

# ELCSA Cape, NT

Motion on merger

10 000 members  
42 Congregations,  
31 Pastor's posts  
200 000 km<sup>2</sup>

Ev. Luth. Lutheran  
Church in Southern  
Africa (Natal-Transvaal)

Louis Trichard to Bethanien  
1101 km

Budget:  
R 19 430 579



ELCSA (N-



The Ev. Luth. Church in Southern Africa (N-T) grew out of the merger between the Transvaal Church and Hermannsburg Church. The former has its roots in the work of the Berlin Mission society as well as German Immigrants that formed independent congregations. The Hermannsburg Church on the other hand has very strong missionary roots. Due to the outreach policy the Hermannsburg mission did not only send theologians, but also "colonists", ie trades people, to support the missionary. Thus little villages were established, which in many cases later developed into a German Congregation, often right next to the indigenous congregation.

In 1981 these two Churches merged into the ELCSA (Natal-Transvaal). When in 1994 the provinces in South Africa were re-arranged, the abbreviation was kept, due to no better suggestion that was found.



**4 200 Members**  
**21 Congregations,**  
**11 Pastor's posts**  
**120 -400 000 km2**  
 Cape Town to Komga 1059 Km

Budget  
 R 7 063 980

**Ev. Luth. Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape)**  
**ELCSA (CAPE)**

The Cape Church also is home for the oldest Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Like many of its congregations, it was established by German immigrants during the course of the last 300 years. Gradually they formed a closer connection with each other, which eventually led to the establishment of a synod. For many decades it was regarded as a circuit of the Hannoverian Church, until it became an independent Church in 1961.

Many of its congregations in the Eastern Cape were affected by the establishment of the Transkei and Ciskei Homelands, when white farmers and communities were resettled, resulting in their closure or much reduced continuation at a different location.

At it's Synod in May 2015 in King-Williams Town the Cape Church, after intensive discussion, adopted the following proposal:

**"We agree in principle to a merger based on a common underlying Christian calling and tradition.**

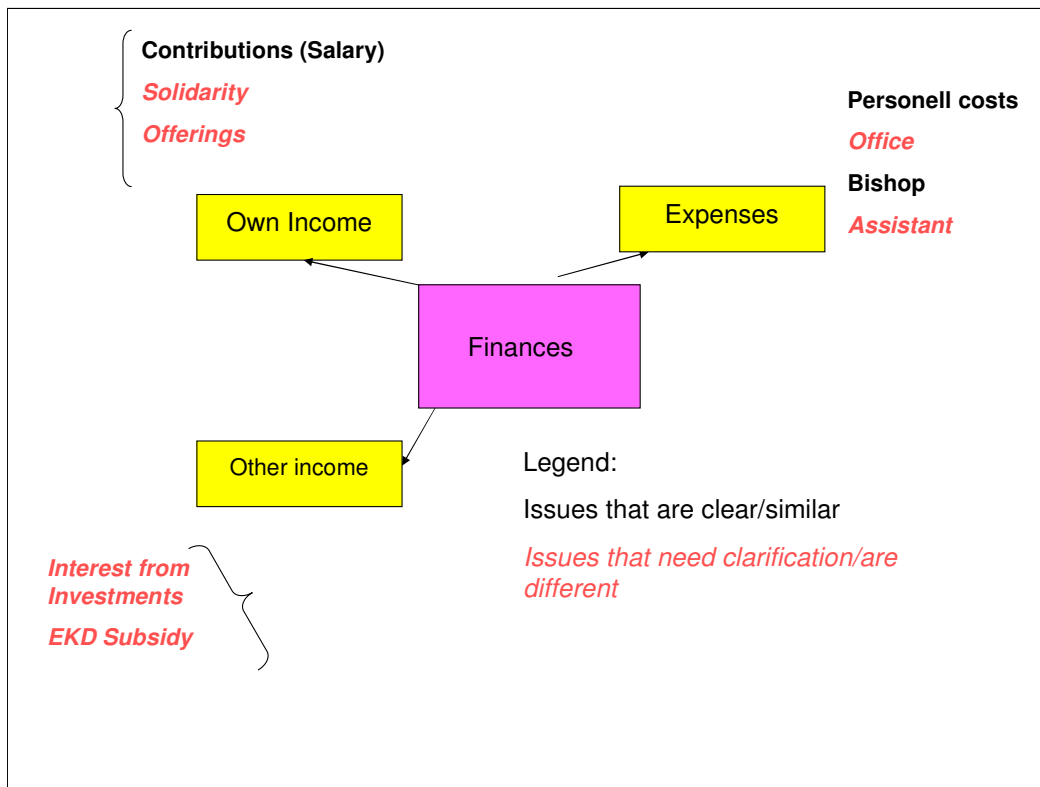
**Synod tasks Church Council to draw up a draft constitution and orders to be agreed upon in 2016 by the Church Councils of the ELCSA Cape and ELCSA (N-T).**

