

## **The Presiding Bishop's Charge - 2019**

This year's Charge will be a slight departure from the normal style. Instead of a single address we will be dividing the Charge into three shorter talks. This will hopefully give us time to reflect on particular aspects of the challenge as well as have opportunity to discuss ways in which we can make progress.

Over these three days we will focus on:

1. Our REACH-SA Structure
2. Our REACH-SA Ministry and Workers
3. Our REACH-SA Strategy

### **Part 1**

#### **Our REACH-SA Structure**

In January 2003 a fully loaded US Air commuter Flight 5481 took off from Charlotte International Airport. Less than a minute later the aircraft stalled and crashed, killing all on board. Lengthy investigations revealed some critical oversights resulted in this deadly conclusion. One major error was a gross undercalculation of the average passenger weight.

It was discovered that, up until this 2003 crash, US airlines were using an outdated calculation chart based on average adult weights in the 1940's. What had not been considered, was the steadily increasing weight of the average citizen living in the "MacDonald's" fast food era. Added to this, hand luggage was no longer a light briefcase or a fur coat, but heavy lap top bags containing multiple weighty devices. All this contributed to the inevitable deadly disaster.

The lesson of Flight 5481 has bearing on many institutions, not just the airline industry. There is a danger of "doing it the way we have always done" for all sorts of companies and organizations. Just ask Kodak. In the case of the airline industry, it can have deadly consequences. In the case of a church organization, it can have deadly eternal consequences.

Let me be clear, I am not talking about a need to change our gospel. That temptation is vividly and repeatedly warned against in Scripture. We are called to preach the unchanging gospel to our constantly changing society as it lurches restlessly from fashions to foolishness in search of happiness. Our challenge relates to the hard work required in bringing the gospel to as many people as possible in a world that has rapidly changed not just since the 1940's but since 1940! In these circumstances, we must be willing to regularly interrogate our structure and practice in order to make right adjustments and remain as effective as possible in our unchanging, God given mission.

## CESA's REACH

It's become pretty much the elephant in the room, but the question needs to be put on the table. Is our federal denominational structure conducive to facilitating growth in our current South African context? Or does it help perpetuate an "over-realized autonomy" that works contrary to the goal of partnering effectively for gospel growth? (The very reason why we have a denomination.) This is especially challenging given the vast socio-economic diversity so evident in South African society.

In asking this question, I must add that several of our local churches do demonstrate gospel partnership across social and economic context, and it is a great encouragement to see. But the questions remain: Are we doing enough? And, are we effective in what we *are* doing?

Statistically we are struggling to grow and sustain ministry amongst the poorest and largest population groups in our country. Estimates put up to 50% of South Africa's urban population in townships.<sup>1</sup> We are seeing a rise in SA's middle class but it's still only 1 out of 5 people. One encouraging sign is that the black middle class has increased from 47% (2008) to 64% (2017).<sup>2</sup>

**Top Ten Townships (2011 census)<sup>3</sup>**

Township	Population	Neighbouring city/town	REACH-SA Church	Members / Adherents
Soweto	1,271,628	Johannesburg	2	120+
Tembisa <sup>4</sup>	463,109	Midrand	1?	
Katlehong	407,294	Germiston	0	
Umlazi	404,811	Durban	4	600+
Soshanguve	403,162	Pretoria	0	
Khayelitsha <sup>5</sup>	391,749	Cape Town	1	
Mamelodi	334,577	Pretoria	0	
Mitchell's Plain	310,485	Cape Town	2	100+
Daveyton / Etwatwa	279,033	Benoni	1	
Ibhayi	237,799	Port Elizabeth	0	
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>	

<sup>1</sup> <https://businesstech.co.za/news/general/132269/these-are-the-biggest-townships-in-south-africa/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/05/07/africa/south-africa-elections-inequality-intl/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> The [2016 Stats SA](#) survey places significantly higher estimates on these population figures.

<sup>4</sup> Some researchers place [Mdantsane](#) near East London (Buffalo City) as the second largest in South Africa.

<sup>5</sup> [Khayelitsha](#) is reported to be South Africa's fastest growing township.

