

SACLA – Daily Reports From Tracks

Wednesday

Church Leaders Track

1. The track began with delegates being asked to reflect on the addresses by Cardinal Wilfrid Napier and Dr Bruce Wilkinson on Jeremiah 29 and Ephesians 1.
2. Thereafter a very moving presentation was made by Roderick Cox and Pieter van der Walt on the relationship between themselves, their congregations and the return of St Steven's Anglican Church, Paarl, to its former members.
3. Dr. Coenie Burger, Moderator of the NGK, also informed delegates about, and asked for prayer for, a meeting to be held on 25 July 2003 between the NGK and the CPSA, the first ever [!], to embark on three or four joint projects. This meeting had come about as a direct result of the return to the congregations of St Steven's, Paarl, a local church affecting whole denominations.
4. As a pointer to the way ahead, and to continue the story wall built by the track, delegates were asked to respond to two questions
 - What challenges does this story of St Steven's present to you as a church leader in your local community to create opportunities where you as a community can receive hope?
 - What can we do as churches to create hope in South Africa?
5. The Listening Group brings to the track participants the following responses, heard around the tables in a variety of forms:
 - As if the Church in SA had been in captivity, the story of St Stevens, Paarl, felt like a liberation, like captives returning, and was something God desires. We felt and tasted hope. The effects of reconciliation, were seen to be far-reaching even diverse communities. One of the tangible effects is a surge of hope for others also "If the NG Kerk and the Anglicans can do this then"
 - While we can taste hope and be hopeful it seems to remain a slippery substance. Just what is "hope"? One helpful explanation heard from the facilitators was that "we cannot produce hope; we can only receive hope". It is God's gift, not something we manufacture.
 - Part of the mechanics of receiving hope includes talking to each other more, and of leaders especially doing more with other leaders of other churches different from their own.
 - Some fears were expressed on just how to begin this journey in the discovery of hope. Equally felt and expressed was the fear of failure; wanting to hope for so much but what, if little or nothing, happened to produce hope.
 - Some delegates wondered whether hope would only be generated when the past was really past and asked who in SA would issue or pronounce a corporate forgiveness for those who had truly repented of the past and of their part in national or corporate sin?
 - Others believed it was the Church in SA that needed to repent for not being as centred on God as He would want it to be. Hope would not be given to, nor found, in a Church not centred on God nor intent on doing God's will, God's way.
 - The "wall", pointing to the future, seemed to show three things very clearly:
 - i. A lot of the wall seemed to be a repeat of what SACLA 1 [1979] felt were priorities then.
 - ii. The wall reveals precisely what the Spirit is urging the Church to do – it is the Ministry of the Spirit written on the wall! Following the subject heads given and grouping some things together that Ministry of the Spirit obligates the Church to be involved in moral regeneration: Love, Unity and Action: Preaching the gospel boldly; Evangelism and Prayer; Community Care projects especially HIV/Aids. That ministry further obligates the Church to be a place of healing [for body, mind and spirit] and to be a prophetic voice and to engage the government. The Church is also empowered by the Spirit to facilitate repentance and reconciliation, contextualisation and to produce Christ-like leadership.
 - iii. The wall is much stronger on WHAT needs to be done than on HOW to do what needs to be done.

SUMMARY

6. What then is God saying to us, Church leaders participating in this event?
 - a. Because God is Trinity and we are made in God's image hope will always be found in community and mutuality.
 - b. Hope is given, not produced, and is always found when the Church works as one and speaks with one voice.
 - c. Love, Unity and Action are verbs, for the Church's *doing* not topics for the Church's debating.
 - d. The church must repent of its disunity and unwillingness to work together.
 - e. Leaders must stop playing denominational games. Such behaviour is a hindrance to God's purposes and therefore produces hopelessness.

- f. Obedience to the Scriptures [such as Eph. 4 - make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit], require leaders to be courageous, creative, bold and daring in expressing unity with other churches.
- g. Independent action and behaviour is not an option in the Body of Christ but ecumenical co-operating is the hope for the future – unity produces the treasure chest of hope: [Ps. 33].

