

AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Annual General Conference 2013



**"GOD'S perspective
becoming OURS"**

YEAR 2014 - VERSE:

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore,
to send out workers into his harvest field."
Matthew 9:37-38 (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.*

APPRECIATION –

Indeed, 2013 has been a year of joy. It has been a year of discovery. A year of realization that we are called to walk with God. Walking with Him reduces anxiety and stress; it dispels fear and unbelief. Indeed, God should be the first in our plans and desires, in our social and spiritual life, in our pain, want or abundance. It is in the dark where diamonds glitter. It is in uncertainty where God appears!

I am grateful to God who allowed us to overflow in joyous celebration and who endorsed our legacy of faith and remembrance even in 2013. In 2013 I saw happy and generous, smiling and laughing, excited and visionary people. These are beautiful people who discovered the real meaning of new life in Christ. I listened to many prayers as well as many testimonies often ending up with, *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."*

To all of those that I had met in your areas in 2013, in your conferences, local churches, special meetings, at funerals and weddings: may the Lord continue to fill you with His joy as you believe in Him. To all those who assisted me with the use of their cars and who prayed and encouraged me, thank you. For all kinds of gifts, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the durable and the perishable, acceptance and love – thank you. All of these gifts are highly appreciated.

My appreciation goes to all who made their vehicles available to provide transport for me. I also want to show my gratitude for the privilege of being able to enjoy fellowship in private homes and other places. We have many people within our churches that have willing and very generous hearts. May that legacy continue to ignite the same spirit among the members of the younger generation. May the Lord bless us all! *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."* Psalm 126:3 (ESV).

THE 2012 JUBILEE CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS –

Wow! What a great time we had at the University of Zululand's Bhekuzulu Hall! We really displayed our unity in diversity. As we celebrated 50 years of God's faithfulness to His church, we were inspired by happy and rejoicing people. This spirit of jubilation was visible all over. Personally, I was amazed when I visualized the time and effort taken to prepare all of the sterling presentations, not forgetting the costs that you incurred in getting everything together and the splendid attire and makeup that you wore. Presentations, whether in Sotho, Venda, Swazi, Zulu, Ndebele, Xhosa or Hebrew, included song, all kinds of prose and poetry, drama and dance and clapping of hands. Enjoyment was mirrored in the beautiful faces of members of the audience and in the laughter and the praise. We indeed had a great time. Thank you to you all! This makes one wonder what the centenary celebrations will be like. How we must all hope to be there – yet, we realize that it is only the good Lord who really knows who will be part of it.

We are grateful to the KZN region for working so hard to enable all of us to enjoy our jubilee conference in a spacious hall which allowed people to enjoy themselves unhindered by limited space. We took long walks on the campus which challenged our fitness; our knees complained, but the walks helped to keep us in shape. What else could we expect but a long walk from 1962 to our Jubilee year 2012?

‡ HEAVEN REJOICES TO RECEIVE THEM –

Mrs T Mbuyazi, who is Rev S Mbuyazi's wife, lost **her mother, Mrs Mntambo** at Mtubatuba, KwaZulu-Natal. The funeral took place on 11 May 2013. I could not be there due to the Skogheim Workers' Seminar, which took place that very weekend. We appreciate all those who prayed for and supported the family during their days of sorrow. Indeed, they sleep but will rise again!

Rev PM Dladla lost **his mother-in-law**. The funeral took place on the 12th of May 2013 at Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal. These have been hard times for this family; we thank God for all those who supported them in their time of bereavement.

Pastor PM Ziqubu lost **his daughter-in-law**, whose funeral was on 24 August and I am grateful to Rev MX Dladla who represented us during those dark moments. Continue to pray for the family as the vacancy in their hearts will continue.

Reverend and Mrs GJ Mfeka lost their son, **Professor**, who was buried on 24 August 2013. The event was sombre and yet encouragement from many speakers reminded us that to know Christ is to better understand death. We dearly appreciate the support of the clergy and the membership who provided warmth in their hearts in the midst of the void.

Mrs Khumsa Myrtle Mamane was also recently called home. She was indeed our inspiring prayer partner. Her funeral was held on 6 September 2013 at Libode, Eastern Cape. Mrs Mamane was somebody who could laugh, anytime and anywhere. She was a good resource to many widows and she bore her widowhood with resilience. Pray for the children to continue in the legacy of love, hospitality and faith in God.

Rev Ray Oosthuis “uMahlalebophile” went to glory at the beginning of September. He was buried on 10 September 2013 in Port Shepstone. We appreciated the presence of AEC pastors at that service. The church will always remember his messages, commitment, character and ministry.

Pastor Alton M Nxumalo, who retired in 1991 from Mseleni Circuit, passed away on 21 October and the funeral service took place on Saturday 26 October 2013. We thank the Lord for many people whom he touched with his life, even in hospital. Indeed heaven rejoices when the faithful pass on. As always, many pastors were there and brethren from other denominations also graced that memorable day at the Nxumalo’s home. Pray for the elderly widow, the children, the church and the community, that they may be comforted in times of bereavement.

