

SACLA – Daily Reports From Tracks

Tuesday

Church Leaders Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 450

Objectives for the day:

Share each others historic story over the last four decades as it related to nation, Church and self.

Processes used:

Small groups and the building of a story wall.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

See separate report.

Important conclusions reached so far:

See separate report.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Nothing at this stage. This will only emerge on Friday.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

The story wall (120m²) speaks literally of hundreds of stories. We will try to capture this information after SACLA.

SACLA Church Leadership Track

1. The first day of the Church Leadership Track was devoted to repentance. To help participants to come to an understanding of the lives and feelings of others, they were placed at tables in groups of six to eight, each group representing the face of South Africa, and encouraged to tell one another their stories. This sharing experience was structured to cover three decades, the 70's, 80's and 90's, as well as the first years of 2000, as well as three subjects: nation, Church and personal experience.
2. A listening team of five moved from table to table hearing what people were saying and this is their combined report.
3. The team was impressed by the ease with which the participants communicated. Right from the beginning there was stimulating interaction and a feeling of released energy. The stories, of course, differed widely. Two of the defining moments in the 1970's which had a "prophetic" impact on the Church were the 1976 Soweto uprising, and the SACLA conference of 1979.
4. The experience of many indicated the degree to which apartheid succeeded, in that several white individuals admitted that they had been largely ignorant of what was happening in the townships. Some confessed to not being politically aware, and, as a result, being silent – as individuals and churches – in the face of black suffering.

Many black delegates on the other hand were hurt and angry because of police treatment. They were also torn and confused because of the kind treatment received from some white people, e.g. one person described having her and her brother's education sponsored by her mother's employers, yet white policemen targeted her brother and shot him down. This sent a confusing signal about whites, which caused her to seek God's help to forgive.

The Church was, in the main, silent, which disappointed both black and white members, but the 70's did see an awakening in the Church. People like Desmond Tutu became signs of new hope from a Christian source, and redeemed the image of Christianity for many black people. This new "prophetic" stance culminated in the first SACLA conference of 1979. SACLA was particularly important because of the spiritual and political awareness it generated.

Many delegates had been converted to Christ in the 70's, partly as a result of the increasing confusion in the country. The conviction was expressed by some that the new person in Christ can forget about race and forget about the past as defining factors. However, others felt we should be careful not to say "peace, peace, when there is no peace", but face the pain truthfully so that real repentance and forgiveness may come.

5. Migrant labour legislation led to many having no father role models, and children took their plight into their own hands. Our society has experienced and is paying the price of the pain of growing fatherlessness. This has led to a confused image of God, the breakdown of God's family order and the loss of moral values. The problem is

continuing in many communities because those of the fatherless generation are becoming parents. There is concern that this gap in “family” is vulnerable to being filled by witchcraft and immoral behaviour.

6. Some special connecting moments emerged during the discussions. There were deep feelings of concern for one another, illustrated by many stories.
7. From 1980 to 1990, the State of Emergency impacted on the lives of many delegates. They experienced bannings, detention without trial, a merciless system, deaths like that of the Uitenhage Five and family members. Some were involved in, and traumatised by, service in the SADF and border war which has not been adequately addressed; some were conscientious objectors; others, both black and white, had been deeply involved in the struggle.
8. The experience of many was of a Church confused and silent, and yet that decade also saw the emergence of Kairos, contextual theology and the increasing influence of Desmond Tutu.
9. During this decade, the Church began to deal with concerns that had been raised at SACLA, in the form of relationship building across denominational and cultural barriers, and taking public responsibility for the process of change, addressing government prophetically, etc. The culmination of this was the Rustenburg Declaration which addressed the issue of repentance for apartheid on the part of the Church.
10. From 1990 to 2000, the release of Mandela, the new democracy and the TRC were the main events of this decade. Many delegates, black and white, expressed difficulty in the transition to democracy. Some examples cited were: assuming responsibility as liberated people; anger and fear generated by violence, crime and affirmative action.
11. The Church is perceived by many to be entering a time of renewal and there are significant expressions of unity. The Church still struggles to find an agenda. However, the “giants” identified by SACLA 2 are proving to be a focal point in the same way as our opposition to apartheid did.
12. In summary, what did we hear God saying through yesterday’s track on repentance?
 1. Through talking about our pain we saw God was in the pain and is here helping us toward repentance.
 2. Through the steps of asking for receiving and giving forgiveness, our pain becomes redemptive and a catalyst of hope.
 3. There was, around the tables, the expression of willingness to be healed and to heal, and this was a blessed start to the process.
 4. A warning note was sounded about naivety concerning the impact of apartheid and its effect on our lives. The grace of forgiveness and healing is not cheap, nor quick, nor simply a matter of “now we’re forgiven let’s move on”.

