

Tuesday, 27 September 2016

Archbishop's Charge to Provincial Synod

Discerning, Developing and Directing the Resources God Provides for the Task God Sets Before Us

Text of the Charge delivered to Provincial Synod by the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, 27 September, 2016.

Job 3:1-19, Psalm 88:1-7, Luke 9:51-56

Introduction

May I speak in the name of God who creates, redeems and sustains.
Amen.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, members of Provincial Synod, distinguished guests: greetings. Welcome to the Thirty-Fourth Session of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

I extend a particular welcome to our guests—and especially to our long-time partners in mission and ministry from Trinity Wall Street: the Rector and our homilist, Dr Bill Lupfer, whom we will decorate later in the service as Provincial Honorary Canon, his wife Kimiko and their team, Canon Benjamin Musoke-Lubega amongst them. I also greet our ecumenical guests and the friends and families of those to be decorated with the Order of Simon of Cyrene, as well as those to be licensed as provincial registrars and deputies.

Those attending Provincial Synod for the first time, a special welcome to you. I hope you will feel at home as you navigate the processes and procedures of this mainly legislative assembly and that you will feel emboldened to contribute confidently to proceedings.

Lungi, Nyakallo and Paballo have a special way of putting me in my place. I am grateful to God for who they are and for giving me the space and time as well as the necessary critiques of how I perform my varied ministries.

Thank you also to the advisory teams, to the Synod of Bishops, the staff at Bishopscourt, the synod manager, Fr Keith Griffiths, the Provincial

Treasury, the diocesan staff, the chancellors and registrars of the Province, indeed to everyone who has contributed to this Synod. A special word of thanks to two of my former staff members, Canon

William Mostert and Ms Pumeza Magona, for all their hard work in getting us here.

Let me also extend my and the Province's particular thanks to Dr Sitembele Mzamane, Dean of the Province, Bishop of Mthatha and Vicar-General of the Diocese of Mzimvubu. You have shouldered an enormous burden for this Province, and for that we give thanks to God.

Since our last Synod, Bishop Nathaniel Nakwatumbah of Namibia has retired and, tragically, died too soon afterwards. The retired Bishop of Grahamstown, David Russell, and the retired Bishop Suffragan of Cape Town, Charles Albertyn, have also died. I want to pay a special tribute to them. Let us observe a moment of silence and thank God for their lives and witness in Namibia, Grahamstown and Cape Town, and for their pastoral zeal and love for all God's people.

It is always a delight and a special honour to welcome new bishops to Provincial Synod, and this year we have six with us: Bishop Carlos Matsinhe of Lebombo, Bishop Charles May of the Highveld, Bishop Monument Makhanya of Zululand, Bishop Luke Pato of Namibia, Bishop Allan Kannemeyer of Pretoria, and Bishop Manuel Ernesto, the Suffragan Bishop of Niassa. And of course, Bishop Dino Gabriel has been translated from Zululand to Natal. Soon we will consecrate new bishops for the dioceses of Niassa and Christ the King, and for Mthatha after Bishop Sitembele's forthcoming retirement.

We thank God for the ministry of those who have served this Province as bishops and who have retired since the last meeting of Synod: Bishops Dinis Sengulane of Lebombo, David Bannerman of the Highveld, Rubin Phillip of Natal, Jo Seoka of Pretoria and Peter Lee of Christ the King. We also thank Bishop Mark van Koeving of Niassa, who resigned to return to the United States, for his decades of dedicated service to the people of Mozambique.

The Incarnation and the Use of Resources

Let me start the substance of my Charge with a poem by Rudyard Kipling, which comes from one of the *Just So Stories*:

I keep six honest serving-men

(They taught me all I knew);

Their names are What and Why and When

And How and Where and Who.

I send them over land and sea,

I send them east and west;

But after they have worked for me,

I give them all a rest.

I let them rest from nine till five,

For I am busy then,

As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,

For they are hungry men.

But different folk have different views;

I know a person small—

She keeps ten million serving-men,

Who get no rest at all!

She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,

From the second she opens her eyes—

One million Hows, two million Wheres,

And seven million Whys!