✦ **ARRIVALS:**

We welcome all the babies who have been born this year, 2013. We embrace them by our love and faith. We pray and long for their growth, salvation and furthering of their faith in the living God. We also welcome all the newlyweds of the year. May your love shine and become a blessing to your families, communities and churches. To those who come from outside AEC, we want to tell you that you came at the right time and right place. We are looking forward to knowing you more as we labour together for the glory of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

✦ **SOARING HIGHER:**

During this year and in this conference, we thank the Lord for allowing some of our members to be promoted to senior positions. Some graduated after hard work, while others achieved the authority to drive various vehicles. Some of our members have been placed in critical, high positions which are contested. We pray that the Lord might shine through them and that they may exude the aroma of peace and reconciliation wherever they happen to be. Always remember that the Lord allowed you to achieve what you have so as to minister to others who are in need. But we as a church are very proud of you. Let us grow and occupy all the key positions so that we can be a blessing to humanity as we serve.

HERE AND THERE

FEBRUARY 15 – 17 BOARD MEETING – CONCORD GUEST HOUSE – DURBAN: KZN

The Board had the privilege of meeting at the beginning of the year to evaluate the Jubilee year and to plan for the future. We were grateful for a 100% attendance and for the discussions that took place. We also took time to pray for the AEC and to re-dedicate ourselves to God and the ministry. As the church grows, challenges also multiply.

FEBRUARY 23 ROODEPOORT NORTH – WORSHIP-BUILDING DEDICATION: GAUTENG

This was a special day for AEC Roodepoort. They purchased a manse from the NGKerk in Roodepoort. Their vision was to purchase this building and start worshipping there. Their commitment is noted: few in number, many in action. They silently raised the money and God gave them a generous heart as well as favour with the NGKerk pastor who was there on the day. The church started with five families as a cell group of AEC Mofolo. Later a decision was taken to function as a fully-fledged branch of the Africa Evangelical Church in the Roodepoort area.

The first service in this new role was held at the Magobe home in Horizon View on the 6th of May 2001 for a period of two months, and then the services moved to the Roodepoort Boys Scout Hall in Horizon View for the next eight years. After searching for some time for an ideal property, they finally settled for 138 7th Avenue, Roodepoort North. The property belonged to the N.G. Kerk and the AEC made an offer to purchase this property. We applaud the vision, the unity, the sharing of gifts and the love that was displayed on the day. Their vision now is to buy the church building which stands across the road from the manse. May we encourage one another in whatever areas that God has placed us to have a growing and maturing vision for the church.

FEBRUARY 24: RUSTENBURG

Due to the fact that I was in Gauteng, and after consultation with the Regional Chairman, it was recommended that I visit The AEC churches in Rustenburg on Sunday. To my surprise I was asked to leave my car where it was parked and accompany the leadership with Rev Dube, who offered to use his car, and Bodibe. Little did I know that we were to worship in one place, move to another for meals, and then again drive to different places for drinks and snacks. In one day we covered four branches. Some of the Pretoria pastors were with us in all these stops. Thank you for your love and commitment to the task that the Lord has given us. We have many AEC members who will never come to such conferences but who pray for us. I was glad to meet some of them.

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 2; AUG 2-3 & 1-3 NOV – SIM-SA COUNCIL MEETING: CAPE TOWN

We are grateful to God who allowed me to attend all three meetings of SIM-SA. This year SIM celebrates 120 years of their global service of sharing the good news. Also, this year the new International Director, Dr Joshua Bogunjoko, assumed his new role on June 1 2013. We express sincere appreciation for the help and encouragement that we received from the Director of SIM-SA who finds time in a very busy schedule to attend our conferences, which he evidently enjoys.

Just before we close this busy year, I am happy and honoured to announce that Revd S Ngubane got his doctorate from the University of Free State after successfully defending his work on “Towards a Christological Missiology.” On behalf of the Africa Evangelical Church may I say Congratulations Revd Dr S Ngubane for your hard work and your success in defending the Christ who is the key in Mission. We pray that the impact of SIM-SA will always be centred on this Christ, the head of the church.

MARCH 30 – 31 AEC DURBAN CIRCUIT CELEBRATION - UBI

Durban Circuit held their Easter services at the Union Bible Institute. I was invited to grace their celebration of the 50 years of God’s faithfulness to the church. It was a blessing to visualize the last meeting of the discussions that took place there in January of 1962. Rev S Shabalala, who was one of the people who was there for the church, painted a picture of the uncertainty of the future at the time.

The programme was complex and they invited Rev J Bodibe, who came with his wife KaMakhaye. Together, they were a blessing to the 13 local churches who were gathered there. Rev BT Chonco (Circuit Chair) and Prof S Ngubane (Circuit Secretary) had their hands full in trying to guide what became a mini conference towards the end.

I was thrilled to see many young people of all ages being involved in the programme and displaying very happy faces in all activities. My eyes became wet in prayer for the future of what God has given us. The delegation of women and men were also very encouraging.

April 27 – KZN Men’s Fellowship Retreat: Delmas – Mpumalanga

This was a brief visit to the Men during their retreat which dealt with commitment. It was clear to me while their speaker Rev SJ Msomi explained the commitment to God that we have to know the one that we commit our lives to, before we share Him with others. They must also know and have confidence in the ones that we call ‘the people’ to commit their lives to. There were about 70 happy men who enjoyed the singing, prayer, being taught and networking with one another. The men’s ministry is really on the verge of taking off with a full throttle! I was grateful for their warm welcome, as well as the welcome expressed by KZN Chairperson, Rev MX Dladla.