Leaders, not members, are the stumbling block to greater co-operation in the church. Go figure!

Education Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 180

Objectives for the day:

Identify what the Church can contribute to education and training.

Processes used:

Speaker: Prof J. Jansen

- 1 Five requirements to get great education.
- 2 Question and answer.
- 3 Small groups and report.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

- Need for the Church to recognise its clear purpose and spread it.
- Need for the Church to serve, to engage in school life through pastors, parents, educators.
- Need to see schools and teachers as valuable.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- Need a clear sense of purpose
- Need the Church to recognise its role in education

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Nothing yet.

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

Very active discussions; everyone is engaging the topics.

Science, Technology and the Environment Track

Estimated number of delegates: 32

Objectives for the day:

- 1 Explore "Making a difference in people's lives" and "Our hope in respect of science, engineering and technology for the future"
- 2 Feedback from day 1

[Reduced scope of programme as group work is being prioritised]

Processes used:

There were no speakers today as the focus was on *groups* developing ideas and approaches, followed by *plenary* feedback.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

- Different starting points are very evident. Almost community workers vs the science establishment.
- People desire to be included in a post-SACLA process.

Important conclusions reached so far:

SST has an impact on all the giants, but SST is not under the "control" of Christians. Scientists cannot act alone, they must be part of a broader set of processes in society.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- Working groups (which may move beyond SACLA) have been formed on:
 1. Bioethics.
 2. Creation Stewardship.
 3. Sustainable Development.
- There is an emerging consensus for an ongoing network post-SACLA.

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

- People have valued the opportunity to "encounter one another" but there are no specific reports of today's meeting.

Our Statement of Hope:

"Our hope is that, networking together, we impact on the needs of the community and the environment with science and technology directed by God's love."

Civil Society, Social Development, Health and Medicine Track

Estimated number of delegates: 175

Objectives for the day:

To move beyond repentance to a place where individuals and groups can start dreaming. We wanted all to take their points of repentance to points of hope and challenge.

Processes used:

- 1 Previous day's points of repentance are given to each.
- 2 Groups (sub-tracts) remain intact, so people can continue the process.
- 3 One plenary: Tony Campolo – WOW!
- 4 One storyteller: WOW again!
- 5 One workshop.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

- *Big divides are crossed - in shared projects, long-term relationships, network building, learning from one another; recognising each other as Kingdom People.*
- *Theology is enriched by setting down a whole new set of Kingdom values on issues such as:*
 1. Economics: rich and poor; "my money".
 2. Land issues.
 3. Sex and gender issues.
 4. Relationships.
 5. Health care values for Christian health care workers.
 6. Servanthood as modelling Jesus
 7. Churches to take hands, networking; rethinking their place and task in society, their institution-make-up - rethink ecclesiology!

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Tomorrow!

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

- Tony Campolo's talk was marvelous, put our track right on track for moving towards new visions.
- Spontaneous song and sharing and praying.
- A lot of crying and laughing; people connect
- Feedback is good.
- Our track grows; people feel social transformation; track didn't deal with some issues.

Politics and Government Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 70

Objectives for the day:

- 1 Explore God's vision for South Africa.
- 2 Identify common and divergent themes in our respective understandings.

Processes used:

- Speaker to stimulate ideas (Dr Brigalia Bam).
- Open discussion and sharing.
- Clay modelling of "visions".
- "Gallery walk" to view models and explanations.
- Small-group discussion of emerging themes

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. Christians must develop constructive and positive visions for the future. If we don't, others will fill the vacuum.
2. We should not be embarrassed about articulating our visions in public debate.
3. We must take action directly against the giants that confront us, and not simply look to the government to act.
4. We must acknowledge that Christians sometimes have different policy priorities and different strategic approaches to influencing policy.
5. The perceived dominance of some theological traditions over others is a source of anger and frustration for those Christians who feel their views are stifled, devalued or ignored.