**From 2016 to the 2017 synod, Church Council is to consult widely with the congregations on the principles and constitution. Synods of both Churches, in 2017 to vote on the principles.**

**In 2019 the Churches are to agree on a final constitution and orders, leading to respective dissolution processes."**

A corresponding motion is now put to our synod for discussion and decision.

This motion was adopted by the Cape Synod in May 2015, and will be discussed and put to vote at our synod in October 2015



Explanation to slide show Unity Cape – NST

Black text indicates similarities, red text highlights differences

**Own Income:** Both Churches rely on the contributions from congregations to cover the cost of pastors in the Church.

Difference: NT requests an additional **solidarity contribution**. This is used for funding the office as well as support of congregations that are not in a position to carry the pastor's costs. Cape adds a levy to each congregation in stead.

NT has a substantial number of **prescribed offerings** that are mainly used to fund extra-congregational activities and projects of the Church. Most significant are the mission projects, and Church music events and training.

Cape has only very few prescribed offerings. The bulk are used for the own congregation as it decides.

**Other Income**

Interest from investments – Cape utilises the full interest for it's budget. NT utilises 25% and the rest grows the reserves or the respective funds.

EKD Subsidy – these funds are utilised differently by the two Churches

**Expenses**

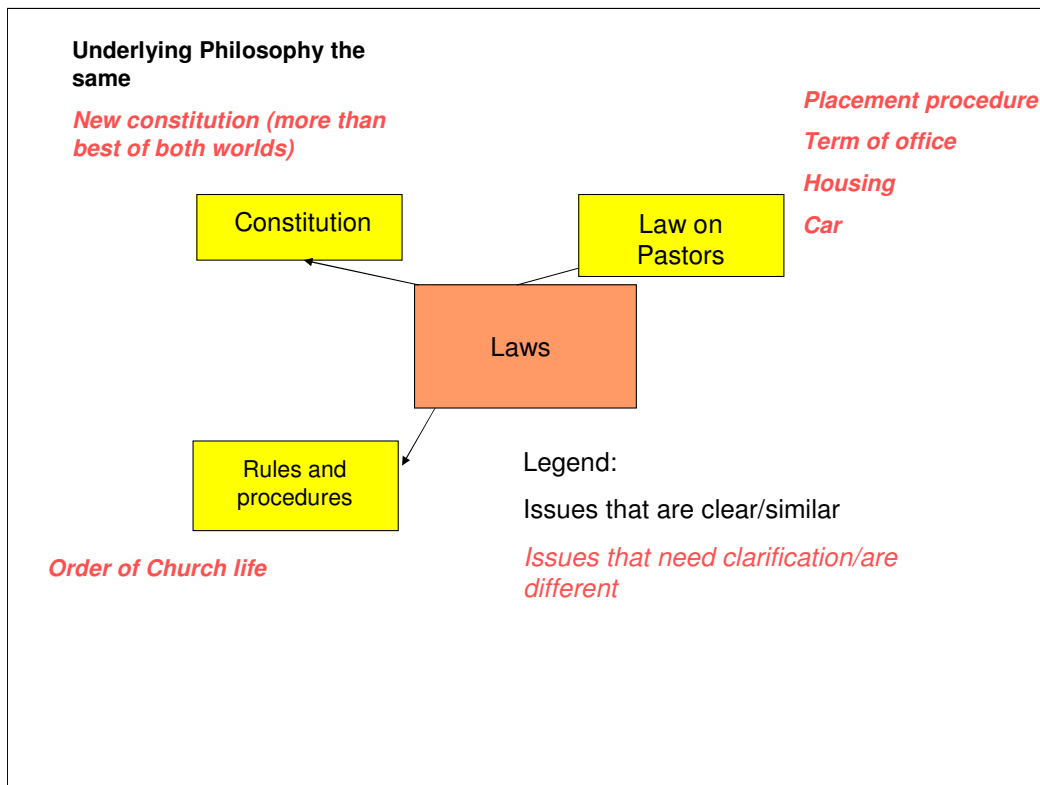
The Personell costs are very similar, since the salary package is the same for both Churches