May 9 - 12 – Skogheim Workers’ Seminar: Port Shepstone

Attendance at this 11th seminar was superb and the programme was doctrinal, inspiring, encouraging and informative. People were relaxed and happy to be there. The experience was personally demanding but filled us, as Evangelicals, with commitment and appreciation. Rev WN Dladu was used by God to encourage us all. Rev AB Nxumalo, Rev VW Ndinisa and Rev MX Dladla expounded parts of our vision statement in regards to unity, evangelical doctrine and the experiencing of body life.

The last evening was a memorable time to all who attended. We started off with the evening charge, the Lord’s Supper and the parting fellowship – with a grand choir of all-female voices conducted by MTE Mtetwa, after which an extraordinary, breathtaking, hilarious fellowship erupted, which will never be repeated.

We salute all the churches and individuals who made it possible for their leaders to attend this seminar. We urge those who did not provide finance for their leaders to attend to plan early and to budget properly for the coming year. The major denominational responsibilities should be attended by all workers. The things that we were exposed to while together will forever be behind us. Even DVD recordings or notes cannot help those who did not attend. Our sympathy goes to those who had funerals during that time, and we express our appreciation towards all those who wrote or sent their apologies. 2014 dates are **May 1 – 4** and the fees are R325pd or **R975 per person** for full stay there subject to final review in January.

JUNE 15 – MBAZWANE INKOSI SJ ZIKHALI FUNERAL – KZN

Mbazwane community “KwaMbila” lost their leader who was a member of AEC from his early youth until death. The Mbazwane AEC had the honour to be included in the long programme of the day. We were requested to open with prayer and to also share the Word of God. Notable was the fact that he was working for the SAPS in Vryheid, and for this reason there were many dignitaries from the KZN Province as well as about five other Makhosis and an entourage of police members. I was told that close to twenty cows had been slaughtered to feed the thousands of mourners who attended.

We are grateful to God who has allowed AEC to minister to many Royalties at different levels in most of our regions. The Mseleni and KaNgwanase circuits work among these people and my prayer is that the church might make a meaningful contribution to the lives of these leaders and their families. Pray for the widow MaMpontshane and her children and for the future leadership of that community.

JULY 26-28 – BOARD AND DENOMINATION’S COMMITTEES

We praise the Lord for allowing the Board and denominational committees to attend this crucial working meeting. Most of the committees registered 100% attendance and they all worked into the late hours of the night.

These meetings are designed to evaluate and plan for the coming AGCC and also to focus on where the Lord might be leading the church during the coming years.

28 AUGUST - EGAGASINI AEC: UMLAZI

After the Board meeting and through the Regional Chair consultation I had the privilege of visiting this branch in Umlazi. Rev SM Mkhize and his wife were waiting for us when we arrived; we were also joined by Rev BT Chonco, the Durban Circuit Chair. They met in a school classroom. I saw that the school has many other groups meeting at the same time, which is not healthy for a good ministry. Pray for the Mkhize’s; they are in a very challenging situation that is not conducive towards proper church growth.

AUGUST 10 – SWAZILAND

It was an extraordinarily uplifting experience to be part of the ceremony in which the Rev Mandla Dlamini, pastor of AEC Sigombeni, pronounced his bonding vows of ‘I DO I DO’ with Nontobeko Mngometulu of AEC KaBoyce. I was grateful to see many pastors who came to congratulate them on the day. Rev Maseko from AEC Mbabane preached a clear, untarnished gospel message reminding all of us that it is Christ alone who satisfies human longing.

August 11 – Swaziland

AEC NQABANENI - I realize that Swaziland is not a small country and I could therefore hardly believe it when the Swaziland Regional leadership led me to AEC Nqabaneni on the way to Mankayana on my arrival early in the morning. We were welcomed by the local pastor, Rev N Hlatshwako, and the local leadership. I was glad to meet Mr Pheneas Nkambule whom I met at many conferences but did not really know. He was the one who briefed me, in capsule format, on the history of the ministry on that hill since 1921. The generosity of that church provided meals for us and when I looked at my watch it was close to midday, which meant that we had to rush our meal.

MANKAYANA AEC -

After Nqabaneni we dashed up the meandering mountain route to Mankayana. Obviously, we were late, but the entourage there was waiting for us. The local church chairman, Mr Nxumalo, and the other leaders took us in. After preliminaries, he handed over to Rev AB Nxumalo, the pastor and Deputy President, who preached another moving message of faith. I was given time to greet the congregation, which consisted of a majority of young people. I saw a great opportunity for us to invest in our young people. Due to the growth of the church, there are many who will never see Mankayana, where we used to hold our conferences.

AEC KADEDA -

After Mankayana we went down the hill to AEC kaDeda, where Revd PM Simelane is the pastor. We were too late for the service in that church which I last visited in 2010. We were thankful to God to see the strides that those few brethren have taken in acquiring a better site and also a better temporary structure. They are few, but their heart is big. I encouraged the Saints, reminding them that the foundation of the building is not seen and yet it holds the whole structure. Little is much when God is in it. The Mtetwa family pledged to donate ten chairs as the need was obvious there.

