

AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Annual General Conference 2009



- Presidential Report -

Will you Go!

YEAR 2010 - VERSE:

He said to them,
"Go into all the world
and preach the good news to all creation."
Mark 16:15 (NIV)

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

"By faith we see the church in Southern Africa working in unity in diversity of language, race, culture and gender, with an agreed evangelical doctrine of salvation whose body life is experienced by all members so that it disciplines and reproduces itself in holiness of living."

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. To plan specific activities and projects where we are working together, in mission and outreach programmes both locally and abroad. This would also include regular sharing of specific prayer requests among our different churches.*
- 2. To conduct periodic reviews (written or verbal) of the membership in order to find their understanding of the evangelical doctrine of salvation. Where there is lack of knowledge or understanding, the leadership in the church will address it.*
- 3. To conduct seminars for our church leaders on the biblical teaching of body life and how it should be operating in our churches.*
- 4. To conduct a course on evangelism and discipleship (verbal or written for all our members) and that each one be given or should find a disciple to minister to (2 Timothy 2:2).*
- 5. To hold seminars on holiness of life and that a system in our churches be adopted to help the membership to be accountable to each other with relevant programmes, i.e., brother/brother, sister/sister programme.*

UMBONO MGOMO WEBANDLA LE-AEC:

"Ngokukholwa sibona ibandla laseMzansi Africa lisebenzisana ebunyeni phezu kokuba lehlukene ngezilimi, ngobuzwe, ngendlela yokuphila nangobulili; labo abavumelene ngesifundiso mayelana nensindiso, futhi-ke abaveza ukuba mzimba munye ngempilo ephilwa yiwo onke amalungu alo ukuze liphumelele ukwenza abafundi nokuzandisa ngokuya liqhubekela ekuphileni impilo engcwele."

IMIGOMO:

- 1. Ukuhlela izinto ezithile eziphawulekayo esinokuzenza ndawonye emsebenzini wokuqhuba ivangeli nokufinyelela ezindaweni ezintsha khona lapha kwelakithi nakwamanye amazwe. Lokhu-ke kuyabandakanya ukwazisana ngezinto eziphathekayo eziyizicelo zomkhuleko emabandleni ethu ahlukeneyo, lokho kwenziwe njalo ngezikhathi ezimisiweyo.*
- 2. Ukuhlela izivivinyo eziyakwenziwa ngezikhathi ezithile ngamalungu amabandla (zibhalwe phansi noma kuxoxwe ngomlomo) ukuze kubonakale ukuthi basiqonda*

kangakanani isifundiso sokusindiswa esiphilayo ngokwevangeli. Lapho kutholakala khona ukuthi kukhona ukungazi noma ukungaqondi ngokufaneleyo abaholi bayakuyimela ngezinyawo leyondaba.

3. *Ukuhlela izikhungo zokufundisa abaholi bamabandla ethu mayelana nokufundiswa yiBhayibheli mayelana nempilo yoMzimba (oyiBandla) nokuthi imelwe iphilwe kanjani emabandleni ethu.*
4. *Ukufundisa izifundo ngokuhambisa ivangeli ngokwenza abafundi (kubhalwe phansi noma kukhulunywe ngomlomo kunikezwa amalungu amabandla ethu) nokuthi lowo nalowo athole umfundi othile azakumelekelela (2 Thim. 2:2).*
5. *Ukuhlela izifundo mayelana nempilo yobungcwele; kube khona indlela eyenziwa ngamabandla ethu ukulekelela amalungu ukuba azi ukuthi awaziphileli-nje, kumelwe azidalule, eziveza ethembekile yilowo nalowo komunye ngezinhlelo ezithile ezifaneleyo ezenziwayo, okusho ukuthi owesilisa komunye wesilisa, nowesifazane komunye wesifazane.*

➤ **APPRECIATION –**

The team spirit that I have witnessed this year from the Board, committees, regions, circuits, pastoral leadership, active and semi active membership, local churches, individuals, young and matured, prayer partners other saints from other denominations, has been indescribable.

Thank you to all of you for your love, prayers, support and encouragement. I have been humbled by the undeserved respect that I have been afforded. I have sensed the body life as God reminds me about different people from time to time who are in the Africa Evangelical Church. It could be that young person by the name of Thembi Hadebe from Mlazi N730, Lindelwa Tshwele from uMthatha, or that child Senelisiwe Mkhize from eSikhawini. It could be Bongani and Phumlile who just got married, the three pastors who were ordained last year, or widows and widowers in our churches, the retirees (like Revd TM Gambushe) and the aged who laboured for many years and now pray for us. Our business people and academia. It could be that young person who gave me water when I visited Dobsonville, the great vision of that small church at KwaMabibi, the accomplishment of Nkamanzi local church or the challenging vision of Matsapha local church. Praying for that young pastor and wondering whether he will last in the preaching of the true gospel. I really believe that is why the Lord Jesus when faced with mammoth task of ministry said in John 4:34. *“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work”,* rather than eating.