Important conclusions reached so far:

Common elements of our shared understanding of God's vision include:

- Recognition of diversity and the need for us to work at building unity through love and continuing dialogue.
- Our conviction that God brings good out of evil, but that we, too, must be engaged in reconciliation and restoration to address brokenness in Church and nation.
- The need for Christians to be involved in defeating the seven giants and shaping a more compassionate society at all levels – local, national, continental and global.
- The need for Christians to be pro-active, not waiting for the government to act.

BUT our understandings of God's plan for us diverge in important respects:

- We feel led to adopt different strategies for influencing public policy (inside vs outside, centralised vs decentralised, "godly government" vs "godly citizens").
- We see different priorities for action (abortion, poverty, death penalty, hunger, gender-based violence, abuse of children).
- Our visions are shaped by different theological traditions (evangelical, liberation, mission, etc).

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Several of the participants felt that the churches needed to develop something akin to the Freedom Charter – a constructive statement of our vision for the future and the principles to which we are committed – to serve as a guiding document for our interaction in the public sphere.

Any special moments or testimonies that came to your attention:

Recognition of the diversity of the group and appreciation for the willingness of people to speak about their pain and frustration – and their eagerness to remain in dialogue about this and to work through it.

Arts Entertainment and Media Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: +-180

Objectives for the day:

- 1 To create hope.
- 2 To receive expert input from Landa Cope and Graham Codrington.

Processes used (e.g. speakers, small groups, etc):

- Small groups.
- Small-group prayer.
- Corporate prayer.
- Big-group discussion.
- Speakers.
- Question and answer.

Recurring and/or emerging themes (both in terms of the overall theme for the day and the giants/ as dealt with)

Family crisis a recurring giant.

Important conclusions reached so far

- Mentorship important.
- Media strong potential to provide hope for one nation.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Strong support given to Garth mass media project.

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

Testimony of a lost handbag that led to a saved soul; presentation really inspired people.

Transformation Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 550

Objectives for the day:

To create hope with regards to giants in the community.

Processes used:

- 1 Two plenary sessions, followed by a panel discussion.
- 2 Speakers – Ed Silvoso: The Transformation of Cities and Nations through the Redemption of the Marketplace; Michael Cassidy – The Transformed Person.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

People have to get out of the churches into the marketplace in defeating the giants.

Important conclusions reached so far:

The Church is not meeting the needs as society intends us to – vertical and horizontal. The Church needs a bold voice.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- In order to overcome the giants, people must make a personal commitment and present their whole body to the Lord.
- Need to both develop and share working models of hope.

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

- Lady from Uganda's testimony; former Aids sufferer now healed.
- The three minutes when we dedicated our bodies to the Lord was very touching.
- Testimony of racism – challenged by the Lord – to serve the black community.

Youth Leaders in High Schools and Churches Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 252

Objectives for the day:

- Hope: to enable young people to grapple with the giants and formulate their response through a variety of creative methods – resulting in a sense of hope for the future.
- To meet the need to be heard.

Processes used:

Movie clips.

Business and Labour Track

Estimated number of delegates for the day: 80

Objectives for the day:

Facing the giants of:
HIV/Aids.
Poverty alleviation.
Crime.

Processes used:

- Three speakers.
- Small groups, questions, report back.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

Hope: the speakers all spoke of ways we could become involved in dealing with the giants. (They themselves were very active in dealing with the giants.)

Important conclusions reached so far:

We are all affected by HIV even though we may not be infected!

Emerging commitments or action steps:

Not really today – focus on that tomorrow.

One big question which many are asking is: "What next?"

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

The speakers were all brilliant. This really enabled us to view the problems as challenges.