It was after Deda that the entourage of the Executive members – Maseko, Dube, Dlamini, Mtetwa, Mdluli, Simelane – went back to Mankayana for a big meal at Mrs B Dlamini's (LaPhenyane) residence with the Mankayana and Deda leadership. It was a day not to be forgotten. Tired as I was, I had to drive back that late afternoon as I had other things to attend to on the following day. Thank you again for all your love and care MaSwati Lamahle!

AUGUST 17 – SIM-SA GAUTENG CELEBRATION

The year 1893 marked the birth of SIM and this year the Mission celebrates 120 years of ministry. You should note that SAGM dates back to 1889. I was invited by Rev S Ngubane, the SIM-SA Director, to be part of the Prayer Breakfast in Gauteng and I was also requested to share our joy with the Mission. A few of our pastors in Gauteng also attended, including Reverends Shoba, Dube and Malinga. The Missions were made alive to us as we commemorated the pioneers.

AUGUST 17-18 – AEC WEST RAND: GAUTENG

The West Rand pastoral leadership organized a joint fellowship at the General Secretary's home in the evening, which most of the pastors and their wives attended. Personally, I was grateful to see the bonding spirit within the leaders. Rev J Shoba facilitated a short programme and Rev K Mbuwako welcomed me in style. Each word he said was genuine and demonstrated his deep and rich maturity. The feasting, laughter and conversation were warm and our hosts wanted us to continue until the early morning hours, which I disapproved of because the following day was going to be hectic for me. For this reason, I was the first to be excused.

On Sunday I attended their Circuit Quarterly service which was a mini conference. Everybody had a smile, demonstrating the joy of the Lord. Mrs N Jwara, the programme coordinator, did very well. Even though they had hired the place, the stage, drapery and the order of the service created a mood as if we were in an AEC building. My heart also went out to the young people who made up the majority. They looked healthy, active and available for service. I was fortunate to see people, still happy in the Lord, whom I haven't seen for more than twenty years.

I am grateful to the Nhlabathi family who took me to the airport and before I departed, my youngest friend by the name of Siphesihle paid for our lunch at the airport and wrote this message on my phone without me seeing it: "All the best going home!"

SEPTEMBER 8 – MATATIEL AEC, EASTERN CAPE

After attending Mrs KM Mamane's funeral it was fitting for me to spend a weekend in the Eastern Cape. I thus had the privilege of visiting one young preaching point with Rev & Mrs TG Ntongana in Matatiel, which is led by the Ndzimba family. The four preaching points (Caba, Lugada, Maluti, Mehloloaneng) met together and I was really encouraged to see the enthusiasm of young and old. I was thankful to God when I heard how each preaching point started, amazed to meet people that God is using in that part of the country. The enthusiasm of the young Nthabie Thelejane captured me as I envisioned the future of that area. We went to the site that has been given to us in a very extraordinary way. The man who went to the chief is not yet a Christian, but when I met him, I could see a potential member of the church who will be indeed a stalwart. His name is Palo. He also is willing to build the church as he is a builder. We acquired the site because of his wife who is a committed member of AEC. May we all jointly thank the Lord for raising up this Ndzimba family and also for the passion that they have for the souls who have never heard about the good news.

OCTOBER 28 – INKANYISO KZN CONFERENCE- MEET MEKAAR -MTUBATUBA

The KZN Women's Conference met at Mtubatuba. I went there with the hope of taking a few good pictures but discovered when we arrived there that my camera's battery was not fully charged and we therefore missed good pictures. I was requested to greet them, which was an honour to me. They had visitors from Swaziland and Gauteng, from the same structure, which was a very good innovation. I gathered that some women were sponsored by other women to attend the conference, which was a sign of maturity. They were well dressed, very happy and indeed a pleasant sight to see.

While there, I was challenged as I saw something beyond what was happening. I saw the needs of the church today for tomorrow. I thought about the leadership needed in the church today for the future. I saw the grace that God has given us of having the young, the middle aged and the senior women in our churches. Indeed, to us as AEC, people matter. May we be observant of the many gifts that the Lord has given us in the church. BoMama, we love you and we are so proud of you. We are what we are because of your commitment. You pray, support, love and value your church. God bless you all.

NOVEMBER 3 – KHAYELITSHA AEC

Having concluded the SIM-SA Council meeting on the previous day, I saw it fitting to spend another night so that I could visit Khayelitsha with Rev. Ngubane, the Director. Our hearts went out to the place as we saw young people everywhere and with very limited churches, schools, clinics and other public amenities. We shared the feelings of our hearts with the group and encouraged them to look ahead as they face daily challenges. We informed them about the intended visit of some board members towards the end of the month.

NOVEMBER 22-25 – CAPE TOWN MISSION

During our July board meeting, we took a resolution to have a few board members visit Cape Town with the aim of seeing, praying and searching the mind of the Lord concerning our establishing an AEC branch in Cape Town. It is on record that the conviction that grew in Spencer Walton, Dr Andrew Murray and Mrs Osborne-Howe when they toured the place was re-lived by the board members who took time to go there. I was accompanied by Reverends TG Ntongana from the Eastern Cape, J Bodibe from Gauteng, MX Dladla from KwaZulu-Natal and AB Nxumalo from Swaziland as we walked the history.