Mr LT Ndlovu from eSikhawini made himself available to travel with me in most of my short visits sacrificing his vehicle and time to help me focus on some of the things that I needed to fulfil for the glory of the Lord. I deeply appreciate his commitment to serve, for the sake of the cross. My local church that went all the way to uplift the image of AEC when I felt like taking a lower profile in certain situations. My editorial team for their support and encouragement when words become too many and thought clouded. I, again salute you all!

➤ GRIEVED BUT NOT CRUSHED –

We are here just for a season and then we take our flight to our eternal home in glory. Some of our loved ones departed unexpectedly to be with the Lord. Our condolences go to the families, relatives, friends and the church at large. May I thank all the saints who became the agents of comfort to the bereaved in all our regions. Some took time to assist in those homes and situations, sacrificing their resources. You stood in silence with dignity alongside those who were bereaved. Heaven is just next door to all Christians. Yes, it is just like a twinkling of an eye. *“The LORD kills and restores to life; he sends people to the world of the dead and brings them back again.”* 1 Sam. 2:6.

Mrs J Dube the wife of Mr J Dube of Nkamanzi, Swaziland left us before we could wake up on the last day to close our conference last year at Soshanguve. We were reminded that we are all waiting at the hall way for our departure! We will ever remember that sad moment on the last day of the conference. We thank the Lord for His goodness that He demonstrated to the Dubes and the Swaziland delegates.

The life of Pastor Johannes Moloi from Daveyton was jointly celebrated for the last time on 17 January 2009. He was also present at Soshanguve and lived just eight days after the conference. Again, we were reminded that our stakes should be shallow as our departure is always imminent.

Revd G Mfeka’s wife, Mrs Thokozile Mfeka, left us on 19 February 2009. We are so grateful for many leaders who came to be with this leader during the time of grief. Revd Dr CPM Gumede, our former AEC President, brought words of comfort and encouragement to Mzingeli on the day and the deputy president Revd T Dlamini ministered in preaching.

Pastor Derrick Maduna of Swaziland was called home on 7 June 2009. It was a great shock and hard to believe that such a dynamic leader was called home in his prime ministry. That visionary, active leader and soul winner is sorely missed by all of us.

Mr Eric Ngubane of KZN who was our active Board Member from 1969 to 1979 during Revd EJ Mfeka’s presidency was laid to rest on 15 August 2009. Ngubane worked with excellence and commitment for many years as Chief M Buthelezi’s personal secretary during the days of KwaZulu Government. Revd AM Zondo brought a crisp message to a very distinguished audience. We will all sorely miss that solid gift to the church.

Mrs Ndwandwe, the mother of Revd VS Ndwandwe was laid to rest on 26 September 2009 at eShowe. Although many leaders were unable to attend the funeral due to prior commitments like funerals, meetings and weddings, the support that they offered is greatly appreciated. We pray that the bereaved family may find solace in knowing that God is the father of all comfort.

➤ **ARRIVALS:**

We saw God blessing us in our different regions with baby boys and girls. We thank God for such gifts of life. We welcome them in our unkindly and rugged world. We pray that God's protection will ever surround them for the rest of their sojourn. They are precious, may the mothers and fathers of these lovely ones be reminded of God's grace in their lives.

We are also thankful to God for allowing us this year to welcome in the church all our lovely brides and grooms. May all those who will celebrate their anniversaries looking back to 2009 be mindful of many unique things that happened this year. It could be political, economic, religious or social impetus that marked the history of our time. May they come with charm and sweet aroma in our local settings and be a blessing to many. We welcome all the 2009 weds with open hands. Join the team gracefully.

May I interject here by saying in attending some funerals and weddings, I have observed that we are losing the serenity and the solemnity of such services by becoming too casual and not present the dignity in gracing such services. Also, some programmes co-opt things that we can do without and bring in a lot of unwanted items which may be interpreted otherwise. These occasions expose AEC to many other denominations and public. Let us portray who we are as a church and not to be swamped by the occasion. Our "*God first*" motto means that we should let God be exalted in all things we do with dignity.

➤ **SOARING HIGHER:**

We acknowledge those who were blessed in a special way during the year. Some have finished their high school education, en route to tertiary; others have finished their rigorous study and research work in their higher education and skilling in technical fields. We also take note of those who got promotions to higher positions in places of employment. Some of you got those titles that tickle some before or after their names, it could be Mrs, Mother, Honourable, Advocate, Doctor, Professor etc. I am taking note of those young people who are studying in rare fields like astronomy, meteorology and all other 'ologies'. Just plough through and help our suffering communities.

➤ **WOMEN; MEN; YOUTH & CHILDREN'S WORK -**

The Women Denominational Chairperson visited the regional fellowship meetings and shared her message of encouragement which was centered on the vision of AEC in general and the objectives of the Women Fellowship in particular. She encouraged women who are in committees at local and circuit level to serve with diligence in whatever portfolio. The structure has planned to sell corporate items and this would serve two purposes firstly making our church known and secondly for fundraising. I would urge you to support this venture. The Women Denominational Committee has been very busy this year and excelling in their giving, hand work, new ideas and grasping the corporate vision. The way they do things stretch our faith and pride in them.