The cost of the bishop is also very similar

Office is carried by the EKD funding (Cape) and solidarity (NT)

Programm Facilitator: This post does not exist in the Cape. In NT it is carried, together with the cost of bishop, by all congregations, linked to the pastor's post (ie. The same amount for all who have a pastor, higher for those who have more than one pastor, less for those who do not have a full post)

**Conclusion:** Although there are differences between the two financial systems, we are of the opinion that a merger will not become significantly cheaper or more expensive than two separate Churches.



## On Church laws and constitution

### Constitution

The underlying philosophy of both constitutions is the same

A new constitution should not attempt to combine the two, but rather use the best of both

### Law on Pastors

Again the underlying philosophy is the same, but there are some significant differences

The placement procedure

NT: A congregation elects a pastor once. There should not be a change before six years, and the tenure should not exceed twelve years. Extensions beyond that require the agreement between Church Council, Pastor and Congregation.

Cape: The congregation elects the pastor for a fixed term. At the end of that term there can be a re-election. There is no limit to the number of re-elections. A pastor not re-elected can apply elsewhere or becomes unemployed.

### Housing

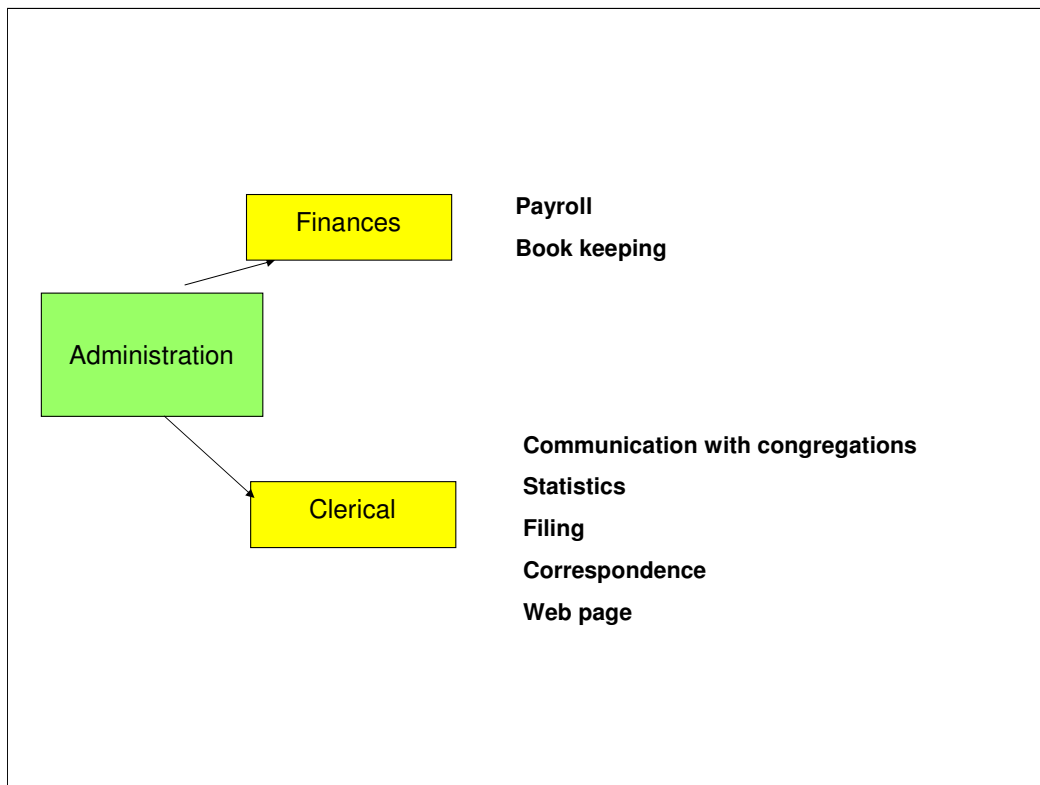
NT: The congregation provides a manse including all running costs, and the pastor has to live there.