Part of being the fellowship of the Spirit urges us to give unhurried time to hear one another’s story. We need not shrink from the pain, because only in hearing and feeling it can we come to repentance and forgiveness.

Education Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 180

Objectives for the day:

To identify and recognise the issues that undermine the education and training in our society and our responsibility for them.

Processes used:

- 1 Keynote speaker: Prof Brian O’Connell.
- 2 Open time for questions.
- 3 Small groups.
- 4 Report back.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

The Church’s dedication to its responsibilities in education.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- In many cases the Church is silent about educational issues.
- There is a lack of understanding of the educational issues and contexts.
- It is the responsibility of the Church and Christians in leadership to counter moral degeneration.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- Much needs to be done to create accountable relationships between Church, school, parents and communities.
- Teachers need to be affirmed, and need to act as role models of Christian values.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

The input of Prof. O’Connell was extremely thought-provoking and challenging.

Science, Technology and the Environment Track

Estimated number of delegates: 40

Objectives for the day:

- 1 Bring forward issues and experiences that would be the basis of new insight and repentance.
- 2 Introduce participants and initiate group work.
- 3 Ensure there is time for prayer.

Processes used:

- Main speaker: David Astronomer from Wits.
- 7-10 minute inputs: Adi Paterson: Mass production and missed opportunities.
Brent Corcoram/Steve Mitchell: The Shattered Earth.
Heinz Wirz: Personal choice in scientific perspective and its link to HIV/Aids.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. Science and technology can be a calling and a mission field for Christians.
2. Ignorance about the real scientific understanding of HIV/Aids is pervasive.
3. Science and technology can have a positive impact on poverty rightly used.
4. The destruction of the environment impacts in a cross-cutting way on a number of the giants – could have been a giant in its own right.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- Scientists, technologists and environmentalists often feel marginalised in Christian discourse.
- Science, technology and the environment can be the basis of Christian work and witness.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Build artwork to continue after SACLA.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

- A number of people felt that this was the first time they could talk about science openly in the contact their faith.
- At least two people were deeply by David Block's talk, as it gave them a new vision of their calling as scientists/ technologists.

Civil Society, Social Development, Health and Medicine Track

Estimated number of delegates: 160

Objectives for the day:

To steer delegates towards a place of true repentance, individually and as a group (sub-tract: see explanation below). Specific issues were asked of groups which were noted down by a scribe and handed in at end of day.

Processes used:

- 1 Plenary Speaker.
- 2 Story Teller with time for personal stories in groups.
- 3 Workshop times.

NB: Tract divided into four sub-tracts:

- Community Development and Relief.
- Land and Housing.
- Health and Medicine.
- Community Organising and Advocacy.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. Big divides between rich and poor not even seen as a Goliath and yet creating many of them, e.g. crime, family crises, etc. Create jobs and many problems would be solved.
2. Shallow theology with regards to Goliaths e.g. Aids, land issues, homosexuality.
3. Lack of servanthood – mentally, greed/success, etc.
4. Church's failure to be agents of change/ transformation in society; Church often not part of community.

Important conclusions reached so far:

Left for next day!

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Not yet – Wednesday or Thursday

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

- Plenary and story time – very special.
- People connected extremely well – we're building bridges: marvellous!
- Aids points: people experienced a wonderful openness in groups that others in other tracts did not always experience.

