

Charge to the Synod of the Diocese of Cape Town

*Who is the Church?*

*What is our collective destinys and our responsibility to God, our  
extended Communities and to Democracy?*

*Discerning God's holiness at work and for the living of these days in  
the everyday life of the saints*

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In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

This is a profoundly personal day for me. Preparation to put meaningful, purposeful and illuminating words behind my feelings and thoughts in the context of Charge to the Synod of the Diocese of Cape Town is the culmination of an exhaustive amount of reflection on who I am, what do I do and why does it matter?

The Charge to Synod is both a responsibility and a tradition within the Anglican Church. It is somewhat patterned on the Speech from the Throne which usually proceeds a new session of a parliament. It should spend a little time reflecting on the past year, a comment on the present, and by far most of the attention should be placed on our aspirations for the future. As we try and dip into that future, we at all times seek divine guidance in all of our decisions, especially those on which we come with differences of opinion.

A few weeks ago I found myself in Aspen, Colorado in the U.S. attending the annual meeting of the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Institute is one of the world's most respected institutions whose mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. My time there was a non-stop experience of discovery where I grew spiritually, intellectually and reaffirmed my moral compass.

All this was accomplished through some required readings; stimulating new relationships; fresh, candid and authentic conversations; a notepad and a Bible. Armed with these resources, I bifurcated my Aspen experience into two journeys...one to gather knowledge and understanding and the second, to stop and reflect on what we know as My Charge.

My Charge is more than a look back, or even a reflection on the present...it's really a look into my heart, my conscience, my purpose and my destiny-- candidly, as a result, my wife and children know what a disruptive journey it is.

As I reflect, I ask, "where do I find myself?" "What did I learn from you?" "What could I have done better?" "How could I have served you and our country more effectively?"

Then, I imagine the next year, and reflect on the complex country we call home and ask, "what's missing?"

"What's missing?"

What's missing from our lives?

What's missing from our hearts?

What's missing from our connection to each other and to God?

Each of us must answer those questions individually.

However, what I can do is offer what I feel is missing from our national consciousness, our communities and our country.

First, I'm afraid that we have forgotten the bond between religion and democracy.

Our nation is surviving, but not thriving. We have a wonderful constitution, perhaps the best in Africa, and yet the principles of democracy are being challenged every day.

Most egregiously, the greatest risk to democracy is the cancer of corruption. I cannot say it any more simply, corruption is anti-democracy.

So in behavioral terms. If you are pro-democracy...you must also be anti-corruption. If you behave or make a corrupt decision, it opens the door to losing the fight for democracy. It contaminates, pollutes and degrades our constitution. I was once told by an elder. We each have two wolves in our lives. They represent our conscience. We have one wolf on our left shoulder and one on our right. They whisper into each ear. And...the wolf that we feed, is the one that survives.

I believe in the separation of Church and State. But having said this, I believe religion plays a pivotal role in stabilizing and strengthening our democracy.

Why and how critical is religion is to the functioning of democracy?

The reason democracy works is not because the government is designed to oversee everything everyone does, or ensure that every need is met...democracy works because most people most of the time voluntarily choose to obey the law.

In my life I have been blessed to travel across Africa and visit many democratic-based countries around the world. And I have made one very key observation. Those who attend church, synagogue, mosque regularly, and are taught by religious leaders that they respect and who teach values-based decision making, overwhelmingly voluntarily follow a deeply personal set of values and all of their constitutions rules and laws.

They operate on a very simple principle, good decisions-good consequences...bad decisions-bad consequences. They know that even if the police didn't catch them, God would catch them.

So their fundamental value becomes, be honest in everything they do, respect other people's property, celebrate the differences in people and never take something from them that is theirs.

It's what I might call, values-based religion

Without values-based religion as a foundation and traditions--free markets and democracy will not work.

If CEOs don't follow values-based honesty, business will fail to achieve its critical role in its relation to civil society. The government can try to police everyone, it but its hard and there is no way to police honesty.