In saying the Daily Offices and Mass in the chapel at Bishops court from Monday to Thursday each week, I try to bring the joys and challenges of this office before God as I seek to discern the will of God and to develop a response which is spirit-filled, yet not timid or woolly, and directs others to Christ within a theological theme. But when I am dealing with the things that come across the archiepiscopal desk each day, too often I fail to ask: What is happening? Why is it happening? What ought to be happening? Who ought to be doing it? I need constantly to struggle theologically with the questions I ask again and again: What does it mean to be the body of Christ in such a time as this? To what discipleship are we called? What does the cost of this discipleship entail?

It was against the backdrop of this wrestling that I was excited recently to rediscover Kipling's poem at the end of the story, *The Elephant's Child*. Asking Kipling's questions—"What and Why and When, and How and Where and Who"—has been a useful tool for discerning the way forward. The Synod Advisory Committee—and the reality of our church's finances and resources—have directed me to a further area. That is the what, the why, the when, the how, the where and the who of exploring a conversation between **Incarnation**, which concerns theology, and available **Resources**, which concern economy. In this Charge, want to begin a journey in which we move beyond throwing out biblical statements such as that God and mammon cannot co-exist and instead explore the subject through the lenses comprising our Synod theme, namely how we can, first, **Discern**, secondly **Develop**, and finally **Direct** the resources that God places before us for God's mission.

I want us to look at what resources might be available within ACSA. Where are they to be found, how are we using them and why, and lastly who are they serving? The Charge, some of you will be pleased to know, will include some accounting for what has happened since the last Synod, including what you have told me in your reports and my own observations from when I have travelled around the Province. Of course

I will also add and direct you to look beyond ACSA to broader societal matters.

Whether we are talking about the economy of our church or of our different nations, it is instructive to look at the roots of the word “economy”. It is based on the Greek words *oikos*, meaning household, and *nomus*, meaning patterns of behaviour, literally translated as rules. So when we ask what our attitude to the resources God places before us should be, we are asking what the rules that govern the allocation of the resources in our church household should be. As Anglican Christians, what informs us in the use of our time, money and skills? What biblical ideals should govern the use of our money, and how? What is the goal of the accumulation of resources?

Two years ago, I was struck by vendors in Turkey who lured you into their shops, saying, “Hello, Sir, let me help you spend your money.” Who and what guides you as an individual in how you deploy your resources? When one of our children was younger, they occasionally returned home from church with the money we had given for the collection plate. When we asked why they had returned home with God’s money, the reply was: “The preacher spoke for so long that I went to sleep and had to go out during the offertory to wake up.” In one way or another, it would seem the preacher misguided this particular child.

Anglicanism is often described as having a strong focus on the incarnation and I have placed repeated emphasis on it since my installation eight years ago. Simply put, by incarnation I refer to God in Jesus entering the everyday experience of human living to point us to God’s reign and to prepare and invite us through our everyday lives to enjoy the blessedness of this reign. My writing and advocacy on the theme of the incarnation and politics is born out of the struggle of God’s people with political systems in Southern Africa that demeaned all of us and which were not designed to address the concrete needs and experiences of our daily lives or to respond to God’s call to human flourishing.

Last year, in my capacities as Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape and Chair of the Church Leaders’ Consultation and the Church Leaders’ Forum of the South African Council of Churches, I was called with other church leaders to meet students protesting under the banner of the *#feesmustfall* movement. On the surface it seemed they were

advancing a political cause, but when we went deeply into the issues over the course of many meetings, some late into the night at Bishopscourt, I came to appreciate the legacy of the inequality of South Africa's political and economic system.

That system has given birth to an intergenerational economic inequality, in which those who are likely to flourish in our society are the sons and daughters of the elite, and those who will struggle to break out of a vicious circle of poverty are the daughters and sons of the poor. One of the initiatives I have supported is the University of the Free State's campaign to reduce student hunger. We listened, shocked, to the stories of students who had secured loans for tuition and accommodation off campus, but who either did not have the money to buy food or had used it for computers and clothing. The question before us is: what does the incarnate Christ say about the economy, about student debt, household debt, diocesan and parochial debt in a world which in which there is also bounteous providence?