### Statistics

Rank	Province	Population (2011)	GDP per capita (2013; ZAR)	REACH-SA Churches / Plants / Posts	Campus Ministries
1	Gauteng	12,272,263	94,179	26	3
2	Western Cape	5,822,734	80,839	36	3
3	North West	3,509,953	66,171	1+5	0
4	Mpumalanga	4,039,939	64,910	0	0
5	Free State	2,745,590	64,909	10	1
6	Northern Cape	1,145,861	61,388	0	0
7	KwaZulu-Natal	10,267,300	53,674	57	2
8	Limpopo	5,404,868	46,336	2	0
9	Eastern Cape	6,562,053	40,712	6	1
 South Africa		<b>51,770,561</b>	<b>66,488</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>10</b>

We are all aware that we live in a country with massive economic disparity. Much of the current political and social upheaval is a clear indicator of the country's economic, criminal, political and social frustrations.

There are many examples of challenges we face as a result of this disparity and social inequality. The fact remains that much change remains stagnant 25 years after Apartheid. This is reflected in our different churches. Uniformity in church workers stipends, for example, is a real problem. The question of opportunity is also a factor. Suburban churches are more able to secure large bonds and find local donors. Something which township and low-income communities will not be able to achieve on the same scale.

As I discuss these challenges with church leaders beyond our denomination, I note that they grapple with these same questions. The encouraging truth is that people *are* grappling with these issues and not ignoring them.

I regularly witness Christian ministries applying innovative and experimental tactics with varying degrees of success. Yet it is reassuring to see that people *are* trying different approaches to reach our communities for Christ. Several of God's people are going to the lost and establishing ministries to the poorest sectors of our population. This should not surprise us, because that is the Biblical picture of the church at work in the world. The surprise from the Bible's point of view, is that some who count themselves among God's people are *not*

participating in prayerful ministry and outreach to the lost, the poor and the marginalized.

Given the complexity of the challenge its clear we are not going to discover a secret key that opens an undiscovered path to ministry effectiveness here. Scripture teaches, and history confirms, that God grows His church through trials and hardship. Struggle and pain go with gospel growth and success. This does not mean, however, that we give up trying to do ministry more effectively and less painfully. It's part of our task to be honestly looking at our challenges and partnering to make workable solutions happen.

Lets consider our current structure and then some possible alternatives:

**Federal Model:** In essence, under our current Federal model, each local church largely carries responsibility for its own affairs (e.g. staff employment, ministry strategy). Each local church functions within the agreed framework of our CESA constitution and our Reformed Evangelical Anglican distinctives. Accountability is maintained through gospel workers and clergy being ordained and/or licenced by the Presiding Bishop. Each minister is employed by the local church but is accountable to the Bishops with regards doctrine and moral conduct. All properties and assets are registered in the name of the Central Trustees but with the interests of each local church constitutionally preserved (as long as they abide by the constitution and procedures of CESA). Synod has the final say (under God) in all our denominational affairs.

Each local church pays a 10% levy into to a central fund. This fund largely goes back into the regions to support needs and ministries in local churches. Allocations are also made toward administration, episcopal oversight, GWC training, conferences and Synod. In the years that we have had surplus income we have also been able to supplement a Church Planting and Church Development fund. (It's a concern for me that these growth funds are at the back of the queue and it's my prayer that we will be able to have more consistent funding for these church growth essentials in a future model.)

Some challenges with this system relate to preserving our partnership across a diverse range of church communities. A federal approach does also rely on the willingness of local churches to participate in national and regional structures and ministry initiatives. Not all churches pay their levies, nor do they always willingly submit to episcopal oversight. It's easy for a local church to become quite independently minded and function without any meaningful partnership or resource sharing with other REACH-SA churches.

This system also means the denomination functions on a relatively small budget. There is not enough income to pay full time Bishops and Administrators for every region unless we reduce allocations to local churches. This places quite a lot of pressure on our area bishops who have to balance their local church responsibilities with often demanding denominational issues.