On Sunday 24 we worshipped at Khayelitsha AEC preaching point. The Lord touched us with many things on the day, although some of the people were at work. Yet we were shocked and humbled after the service when we were served with a big lunch. We enjoyed the meal and deep down in our hearts there was the prayer: *“Lord, send your harvesters to this vineyard.”*

The SIM-SA Director was so helpful to us in many ways, inter alia by providing accommodation, organizing a get-together evening and sacrificing his weekend to show us around and be with us. Daniel Hopley from SIM-SA offices was our chauffeur during our stay there. Nobody knew that the fire that was kindled way back in 1889 was going to be an unquenchable eternal flame. The mere fact that SIM-SA has their head office there makes it our entry point to rise and build up a strong AEC church presence in the Western Cape. We stopped at the SIM-SA offices before flying back; unfortunately, we brought the office to a standstill with introductions, tea, prayer, questions and answers, laughter, picture taking and a tour of the office. We say *“Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. AMEN.”*

MODERN SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONS

My request to local church leaders in all our regions to please have the name of the church written visibly on site and/or clear directions to the place should be executed without delay. That will be a good publicity. Also, some local churches tend to promote their local favourite ethos name more than the AEC. Remember that we belong to the Africa Evangelical Church. We are not Shalom or Upper Room or Tower of Praise Family Church. There are many names like that which are really unconstitutional. If people know us by names other than AEC, please go and correct that while it is still early. We sometimes do things without realizing the impact and damage it might cause in future.

DIFFERENT STRUCTURES

I am grateful to God for the fact that most of the structural committee's chairpersons write their reports and table them to their committees as well as their constituencies and copy me. I saw the report of Men's Fellowship from Mr B Nomandla thank you for the time you took to write. It is through such reports that we can jointly thank the Lord for His dealings within the church. Some regions do the same in their Regional Conferences, and that is also where the financial reports should be tabled.

I do salute Women for many initiatives that they have taken. To Dr ZM Mkhize and your team, I have the report and may the Lord richly bless you. Also, I have observed in our conferences and regions that we have happy women, beautiful women, praying women; we have women in AEC who love their leadership and their church. They love Jesus and His church. They can smile, laugh and cry. Let us thank God for such gifts in our church.

I also have registered that they have discovered the untapped territory of ministering to women. Some are readers and some are great givers and some are encouragers. Other regions have started pastors' wives' forums and groups. I saw it when the Swaziland pastoral wives came back from a Durban retreat. May I salute again Mrs Dube as well Mrs Dlodlu for the great concern you have for our pastoral families. Some regions have yearly workshops or retreats for pastors' wives, which is commendable.

The Women's Fellowship recognizes the needs of the various sub-structures. Women continue to have prayer meetings at circuit level and also at regional level where they fast and pray for the family needs and church needs. In some regions, time is dedicated for prayer and fasting and this happens during the regional fellowship meeting.

ISRAEL: WE ARE COMING IN 2014

We promised you that there will be another trip Israel in 2014. We are still willing to organize for another group to go and walk where Jesus walked. We suggest that you show your interest early to your regional leadership. We want to be better organized this time. The correct or preferred month and fare will be announced in the New Year. Kindly save toward a good deposit for the trip. I would suggest that you aim at R10 000 this time. That will give you relief and ensure a lower outstanding balance.

Let us support those who show interest and commitment. I heard that many would like to go, but for touring the place it is wise to have a smaller group. Big groups become a problem when you have a tour guide who has to explain things and there are many who have questions that need answers in a limited time schedule. We will have good tips for those who will be going this time from those who went last year. Do work on this through prayer and action.

STRUCTURES ELECTIONS 2013

May I take time to appreciate all those committee members who faithfully served during the past term in many of our structures? You have been tested, matured and loved. Remember that you are still an available leader and consultant. On the other hand, may I welcome all the incoming committee members and say to you, serve as servants should and after you have done what you are supposed to do, say: *“We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty.”* Luke 17:10b. Give it all and God will give it all to you. Love the people of God, **do everything well**. Be always alert and sensitive to the leading of the Spirit and embrace all for the sake of Jesus Christ.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

1. EASTERN CAPE – 3 – 7 JULY 2013

The Jubilee feeling was still high when I visited the Eastern Cape Region. They met where we are meeting this year, Ikwezi Lokusa School. I like their innovativeness in trying to recall what 50 years has brought the church. Their theme was “My Church My Vision.” Rev BA Nxumalo, the Vice-President, enjoyed weaving our vision during his Bible Study session and the evening’s speaker continued with the thread of the vision.

I am grateful to God for Rev TG Ntongana the Chairperson and his executive who allowed me to greet their Regional Conference delegates. Eastern Cape has grown and is growing. One of the sobering thoughts that dawned on me was the great need for workers in this region. There are only six ordained active pastors and their statistics stand somewhere near 3000. These members are scattered all over the Eastern Cape as well as the Western Cape. Yes I cry with Lord Jesus: *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* Matthew 9:37-38.

