

Why Us

WHY the SOUTHERN MISSION SOCIETY?

The Anglican Church in Southern Africa has a unique status and role in relation to the wider society and the nation due to its significant contribution to the struggle against apartheid. However its social capital is rapidly being depleted. The church is under pressure to succumb to secular ideas and movements. It is bleeding numbers and is becoming financially unviable; in many areas it has ageing congregations. Indeed several years ago a church demographic specialist warned that the church as a whole was shrinking dramatically.

Southern African society is experiencing serious moral challenges in the areas of gender roles, sexual behaviour, marriage, family life, economic practices, corruption and political leadership. The Christian church is struggling to continue to provide the basis for a moral order to a fast changing contemporary society, and to be a bulwark against social breakdown and a resource for social transformation.

Churches which are faithful to biblical teaching and developing contemporary expressions of ministry are growing rapidly, not least among the educated classes in the nation. It is not the failure of the faith against contemporary anti-Christian and secular forces but the lack of well trained pastoral and lay leadership in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa. We observe that where churches are led by pastors committed to biblical faithfulness and contemporary ministry styles, they are flourishing. In these parishes Clergy and Lay persons are involved in growing churches and ministries that impact education, poverty alleviation, health care and public policy. This gives us the confidence to:

Launch the Southern Mission Society (SMS) in the established tradition of Anglican mission societies. SMS will seek train a new generation of clergy and lay leadership in practice based, academically excellent training programmes. SMS will enable local Anglican parishes in planting and growing flourishing congregations. It will also equip Anglican parishes to engage in transforming society by developing programmes and practices. These will address areas where anti-Christian morality is making a significant impact contributing to social breakdown, family and community destruction and impoverishment.

SMS will be the instrument of oversight for such training and programmes as will further the aims of SMS such as the East Mountain Anglican House. The School will develop Anglican Studies Programmes that will offer academic and ministry formation and training for lay and ordained ministries. It will offer short courses and training programmes for pastors, youth workers, lay pastors, children's workers, evangelists, church planters and church leaders.

SMS will work with local churches keen to be involved in church planting and growth, in community development work and in social transformation. SMS will partner with existing training programmes and initiatives wherever possible.

SMS's goal is to see the church equipped to flourish and make a significant difference in building a moral order for Southern African societies, that will help shape the direction of the educational and health

systems, engage constructively with the economic, political and social life on the basis of a well articulated Christian worldview .
