to refine and test these Bible studies.

Then, at the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit. The Anglican Alliance, like so many others, had to adapt rapidly and refocus its immediate work priorities. For the rest of the year, the Alliance was occupied with connecting and equipping the worldwide Anglican family to respond to the pandemic, including creating a set of Bible studies on Covid-19 (*Faith in the Time of Covid-19*). Of necessity, we had to put these SDG Bible studies on hold, however reluctant we were to do so.

As the pandemic continued, the relevance of these Bible studies became ever more apparent. The pandemic has caused enormous personal pain and economic loss; injustices in who has access to resources, health care and vaccines were all too obvious. But for many people around the world, this is nothing new. Inequality, poverty and injustice were already the daily reality lived by millions of people. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated what was already there. And people everywhere have been questioning this reality and asking how we can build back better, re-imagining and reshaping our world so that it more closely resembles God's kin-dom'.

So, as we started to move out of the pandemic, we were determined to finish the resource, which we hope will help people address this question deeply and meaningfully. We have made some small adaptations to the materials in the light of the pandemic and other recent developments, but most remains the same because – as we have said – the underlying realities were already there.

The pandemic has, however, added to the urgency of addressing the global inequality and poverty and ensuring the integrity of creation. The pandemic has made it crystal clear how deeply interconnected people, planet and prosperity are. The parallels between coronavirus and climate change are obvious. Both are invisible and experienced through their impacts. Both affect everyone on earth but have

a disproportionate impact on those who are already vulnerable, poor and marginalised. Both are deadly and will shape our world for decades. This is the context in which we now launch these Bible studies. They will continue to evolve as our context changes, because our lived reality is always at the heart of Contextual Bible Study.

Appendix 2

The Creative Team

The Anglican Alliance is deeply grateful to the team of theologians, biblical scholars and development practitioners from across the world who have created these Bible studies. They are listed here in alphabetical order:

Rev Canon Rachel Carnegie, Anglican Alliance

Rev Prof Sathianathan Clarke, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, USA

Rev Dr Beverley Haddad, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Rev Mércio Langa, Diocese of Lebombo, Mozambique / Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Prof Edgar Antonio López López, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia

Lina Magallanes, Anglican Board of Mission, Australia

Rev Mote Magomba, Anglican Church of Tanzania

Very Rev Dr Gloria Mapangdol, St Andrew's Theological Seminary, Quezon City, Philippines

Rev Helder Luis Carlos Mapanzene, Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Prof Esther Mombo, St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya,

Rev Sabelo Mthimkhulu, Anglican Church of South Africa; Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Dr Elizabeth Perry, Anglican Alliance

Rev John Plant, Christian Aid

Rev Simlindele Qotoyi, Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Prof Paulo Ueti, Anglican Alliance

Prof Gerald West, Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Rev Sithembiso Zwane, Ujamaa Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Please see a photo of the working group on page 8.

Appendix 3

A suggested liturgical framework for CBS

Contextual Bible Study is best done in a spiritual and liturgical environment. Here we offer some thoughts on how to create sacred space and liturgical moments of lament, repentance, hope and a call to action. These suggested steps can be woven throughout your time together, as suits your context.

Sacred Space

“Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5)

Before the session, prepare the meeting space. Set the room in a circle, if possible. Have some holy symbols in the room. You might want to include something that fits the theme of the biblical text or the study.

Lament

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I bear pain in my soul,

and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

(Psalm 13)

What are our sorrows? What do we lack? Have a time to lament – to acknowledge the difficulties in your own life and in your community, church, country, continent and world. Join your voices to the global lament because “we know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Romans 8:22-23). Organise or recite together a litany or a psalm and take some moments to pray individually and as a group.

Repentance

... there is forgiveness with you [Lord],
so that you may be revered. (Psalm 130)

We are called to acknowledge our wrong ways and to grow towards being a parable of the Kingdom of God. We are called to be like Jesus: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:5).

Organise a moment where all the participants of the Bible study group can share prayers and/or signs of repentance. Write it down, share symbols, be still in prayer.

Hope

Hoping against hope (Romans 4:18) is part of a way of life for Christians. Resistance against the “powers of oppression” and resilience to keep an active hope are the Marks of Mission for us. Let’s take time to dream and to plan how to make our dreams come true. If you dream alone it is just a dream but if you dream together, realities can be born.

Call for Action

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;

and what does the Lord require of you

but to do justice, and to love kindness,

and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

We are asked to DO something. We suggest you reserve some time at the end to share lessons learnt from the Bible study and discuss what you are being called to do. What do you think you and your community can do in the light of what you learnt or were provoked by in the Bible study?