The Men's Fellowship Committee also had new incentives and new ideas that have been encouraging to see. Forward Men! I will not say much about Youth and Sunday School as it was not easy to get their reports so that I could share with you

but they are the majority. As I said last year I do repeat, “Let us invest on people for eternity.” The children and young people should emulate us and assimilate the core values of AEC grounded in the Bible.

- HERE AND THERE

YEAR OPENER –

➤ **January 24 – KwaMsane Local Church - Mtuba – KZN**

I was honoured to grace the thanksgiving service for Revd & Mrs S Gumede of Mtubatuba, which was organized by the local church. Revd Gumede graced the meeting with his children and relatives. This vibrant local church reflected on the goodness of the Lord who helped them grow under the leadership of this servant for many years. The generosity of the members and the respect they showed toward their leader was just superb.

It was encouraging to witness and hear of God's faithfulness in Gumedes' life and how the KwaMsane church grew from the early humble beginning. I also heard how men were saved and also joined the church through prayer. I was promised as I requested a written documentation of that ministry. Pray for the new leadership that came and for the Gumedes as they continue to serve in another capacity in the vineyard of the Master.

➤ **February 13 – 15 BOARD MEETING – Camp Jonathan - KZN**

This was another planning opportunity for the Board and we were so thankful to God who gave us shared vision. When evaluating the ministry that God has given us, it was exciting to look into future prospects as we endeavour to do good to everyone, especially to the household of faith. The unusual thing that happened during this meeting was that we finished early before dinner. We thus relaxed and retired early for bed unlike during other times where the business finishes after midnight. Thank you for praying for this team. They are a great team indeed. I am personally privileged to be given such a team.

FEBRUARY 15 – N730 UMLAZI LOCAL CHURCH – KZN (STOPOVER)

God gave me an opportunity to visit Revd & Mrs BT Chonco on a Sunday after the Board meeting. This local church has some of the senior members who were pastured by our first president of AEC Revd EJ Mfeka at Umlazi in Durban. When I arrived, I was amazed to see some with cameras, others tasked to lead me to the church after being directed where to park my car. There was a spirit of excitement in the congregation. It was a refreshing mood after a hectic board meeting to be graduated to a stage of spiritual fulfilment and joy. The drapery that has become the **'THING'** these days was stunning for that special occasion. Our ladies can improvise any space and change it to be something most desirable. We are proud of you for your creativity, sense of art and beauty. Seeing Dr S Shabalala, one of the stalwarts of the AEC of the 60s who is a blessing to that church in many ways, seeing the active Mntanenkosi M Tembe and the team of young adults, youth, children who learn through observation being cheerful on the day was a blessing.

Mrs H Chonco, somehow forgot that she was not feeling well during those days. She was just full of enthusiasm and inspiration. She opened her home to whosoever

after service for a complex mouth-watering lunch which one could tell that some people had slept in the morning preparing the food.

MARCH 7 – 8 WEST RAND CIRCUIT- GAUTENG

This was a glorious day to Zola Congregation as they honoured our resilient leaders the Revd & Mrs KV Mbuwako. The Gauteng regional chairman Revd K Riba, and many leaders from that region saw it fit to be part of the festivities. Many people from other churches who worked with the Mavimbelas in the past graced the function.

The programme took most of the day. I was confused when one young lady came to me on stage and whispered, *“Pardon my question Mr President, Are you diabetic?”* I could tell that she was neither a doctor nor a nurse. After rethinking her question, I answered, ‘No’. Little did I know that she was sensitive to the fact that the programme was getting a bit long and I could collapse if I did not have something to eat in time.

It was then that I learnt the importance of having a programme that caters for the diabetic. I hope you all hear this. When you design your programme, have the diabetic in mind.

MARCH 8 – DOBSONVILLE LOCAL CHURCH - GAUTENG

The vibrancy of this congregation brought great expectations when we parked our car and were greeted by the pastor Revd E Hlongwane and his wife maMokoena. Everything was fast paced, the greetings, the debriefing, the site viewing, the leadership, the youth, the women’s section, the children’s group, the musicians and the spirit of happiness that filled the place. They have an expression that says, *“We love you, we love you, we love you”*.

They shared their great vision with me, and I was so delighted to meet with people of vision. We later had meals at the home of the Congwanes with the leadership. I was warned not to leave too soon from that home, because the leadership would be asked to leave also and not enjoy many good things that we enjoyed that afternoon.