Justice, Safety and Security Track

Estimated number of delegates: plus minus 80 – 100 (maybe a few more this time)

OBJECTIVES FOR THE DAY:

- 1 To introduce a practical understanding of the injustices that are evident in the economy of South Africa that are, by and large, the root cause of poverty, which in turn leads to high levels of crime.
- 2 Introduce understanding of the underlying threats to the Christian Judeo values that have formed the bedrock of western civilisation for more than 600 years; threats which are embedded in the legislative system of South Africa (human rights, tolerance at all costs) and which corrode the substance and stability of our nation at a fundamental level.
- 3 To highlight key issues that need to be acknowledged in the fight against crime, introducing some understanding from a holistic perspective (Commissioner George Fivaz); the morale of the armed forces, specifically the police (Ds Duvenhage); the processes of restorative justice (Mike Batley); the underlying tensions caused by racism (General Job Ngema); and the challenges in the sector Correctional Services (name to be filled in).

PROCESSES:

Kevin Wakeford addressed delegates on matters of economic injustice. (Executive summary and slide presentation available.) He defined economic justice as: fairness and reasonable access to the wealth creation process, i.e. a free market economy for the nation as opposed to monopoly capitalism and state capitalism, both of which have dominated the economic processes of the country and continue to do so in a great measure. He highlighted positive aspects of the transition since 1994 and steps taken by the government to address inequality in the economic sphere in SA. But most of this has been legislative by nature – good legislation. However, the potential is jeopardised by corruption and unholy alliances between big corporate business and a black elite, with no real benefits for the poor. The system still locks most people out of the economic process. The result is evident in the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

John Smythe (QC) followed with a dissertation on the matter of Democracy vs Tolerance and the threats to true freedom under God. He highlighted the impact of secular humanism in real areas of society focusing on education and the current processes in government to entrench legislation that is opposed by the majority of people and will not serve in sustaining the national interests of social stability. (Dissertation available in print.)

Panel discussion:

The track leader introduced the panel participants and each one had a chance to share perspectives on the wave of crime that is now evident in the country.

Commissioner Fivaz is calling for a multi-disciplinary approach to dealing with crime. He said that if the root causes of crime – lack of social development, poverty and illiteracy and ignorance – are not dealt with, it will not help to talk about values and norms. Hungry, destitute people are not interested in values.

Ds Duvenhage: The tidal wave of crime continues to impact increasingly on the police force. This should be a matter of the gravest concern to all South Africans but particularly Christians. If the first line of defence against crime is overtaken (i.e. the crime fighters), then there will be anarchy. The criminal justice system is inadequate and inefficient. New ways to address offenders and reduce the rate of crime must be found as a matter of urgency.

Mike Batley, on restorative justice, explained the biblical foundations of this process, which is now being recognised widely in other places of the world as the better way to deal with offenders. They are to be brought to understand the consequences of their actions in relation to the victims that have been affected by their crime. They are to make restitution, etc. This leads to levels of reform of criminals that is not so in the punitive system of justice where criminals are more often hardened by the terms of imprisonment rather than rehabilitated. God's way is to restore people.

General Ngema addressed the underlying causes of racism which are not unique to the armed forces but which are at the root of all racism and prejudice. Fear and pride together are the root cause of racism. The need for mindset changes is critical. To recognize the handiwork of God in others and to acknowledge that judgment and criticism of others amounts to judgment of God Himself, is the responsibility of every believer.

Correctional Services: Practical involvement of the Church in the rehabilitation of prisoners is essential as the main challenge of correctional services is to address the re-entry of offenders into prison. The speaker called for the participation of the Church in two processes: (1) the rehabilitation of prisoners in the process of restorative justice, counselling of offenders while they are in prison; and (2) to assist with the re-integration of prisoners into civil society, assist with finding housing, jobs, social support, into fellowship with the Church, etc.