Politics and Government Track

Estimated delegates for the day: 80

Objectives for the day:

- 1 Find out why people chose this track.
- 2 Identify issues or situations that are painful – sources of frustration, anger or guilt.
- 3 Discern ways in which God is working in these painful situations.

Processes used:

- Speaker to stimulate ideas (Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane).
- Small-group discussions of issues.
- Newsprint recording of areas in which God is working.
- “Gallery walk” of newsprint reports.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. Government is a part of God's plan for human society.
2. We live in a world without walls, where the rich are just as vulnerable as the poor.
3. God provides for the world's needs, but not the world's greed. We have a responsibility to pursue a more just distribution of wealth and resources.
4. Christians are called to lead the fight against the giants of poverty and HIV/Aids, to speak truth to the powerful, and to preach good news to the poor, the marginalised and the stigmatised. In particular, we must work to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, to challenge the stigma of HIV and to demonstrate caring for those infected and affected by the virus.
5. We must work together, both ecumenically and with business and government, to achieve these goals.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- God is at work, even in the “small” places, raising up new leaders in Church and nation, empowering Christians to be more outspoken – and more prayerful.
- God is reconciling Christians, uniting us in our diversity – and SACLA 2 is one sign of this.
- God is giving us a new vision of our role in society, challenging us to tackle the giants in a spirit of servanthood.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

None.

Arts Entertainment and Media Track

Report to come

Transformation Track

Estimated number of delegates: 500

Objectives for the day:

Repentance

Processes used:

- Bruce Wilkinson - shared a repentance, followed by a panelled discussion.
- Graham Power gave a testimony of his vision for Transformation.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

We must repent, leave it behind, make restitution and move forward in adjusting and changing things.

Important conclusions reached so far:

There is not real deep repentance yet. There is a lot of words, but not so much in deeds. Restitution and good works needs to come. Complete surrender of our wills and lives and to be willing to go it alone – if it is in God's plan.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Challenge as leaders to set the example and thus be credible to challenge others.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

Repentance must first start with leaders. Bruce called leaders to the front to repent of certain issues in their lives so they can boldly challenge their communities. Focus on immorality.

Youth Leaders in High Schools and Churches Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 284

Objectives for the day:

- 1 Expose the giants.
- 2 Elicit response from young people.
- 3 Call for repentance.
- 4 Break down walls.

Processes used:

- Audio-visual presentation – Shock and awe methodology.
- Small groups.
- Role playing – Actors play for half day their roles, e.g. poverty, mixed relationships etc; Drama.
- Testimony of Afrikaans pastor.
- Foot-washing ceremony
- Nailing confessions to four crosses (opportunity to repent).

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. Repentance and reconciliation.
2. Exposure to some of the giants – violence, rage, poverty. Racism the main giant, with social issues.

Important conclusions reached so far:

There is a great deal of reconciliation which needs to take place. Even though we have a new generation of young people, the need for symbolic repentance is critical to our future. The giants need to be exposed through information, and a response is called for.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- A commitment to the message of the giants to the youth culture.
- Continuous repentance.
- To create opportunities to be heard.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

- Through the single testimony of a white Afrikaans pastor and his humble request for forgiveness (and offered apology).
- The washing of many feet as a ceremony – with tears. Healing took place between young people of different race and culture groups.
- A repentance of silence to these giants.
- The writing up of personal repentance on sheets of paper – nailing them to the cross made.

Business and Labour Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 140

Objectives for the day:

Deal with two giants: family and crisis, gender issues.

Processes used:

Small groups.

Speaker.

Questions and Answers.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:**Important conclusions reached so far:**

None. The group was very diverse and so our imagination was tested to the uttermost

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Commitments to educate people on dealing with finances so as to help them out of the debt track. Also that business is already very involved in facing many of these giants.

Justice, Safety and Security Track

Estimated number of delegates: 80-100

Objectives for the day:

- To lay a Biblical basis of understanding of GOVERNMENT and the key branches of government – ie. legislative, judicial and executive branches.
- To highlight the serious consequences of CORRUPTION by examining the example of the 3 commission of enquiry into corruption in Uganda that were headed up by Judge Julia Sebutinde (3 track speaker) and gain some understanding of the church's required response.