Cape: A pastor can opt to stay in an own residence. Terms and conditions are negotiated between pastor and congregational council

### Car

NT: The congregation provides a car for work purposes and carries all the related costs

Cape: Cape Church has no formal vehicle policy included in the orders but does offer a car fund to congregations for the acquisition of a suitable pastoral vehicle.



### **On Administration**

In all areas one larger Church would mean more work than in any one of the smaller ones, but the total amount of work will be less than currently in two churches.

#### **Finances**

It is not a big issue to add all pastors onto one pay roll. The main work is at the beginning of each tax year, incorporating new staff, and changes to staff. In this regard one Church would make total sense

Book keeping: Here too the main thing is to have the systems in place. A merger will result in less work than currently the two churches combined.

#### **Clerical:**

Communication with congregations continues to be a vital function of the Church office

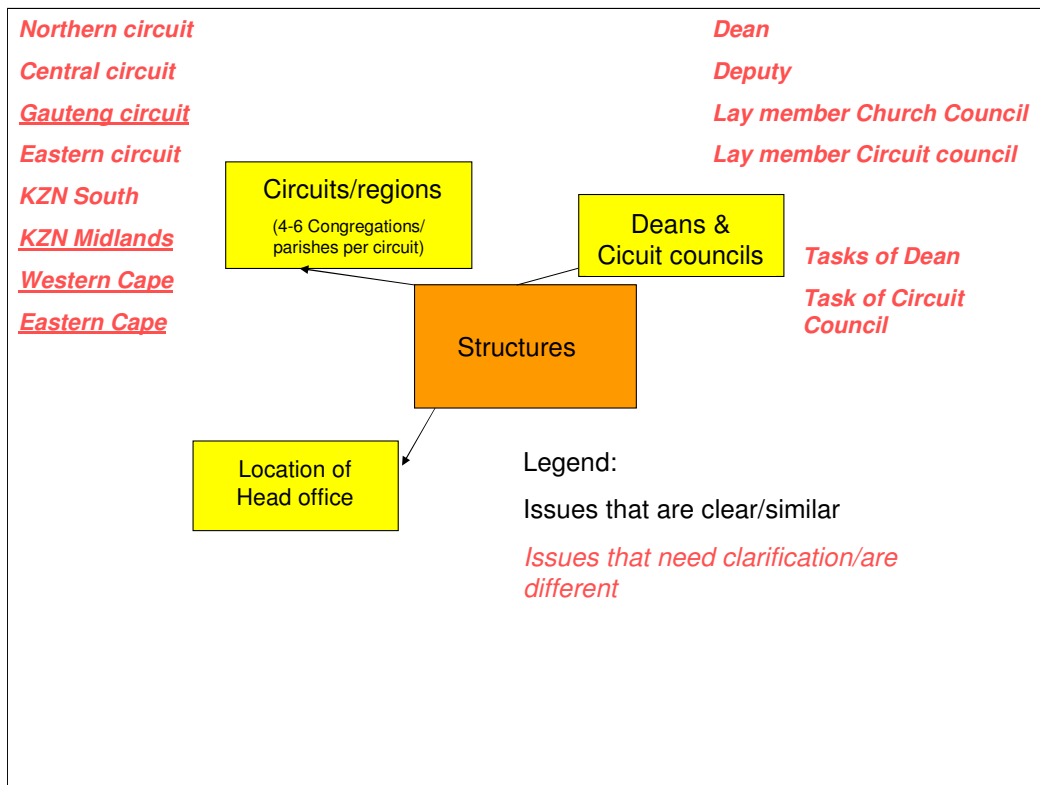
Statistics need to be gathered and processed, as currently is the case, but for a larger group.