Too many organizations are trying to push religion out of the country's focus and public eye. These are the very institutions that protect our civil liberties. If religion loses its authority over the lives of South Africans. what will happen to our democracy?

Where are the institutions that will teach the next generation that they voluntarily must obey the laws because it's always the right time to do what's right.

If you take away religion, you cannot hire enough police!

We can do better. We must do better. We will do better to ask ourselves, our family, our neighbors and our country...where are our values?

Second, I believe that as we enter the third decade of our existence we must reflect on what we learned from our country's 'great struggle' and ask, are we not again confronting the reality that we only can achieve equality if we embark on a second great struggle?"

Similar to where we were 20, 30 and 40 years ago there is pervasive inequality and despite the talk, disadvantaged, South Africans and Southern Africans are still suffering from inequalities. Perhaps some are in the same silos as pre-1994 and some are a result of decisions (or non-decisions) made since our independence, emancipation and the creation of our constitution.

We still see economic inequality; our families and children still experience inequality in education; our communities are victimized by the inequality in healthcare; our women are increasingly abused because of the inequality in women's' issues; every day we read about pervasive inequality in service delivery; and there is inequality in addressing the unemployed and underemployed.

But in my humble opinion, the greatest, most serious inequality is the inequality of opportunity. And it is here that we can see the interrelationship between all of the inequalities.

The access to opportunities is an important predictor of future outcomes. Access to quality basic services such as education, health care, essential service delivery infrastructure (like water, sanitation and electricity) and early childhood development provides an individual, irrespective of background, the opportunity to advance and reach his or her unique human potential.

When Madiba spend his entire life fighting for? Fundamentally, one word. Equality. As I see it, isn't it time that we again rise up together as a nation, as a community of communities to ask, "is this the best we can do?"

The answer is "NO".

We can do better. We will do better. We must do better to give our children a chance.

So, where, why and how does the new struggle begin?

It starts by agreeing that South Africa's *new struggle* begins with the rational and emotional acceptance that after 20 years of democracy, WE need to regain our moral compass.

The New Struggle requires that you, who in my mind and heart represents the millions of honest, hard-working, South Africans must come together to realize the potential of this blessed country.

The New Struggle is about one word with two letters...WE

As a country. As religious leaders. As believers. As business leaders. As civil society leaders. As government leaders. As neighbors. As a democratic, constitutional, values-based society. "We" must replace "me" for South Africa to triumph. We must decide that WE can do better. We must do better.

It takes integrity to acknowledge we can do better, but it takes courage to do better.

The power of a country is its capacity generated by relationships. Positive or negative national energy is determined by the quality of relationships and the respect of those relationships. Those who relate through coercion, or in disregard of others, create negative energy. Those who are open to others, and who see others in their fullness,

create positive energy. Positive energy will frame the answer to the question, "what kind of nation do we want to be?"

So let's ask ourselves...do we live in a ME country or a WE country?

For most of you the answer will be we unfortunately live in a ME society.

What's the difference – and why does it matter?

ME unfortunately is an I centered country and that is still the norm. As a result, we suffer from the high cost of low trust.

A ME society like ours is characterized by cultures that are high on fear and low on trust. People don't feel or believe they can speak honestly and contribute ideas and opinions freely. Organizations, ministries, departments preach teams, but many 'team members' and 'team leaders' operate as lone wolves.

In ME based societies, leaders, elected officials, those who operate at the Province, city or township level feel they have to protect turf. As a result, these "leaders" are perceived as ineffectual or autocratic and self-protection is the dominant feeling.

Anxiety, frustration and resentment are the common emotions found in ME centered societies like ours.

Alternatively, WE focused societies bring out the best in their citizens – at every level. WE centric leaders are characterized by caring, courage and vision and to use the old expression, walk the talk. Environments that foster WE centered behaviors encourage diversity of thought and expression of feeling. They encourage risk-taking and tolerate "failure." WE cultures support sharing and discourage territoriality. They are dedicated to fairness and the achievement of the full potential within everyone.  
Opportunity,

How did we get here and where from here?