2. KWAZULU-NATAL: 8 - 12 JULY 2013

When I arrived back on the 8th the Dlangezwa High School near the University of Zululand had KZN delegates starting their conference and Esikhaleni was hosting this year. I had to fulfil my pastoral duties until I visited the conference on Wednesday morning. It was true that I was exhausted but the spirit of the delegates was electrifying and healing to my soul.

I shared with the region the deep concerns in my heart as I see the church. As per our vision statement, seeing the church in the future should be something that keeps us going. The future will have a different kind of people, as such; the challenge is to impact those people today with lasting resources for their faith.

May I say thank you to the KZN Chairperson and his executive who allowed me to share my heart with the delegates. Seeing happy elderly and young people listening to the taught Word by Rev G Mnisi, whom the church has used in many of our conferences, brought hope as “we see the church.” They dealt with the deeper things of Christian life. To quote: **“Faithfulness:** *‘To follow through with a commitment regardless of difficulty.’* Faithfulness has to do with **“reliability”** and **“fidelity”**. Faithfulness is love hanging on, it is love saying: *‘I will not quit, there may be misunderstanding, there may be disappointments, there may be discouragements, but I will not quit.’*

The faithful person is one who can be counted on to carry out his or her responsibilities and promises to the best of his/her ability through thick and thin no matter how bad the situation. Faithfulness, then, is a quality that God wants to reproduce in us through the salvation that comes in Christ.” I hope you bought a copy of that lecture here, as they were printed just for you and others you love.

3. GAUTENG – SUNDAY – 07 JULY 2013

This Region had one session of celebration this year and they met in Temba, Pretoria. I could not attend as I was in the Eastern Cape on that day. I did send my greetings, which were read by Rev JA Shoba. Thank you for your willingness to be my voice. Even though I missed seeing the Pretoria membership, I was happy to be afforded the opportunity by SIM-SA to see some West Rand members when I attended the SIM-SA 120th anniversary celebration prayer breakfast in Gauteng.

4. SWAZILAND: 30 AUGUST – 1 SEPTEMBER 2013

Swaziland was the last region to host their regional conference. There were so many things that happened, but what blessed me was to see a good number of children and young people attending the conference this year. My impressions and comments were centred on that gift of youth that the Lord has given us. I noticed that in some local churches and at this conference. Let us invest in our children and youth. Let us invest more time, love, prayer and solid teaching in these young minds. They were hungry to learn from the service, but unfortunately, many times in our plenary services we forget that they are with us as delicate and precious vessels of honour.

Another heart-warming experience was to see another preaching point being graduated to a local church. Mbuluzi Circuit added AEC Vusweni Local Church under the leadership of Rev K Lukhele with his wife LaMhlanga. The composition of their membership encompasses all of the structures and age groups. The elderly and the frail are represented as well as young children.

OUR HORIZONTAL INVOLVEMENT

UNION BIBLE INSTITUTE – www.ubi-ac.za We thank God for allowing N Mavuso, I Ngobese, L Nkosi, L Ntlantsana, B Zuma and Mrs E Mosehla our UBI students to graduate last month. We celebrate with the families, churches and regions. Also, Eastern Cape celebrates the graduation of Rev T G Ntongana, the Chair with his Bachelors degree at Baptist Theological College after a very busy year on his

shoulders. We are grateful to all who have supported him, indeed are filled with joy!

UBI, historically, is our school. We therefore should continue supporting the school through our prayers, involvement in various other ways, and by supporting the students who show desire to study the Word of God in that lovely setting.

In 2011 we made a difference when we contributed furniture. Many people were left out as we only contacted ten local churches who became very positive and did their best. We are requesting more contributions in 2014, of something that the Lord will direct us to give. We have provided all the pastors with information about how to contribute as local churches. Some have started already. We are extending this drive to the end of July 2014. May I add that our structures could also give, as structures, while keeping me informed. The total amount will be announced during the next conference and the Regional Chairpersons and the structures' leadership will know beforehand. Your financial gifts for this participation should be deposited to:

ACCOUNT NAME: AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
ACCOUNT NUMBER: 38023171110
BANK: ABSA BANK
REFERENCE: UBI

Let us touch many people through our vision and love. Let us leave indelible marks while the time is still favourable.

BIBLE SOCIETY – www.biblesociety.co.za We are grateful to God for another year in which the Bible could be produced and distributed in different formats. It should be noted that our year-end contribution to the Bible Society was minimal, if not disappointing. What will remain is what is done for Christ's brethren. The IsiZulu translation is still going on in Durban and some people have already had a taste of the language that is used. Let us learn to include these two in the annual budgets of our local churches, circuits and regions – the UBI and the Bible Society. I don't believe that we don't give because we don't have; I think we don't give because we are not taught how to and as a result we forget or end up not knowing why we should give. This is one of the major indicators of our maturity. The pastoral leadership should train their committees and let the committees run with such responsibilities.

To hear that last year more than a million Bibles were printed (of which 50 000 were given to Grade 7 learners in schools that are in poor areas, and close to 20 000 to prisoners) and seeing that, as AEC, we only contributed less than R4 000 IS EMBARRASSING indeed!