We finally drove through Jabavu (where the Ratholos pastor) and Mofolo (where the Bodibes pastor) local churches just to see their location with the help of Mr D Nhlabathi. My spirit was lifted very high that afternoon. But at night I was tormented when I visualized our most populous city in Africa, Soweto with about two million people and yet AEC has only three church buildings. May I ask, **Will you go?**

MARCH 29 – ZIBUNGU LOCAL CHURCH – EASTERN CAPE

This was an unforgettable day at Zibungu, Nkanga. The day started with a drizzling heavy fog at Mthatha where we spent a night and early Sunday morning Revd MS Kunju, the Eastern Cape Chairman with Mr Ndibongo from Lutubeni came and picked us up by their cars since our small car could not take the heavy gravel road through Nkanga and then Zibungu. Thank you for that wisdom!

The occasion was the declaration of Zibungu as a circuit, which was part of Nkanga for many years. The brethren were very excited for the occasion and you could see joy and happiness everywhere. The Eastern Cape leadership was all in attendance. Mrs Kiji and Mrs Magubeni who lost their husbands during the course of ministry recently were also present. The Chairman conducted that unique service in a dignified manner, which I appreciated. Pastor G Nkosibomvu has been tasked to lead that work for now.

The Lord was so gracious in blessing us with His word and many people were challenged to put their life pure before the Lord. Pray for the growth of that circuit.

APRIL 18 – OFFICIAL OPENING OF NKAMANZI LOCAL CHURCH - SWAZILAND

God gives us glorious days in our life that are hard to forget. Nkamanzi local church in Swaziland was filled with joyful aroma of praise and awe as we reflected on the goodness of God in helping that membership to complete a beautiful building for worship.

When the programme is mastered by Revd Dr CPM Gumede and Babe MTE Mtetwa you just cannot help it but feel the chill at your back for the seriousness and the dignity expected as the programme gently unfolds.

The unforgettable happening was to march around the building three times singing a hymn of praise, unveiling the plaque, cutting the ribbon, entering the worship area with a hymn of thanksgiving. It was such great joy to witness the presence of Prince Masitsela from Matshapha, MP Make Nonhlanhla Dlamini, and to listen to Babe Fonono Dube unwinding the history of South Africa General Mission. He informed us about the first missionary exploit to Swaziland, weaving the linkage of Northern Zululand and Swaziland. This was the greatest day ever celebrated.

APRIL 19 – MATSAPHA LOCAL CHURCH - SWAZILAND

I was privileged to fellowship at Matsapha AEC, the day after Nkamanzi experience. Matsapha is the home church of Revd Tsela and laMthupha. The Swazi Gospel Singers performed as always, and Revd CPM Gumedze my predecessor was also in attendance. I was so encouraged to see the progress and the growth of that historical local church. I was amazed to see the embryo of their vision as they develop their property.

Pray for that work as they need courage to fully realise their vision. While I was there, I saw the AEC leadership impacted with vision of growth, if only we could keep our unity and reach out with passionate hearts to the lost. I am happy to be part of the team.

➤ MAY 7 - 10 WORKERS' SEMINAR – SKOGHEIM CONFERENCE CENTRE.

This year we looked at the challenge of Missions. As you may know that we came to being because of missions. It was because of the faithfulness of those who were commissioned to go that we are where we are today. It was therefore fitting for the pastoral leadership to look at this subject and see what the Lord has for us in our century.

We were thankful to have Dr G Mnisi, the Principal of Union Bible Institute leading us in what our mission is as a church. We are here these days reflecting on what

started then and as a family we would like to commit ourselves to this great task of evangelization of the world.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for the entire pastoral staff to be present in these meetings because of their hectic schedules. I would like to commend local churches for investing in their leadership by allowing them to attend this annual event. They pay for their accommodation and boarding as well as travelling expenses. To those local churches who have not caught the vision and the value of these seminars, may I encourage you to be involved in 2010, come on board!

The dates for the **2010 Seminar** are **May 06 – 09** and the registration will be about **R1595 per couple and R725 for single** sharing. Please start planning to be there and put these dates on your diary, cell phone or year planner.

➤ **May 10 Port Shepstone Local Church – Murchison - KZN**

I visited Murchison AEC branch or their alias name Mannaseh where Revd & Mrs A Mashiyane pastor the vibrant congregation. They sing as if they are in the recording studio. I was warmly welcomed by the leadership of that church on a beautiful morning.

The young people were very lively that morning. To my great surprise I discovered that Revd & Mrs Mashiyane allowed their daughter to get married to a young man from another denomination. After they were married this Mashiyane couple allowed their daughter to entice her husband back to AEC and they are both actively involved in the church.

They shared with me the vision of the development of their property which is well placed in that community. Pray for the fulfilment of their vision and goals in that area.

MAY 30 – MSELENI CIRCUIT - MABIBI LOCAL CHURCH

This was my first home local church where I was born, saved and preached for the first time. My last visit to this local church was 36 years ago. The warmness, joyfulness, fellowship, civility, singing and thoughtfulness was unbelievable. The Lord is using Revd & Mrs MS Phoseka in a unique way in that part of the country. The church building is small with four windows, that is where I did my early schooling up to Standard Four. The church building is more than 70 years old. The pastor's house is being refurbished. The size of the church building does not fit the current intake in that area.

