



The Ten Distinctives

2022 Revision

The Ten Distinctives were first introduced to REACH-SA under the tenure of Presiding Bishop Desmond Inglesby in 2014. They are accepted as a summary description of the central features and practices of our denomination.

The Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church – South Africa

1. We are a Word centred church.

The Bible occupies a central place in our denomination which is expressed in our motto: 'God's Word above all things'.

REACH SA is a 'Biblical' church. We read and preach from the Scriptures every week in our services and Bible study groups.

Article 6: *"Holy Scripture sets forth everything that is necessary for our salvation. Consequently, nobody should be required to believe as an article of the Christian faith, or to regard as necessary for salvation, anything that is not found in Scripture."*

Scripture and Scripture alone is the standard by which all teachings and doctrines of the church must be measured.

2. We are an Evangelical church

What makes us Evangelical?

- The absolute supremacy we assign to Holy Scripture
- The depth and prominence we assign to the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption
- The paramount importance we attach to the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ and the nature of the salvation He has wrought for mankind.
- The high place which we assign to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man.
- The importance we place on the outward and visible work of the Holy Spirit manifested itself in the life, conduct and behaviour of the believer in overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil i.e. the evidence of godliness and holiness.



3. We are a Protestant church.

At one level being Protestant is nothing more than not being Roman Catholic.

The English word 'Protestant' comes from the Latin and is made up from two words, pro = 'for', and testari = 'witness'. And it has come to mean to write or speak strongly against.

REACH-SA upholds the right of every believer to read and understand the Bible for their salvation, as opposed to salvation truth being mediated by the church. We believe, therefore, in the Biblical doctrine of the 'Priesthood of all believers' (e.g. 1 Pet.2:9)

4. We are a Reformed church

Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of King Henry VIII, was able to bring Martin Luther's rediscovery of justification by faith into the central teaching of the Church in England. REACH-SA is therefore Reformed in that it embraces and articulates the great doctrines of grace as articulated by Luther, Calvin and other reformers. These five points of doctrine are at the heart of the Reformation: By Grace alone, through Faith alone, in Christ alone, according to Scripture alone and to the Glory of God alone.

5. We are a Missional church

We believe in the Great Commission. We are therefore evangelistic and missionary in our outlook. Christ's work of Salvation is for every tongue, tribe and nation. It is our vision to declare the gospel of Grace to every person without prejudice or discrimination. The message of eternal life through faith in Christ does not exclude our God given obligation to care for the poor and to speak out against all forms of injustice. If anything, it is an essential aspect of our witness in the world.

6. We are a Confessional church

REACH-SA is a church that uses confessions of faith to express the teaching of the Bible.

Article 8: The three creeds, namely the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, should be received and believed without reservation, because they may be proved from Holy Scripture.



7. We are a Covenantal church

REACH-SA can be called a Covenantal church because it emphasises God's one single Covenant with his people as initially promised to Abraham (Gen.12), this is a covenant not simply with individuals but with families — first with the family of Abraham - Israel, and extending to include Jewish and gentile believers adopted into the family of Abraham by faith in Christ.

We raise our children as part of the visible family of Christ, the church, not as unbelievers.

REACH-SA therefore practises the baptism of infants as well as adults but requires of those infants' personal affirmation of their Christian faith at the years of discretion. This is ordinarily testified to in a service of Confirmation.

8. We are an Episcopal church

REACH-SA is an Episcopal church in that it values Bishops, as an ancient and well-trying form of ministry, agreeable to Scripture (though not actually required by Scripture).

There are three ministry offices in Anglican tradition.

Deacons are 'appointed' or 'made' for various forms of service in the local church (1 Tim.3) and can be male or female.

Presbyters are recognized gifted and godly men who are ordained ministers and tasked with leadership, pastoral care and preaching in the local church. (Titus 1; 1 Tim.3)

Bishops are essentially senior Presbyters and are consecrated (set apart) for denominational leadership, oversight and pastoral care – both of clergy and laity.

9. We are a Liturgical church

REACH-SA is a liturgical church in that it values and uses set forms for its public services. In particular, we subscribe to the theology, principles and practices expressed in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Subsequent Synodically accepted translations and adaptations, such as the 1992 Prayer Book, must maintain doctrinal integrity with this foundational document.

In practice that means that each service must be congregational and have a form and structure that includes confession of sin, praise and thanksgiving, prayer, the reading of God's word and the preaching of God's Word.



10. We are an Anglican church

What makes anyone an Anglican? This is a question that needs to be constantly revisited in the light of the many versions of Anglicanism in our world today. We do not hold to the so called “Broad” or Liberal Anglicanism that has much popularity in mostly Western countries. Neither do we hold to Anglo-Catholicism, which attained dominance in the late 1800’s and has largely embraced Roman rituals and beliefs, rather than Reformation, doctrines of faith and practice.

Historically true Anglicans are those who subscribe to the doctrines of the Reformation as embodied in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles. These, we believe, are the touchstone of true Anglicanism.

We are therefore, unashamedly, Reformed, Evangelical Anglicans.

We also delight to be part of the growing family of Evangelical Anglican churches emerging in ‘the new world’ of South America, Africa and Asia and we continue to remain in communion with likeminded Anglicans across our continent and the world.

‘Soli Deo Gloria’

Denominations are certainly not the answer to the world's ills, nor are they our last and only hope. But a denominational structure can be a valuable tool for the church to use in her God given mission.

A healthy denomination ultimately gives us strength. It's a home, not a prison. It allows us to share resources as we partner together to establish churches, sustain ministries, train ministry candidates and practice our expression of ministry within our community context. Anglicanism gives us great freedom to adapt and adjust our ministry model as we bring the unchanging gospel into the many facets of our ever-changing world.

We are therefore convinced that “Anglicanism embodies the richest, truest and wisest heritage in Christendom.” J.I. Packer