Despite two decades of upward, inclusive ideas to distance ourselves from Apartheid and numerous programs (some successful and some failures) we have to acknowledge, the consensus is that for the most part, our country is still not healthy, inequality is everywhere and there is almost a toxic pollution of public confidence, trust and confidence.

There are many reasons for this. And not to oversimplify, but the well-intentioned promises of our political leadership failed to be transparent when they realized the assumptions they used to formulate a national vision changed and they couldn't keep their promises. So the "legacy" became one of blame throwing, finger pointing and the perpetuation of fear vs. treating our nation as adults. Fear is the dominant emotional driver on so many of our country's stages. We have to end the perception of White fear. We have to end the perceptions of Black fear. Fear keeps us focused on the past and worried about the future. Fear stifles our thinking and actions. Fear creates indecisiveness that results in stagnation. Every day we see talented people, leaders in all walks of life who procrastinate indefinitely rather than risk failure. Lost opportunities cause erosion of confidence, and the downward spiral begins. Our future is in our ability to rise. Haven't we been down long enough? It's been said, "only when we are no longer afraid, we can begin to live."

As Plato said, " We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

So, this is the core of My Charge to talk about the **'new struggle'** and the **'new walk.'** ***The walk toward 'The light.'***

The Inner Light that guides each of us to making the right, values-based decisions. The Inner Light that guides our choices.

The Inner Light raises our collective consciousness to new levels of conduct where compassion is spread impartially, all inclusively, spontaneously, to cover all possible scenarios,

The Inner light realizes the bad man is but the good man's opportunity to do love's duty, instructing while conveying respect, without judging,

The Inner Light is one thought, one action at a time, making South Africa a better place because we are each here. Each contributing. Each believing. Each caring.

The Inner Light is the knowledge that there is something Divine, Something of God in the human soul". As John 8:12 says, "*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.*"

I see My Charge, and candidly see Our Charge as committing ourselves to the New Struggle and the Walk to the Light.

I've never been more certain of any truth in my lifetime. Our country is ready to Walk to Light of WE.

But developing the WE factor inside of us is going to be the greatest challenge any of us have faced. It's easy for me to say it's going to take work. Why? Because it is so easy (for most of us) to jump into the ME vs. WE pool. Our entire culture is organized, rewarded and directed to support the ME.

Fundamentally, WE isn't popular.

Oh yes, we teach our kiddies to share their toys and not whack little Jacob with a baseball bat, but as a culture we are still modeling aggression, attack and ruthless competition as our primary values.

So building our WE behaviors will take vigilance, illumination and practice. So, where from here?

First, WE live by our beliefs (some are conscious and most are not) We have dozens that govern the way we relate to our own feelings, those of others, behave in relationships (inside the workplace and outside of it) and treat other people. Unless we make a determined effort to unearth our deepest beliefs, we cannot change our behaviors.

Second, WE must Value Our Values – Everyone has values. WE refer to them, but often we don't really know them or live by them. Unless you honor your own values, you can't possibly understand or respect those of others. Unless we initiate a national conversation about our national and personal values, they'll be nothing but 'lip service.' Unless we hold our leaders up to living our national values, they'll continue making morally-corrupt decisions. Unless we begin to teach our children the value of values, we'll perpetuate the spiral of inequality.

**WE centric** cultures use values as a guiding force. WE centric cultures make every decision by everyone everyday based on values.

**WE centric** cultures get their assumptions, judgments and expectations of others under control. Only then will they reflect your beliefs and values – so make the connections. This is important because we tend to judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behaviors.

Whether we live and work in ME or WE cultures depends a great deal on US. Each time we interact with someone in our society we make a deposit or withdrawal into the Bank of WE or ME. The problem in most workplaces is that the bank is overdrawn. All of the big and little daily interactions have drained the coffers.

“WE” must replace “me” for South Africa to triumph.

**WE** must decide that.

**WE** must rise up and say, "**WE** can do better!"

WE must step up and say, "WE must do better!"

We must lead and show, "WE will do better!"