Filing: Much of the filing currently is doubled, ie both Churches are filing similar material. A larger Church will not substantially increase the filing compared to eg current situation at ELCSA (N-T)

Correspondence: Here too in quite a few cases the correspondence partners are the same, meaning that the merged Church correspondence will be less than the combination of two Churches

Web page: Having only one web page is less work than maintaining two. The additional work for the larger church will not be significantly more

In summary, from an administrative point of view a merged Church does make sense.



### On Structures

The biggest impact and opportunity of a merger will be on structures. It can be seen as an opportunity to re-thing the way the Church operates, and make use of the experience of the past decades to streamline operations.

#### Circuits/regions

Both Churches have a regional system, but it differs vastly in its functions. The following is currently the suggestion by the two bishops on a structure for a merged Church.

Divide the church into circuits of 4 to 6 congregations, each lead by a circuit council

The regions could be:

Northern circuit (similar to current, excluding Pretoria)

Gauteng North Circuit

Gauteng South Circuit (ie the current central circuit is expanded by Pretoria, but divided into two regions of 5 congregations each)

Eastern Circuit

KZN Midlands circuit

KZN Coastal circuit

Western Cape

Eastern Cape

The main reason for this division is that a very important aspect of Circuits is that of visitations. Currently the Central and Southern Circuits are the largest, and it is a challenge to do all the visitations in a six year cycle. However, experience has shown that longer cycles are not advisable. Therefore a size of up to six congregations means one visitation per year per circuit.

#### Deans and Circuit councils

They consist of the dean and deputy, Lay member of Church Council and Lay member of circuit council.

The dean's tasks can be as currently defined in ELCSA (N-T) constitution. A main function will be leading visitations, and overseeing the church life in the circuit.

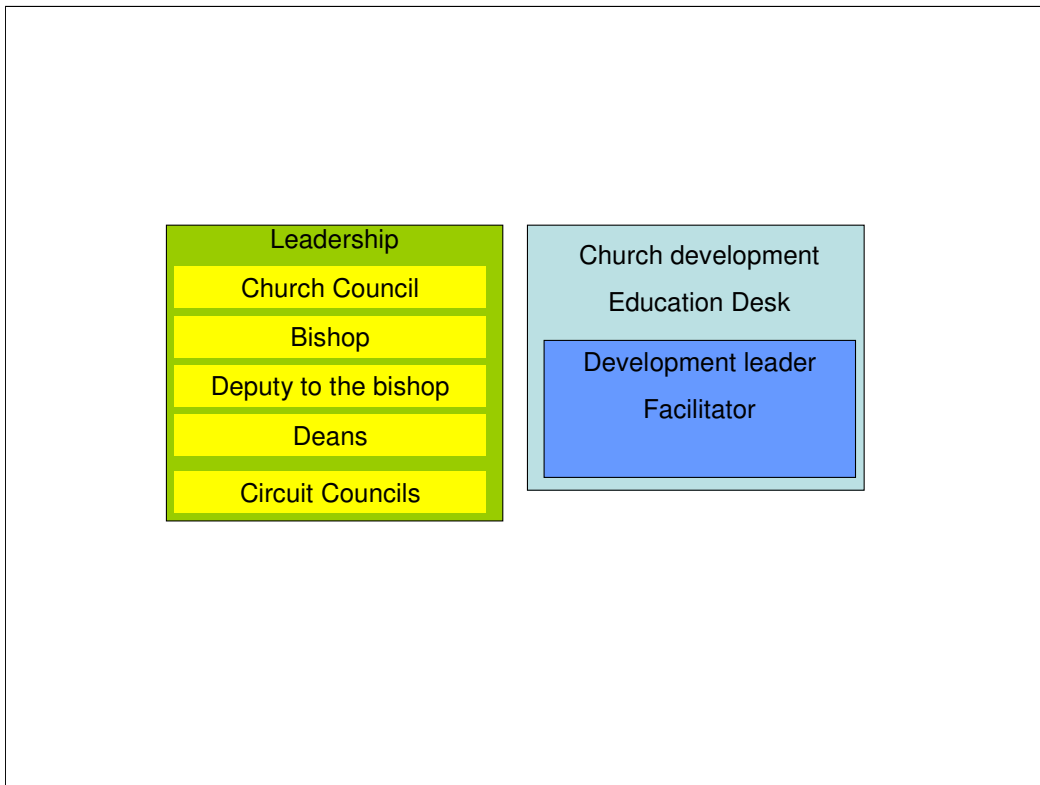
The circuit council, together with the dean, plans circuit conference and conducts visitations.

