



South African
Christian
Directory

KINGDOM EXPANSION THROUGH INFORMATION: A DIRECTORY FOR US ALL

NEWS RELEASE

Online South African Christian Directory Launched

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FOR RELEASE: May 10, 2018

<http://www.sacd.org.za/>: A comprehensive online platform of Christian engagement in South Africa for connection, communication and collaboration.

The **South African Christian Directory (SACD)** is a newly launched online platform that gives an overview of the Christian landscape in South Africa, covering a wide scope of areas of influence and activities of Christian churches, ministries, organisations, initiatives, networks and movements. There are currently over 3 000 organisations from 35 sectors on the directory, with the number growing daily.

The SACD is the result of an extensive ongoing research initiative, spearheaded by Mergon Foundation and Bible Media, responding to the need expressed by various church and mission networks to develop a platform that gives an overview of the Christian landscape in South Africa. The purpose is to facilitate connection, communication, and collaboration.

“There is a need for a comprehensive, reliable and free online digital database for Christianity in South Africa. That is why Mergon and Bible Media combined forces to build this mobile-friendly, responsive and secure online database. Our prayer is that this would advance the Kingdom and empower the harvest force,” said Nico Simpson, Head of Publications and Media, Bible Media.

The SACD aims to be a national online database that is sustainable and comprehensive, and portrays an overall picture of the Body of Christ in South Africa. It will ideally increase cooperation and networking within the national Church sphere.

“A better understanding of who the Church is, what her activities are and where those activities are based, would help to build platforms for unity and synchronize Kingdom activities for greater impact,” said Skip Krige, SACD project coordinator.

The online hub has multiple layers of information, and has the functionality built-in to harvest statistics that can be used for various trend reports.

The SACD builds on the legacy of Marjorie Froise, who published the SA Christian Handbook from 1986 to 2001 to address the need of exploring the Christian landscape in SA. Her aim was to empower the Church for strategic partnerships and collaboration towards Kingdom expansion. This publication, later with the help of Bible Media, was issued until 2008. The SACD hopes to further this important role, in an online format.

In essence, the SACD envisions Kingdom expansion through information.

“The collective knowledge of the SACD will empower the Body of Christ to connect better, synergise more and strategise effectively to establish the Kingdom of God in all spheres of the South African society through the “whole church” in South Africa,” said Etienne Piek, Regional Manager SA, Mergon Foundation. ***“Strategic funding is only possible if we know the Christian landscape, understand current trends and contexts and know where, how and who to fund. The SACD will make an enormous contribution in this regard, for the wider Body of Christ in South Africa,”*** he added.

The widespread buy-in and excitement from most denominations, Christian NGOs, missions organisations and Christian media platforms underlines the urgent need for a platform like the SACD, and the strategic role that it can play in terms of future effective Kingdom expansion within the SA context.

“The SACD makes Kingdom synergies possible,” said Rev. Moss Ntlha, TEASA General Secretary.

Currently there are a few thousand organisations, ministries, networks, platforms, movements and initiatives on the SACD representing 35 different sectors: Church Denominations/Networks, Missions, Evangelism, Prayer, Justice, Business, Media, Family Life, Youth, Children, Education, Health, Environment, Research and Development etc. A further 50 categories to include Advocacy, Rehabilitation, Violence, Human Trafficking, Relief Response, Strategic Partnerships etc.

The first phase mainly focused on a national and regional scale, while the second phase currently underway will expand the directory to the local level by including congregations and branches at city and town level.

“In order to efficiently work in the Kingdom, Christian organisations need to be able to effectively communicate with one another. By creating an online directory of Christian organisations, SACD has

provided a unique tool for this to happen,” said Jenny Mason, Projects Director, SATS.

The following functions are currently available on the website: a variety of search options, an events calendar, a volunteering section and Pray for Africa. A neutral research platform with national statistics and trends is being developed, as well as a mobile app.

Search options include search by category, topics, name of church or ministry, province, city, town, suburb, or abbreviation. Links between themes and geographical areas are also possible to search e.g. Justice Ministries in South Africa, Teaching and Training Ministries in KwaZulu-Natal, Youth Ministries in Cape Town, Social Ministries in Soweto, BADISA programmes, branches of YWAM or CUM Books etc.

The events calendar lists events per calendar month, while under Volunteers, ministries can provide the needs and time periods for volunteering opportunities.

From a technical angle the SACD is accessible to all and mobile friendly. It allows members to update or edit their own profiles to ensure accuracy. It is secure, no personal information is required and participation is entirely free of charge.

Future functionalities of the SACD include:

- Sub-categories for all the congregations within denominations
- Further sub-divisions of towns within provinces
- Online chat forums within focus areas
- Focused connections between volunteers and volunteering opportunities

The methodology to develop the SACD was based on identifying a few ***“champions”*** for each sector with the assignment to map that particular sector. This was to ensure accuracy and a relational approach.

“We have for a long time asked ourselves in the context of the South African church, ‘where is the church, what are they doing, and where are the gaps that still need to be filled?’ The SACD will go a long way towards answering those questions,” said Peter Tarantal, Director of WENSA.

Visit the South African Christian Directory: <http://www.sacd.org.za/>