

REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA

1. Being a Missional Church

1(a) What is happening?

The RCA is currently grappling with a number of issues regarding its identity, future, structure, etc. The leadership entered into a “full day” discussion with a facilitator and discussed the concept of the Missional Church in detail. A meeting of Leaders (elders, ministers, propienants) is planned for 29 September 2018 where this will be tabled for further dicussion, deliberation and decision.

A number of congregations have very active outreach programs to the community which include:

Soup kitchens – feeding schemes (weekly)

Medical ourteach partnership

Youth activities

Holiday Clubs - for kids during school holidays

Professional counselling

Some congregations are reaching the community and assisting with counselling (various kinds) as well as drug and alcohol rehabilitation. We have a very strong partnership with Jivanaddi Mission who provive care for people on a longer term basis. The Mission is faith based and therefore there are no cost associated with this care.

Congregations historically exists within “Indian” communities and in the past, the RCA predominantly reached out to the Indian community with immediate focus on Hindu and Muslim evangelism. The profile of these communities have changed over time and so has the membership of the RCA. A number of people of colour have membership in various congregations as well as serving as elders and deacons.

Young people are getting influenced by the tele-evangelists and Pentacostalism

1(b) Why is it happening?

The church, while doing a lot of “good” things, has continued to followed in the “tradition”. Strong leadership (congregation level), regional

characteristics, young vibrant members, etc. has brought us to the point of questioning our identity and future.

1(c) What should happen?

As the Church (congregational) profile changes, we should be able to readily adapt to these changes.

Our young people should be carefully disciplined into the Reformed Faith tradition.

We should be able to bridge the “age gap”. Older people prefer classical Hymns and young people prefer contemporary music.

2. Peace making and Justice

2(a) What is happening?

South Africa is considered to be a relatively stable country when compared to other countries on the African continent. We thank God for the peace that prevails – we do not have civil war.

However, a number of issues have arisen lately that threatens the stability of our beloved country, namely the Land question and government service delivery.

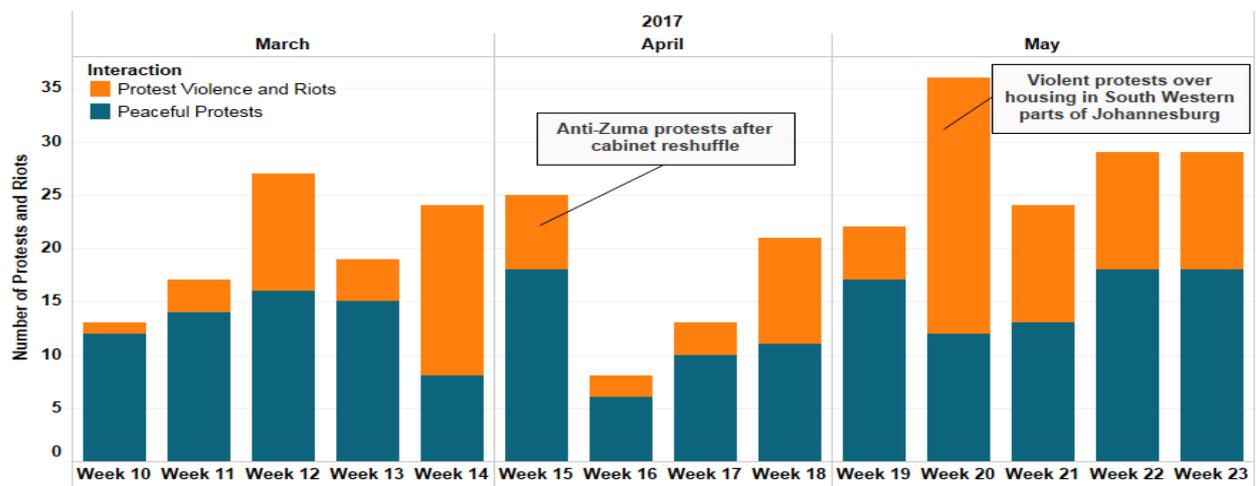
Illegal occupation of land (land grabs) have been reported in Pretoria, KZN, Hermanus, etc. If a political agreement is not reached, peace and stability will be replaced by chaos and violence. This will affect food stability and contribute to our already poor economy.



It is reported that there are (currently) in excess of 30 service delivery protests a day in South Africa. Many of these protests turn out to be violent with destruction of infrastructure – which has to be replaced.



Figure 1: Number of Protests and Riots in South Africa from March 2017 - June 2017.



2(b) Why is it happening?

Dissatisfaction with the delivery of municipal services e.g. running water, electricity and toilets, especially in informal settlements.

Unemployment (officially at around 23%)

High levels of poverty, poor infrastructure, and the lack of houses
 Allegations of corruption and nepotism within local government structures.

Municipalities are in a state of dysfunction perceived to be due to incompetence, corruption and maladministration'.

The followers are always reminded that their promised blessings will not materialise unless they continue to give money to the church.

Some have mixed traditional rituals in pursuit of the materialism. Bottles of oil, sand, water, handkerchiefs, etc. are sold as church merchandise to usher in the so-called sort after blessing. The central theme of prosperity gospel is to continually urge members to sow financial seeds so they can reap bigger and bigger rewards.

This commercialisation of the Christian faith has resulted in the planting of churches not because they have a burden for lost souls, but because money is the key driver. Prosperity gospel works against the formation of Christian character.

Some practices include indecent conduct with female followers have been reported.

The prosperity gospel “doctrine” does not agree with Jesus when he said that we should deny ourselves, carry our own crosses and follow him.

Prosperity gospel has the ironic effect of keeping people in poverty.

3(b) Why is it happening

Many so called prophets and preachers from the movement declare that God is currently moving in a mighty way and they deride the traditional Christian communities as “backslidden.”

At its surface it seems to have its roots in the ‘social causes’ that largely has to do with the ability of fulfilling needs for individuals and social groups. This development has, dealt with aspects of deprivation largely, but not exclusively, among its followers.

The greed of these so called prophets (swindlers), merchandising God’s blessing, always remind their followers that their promised blessings will not materialise unless they continue to give money to the church.

3(c) What should be done?

Our congregations should be kept informed of the dangers of these teachings.

We must stand against their (Neo- Pentecostalist) manner of interpreting scripture and correctly explaining the message to our fellow Christians. The gospel must be preached and taught in its correct context.

We must teach congregants to be content with what we have and to serve God with what we have. (Phil. 4:11-13)

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grieves. (1 Tm 6:6-10)

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Reformed Church In Africa