Appendix 4

The Sustainable Development Goals – successors to the Millennium Development Goals

What were the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

Launched in 2000 to focus global progress on poverty, education, health, hunger and the environment, the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals were a landmark for global commitment to a vision for ending poverty. They expired in 2015 and were replaced by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The MDGs were:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

How did the Anglican Communion relate to the MDGs within its holistic & integral mission?

A number of Provinces around the Communion engaged with the MDGs as a framework to help them flesh out their practical response to holistic and integral mission as expressed in the Anglican Marks of Mission – for social action alongside proclamation, integral to authentic Christian discipleship.

In many parts of the world, Anglican churches were key actors in promoting the MDGs: in access to education, health, poverty reduction, women's development, environmental protection, tackling HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB, promoting maternal and child mortality, and in working in partnership with others. Anglicans, along with other faith communities, have a rich account to make of the work as active partners in the MDGs, and in some places, including

conflict areas, sometimes taking a lead as advocates and implementers. These churches were often supported in this work by Anglican / Episcopal mission and development agencies, as well as ecumenical, bilateral and UN donors.

Anglicans related the MDGs to the Gospel call to act on as well as speak out the Good News, citing scripture, such as: Luke 4: 18-19 (*'to bring good news to the poor...'*); John 10:10 (*'I came that they might have life in all its abundance'*); and Matthew 25: 40 (*'...whatever you did for the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'*)

Commitment and action around the MDGs was expressed in a range of synods, and collectively in many ways, including:

- **2007 TEAM (Towards Effective Anglican Mission) Conference** in South Africa, hosted by Archbishop Ndungane of Southern Africa. 400 delegates working with their churches on relief, development and advocacy gathered in Johannesburg for a conference focusing on the Anglican Communion's theological and practical response to the MDGs. At the conference, Archbishop Ndungane said: "Here we have people of God gathered together in the context of prayer and theology, sharing diverse experiences and views on specific social issues, renewing the church's commitment and capabilities to respond to God's call to service in the 21st century. This conference provides us with an opportunity to rally around issues of poverty and to position ourselves as a significant partner in the global development agenda. "Mission goes out from God. Mission is God's way of loving and saving the world... So mission is never our invention or choice." (Lambeth Conference 1998, Section II p121). The initiative in mission is God's, not ours. We are called simply to serve God's mission by living and proclaiming the good news."

- **2008 Lambeth Conference Walk of Witness** by the bishops and their spouses through Westminster, addressed by the then UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. The Walk of Witness upheld the Micah Call 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with the Lord' (Micah 6:8), calling on governments to honour their commitments to the MDGs and highlighting the commitment of the churches to support this work.
- **Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development and Advocacy:** Born out of the vision of these two initiatives, the Anglican Alliance was established in 2011 to provide a platform for sharing information and skills and promoting collaboration across the Anglican Communion on development, humanitarian relief and advocacy on global issues, such as climate justice. A number of the Alliance's regional conferences have reflected on the relationship between the Anglican Marks of Mission and the MDGs. The Anglican Alliance, along with CAPA and many other bodies, engaged in advocacy on the shaping of the Global Goals.
- In each context/country governments and other actors will need to strategise on priorities, as it would be difficult to work on all 17 at once.
- Funding for the Global Goals is not in place, but their financing will need to include public policies, regulatory environments (including tax justice), trade agreements, not just traditional ODA (overseas development aid). The UN Financing for Development Conference in Addis in 2015 did not reach an adequate conclusion on how the Global Goals would be funded.
- The Global Goals are based on the best available evidence. The world knows far better now than 20 years ago what can achieve sustainable development and end extreme poverty in our generation. The Global Goals also have a series of detailed indicators, and can potentially enable strong measurement.
- 17 is said by some to be a 'good' number, as it shows thought, not just a convenient numbered list!

What are the Global Goals for Sustainable Development?

Launched in September 2015 at the UN General Assembly, after years of intense negotiation by member states and intense lobbying by civil society actors, the Global Goals are held up by the United Nations as the global goals to guide work on sustainable development, on poverty and climate justice, until 2030.

The Global Goals have some distinctive characteristics and raise some important issues:

- They are interconnected and, unlike the MDGs, address themselves to societies in all parts of the world. This universality means that all countries will be required to plan and report on their progress against the goals.
- They seek to demonstrate the shared, joint ground between the environment and poverty agendas – but there will need to be trade offs (e.g. balancing carbon emissions against wealth creation). Their 'growth' agenda is challenged by some.

Who/what are the Global Goals supposed to influence?

They aim to influence country budgets and policies, wider social norms about rights and the duties of governments and others, aid volumes and priorities, etc.