Incarnation is thus an invitation, as the theme of our Synod states, to begin a journey to discern, to develop and to direct our lives to be more and more like that of the incarnate Christ. The invitation is costly and Jesus' disciples struggle with it even after they accept it and are honoured to be in his presence. Let us too accept and let's begin our journey by looking at what today's lessons tell us.

The first lesson, Job 3:1-19, depicts the "new" struggle of someone who had accepted the invitation of actually translating that acceptance into actual practice. You might want to paraphrase Job's account by asking: why does a righteous God allow a just servant to suffer? Faced with individual and private suffering, Job vents his thoughts, "let no joyful voice come therein". There is no happily ever after. Job is restless and does not understand why evil and suffering should beset him as a God-abiding person. He finds his context and personal circumstances too burdening. To borrow the language we used earlier to define the economy, he asks: Why are the rules of the household so unfair, full of suffering and evil? Where is God in all of this?

The psalmist echoes this lament. Like Job, the psalmist feels cut off from God. Unlike in Job's case, the feeling of sadness is due to his weighty ills. The psalmist's soul is full of trouble. Remember the refrain, "Why are you so full of heaviness my soul, why so unquiet within me?" In this

psalm, the psalmist expresses raw feelings, seemingly on the brink of collapse. There is no sense of Job's discernment of the hand and presence of God in evil and suffering, only personal trauma and clouds of darkness. I have to confess that while preparing this Charge I was worried that the melancholy of these first readings was too depressing for the opening of Synod, and I was tempted to drop the day's lections and choose readings which reflected more sunshine. But I stayed with them, trying to discern what God might be saying to me, to members of Synod and to those who might read this text.

Discernment does not have to be morose but neither can it be shallow nor an escape from reality. I find the concept of lament, as expressed by Denise Ackermann, helpful in this context. Denise has written that lamenting "...is a refusal to settle for the way things are. It is reminding God that the human situation is not as it should be and that God as the partner in the covenant must act." In exploring lamentation, we trust that the incarnate, second person of the Trinity, God who took human form, is always with us as we discern his way in struggling with the contemporary issues of our day. We must thus act courageously, "recklessly confident" that nothing will separate us from God's love.

Turning to the Gospel, as the Lucan Jesus zigzags through the villages to Jerusalem, he is rejected even by those he went out of his way to embrace. The disciples can't deal with this rejection and want to respond by deploying God's power to destructive ends. But Jesus forcefully directs them away from such a course, pointing them to the bigger picture and highlighting that short-term gains come at a long-term cost. His action underlines the importance of his disciples accurately discerning risks, discerning the correct interventions to make, relying neither on bullying nor fear-laden behaviour but on developing God's ways.

Discerning

During the Lenten observances of our life's journeys, we are called to discern God's ways. Job and the psalmist give us a model for penetrating the issues more deeply. They lament. The disciples on the other hand demonstrate how often we shy away from probing the messiness and

madness of the world around us, but act impulsively to avoid it. We are particularly prone to this in our technological age. We—and I count myself here too—often tend to “press the send button” before discerning whether our intervention builds the kingdom or is self-seeking or egoistic.

But I have to tell you that when I read the reports, the measures and the resolutions that will come before us at this Synod, I am heartened. As your Archbishop and Metropolitan, I have the privilege of regularly travelling through the Province, and with the broader view this gives me I discern that as we—like the Lucan Jesus zigzagging his way to Jerusalem—traverse the mountains and hills, the valleys and the plains, the wealth and the filthy poverty of our Province, we can thank God that we are alive at such a time. Although there are risks, although there is pushing and pulling, although there are those who, like the disciples, are tempted to want to escape from our protracted and complex problems by seeking Elijah’s chariot of fire to take us away, we are nevertheless growing; we are wrestling, we are fighting, we are laughing, we are planting, we are learning and teaching, we are healing, we are communicating, and above all we are determined to be people of the Way.

Although when I address specific situations in this Charge I am usually referring to our own Province, we should also give our attention to the pain in other parts of our continent. In recent months I have visited both Kigali in Rwanda, for a meeting of the Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa, and Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for the inauguration of the new Archbishop of the Congo. These visits were part of an intentional outreach to develop closer relations with our sister Provinces across the continent. In Kigali, where I visited the city’s genocide memorial, I could not help but be struck by how well the city works. There is effective policing, the place is clean and there is a commitment to service. But I got the distinct impression that the efficiency could be the result of an obsession to run away from the country’s dreadful past, from the messiness of a system that did not work. That made me all the more grateful for the national electoral systems in our Province which do work in mediating political conflict, seen most recently in the South African municipal elections.

I was also distressed at how political leaders in the Great Lakes Region of Africa don’t seem to want to give up power. President Museveni in

nearby Uganda has been in power for 30 years. In sad demonstrations of undemocratic behaviour, others have sought to follow him by staging pseudo-referendums or manipulating their constitutional processes to abolish or ignore presidential term limits. As a result, in Burundi we have seen gross human rights violations, including disappearances, assassinations and other killings. It would appear that President Kabila in the Congo wants to become the newest person to go down this road. Of course in our own region, presidents Dos Santos in Angola and Mugabe in Zimbabwe lead the pack, having ruled since 1979 and 1980 respectively. We hope that President Zuma won't seek to emulate them; fortunately in current circumstances it would appear that his party would not have the stomach to try to force through such a change.

Not only in our own Province, our region and our continent, but across the world we hear the cries of those of God's people who are unable to live their lives as abundantly as God desires. The Anglican Communion's fourth "Mark of Mission" enjoins us "to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation." In response to the cries of the people and to our call to mission, let those of our parishioners who are well endowed and well connected become voices which broadcast widely the lamentations of the Jobs and the psalmists of our time. The incarnation invites us to a deeper dialogue with our governments over ways in which they and we can uproot and destroy structures which facilitate societal evils.

A number of our bishops have been attending courses on sustainability in the use of the church's resources and exploring various commercial models to ensure this sustainability. We are grateful to Trinity Wall Street for their support of this initiative for the church in Africa. Each one of you is involved in the economy in one way or another, so each one of you has a contribution to make from your own experience: what are the questions you ask of yourselves and which we should be asking? What should direct your, and our, use of money? We have many skilled and under-employed people. We have plenty of land and parish buildings. Can we find ways in which we can deploy these to empower the unskilled and unemployed? We have many people who love this church and give of their time and talents. What should we do to guide them to give more without counting the cost and without, in some instances at least, wanting power to control. Can we develop a sustainable Christian model for financing—even a Christian bank—which operates on the basis of equitable and just principles, less speculation

and fair taxes? Many of the poor I meet in the Province give all they have to the church but cry, “When will development bring justice and wear a compassionate face?” Can it? we ask. I came across a colleague from the Philippines who answered impulsively, like the disciples to Jesus: No, it

cannot and it will not. Our faith does not allow us to live with that answer.

Developing

Developing is acknowledging that we are not static. We need to become more and more like the incarnate Christ, who came not to be served but to serve. Our Mission Statement as a Province invites us as disciples to transform the legacies of apartheid and to grow communities of faith that form, inform, and transform those who follow Christ. In the global context, development has sadly become synonymous with the insatiable quest of the privileged for unguided, untrammelled growth at the expense of the poor and indigenous and on the basis of uneconomic land use. In discerning how we as ACSA need to develop and grow and use our resources, we are called to develop what I call a “spirituality of enough”, one which promotes equality and sharing.

Let me share some of the development which has happened in our Province over the last three years and of which I am most proud:

Since the last Synod, through the work of the Anglican Board of Education our Province has partnered with others and opened the Mabooe Archbishop High School in Lesotho. The CEO of ABESA joined me, the Bishop of Lesotho and others for the opening. We need, as a Province, to continue to support the school, which needs more classrooms. Encouraged by this education mission, individual parishioners in Lesotho have renovated their schools and are building local churches near the schools. The Vuleka St Joseph’s Archbishop School was also officially opened in Johannesburg, where we are grateful to the Diocese for its facilities. The Diocese of Swaziland has a large plot and is drafting a proposal to open a school too. The ABESA report to Synod is well worth reading. The AWF in Grahamstown has a bursary scheme for indigent learners, as does the Provincial AWF for women in the ordained ministry.

The College of the Transfiguration, ANSOCs, our Anglican schools and chaplains and other diocesan initiatives continue to develop and form people of the way who respond to the calling to God’s mission in the

world. The Mothers' Union, the Bernard Mizeki Guild and others continue to offer socio-economic programmes to alleviate poverty and give skills to unemployed youth. Green Anglicans continue to develop ecological awareness among young people in particular and to promote the greening of our Province. Hope Africa has partnered with a number of dioceses in theology and development, not in theory but in praxis. I am grateful too to Growing the Church for its role in growing disciples and to the Liturgical Committee for directing the process of liturgical renewal in our Province.

Since the last Provincial Synod there have been other innovations which have advanced our mission and witness. We will launch some during Synod, such as a video giving glimpses of the life of our Province, produced courtesy of Trinity Wall Street. We will also hear inputs and reports on many other initiatives, including progress on a new Prayer Book, an updated Provincial website, a youth academy and progress with the registration of COTT. The newly-established Canon Law Council is working well, as is evident in the quality of measures and motions before us at Synod. We are grateful for the work of this Provincial advisory team on matters canonical, especially the contributions of the Revd Matt Esau and Provincial Registrar Henry Bennett. In this our 167th year, we are still growing, learning, discerning and developing into apt disciples of the 21st century.

In partnership with the mining community and interfaith leaders, we have also started a series of what we call "Courageous Conversations". This initiative is aimed at making an impact on the lives of ordinary people around the mines without compromising either the pastoral or the prophetic voice of the church. We have contracted the Provincial Public Policy director, Canon Desmond Lambrechts, to study and implement programmes and advocate policy changes that can generate responsible mining activity. This has brought about a mechanism for collaboration on issues such as health, development and advocacy.

I have recently returned from two weeks in Hong Kong, where I took part in the first Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics and Management, an initiative of the World Council of Churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Council for World Mission and the Lutheran World Federation. These four major international Christian groups convened the conference I attended to study how to achieve a new "economy of life" which benefits all. We looked at how we

could find an alternative to the current global governance of money and financial systems, replacing it with a system that would be less exploitative and would distribute resources and income more equitably. This sounds impractical, but as stewards of God's creation we know that nothing is impossible with God. I will be exploring with the Synod of Bishops at our leadership and formation week next February a theology and ecclesiology of generosity—the incarnation as hermeneutical conversation of theology and economy. This may well be one way of discerning what our prophetic voice might be in matters of economy. It could help us develop liturgies and an Anglican social teaching on the economy, possibly leading to a course at COTT on theology and economy.

In South Africa today, faith leaders across the spectrum are saying that we as a nation have lost our moral compass and that this has happened partly because we have been too quiet for too long. We have had little to say about the Treasury's willingness to bail out SAA and badly-run state-owned enterprises, but not poor students mired in debt. In other parts of our Province, we have little to say about reported corruption in Angola and Mozambique, or about housing developments on the Namibian coast which locals cannot afford. Apart from Green Anglicans, few speak out about plans to develop nuclear energy at a time when great strides are being made in the storage of solar power. As prophets we are economically illiterate. Yet the economic ordering of society and the question of how we develop our material resources is central to the crises that afflict us.

In South Africa, the current ordering of the economy lies at the heart of the political crisis that is beginning to paralyse government. Inherited patterns of privilege and wealth, overwhelmingly associated with one racial group, have created an economy which spits in the face of Gospel values. Because of this injustice in the distribution of resources and economic power, there is a group in the ruling party which is carrying out a programme which it justifies on the grounds that it is necessary to redistribute the country's wealth. However, the programme redirects resources not for the benefit of the poor but to a small elite group of individuals with links to a small number of politicians and officials. Private interests are capturing the public purse. Inflated tenders awarded to cronies drive up the cost of providing services. The worst-run state-owned enterprises are gobbling up billions of the public's money, draining the fiscus and stalling the development of the real economy.

The cost of nuclear procurement plans—the case for which has not been proven—threatens to become an albatross around the necks of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, plunging them deeply into debt for decades to come. We are told that 16 million South Africans depend on social grants. If we allow the looting of the resources and wealth of future generations to continue unabated, there won't be any

money to pay those grants in future and millions will lose their only means of existence.

As the South African Communist Party correctly points out, the answer to the obscene inequality of our society does not lie in indulging the rapacious greed of a tiny number of politically-connected individuals—some of whom are associated with my Johannesburg neighbours down the road in Saxonwold. No, for Christians, challenging the skewed racial ordering of our economy must involve a new compact in society, driven by the values of the Kingdom of God, which creates a fairer and more equitable system. Perhaps Moeletsi Mbeki has a point when he calls for a new coalition for development between the very poor and the owners of capital on the basis that they are the two key constituencies who support sustainable economic growth. As religious leaders, we need to be intentional in building relationships between ourselves and with business and government to pursue these ideas.

I call upon Anglicans and others to join efforts to clean up our government and to reform our economy. As we discern, direct and develop our resources within the church, let us become more accountable and transparent about our own dealings and then be robust in demanding the same truth and behaviour from our governments. I call upon our liturgists, COTT, Hope Africa and other advisory bodies in our church to develop liturgies and Bible studies that can help us explore the creation and governance of wealth and pose sharp concise questions to help us formulate a social teaching on money and the common good. Perhaps God is calling us to denounce the kind of development that is creating inequality and poverty, and instead to learn to live simply.

Directing

Our formulation of this Synod's theme ends by inviting us to direct the resources which God provides for the task set before us.

Last year we held a Provincial Planning Meeting to look at our Provincial Vision and Mission Statement. Both that meeting and Provincial Standing Committee meeting which followed it affirmed our mission priorities. They directed that we should prioritise communication and

the personnel needed in this area. The prophetic ministry of the Archbishop and the Bishops needed to be enhanced within democratic southern Africa. There was an appreciation by both these meetings that prophetic ministry entails much more than criticism of the state: that it should also encompass the exercising of our theological imagination around what we hope each person should be about in a democratic state; that it should create space for all God's people to tell their stories; and that it should include advocacy for change not only through public utterance and demonstration, but also through engaging in policy formulation. Following in the footsteps of the incarnate son of God, prophetic ministry entails understanding the obstacles of every village,

being prepared to be rejected, being determined not to count the cost, finally to be glorified with Christ.

As you will see, we will be trimming the budget and returning to the five core mission support items of the Province. We are exploring the concept of impact investment, which will hopefully not be a new name for commodifying everything, speculating with the little money we have and ending up slaves to debt, but will bring about a means of caring for our disciples, our environment and being stewards for tomorrow's faithful.

Whilst on the subject of care, and specifically of pastoral care, you will know that we have a motion on the agenda from the Diocese of Saldanha Bay concerning the pastoral care of Anglicans in same-sex relationships. We will discuss the motion first in Conference of Synod on Thursday, and I hope we will discern carefully together the needs of both our church and the broader church beyond this Province. I hope you will listen carefully to and hear one another other as we develop the mind of Synod, directed by the Holy Spirit already at work within us.

Conclusion

Let me end where I started, with the incarnation, in which God took on human form and in so doing became part of the contemporary world. Through the incarnation, God invites us to a conversation, on a Lucan journey, to discern as He does how best to realise our true humanity and to be directed in our ways with each other in service to God and in respect for His creation.

My prayer is that in evaluating our resources, we will not be trapped by the temptation of aggrandisement and profit to follow a prosperity gospel, but rather that, like Job and the psalmist, we will lament that which breaks our humanity and develop a spirituality and an ecclesiology of honesty and sharing. As your Archbishop, in response to an invitation to a conversational hermeneutic, especially with those who express disagreement, I will seek to listen, discern, develop and where necessary direct. I come to this Synod full of hope for our future, open and vulnerable like Job, ready to share my laments and hear yours, conscious of the disciples' impatience and yet committed to the long journey ahead.

I am full of hope because God has placed before me, before all of you—whether Synod members, staff, family, friends, colleagues or the restless youth of our time—many resources to discover and to dedicate to God’s service as we journey together and disciple one another.

Let us as a Province dare to discern, develop and direct the spiritual, mental, and material resources which God places before us for the good of all people and creation.

Let no one be too full while another goes hungry. Amen.