May our good Lord allow that visionary church to accomplish great things. There were young and matured in the congregation. To my great surprise there were three cars parked in the yard, a public address system, a keyboard which was played perfectly and professionally. I was moved and thanked the Lord when I saw pensioners giving joyfully. I do believe great things are around the corner for those good people at Mabibi local Church. Twelve were baptized on 1 November 2009 in a very memorable service. We all join in welcoming those new members of the church. Thank you for your love, your support, your prayers and gifts.

JULY 24 – 26 DENOMINATION'S PLANNING MEETING – ESTON - KZN

This meeting took place again at Camp Jonathan in Eston, KZN. Most of what took place at this conference was created and submitted to God who approves our plans. The leadership representing all structures were present with few who apologized

and some were just not there. It was encouraging to see the Women, Youth, Sunday School and Men teams dedicating their time to plan and pray together. It is a privilege and honour to work with you ladies and gentlemen.

Some of the structures slept after midnight for the two consecutive nights. May I say to them, the Lord never forgets our labour. In due time we will reap. Thank you for paying that penalty of leadership so that we may enjoy blessings in this conference.

NOVEMBER 29 – DUMISA CIRCUIT - KZN

Dumisa is one of our old missionary hill that dates back before UBI. The training of pastors was the vision of Revd Fred Suter, who was born on 10 May 1865. In 1924 he began what was to be perhaps most vital of all his missionary work – Dumisa Bible School. This is where Revd Nicholas Bhengu studied in 1934 – 1936.

Revd & Mrs JM Ntuli heads that circuit. I was privileged to visit them on the last morning of their quarterly meetings. The saints were full of joy when we connected with them. Their enthusiasm, respect, humility and decorum captivated me. I was humbled by their generosity and appreciation. The day was covered with thick fog and we could hardly see 50 meters away hence was unable to see the mission house which burnt down.

Some of their prayer requests are: for the availability of workers, for the completion of the church buildings at KwaBombo and Mkhomazi. Pray for that great work as I told them that they were like cedars of Lebanon. (Ps 92:12-15) The great cedars in the like of Bhengu, Revd EME Mbonambi and Revd WTA Xaba who were once the citizens of that community.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

I observed that all regional conferences had a spirit of joy and happiness. All regions had themes for their conferences. All regions especially during the Bible study plenary session gave their speakers all the time they needed to empty their expository messages without looking at their watches. In two regions, lunchtime was anytime in the afternoon. Hmm! Woe to the diabetic individuals!

1. KWAZULU-NATAL – 04 JULY 2009.

It was another conference of joy and excitement at East Rand School of Art in Benoni. My day was filled with encounter with happy people. The Bible Study was led by Revd AM Zondo who encouraged, taught, built and assured the saints to live through suffering as their Conference theme was “*Izinhlupheko zolungileyo*”.

He weaved the ability and hope that the Lord gives in times of suffering. In essence the suffering of the saints is a great blessing. The pressure of suffering gets intense when we compare ourselves with others not knowing that God has a purpose. I was encouraged to see a growing number of young adults in the conference. May our good Lord bless you all as you mature in Christ.

In the evening Pastor L Khumalo was also grounding the saints in the word and encouraging them not to compromise. Pastor Khumalo has just come back from

Israel and Egypt together with Rev JH Gumede. Just rub yourselves close to them as they are still fresh in their experience. May I encourage those who can afford time off, to take the trip in your lifetime. Your understanding of the Bible will be rekindled. Your faith, knowledge and commitment will never be the same again.

2. GAUTENG – SATURDAY – 4 JULY 2009

The Gauteng moved their conference back to July and they met at Stoney Ridge in Hekpoort. My observation was that the attendance was far better than what it was last year. The only thing that disturbed them were funerals in Mamelodi and Temba. Some of the saints came late at the conference because they had to attend one or two or all three funerals. I salute that desire to be with the bereaved in such delicate moments in life. I also observed that their attendance was boosted by more men and they were excited to be there. Their spirits were very high and I did not know why. But talk about the Chairman, Revd K Riba, Revd LA Rahlogo, Baba Msibi, Mr D Nhlabathi and all of them. Observing them was like seating in an auditorium where a world-renowned orchestra performs and appreciate the touch of all notes, the aroma of the occasion and spirit of trying to reach out to something there! Pastor J Shoba gave a challenging Bible Study on leadership.

Due to their conference coinciding with the KZN Regional Conference, I could not attend their evening service. It was so warm to be with them for about seven hours.

3. EASTERN CAPE – 10-11 JULY 2009.

Eastern Cape has become a very dynamic region. Their conference was vibrant and also full of tangible joy. I was humbled by many things that I saw, and what they did. It is difficult or unethical for me to mention those things in public domain. But that jubilancy on the day! Wow! Revd WTA Xaba, their Bible Study speaker, was greatly used of God when he unpacked the subject of God's call, "*our response and His commissioning us to go*". Our eyes were really bathed in tears. We saw God touching hearts of women and men to answer the perpetual call in their lives to go and stand in the gap. May I also whisper these words to you; **"Will you go!"**

I was encouraged to see a number of very happy active young people. I felt like snatching them away for a short visit to other three regions. They were really sweet. Young people from the Eastern Cape, you are great! We all love you!

I thank God for the leadership of Revd MS Kunju, his executive and structures of other committees for the co-operation that I witnessed. They are people with purpose and faith. That is what we need in our Christian lives. Thank you again for hosting this unique conference this year. May our good Lord enrich you with all gifts needed in the body of Christ.

4. SWAZILAND – 28 - 30 AUGUST 2009.

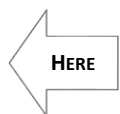
I ended my regional conference visits with Swaziland as they hold theirs in August. When one has to cross the border, there are extra preparations one has to consider. You wonder when you approach the border about the courtesy of the officials, unexpected problem that you might encounter and other things. H1N1 outbreak made Swaziland to come up with other forms to fill and completing two forms became tedious to many people at the border gate.

I was honoured again to be met by the Vice President Revd TM Dlamini when I arrived, he escorted me to where I was going to stay and then the following morning he escorted me to Mbuluzi where I met the leadership in the morning. To my surprise Revd WTA Xaba was the speaker and I requested him to compile a summary of all three regional conferences which he attended in 2009. He only missed the Gauteng conference.

Swaziland is still privileged to hold their conference for the whole week. Their theme 'Developing Maturing Christians' was relevant to our situation of many emerging groups with new teaching and skewed presentation of the gospel.

I witnessed the greatest the graduation of one preaching point to a kwaDeda local church from Mankayane circuit. They came by bus about 100 of them and were formally introduced to a regional conference which was an excellent procedure of initiation to a wider AEC membership.

Let us pray for those new members who would like to mature in AEC. Pray for our pastors to preach exegetical messages so that our membership would mature. The harvest truly is ripe and the workers are few. I spent my Sunday afternoon visiting our former president Revd CPM Gumede who missed the conference because of Uganda engagement. On the following morning, we visited Mahwalala local church to see the building project that they have embarked upon. It was encouraging to see the beautiful solid walls waiting for the roof. Pray that the Lord would provide the roofs that a number of our local churches are desperately in need of.



OUR HORIZONTAL INVOLVEMENT

UNION BIBLE INSTITUTE –

We are thankful for your prayers for this institution of Higher Education. This year we had six students from AEC. You may visit UBI on their web page on: www.ubi-edu.co.za. We are grateful to God for Dr G Mnisi's leadership and the contribution from different lecturers and students who have made it possible for the other year to go to history with joy.

The Council and the Board leadership saw many new initiatives on campus. The monthly giving to the school has gone up but many of our AEC churches are not involved as yet. We have benefited a lot from this institution and may I encourage you to have a yearly budget for the school. We praise God for those who are already doing that.

Graduation was again a glorious day for 13 students who graduated. We had one from AEC by the name of Sikhumbuzo Mkhathshwa from Katlehong. Pray that those who graduated might be used of God in the areas of their calling. When they presented their motto, we did sense the texture of their knowledge of the Word. We are thankful to God for such product from this institution.

It was sadly reported to me that the attendance on the Alumni Conference by the AEC pastorate was not encouraging. Please dear alumni, you grow through sharing, connecting, interacting and fellowshiping with others who are walking

the same road in other terrain of life with same goal. Make 2011 conference very exciting by your attendance.

BIBLE SOCIETY –

I would like to applaud the KZN who gave generously during this financial year so that Bible Society could carry on with their mission of providing the affordable Bibles for everyone in their own language and in suitable formats so that all may experience the life-giving message of the Word. The Bible Society is always moved when they see people. They would like to see a person behind each Bible. Plans to invade our visiting guests during the World Cup in 2010 are under way. Your contribution will go many kilometres across our globe.

Bible Society is now operating as a section 21 company; as such we as Africa Evangelical Church are members of that company. We should be represented in all the regional committees where the Bible Society has offices e.g., Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal (North); KwaZulu-Natal (South) Transkei and Swaziland. Our giving per year should be budgeted as members.

I am happy to report that the translation of Zulu Bible from the original languages into modern dynamic isiZulu is on. I have seen and read through some of the books that are going through the first phase of translation, proof reading and debating on usage of some of the terms and style. It will be a good translation for isiZulu speakers.

HIV & AIDS –

We are thankful to SIM who sponsored a *'Today for Tomorrow'* training workshop on 15-21 September 2009 near Sodwana Bay in KZN. This workshop was attended by a number of our AEC leaders from Swaziland and KwaZulu-Natal, ECSA and other representatives including Khulisa umntfwana of the Swaziland Queen Mother's initiative. Mrs ET Mndzebele and Revd MJ Tembe coordinated on our denomination side.

All those who attended this workshop were provided with tools to enable them to be trainers. Already some have taken initiative in training others since the training. While the scourge is a killer with intention of wiping out generations the merit of the programme is that it is designed to focus on children. May I highlight that the first block was for Swaziland and KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng and Eastern Cape will follow soon. Our involvement in our communities do contribute to the global programme.

◆ CONFERENCE CENTRE

Like it or not, the Lord is still teaching us something. The problem that might be delaying this project might be us. Seemingly we are not yet where we should be. This could be in our desire to be ONE and yet we are not fully committed to one goal. The Lord is saying to us, *'work hard but wait. Invest your money but for now, wait!'* Like David of old who wanted to build the temple for the Lord of Hosts, but the Lord said to him, collect the building material but don't build. For us is to collect the building material, but the actual building of the centre is for the Lord. Who knows, may be the building is not for now, and perhaps not us. David was faithful in collecting the material and surrendered it to the Lord who allowed

Solomon to utilize the material. Let us be faithful in collecting the material and give it to the Lord.

◆ 2010 ELECTION YEAR

May I remind all the leadership and all structures that we will elect the new leadership before the end of June 2010 from the local church structures (committees, Sunday school, youth, ladies and men inclusive) circuit committees and regional leadership. Our financial year ends at the end of June. May we also remind all the treasurers to have their financial reports ready by the first week of July so that when the handover is done in July, everything will be transparent to every member. To those who will be elected may they run with the baton of the vision of AEC to greater heights.

The present denominational leadership will not change until the AGCC of 2010 where those who will be elected during all our Regional Conferences will be phased in and the handover will follow thereafter.

This must be one of our prayer items for the year 2010. We need leadership of integrity and excellence. We just cannot revert back to mediocre leadership style now. It is 'waya waya'!

◆ CLERGY APPRECIATION DAY - OCTOBER 11 2009

May I say thank you to all brethren who remembered this day for the first time in the AEC. Some pastors did inform me how it went in their local assemblies. We were honoured to be with the Xaba family on the day and he brought a very helpful message on DEATH. It was a strange subject on this day but we will never forget what was said about this defeated enemy.

I wanted to be away from my own local church on this day to expose them to the fact that they also forget notable announcements. I was taken by surprise when the Women's group visited me on 10 October just to pay tribute to God for having me in their midst. They even quoted that I said it on page 12 of 2008 President's Report. I was humbled when they said all nice words that you can think about and they left a confidential humbling gift to help me in the ministry.

My brief survey showed me that most of the pastors did not know about it and as a result the members also did not know about it. Since we are still on a learning curve, **October 10 2010** will be our next **Clergy Appreciation Day**. This one will not be easily forgotten. **2010-10-10**.

Finally, *bazalwane, zihlobo zam, baratuwa ba rona*, as I said last year, let us enjoy that little push, that extra stretch and that full step of faith. We are called to do greater things than we ever can think. Truly there are no limits to the possibilities of a life wholly yielded to God. Let us go and share the good news in 2010.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings of happiness, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isa 52:7 NIV)

We may not all physically go, but we can all pray. You may not go, but perhaps you may go with your finance. You may not give but you might encourage that one to go. It might not where you happen to be, but where they are. The words might be harsh to others, perhaps gentle and soft to you. But they are the same and meaning the same thing: **Will you go!**

May I wish you a meaningful Christmas and a Happy New Year in all you do in your journey with the Lord! Let us take care of ourselves, mind our children in this age of human trafficking, keep the basic rules of hygiene to escape many viruses, wash our hands, drink clean water, eat healthy food. Share our good discoveries with others. *Uyifihlelani into enhle!*

I thank God for the opportunity to go and for your support!

Humbly presented by



Rev. P. Mntambo, PRESIDENT
AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
19 DECEMBER 2009

Prayer Pointers for the Year:

1. The Board and the entire leadership as they execute policies in different levels for the glory of God.
2. Sensitive and obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
3. Elections of all committees from local churches to the regions.
4. Our consistency in doing the work God has given us.
5. Faithfulness of all messengers as they proclaim the good news exegetically.
6. Good health, safety, fulfilment and joy in our communities and families.
7. Tangible contagious love that will draw men to Jesus.
8. Breakthroughs in all our regions!
9. Biblical and cheerful giving within our denomination.
10. Development and launching of our web site address.
11. Important Dates to note:
 - ✓ 29 - 31 January 2010 [Board Meeting]
 - ✓ 6 - 9 May [Workers' Seminar]
 - ✓ 22 - 27 June [RCC Eastern Cape]
 - ✓ 7 - 11 July [RCCs Gauteng and KZN]
 - ✓ End of August [Swaziland RCC]
 - ✓ 10 October 2010 [Clergy Appreciation Day]
 - ✓ 16 - 20 December 2010 [AGCC]

**AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
PRESIDENT'S REPORT – REPLY - Mthatha
19 DECEMBER 2009**

INTRODUCTION

Greetings to the President, Board, Pastors and their Wives and the church at large. It is indeed an honour for me to be asked to give a reply on behalf of the AEC congregation. I will comment on some of the areas that were mentioned.

APPRECIATION

On behalf of the church, I would like to thank the church for the team spirit that has been displayed and had an impact in enabling the President to do his work well. Let us continue to work together and support the leadership. Also, we would like to thank Mr. Ndlovu, who has always been there for the President. We have seen him doing the work that is supposed to be done by all of us. May the good Lord bless him as he continues to serve Him. We appreciate the President's good leadership skills, as evidenced by paying attention to detail, discernment and being in touch with all people. It is uplifting to have a President who knows so many of us by name, irrespective of where you come from. We are indeed blessed to have the "Peoples' President". Arrivals, promotions and bereavement are some of the areas covered in the report and this is saying to us the leadership does care and is very supportive of the membership.

I noted that a concern has been raised about dress code at weddings and funerals. It is important that there should be documented guidelines on the do's and don'ts at such occasions. There should be no confusion on what to do for instance at a funeral of an AEC congregant. For example, in other denominations funerals are conducted the same, because the norms of the church are known and practiced in a consistent way.

The President has made mention of the young graduates, most of whom work in the cities after achieving their qualifications. We who live in the cities never see the rural members of AEC in our churches. Where are they? Why are they not aligning themselves with the church of their parents? The truth is that many of them loathe the inflexibility that is characterizing our church. I must commend the Board that since we joined the church, we have seen a lot of improvement. Notwithstanding this, there's still a room for change, and it must be speeded up to prevent losing more of the young people.

PASTORAL VISITS

It is always encouraging to see the President in our regions. We are aware that that it is costly emotionally, physically and financially. The number of visits done is unbelievable. Let us keep on praying for the President, so that he can have good health to continue this service. It is interesting to note that the President has great observation skills, e.g., comments about the drapery and the care of diabetics during church services. We note your concern for instance about Soweto that has only 3 church buildings for over 2 million people. We are taking that as a challenge, and I believe it goes for most areas because our church is not visible in most areas.

WORKERS SEMINAR

I would like to appeal to the churches to make an effort to send their pastors to the pastors' conference. Our pastors need to be fed and revived spiritually as well. Looking at the year verse and the report on the conference, it looks like the themes are linked. A church that did not send its Pastor to the conference has apparently missed out. As a church, we admire the example set by the President on forward planning. The dates and cost have already been tabled. Let us also learn so that we could do things in a decent way.

MISSIONS

We are encouraged to visit Israel, so that we can see the origin and strengthen our faith. We also need to support the UBI as recommended. The Bible Society will be distributing Bibles during the Soccer World Cup in 2010. We need to give to the society so that they can achieve their target. As a church, we need to have a strategic plan towards the World Cup. Our year verse is very relevant and would make a difference if we could work on particular strategic objectives.

HIV/AIDS

This is a very serious challenge to the church and society as a whole. We as AEC have started doing something about it, but we could still do more. We thank our leadership for including a slot on HIV/AIDS in the plenary sessions. However, we need to have a coordinated, sustainable and visible programme.

CONFERENCE CENTRE

The issue of conference centre has been at one stage a very urgent priority, but it seems the interest is gradually diminishing. We are our own enemy if we do not give towards this project. We need to be faithful, goal-oriented and result driven. We need to have a plan and identify specific targets. If not, we have no legacy to leave for the young ones.

CLERGY APPRECIATION

We would like to thank the President for introducing and insisting on the observance of the Clergy appreciation day. Our Pastors do so much for us and the church, and it is only fair and logical to say "thank you" to them. As a church, we need to commit ourselves to observing this day again on 10.10.2010 as proposed by the President.

CHURCH STATISTICS

This is the first time that the AEC President is not complaining about failure of the church in submitting stats. Let's keep up the good work. However, we need to be concerned that most of our churches are small and not growing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to thank the President for a very comprehensive thought-provoking report. However, I would like to point out the following priorities for the attention of the leadership:

1. We need a systematic plan on soul winning. The year verse is a very good initiative from this church. A strategy that will be able to address the contemporary challenges.

2. A church conference centre needs to be prioritized.
3. What is the transformation agenda of AEC? We are losing youth and some women servants because of the policies that are not inclusive. We tend to focus on non-evangelical issues and make them major issues that marginalize some members, especially women who are in the majority and the youth. I must say that change is happening, but it needs to be accelerated.
4. We need to look at a unified way of doing things. E.g., having an AEC devotional book and prayer pointers. We do have theologians, academics and committed Christians who can come together and write books. The writings could also address dress code and how to conduct funerals the AEC way for example.
5. Finally, the corporate image of the church needs to be developed. It is pleasing to see that Men's Fellowship has already started. We hope that this will be sustained.

Thank you.

Presented by

Mrs Rose Ramahlafi

AEC – Mofolo, Gauteng