Opportunities for the Church to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals

While there are limitations and concerns about the Global Goals, it is also clear that they will increasingly dominate global discourse, especially from 2020 when there is just one decade left to achieve them. As with the MDGs, the Church and other faith communities are recognised as having a key role, in implementation, but also in monitoring and holding governments to account – as well as building a values framework which reflects our own theological commitments around justice and human flourishing. The 2007 TEAM Conference concluded that a Church faced with MDG's is bound to be asking, 'Who is being forgotten?' since the targets were percentages.

It is fair to say that the Church's moral voice in response to the MDGs helped to influence a guiding principle in the defining of the Global Goals – that 'no one is left behind'. Framing of the goals around 5 more memorable areas has been proposed and might help the Church develop a coherent movement.

People – the goals are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

Planet – there is a determination to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

Prosperity – the goals have within them a desire to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature. (The Church also needs to reclaim the term of prosperity from the reductions of the 'Prosperity Gospel')

Peace – They recognise that fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence will enable people to flourish.

Partnership – as with the MDGs there is a clear articulated desire to work in partnership and the fuller documents highlight the essential role of the faith community.

Re-imagine our World Campaign: Re-imagine. Re-build. Re-new.

The "Re-imagine Our World" Campaign was commissioned by the Anglican Consultative Council Standing Committee. Launched at the Lambeth Conference 2022, the campaign is an Anglican Communion-wide campaign to be developed in consultation with a range of Anglican and wider stakeholders. It is aimed at bringing ongoing activities and collaboration across the Communion under a common banner with shared messaging. It will engage provinces, dioceses, churches, communities, and agencies that share an Anglican identity and partners who share our common mission.

The next 10 years will take effort from all sectors of society for us not only to re-imagine our world – but also to rebuild and renew our communities. If we are not intentional during this time frame, we run the risk of 'building back the same' – which is a world facing climate crisis, with rampant poverty, inequality and injustice. The Anglican Communion, in all its manifestations, has the opportunity to change that narrative and effect change--with intentional, strategic action that is grounded in our faith and the Five Marks of Mission and inspired by the transformative vision of Agenda 2030.

For more information about the Re-imagine our World Campaign, please contact:

- Anglican Communion United Nations Office – un.rep@anglicancommunion.org
- Anglican Alliance – Anglican.Alliance@aco.org

"In the resurrection of Jesus God lights a fire which calls us to justice, to live in humble generosity, to transform our societies. After so much suffering, so much heroism from key workers...so much effort, once this epidemic is conquered here and round the world, we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal. There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it because it is the gift of God. Then we must build it in partnership with God."

Archbishop Justin Welby, Easter Day Sermon 2020

Appendix 5:

Archbishop of Canterbury's Statement at the Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals

"I warmly welcome today's announcement that the members of the UN General Assembly have adopted an ambitious agenda to tackle poverty, inequality and injustice and climate change over the next fifteen years.

"Humanity is called to justice, compassion and standing alongside the poor. If we root our response to the afflictions of extreme poverty and other major global issues in these values, we can ensure that the Global Goals for Sustainable Development provide a vision and a framework through which all of us can play a part in working towards a more just world, in which all have the opportunity to flourish and where no one is left behind.

"Our response, today and in the years to come, must seek to emulate the sacrificial pattern of love and servant-hearted leadership that is demonstrated perfectly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The powerful are called to serve, the rich to give, and the vulnerable to be cherished, so that they may flourish and stand strong.

"The global Anglican Communion has sought to model this example in its response to the Millennium Development Goals – in many parts of the world delivering health and education services, that have helped improve access to education, reduce child and maternal mortality, and assisted in turning the tide on HIV/AIDS and other diseases. In places of instability and conflict it is often the church – along with other faith communities – that is the sole surviving institution providing hope, relief and support to those most in need.

"We must all now work together to redouble our efforts to banish global extreme poverty and inequality from our midst. When we recognise the God-given dignity in each and every person in our world, we are compelled to reach out to them in love, whatever the cost.

"I echo Pope Francis' exhortation that 'it must never be forgotten that political and economic activity is only effective when it is understood as a prudential activity, guided by a perennial concept of justice and constantly conscious... [that] we are dealing with real men and women who live, struggle and suffer, and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights.'

"Without such a response from all involved in this endeavour – governments, the private sector, faith communities, civil society and the public, we risk falling short of what is required of us, and undermining the major progress made through the Millennium Development Goals.

"My prayer today is that all of us would have the courage to live our lives for the common good; to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly in pursuit of a world free from poverty and injustice."

**The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby,
Archbishop of Canterbury**

Notes:

