



BISHOP'S  
Dec 13 POST Jan 14



*“Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.” (Luke 13, 18&19)*

In the previous Bishop's Post I shared thoughts on the theme of Synod: Enough is a feast.

At synod we spend a good deal of time reflecting on this topic. One thing that struck me is that sometimes even small groups (like our Church) or a small number of people (like the disciples of Jesus) can have a major impact on the world and on history.

To use an illustration: Termite mounds, or ant hills easily reach heights of two to three metres, some can be as high as nine. These huge structures were built grain by grain by millions of ants. Each ant on it's own would hardly have had an impact. But all their efforts put together resulted in a magnificent structure.

No single one of us can solve the hunger issue, the high rate of unemployment, corruption, prejudice etc. But each one of us can “carry a grain of sand” at a time. Each one of us can, where God has placed us, live as Christians, perhaps help a child through school, teach an illiterate person to read, and refuse to be part of lies and corruption. On it's own it will not be noticed. But if fellow Christians join in with their “grain of sand” it will have an impact.

Two thousand years ago a child was born to poor parents in an animal shelter. Today more than two billion people worship this Christ as Saviour. Jesus, with the parable of the mustard seed, emphasised this “power of the insignificant” in his kingdom.

Do therefore not underestimate your role, your “grain of sand” as you follow Christ! Why not do something special this Christmas? In stead of giving expensive gifts to your loved ones, give something smaller, ideally self made. And then look around to see whether you can use what you have saved, to bring joy or relief to a person that would otherwise have been overlooked. One grain of sand - perhaps multiplied by 10 000 who do the same?

May you (and others through you!) have a blessed Christmas, and then a good start in 2014!

Your brother in Christ

*Host Müller*

## News from the Church

**Synod 2013 in Piet Retief** elected amongst others 3 new deans, lay members of church council and circuit council and their deputies.

Each circuit is lead by a circuit council comprising of the dean, deputy, member of church council and deputy. Thus, the current circuit councils are as follows:

Northern: Theo Jäckel, Mark Meier, Renate Wittenberg, Dorothea Thiele

Central: Edwin Dedekind, Olaf Gieseke, Ann Mokhine, Alec Gumbie

Eastern: Dirk Köstlin, Hugo Filter, Hans Schütte, Johann Engelbrecht

Southern: Ronald Küsel, Manfred Müller-Nedebock, Annette Pfeiffer, Jens von Delft

May God bless these people as they serve in the various capacities.

To those who “retire” from office: Deans Victor Röhrs and Gilbert Filter, Rolf Köstlin and Edmund Bunge - thank you very much for years of dedicated service!

To the congregation Piet Retief a hearty thanks for the hard work, resulting in a pleasant environment for Synod to take place!

Documents and reports presented at synod can be viewed at [www.elcsant.org.za](http://www.elcsant.org.za), clicking on the Synod 2013 button.

**Pastor Georg Scriba**, who served beyond his retirement date in March, will conclude his service in Pietermaritzburg at the end of December 2013. Previously he was tutor at our theological Training Centre (1992-2008) pastor in Kroondal (1984-91) and Augsburg/Braunschweig 1976-83). He also, amongst other, served as Dean of the Northern and Southern Circuits, deputy to the präsés and bishop, theological advisor and chairman of the Mission Committee.

We are grateful for his service. May he and his wife Inge have a blessed retirement!

Pastors **Victor and Petra Röhrs** will commence their duties in **Pietermaritzburg** in January 2014, and **Dean Theo Jäckel** his in **Kroondal** and as dean of the northern Circuit at the end of January 2014. May God give them the necessary strength for the move, and grant that they will settle in quickly. May they and their congregations experience Gods blessing!

**Gilbert Filter** will start the new year as bishop of the ELCSA (Cape). May God bless him and his family as they re-locate and tackle the new challenges. Since our synod accepted the proposal of the Cape Church to work towards unity, we will most likely still see him regularly!