PROCESSES:

Introduction of the day's objectives by the Track leader.

Followed by teaching session by Landa Cope on the said topic of Government.

The second track session was also taken as a teaching session by Landa Cope followed by a short time of questions and answers.

The third track session was the presentation by Judge Sebutinde (from Uganda). This included the testimony of her leadership on the commissions of enquiry set up to investigate corruption in the police, the military and the national treasury of Uganda. She concluded with an exposition of the Biblical injunction to the Church that they are to be SALT AND LIGHT in society. Again this was followed by questions and answers.

RECURRING THEMES:

- 1 The Church has not been disciplined in an understanding of the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.
- 2 Ignorance of the Church: The mindset of most believers presupposes that there is no basis or responsibility for Christians to engage in the marketplace actively addressing unrighteousness, injustice, immorality, wickedness and rebellion.
- 3 Government: Because of this lack of understanding and commitment to take responsibility most Christians do not engage constructively in political debate or affairs. Many do not vote.
- 4 There is no understanding that the power and authority of God has been given to the people.
- 5 Therefore Christians have abdicated their civil responsibilities. This leads to the removal of SALT and LIGHT from civil and government arenas and Wickedness prevails because those in positions of authority are not held accountable to the people, by the people.
- 6 Addressing the ignorance, apathy and abdication from responsibility by the Church is evidently the first step to addressing CORRUPTION & ABUSE OF POSITION AND POWER.
- 7 The church will need to be DISCIPLINED AND MOBILISED to effectively address and transform the inefficient systems of justice administration and other malpractices in the criminal justice system.

Children's Ministry and Family Issues Track

Estimated number of delegates: 170

Objectives for the day:

Set the scene: family in crisis; our response in small groups; engage small groups.

Processes used:

- Speakers.
- Small group discussion.
- Interactive plenaries.

Important conclusions reached so far:

The Church has to use its prophetic voice in helping to restore the family as a God-ordained institution.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- Return to biblical mandate for marriage.
- Church to promote family enrichment and pre-marital counselling.
- Promotion of abstinence.
- Teaching of parental skills.
- Work with government on tackling issues but be prepared to speak prophetically when things go wrong.
- Call to Church to stand against schools which enforce sport and other extra-mural activities on Sundays.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

Breaking of social barriers as small groups began to engage among themselves.

Tertiary Students and Young Adult Track

Objectives for the day:

- 1 To get participants to understand the part that the Church has contributed towards the present crisis.
- 2 To get the participants to confront their own prejudices.
- 3 Get participants to repent on behalf of the Church and of themselves of sins of racism, sexism and the unhealthy attitudes towards HIV/Aids.

Processes used:

- Speaker.
- Panel speakers and testimonies.
- Small group discussion.
- Personal reflection.

Recurring and/or emerging themes (both in terms of the overall theme for the day and the giant/s dealt with):

1. Affirmative action in response to racism.
2. Abstinence in response to Aids.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- Affirmative action is important in integration of and empowering people. However, we should allow the hand of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead.
- Abstinence is still the key prevention in the fight against HIV/Aids.
- We need to change our mindset on and attitude towards racial issues.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Acknowledge and appreciate diversity in culture, language and race among ourselves, and strive for unity.

Any special moments and/or testimonies that came to your attention:

Confession of prejudice attitude and racial discrimination practice in the past, but through Christ we have been united.

3.0 Outcomes

3.1 Day One, Tuesday

Speaker: Mrs Esmë Bowers

Theme: Repentance
Activities: Testimonies (South African story of racism)
Giants: HIV/Aids, Racism, Sexism

3.1.1 Highlights

- Issues of HIV/Aids is often linked to violence on women.
- Society has not changed yet, it is still biased.
- South Africa has one of the highest statistics of abuse in the world.
- We should be activists that will address the issues of gender HIV/Aids and violence.