#### Location of Head Office

Due to the geographical spread of congregations there are four options: Cape Town, Gauteng, Durban or East London. From a travel-economic point of view Gauteng will be the most cost effective, followed by Cape Town. (All regions have good to fairly good flight connections with Gauteng, slightly less with Cape Town)

Since most communication happens via email and telephone, the location does not play a big role in this regard

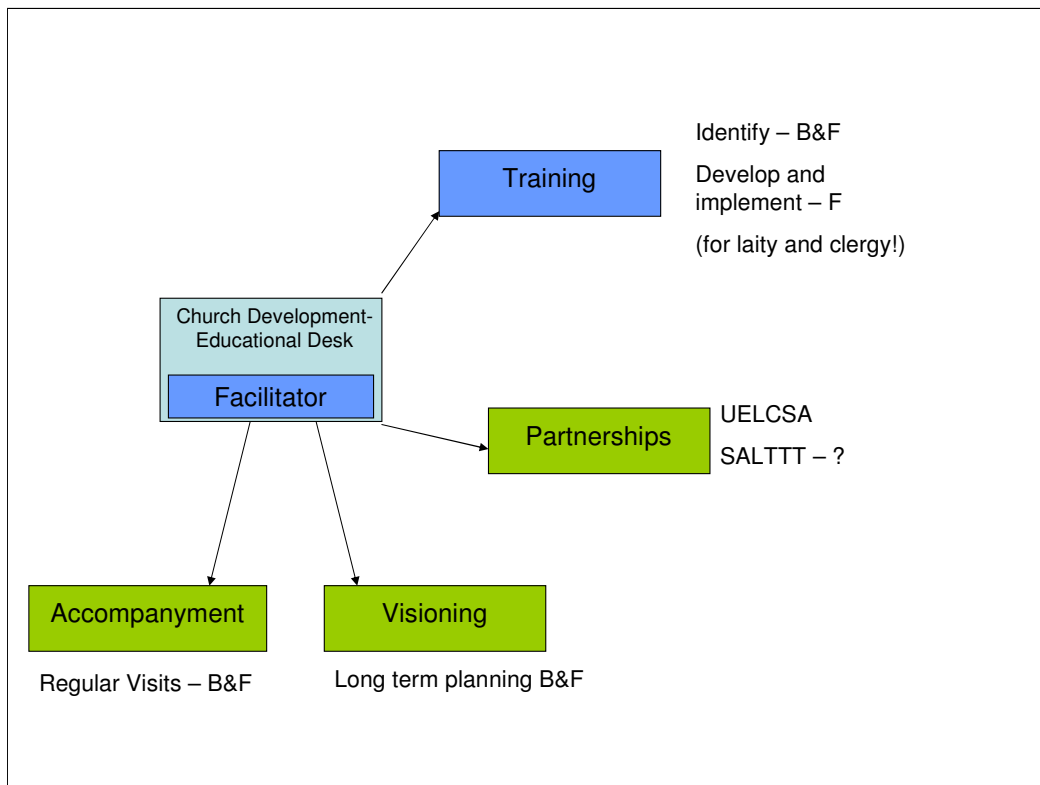




### **On Structures – potential for new developments**

In a merged Church the leadership structure would consist of Church Council, the Bishop as the representative of the Church, the deputy to the bishop and the deans assisted by Circuit councils. It can be considered to make the deputy to the bishop a full time post, but that would depend on the role of the deans in their circuits.