MODERN SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONS

Having visited many AEC local churches, I have not been impressed by signage. Signs showing where we are to be found are still lacking, dear people. Such signs are not only for our own good – they are also required by many municipalities and are also necessary for the making of new maps using GPS technologies. Maybe I should encourage the youth or the women to see to it that this need is met where

you come from due to the fact that the local committees are occupied with table business not field business needs. I know a denomination where women took over the signage project and paid for as well as put up the signs in all corners. The only major mistake they made was choosing the wrong colour which is not allowed for churches. Also, the signs were not stable as the poles started swinging, indicating the wrong direction. It is difficult for me not to speak about this until it is done because I know the value of signage. Consult the people in charge for specifications and requirements.

HIV & AIDS –

We praise God for all who are involved in HIV&AIDS programmes in various areas in our communities. However, the challenge still goes on. As we all have observed: the high rate of teenage pregnancies, the abuse, the forced marriages, the high divorce rate, the increase in orphans, and many other social ills that are present with us. The church is the nearest hope to the needy.

We still have a plan as AEC to visit Zimbabwe with the aim of observing and learning from them. Since the implementation of our programmes as well as T4T, there is a need of programme review. Our involvement in these programmes needs funding. We have not yet utilized the resources that the Lord has given us. Daniela who was working with us from SIM-SA left for Germany and Saralee Molodi will be coming in future to assist us in some of the coordination from SIM-SA. There is also a great need of caring for the carers. The second book translation of the T4T is complete in SiSwati and that will need financing to print. My proposal is that we keep that fund revolving just for those materials.

✠ CLERGY APPRECIATION DAY - OCTOBER 13 2013

Again the 2013 Clergy Appreciation Day was celebrated in a variety of ways in some of our local churches. It has been hinted to me that some local churches don't know about this, and that some just can't do it because of the sour relationships between the local church and the pastorate, and that some just forget about it. I wish I could have time to explain about the grace of giving. The giver should not feel pressure to give. It should be the overflowing heart that scatters the precious seeds, through sparks of His loving kindness showing His unfailing love toward us. The Clergy should not demand to be appreciated; the local church leadership should plan this in their year plan so that they don't forget it, it should be one of the many signs of a maturing church.

May our good Lord richly bless you and meet all your needs. **12 October 2014** will be our next **Clergy Appreciation Day**.

Vision for our Conference Centre – At the time of writing this report I haven't tabled to the delegates what Mr M Ngcobo and his team had compiled from the studies they made in Swaziland and KZN. They did a great job of taking the time to visit recommended sites and gathering the necessary documentation.

The key thing that holds us back is finance. We have to think in terms of millions even though we have never seen a million! Let our faith be in action.

A LITTLE TOKEN OF UPGRADE

TIPS FOR OUR GOOD LEGACY:

Legacy is made out of simple things. Simple things are the main things, and the main things are the simple things as shown below: -

1. Adhere to the Word of God – the Bible and the way we as Evangelicals interpret the Scriptures.
2. In every situation – pray. Surrender your wisdom to God, He will save your time and give you a healthy mind as you bury your ego.
3. Follow the directives found in our church documents i.e., Constitution, Statement of Faith, Bylaws, Distinctives and Guidelines.
4. In our worship services we use the Hymn Book called Icilongo LeVangeli and other favoured hymns from Amagama Okuhlabela, etc. These will change as we reach out to the nations.
5. Our worship services are taken as formal as we believe we have an appointment with the Lord.
6. Through new birth we become Happy and Generous People!
7. Let us live our Christian ethics. I have observed that most of us do things that the world is doing without realizing that we are the salt and light of the world. Let us not go with the flow, in our social, financial and spiritual engagement with the people we interact with.
8. Make every effort to be informed and be pure in your department.

OUR AEC CORE VALUES:

During this AGCC, we as the Africa Evangelical Church are going to adopt these **CORE VALUES** that will remind us about some of the things we stand for and value. These will be our measure of our daily interactions with various communities where God has placed us.

1. **BIBLE** We value that the Bible is our ultimate source of authority and its truth is essential for transformation of lives. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
2. **PEOPLE** We value that people matter. Genesis 4:9-12; 9:5-6.
3. **GROWTH** We value that spiritual growth, full devotion to Christ and relational health are to be the norms of every believer. 2 Peter 3:18; Romans 12:1-2.
4. **UNITY** We value that the church should operate as a loving unified community of servants that celebrates diversity in gifts, function and preference. 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 (4-7); Ephesians 4:3-7; 11-13.
5. **LEADERSHIP** We value the critical value of Godly character, personal integrity, ministry skill and relational health in leadership at all levels of ministry. Philippians 2:19-23.
6. **EXCELLENCE** We value that excellence honours God and inspires people. Genesis 39:4-15.
7. **RELEVANCE** We value that the Church should be culturally relevant while holding to God's eternal truth. 1 Corinthians 9:20.
8. **INNOVATION** We value that gifts of innovation should be encouraged in all that we do. Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58.
9. **INVOLVEMENT** We value the encouragement, development and exercise of each believer's ministry gifts and skills. 1 Corinthians 14:29-33.
10. **STEWARDSHIP** We value that every believer has God-given resources that should be used for eternal purposes. Ephesians 2:10.

