



WHAT ARE PACSA FACTSHEETS SAYING?

PACSA is often most visible to the public through its Factsheets which are distributed in a number of Pietermaritzburg congregations and even wider afield. PACSA Factsheets do not focus on PACSA itself, and this is as it should be. However, the Factsheets often lead to questions being asked about PACSA that need to be answered. The following is an attempt to do so:

1. Q: *“Why does PACSA concern itself with ‘politics’?”*

A: ‘Politics’ is not something separate from life. Every facet of our lives is determined by politics – even perhaps who we love and who we hate! It has to do with the network of relationships and institutions which form our society and God has something to say about this. The first and second commandments are intimately linked – we cannot love God without loving those whom God loves. An authentic love for our fellows includes justice. Love fails without a concern for justice; and justice has to do with politics.

2. Q: *“Why do the Factsheets show so much of the negative side of society – poverty, malnutrition, inequality?”*

A: They may seem to convey a negative picture compared to that presented by our media, and compared to our own experience if we are White Christians cut off from those who experience the negative side of South African society. PACSA seeks to bridge the gap.

3. Q: *“Why do the Factsheets provide this information – for what purpose? Is it to make White Christians feel guilty?”*

A: They are a resource to be used by members of the Church. We, as the Church, have a special mission: to manifest in the world, in a visible way, God’s loving concern for people.

4. Q: *“Are PACSA people depressed, since they concentrate on the sad state of the world?”*

Compassion for others does not quench the Spirit of life and love and joy – just the opposite. And we are assured of God’s final victory over sin and suffering and death, even when we seem to be failing.

5. Q: *“The Factsheets appear to be one-sided. What is the reason for this?”*

A: They present facts, which are true and not exaggerated. If, however, there seems to be a bias it is in favour of those who most need support, as a sign of God’s love for all people and a longing for the Kingdom of God – which is a Kingdom of the poor, and those who hunger and thirst for justice.

6. Q: *“Shouldn’t Christians be spreading love and peace and reconciliation around?”*

A: Love and peace and reconciliation can be spread in an unjust society by opposing injustice. Surface harmony can be imposed but this is not reconciliation.

7. Q: *“Some people believe the government is doing all it can and things are changing. Why do the factsheets not reflect this?”*

A: They do not reflect this, firstly, because an analysis of our society shows no real or basic change. As long as people have no say in or control over their affairs, so long must those with political and economic power use violent and unchristian methods to keep their power. Genuine signs of change will be applauded. Secondly, because approving a social order which is basically wrong means rejecting the values of God and His Kingdom. Christians can never be content as long as we compare what is with what will be and should be; what God intends. We pray “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth. . .” How can we be satisfied with anything less?

8. Q: *“There is a swing these days to the ‘born again’ movements – for personal prosperity, healing, cleansing and emotional happiness. How does PACSA compete with this trend?”*

A: PACSA does not ‘compete’ for followers but provides resources for churches and a community for Church members of any persuasion: we do not judge those who seek personal health, wealth and happiness. Crowds followed Jesus for this. But we believe God also calls disciples – and that is where cost is involved. (Luke 14:26,27). ‘Cost’ is never widely popular but through it, eventually ALL will enjoy abundant life.

9. Q: *“Evangelisation – bringing people to Jesus – will change the world. Do you believe this?”*

A: We do. But bringing individuals to Jesus means bringing society to Him as well. There is no separation. An individual is always part of society, never isolated; never untouched, unconditioned, untainted. Jesus brought us the good news of the Kingdom. He came to save the World, to redeem us, and to bring us to Himself; “to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ.” (Eph. 1:10).

10. Q: *“Does the distribution of Factsheets achieve any results?”*

A: Yes and no.

YES

– where people are serious in following Jesus as their Lord, and commit their lives to work for the Kingdom he proclaimed;

– where the Church’s role is seen as a sign and instrument of the salvation and redemption of the world;

– where conversion is linked to a distinctly new way of life, with different values;

– where there is a discernment of truth in conflicting ideologies and powers;

– where there is a sense of relationship with the poor, the brothers and sisters of our Lord Jesus Christ;

– where the call is to love God with heart and soul and mind.

NO

– where the Kingdom of God is not proclaimed;

– where salvation and redemption are made private matters and life on earth is seen as having no value except as a testing ground for heaven;

– where the call to conversion is a call to people to see what Jesus can do for them in their present way of life;

– where powerful ideologies have an unrecognised grip;

– where Christ is not identified with the weak and hungry and oppressed, and they are not felt to be brothers and sisters;

– where an emotional ‘high’ is mistaken for spiritual renewal.



A PACSA AGAPE — PART OF THE CIRCLE.



PARTICIPANTS AT A PACSA WORKSHOP