RECURRING THEMES:

- The need to inform and disciple church members in understanding their social responsibilities in civil society.
- Individual citizens are to hold leaders to account for their actions, both political leaders and leaders in the economy (issues of economic injustice, abuse of the system at the expense of the poor).
- The need to establish a moral code of values and norms by which to gauge economic conduct and policy is imperative. The Church could play a role in setting up a type of "Magna Carta" to demand an overall reform of the systems that direct economic and social development in SA.
- There is a responsibility on the part of the Church to act at a macro level to formulate and direct moral reform in the nation. This would have to be worked out in conjunction with a process of mass mobilisation and training.
- NB: Under God, only the Church, as a body of people, is in the position to wield the authority (moral and spiritual authority) to hold individuals and government to account. The Church has to come to the place where they recognize AND LIVE WITHIN the parameters that God has set for conducting all the processes of life. Only then can the Church hold the nation to account and facilitate moral and spiritual reform to save the nation from self-destruction by being both salt and light.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 – *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience **when your obedience is fulfilled.**”*

SOME KEY IDEAS:

- Priority No. 1 is to address the ignorance and apathy of the Church – that is, revive biblical thinking on all issues.
- Mobilise the entire body of Christ and direct action to facilitate social reform. This requires specific, focused apostolic leadership from every sector of society. Such apostolic leadership is not necessarily present in ecclesiastical structures but may well be identified in the market place, government, economics, education, etc. The test of such leadership is to corporately harness the capacity of the Church and direct it under God to accomplish the required reforms.

This will require a multi-disciplinary approach.

Children’s Ministry and Family Issues Track

Estimated number of delegates: 150

Objectives for the day:

To expose delegates to the reality of HIV/Aids in SA and its impact on the family.

Processes used:

- Speakers
- Small groups
- Testimony
- Interactive Plenaries

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

- 1 Small contributions can make a big difference.
- 2 The importance of prayer and the value of both a divine and human touch.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- The Church to be more vocal in terms of the promotion of abstinence.
- To oppose the availability of condoms and other contraceptives to young children.
- To encourage church members to foster a spirit of adoption.

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

Sharing stories of hope with regard to HIV/Aids and care of children.
Miriam Cele, from Crozalolo, who showed her ministry to 1 300 Aids orphans in KZN.

Tertiary Students and Young Adult Track

Objectives of the day:

- 1 In the midst of crisis, we want to instil hope to all in terms of crime, poverty and unemployment.
- 2 To make delegates aware that they have a role to play.
- 3 To ensure participants understand the root causes of the Goliaths.
- 4 To spur on the participants to action against the giants.

Processes used:

- Speaker.
- Small groups.
- Monologue.
- Personal reflection.
- Case study.
- Interaction with feedback.

Recurring and/or emerging themes:

1. The Church needs to recommit itself to offering and tithing as well as incorporating skills development training in church.
2. Encourage converted criminals to speak out about their past and how Christ saved them.

Important conclusions reached so far:

- The Church needs to be strong in partnering with other organisations in the fight against hunger, unemployment and crime and yet maintain its identity.

Emerging commitments or action steps:

- Start small skills development programmes in our churches and communities.
- Tithing and offering is key to solving the problem.

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

- Converted criminals sharing their stories and how God helped them and how they are helping the community
- The case study on woman abuse triggered a discussion on the scourge of violence and crime in our society.

3.2 Day Two, Wednesday

Speaker: Dr Molefe Tsele
Theme: Hope
Activities: Monologue, personal reflection
Giants: Poverty, unemployment, crime

3.2.1 Highlights

Topic: Active response to poverty and employment

- § There should be unity among the churches and promote the spirits of sharing, giving and helping.
- § The church should involve the business sector in its projects.
- § The education of the country should produce job creators.

3.2.2 Group Discussion (banning issues)

There were a number of burning issues that the small groups had to discuss and come with a way forward on. These include:

- The church should partner with other organisations that are already dealing with such issues
- The Church must produce godly leaders who will then serve at government level.
- Giving and offering should begin in the house of God.
- Networking is key.
- The Church should preach informed abstinence.
- Reconciliation should come from both parties, oppressor and the oppressed.
- Pray, be united and forgive one another.
- Love one another and be embracing.
- Submit to one another out of brotherly love.
- Encourage cross gender mentors.
- Learn more effective ways for gender relations