Instead of a second full time post in the leadership, an alternative would be to establish a Church development desk, or Education Desk, with the facilitator as full time post (similar to the Program Facilitator in ELCSA (N-T))



### **Church Development/Educational Desk**

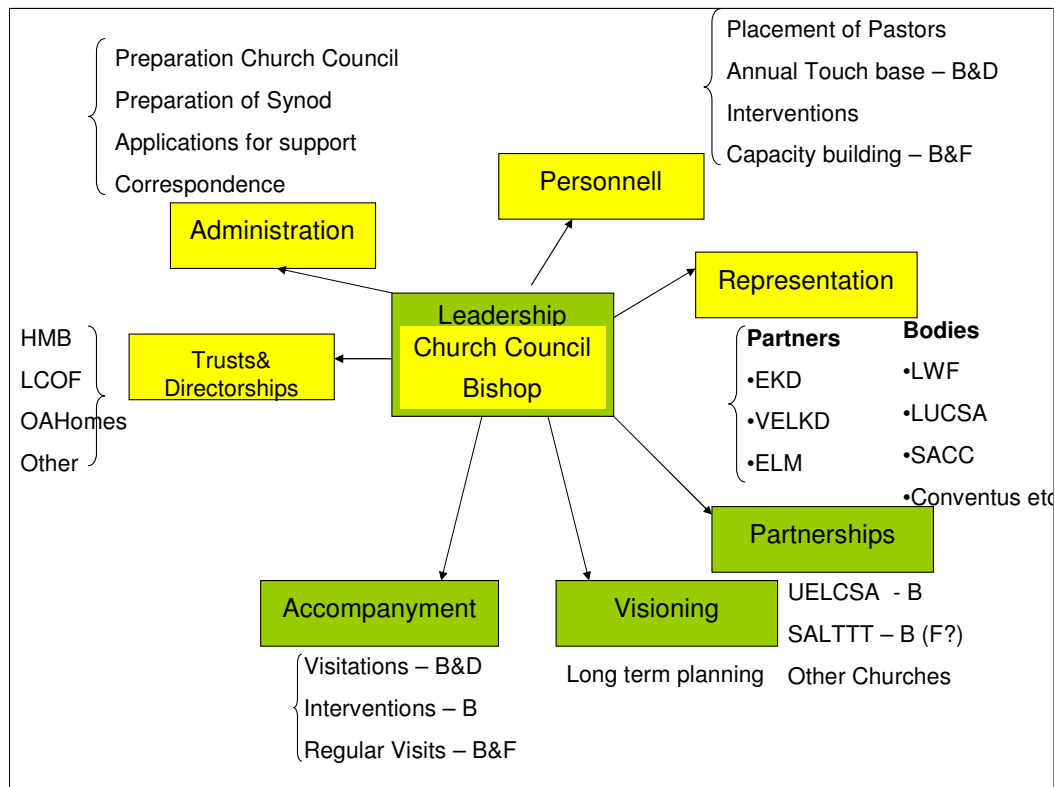
The main task here would be the training portfolio of the church, which means to identify training needs in consultation with the Bishop, and to develop and Implement training plans.

In all areas there must be a good co-operation between the bishop and the facilitator

Accompaniment of congregations through visits (not visitations)

Visioning process in close co-operation with Church Council and the Bishop

Making use of the resources available through various partnerships that the Church has.



This graph shows the various tasks by leadership, which will be most affected by a merger of the two Churches.

*Abbreviations: B=Bishop; D=Deans; F=Facilitator*

Currently all of these happen in both Churches, and both bishops/church Councils/head offices spend similar amounts of time on the various aspects.

A merged Church will not result in a doubling of task for the new leadership. The load would be slightly more than at present for each one separately.

The yellow blocks indicate tasks of a more administrative and representative nature, mainly done by the bishop and head office, with Church Council as overseer.

The green blocks indicate tasks of a church development nature, where the deans, deputy to the bishop and/or facilitator would be more involved. Here too the Church council receives the reports and oversees the process.



This map shows the two Churches and the regions that they occupy in South Africa.