OUR WEB PAGE – www.africec.org

We apologize to the membership for the problems they encountered in downloading or even opening our available documents through the internet. Our web page has been very active since early March and because of those high volumes, we had people logging in with the aim of hacking and corrupting our web page. We were hacked twice and corrupted a number of times. It is because of those disappointments that higher security measures are being tried. Unfortunately, such things come with a high price. We cannot guarantee that 2014 will be safe. Usage of our banking facilities and other amenities has not yet been activated due to all of the activities that are taking place in cyberspace.

The original aim was not to have a sophisticated and fancy web page. We wanted our members to have access even when using cell phones, but for those who follow technology, they know how high competition is with these gadgets. Something that might be suitable for Windows may not work for Android or other platforms. Because of that each platform should have its own unique software that is compatible to other related gadgets. I do apologise to all those who might be confused by all this explanation. But close to half a million people visited our site during the last nine months. This proves that we are in the world. May God protect us and fulfil our hearts desire, *“to let the world know about Him.”*

Finally, brethren, *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”* Matthew 9:37-38.

“He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” Mark 6:34b.

“The fields are already ripe for harvest.” John 4:35b.

“I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.” John 10:16.

May His compassion be our compassion, may His perspective become ours as He gives us breath. We have everything to be aggressive and win many to the fold. Let us go out by faith, resilience, submission and purpose.

May I take this opportunity and wish all members of our church a joyful Christmas and a wonderful action-packed New Year 2014 with all your relatives and support structures.

I thank God for the privilege of being nothing but a servant, seeing Him increase while I decrease.

Humbly presented by



Rev P Mtambo, PRESIDENT
AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
19 DECEMBER 2013

**AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE
IKHWEZI SCHOOL -MTHATHA, EASTERN CAPE
RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT
19 DECEMBER 2013**

The honourable President of the Africa Evangelical Church, Rev P Mntambo, Board members, the servants of the Lord, men and women of God, the Youth and Sunday school learners, I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I am very humbled to be asked to give a reply on behalf of Africa Evangelical Church, a challenging task, I however trust God to open my mouth with wisdom. On behalf of the church, let me take this opportunity to thank the President for his detailed and informative report, presented with eloquence. I would also like to thank Rev J A Shoba, the Treasurer, for the financial report. It is important, we value it. It provides the level of transparency and an indication of whether we are growing or not. We are proud of the KZN region who did their best in giving their membership fee and we are certain that the 2014 financial report will reflect 100% membership contribution.

We humbly receive the words of appreciation, encouragement, praise, condolences, affirmation, caution, and recommendation. Words which gives us a strong base to reflect our strengths and weaknesses, which makes us pause and introspect, which makes us cherish our accomplishments, and devise strategies to tackle challenges encountered in the year 2013.

Amongst the things the President reported on, in which he echoed his concerns, we take with us back home highlights, to focus on, in 2014:

- ***Failure to have names of our local churches written visibly on site and clear directions to the place:*** This concern was more than emphasized, we acknowledge that it is long overdue. We therefore accept the task given to us; youth and women, to see to it that this need is met, and jointly with men and local committees, we assure the President that this subject will be amongst praise items in the 2014 report.
- ***Promotion of local favourite ethos:*** This concern has posed a challenge to us to re-define ourselves, by differentiating between a brand (our identity) and a philosophy (a way to appeal to the emotions of the people). We commit to make corrections where necessary.
- ***Lack of response to Bible Society contribution:*** We acknowledge the failure, and wish to say that we appreciate the initiation to give to this course. It will not only serve as "malihambe ivangeli" but will also be a true reflection of those who have made God's perspective theirs.
- ***Union Bible Institute support:*** Another good initiation, we compliment the ten local churches who did their best and we thank the President for extending the invitation to all of us. An opportunity to make a difference, we adopt it as social responsibility programme.

- ***Failure to recognise clergy appreciation day and Skogheim Worker's Seminar:*** We acknowledge that the two events are announced well in advance, we therefore have no excuse not to support them, some of us who failed on both, will have to remove the stumbling blocks and copy from others who have done well, bearing in mind that recognition of such, will serve as a motivation, empowerment and a way to distress to our pastors.

We appreciate the update with regards to the conference centre project, it is a step towards a right direction. A need to fundraise was emphasized, the financial report presented by Rev Shoba reflects that we only have R524 758 in the centre bank account. It is obvious that we still have to work hard, it throws the ball back into our court. However, we are confident that this project will be successful, taking into account the initiation taken by the men's structure to fund raise R5 521 towards the Khayelitsha ministry, within an hour. Together, we will make it.

We would like to thank the President and the board for the powerful year verse: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" Matthew 9:37. It was announced at the right time, "beyond 50 years". We have overlooked the harvest in many ways, unaware that we are acting against God's perspective. Back at our local churches, we are going to strategize, and break new grounds as it has already taken place in the Western Cape, We will ensure that God's vision is carried forward.

In conclusion, we also thank the President for his leadership; visionary, and observant. His dedication towards God's work has not gone unnoticed. Visits done out of love and caring, which calls for tolerance and understanding, when we do things differently as a diversified church. We thank God for giving him the strength and good health, may He bless him abundantly. "God is not unjust, he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" Hebrews 6:10.

SIYAKUTHANDA! SIYAKUTHANDA! SIYAKUTHANDA!

Presented by:

Ms GSJ Nhlabathi

AEC – Dobsonville, Gauteng