**Centralized Model:** A central administration receives a large portion of all local church income and administers affairs from a central office. They would pay all clergy salaries, purchase and maintain buildings and take care of many other administrative affairs. The percentage of each local church's 'levy' or 'assessment' would be determined by a designated financial committee

This model certainly seems a more advantageous option in a country such as ours with its wide economic disparity. In theory more consistent stipends could be paid to workers across all communities. It's also true that wealthier churches can still manage to grow staff and facilities by gaining donors and project funding elsewhere (much like the former Model C government schools provide more teachers and facilities through charging higher school fees and creating a donor culture). This model is also intensely admin orientated and will require a significant number of employed staff. This could even offset any gains made by centralizing our denomination.

One other more Anglican variant of this model needs to be considered.

**Diocesan System:** Currently REACH-SA / CESA functions as a single diocese with five Areas or Regions. We also have associate REACH denominations in neighbouring countries. If we re-organized into multiple dioceses, we would effectively become a REACH-SA Province. Other REACH countries (REACH-Namibia; Zimbabwe, Mozambique etc) could also, effectively, be dioceses within the Province. Each one manages their own clergy, workers, funds and ministry strategy. The diocese receives a levy from each local church. From various enquiries I have discovered that this levy ranges from 10% to 50% depending on the church and diocese<sup>6</sup>. The Presiding Bishop and a Central Admin office would oversee the "Province" of REACH-Southern Africa. They would be funded by a levy from each diocese.

This more traditional Anglican system for REACH-SA was floated at the recent GAFCON Primates Meeting. The possibility of REACH-Southern Africa becoming the recognized GAFCON province in Southern Africa was briefly discussed but not formally moved. We would need to initiate further discussion from our side.

There is much to think about here. On the one hand, being the recognized GAFCON province in Southern Africa would certainly open the door to many disenchanting Anglicans who are seeking a home where the authority of Scripture is held above the whims and fashions of liberal churches and secular society. There are many people who seek an Anglican church that holds to the historic Articles and Reformation distinctives of the faith rather than the spirit of the day.

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<sup>6</sup> From personal discussions with other Anglican clergy I have learned that there are moves in some dioceses to return to a standard 10% levy on local churches.

There may also be some challenges. I don't think any of us would be keen on applying a parish system, which could restrict church planting. Would we also accept the wider expressions of Anglican practice (High Church and Charismatic) within REACH-SA? Historically the Anglo-Catholic disagreement was the reason for our exclusion from the Anglican Communion. Are we concerned that with our wider 'reach' we may lose the "E" in our REACH-SA distinctives? It's also true that most of our local REACH-SA churches are very low church in their practice. Would this more intentional Anglican ecclesiology facilitate growth and church planting in REACH, or would it inhibit it?

I'm not convinced that we are in a position to facilitate such a complete change into an Anglican Province without lengthy and expensive legal processes. It might, however, be possible to make some initial adjustments with minimal constitutional disruption, but some legal consulting would be needed.

**Note:** Since distributing drafts of this Charge I have received some very thoughtful contributions from our clergy. Several proposals centred around a version of a "three dioceses" model, with Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town being the centres, each under a full time Bishop and a part time admin team.<sup>7</sup> Much more needs to be done in unpacking and testing the details of this proposed restructuring.

Lastly, a mild caution. Any wholesale revamps must be approached with caution. Sometimes the new management don't realize that the nail in the wall was there for a reason. We may remove something that seems obsolete, only to find the whole house can't stand without it.

So let us pray, talk and work together on a way forward, keeping our God given gospel mandate at the centre. We are about the building of God's Kingdom. Let us resolve to build together on what is right and wise for gospel growth in Southern Africa. May we have the courage to make right and prayerfully considered changes. And, may we be willing to put the bigger interests of the Kingdom above our own desires.

Doing all for His glory not ours.

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<sup>7</sup> This type of proposal was first tabled by our Chancellor during the Feb 2018 National Executive Meeting.

## Questions

1. Would a centralized model provide a more effective approach to church planting and growth, especially in poorer communities and townships? How would you see this happening?
2. A centralized denomination would require a higher level of employed admin staff and local church oversight. What pros and cons would there be to this?
3. REACH-SA as a Province, providing alternative orthodox Anglican oversight? What advantages and disadvantages could this scenario present?
4. Is a three dioceses REACH-SA possible? What advantages would this give us? What are the potential disadvantages?