

AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
Annual General Conference 2014

- President's Report -

*"pursuing the
Mind of Christ"*

**Annual General Conference 2014 held at the
Filadelfia School, Soshanguve, Gauteng.**

YEAR 2015 - VERSE:

**"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."
(Phil. 2:5 NKJV)**

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.*

AEC CORE VALUES:

1. **BIBLE** is our ultimate source of authority and its truth is essential for transformation of lives. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 2. **PEOPLE** matter. Genesis 4:9-12; 9:5-6.
 3. We value **HOLINESS** and that full devotion to Christ and relational health are to be 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** is 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** 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. **MISSION** We value the encouragement, development and exercise of each believer's ministry gifts and skills in fulfilling mission work." 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
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APPRECIATION –

Indeed, 2014 has been a year of many challenges. It has been a year of mixed emotions. A year of looking beyond what we see as we walked with the Lord. 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!

World tragedies have increased. The Ebola killer disease, the disappearance of Malaysian Airline and the gunning down of another, the more air plane crashes resulting in death of hundreds of innocent people and involving some intellectuals from different countries, the escalation of wars in many countries, the strong words from super powers, the increase of anarchy, earthquakes, the increase in divorce, rape, hijacking, corruption, unrest, backsliding, the falling away of believers, the increase of ego centric leadership, the increase of nominal Christians. The grass eating and petrol drinking church, Nigerian complex news. The list is endless. It is our time!

I am grateful to God who allowed us to overflow in joyous celebration and endorsed our legacy of faith in God. In 2014 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 and some in tears and yet ending with, *"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."*

In my travels I met many people in 2014, in your conferences, local churches, meetings, funerals, weddings and homes: may the Lord continue to fill you with His joy as you believe in Him. May I say thank you to all those who assisted me with the use of their time; the Saints who prayed and encouraged me. Many kinds of gifts, the tangible and intangible, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the durable and the perishable, acceptance and love I say thank you. I noted those clammy cautious and the confident handshakes and eye locking. All of those gifts are highly appreciated and treasured in our cruel world.

My appreciation goes to all who made their vehicles available to provide transport for me. We have many people within our churches that have willing and very generous hearts. My gratitude goes to my Esikhaleni AEC – my home church. They have given all so that I might be everything to others. 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 2013 CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS –

The death of Dr Nelson Mandela only 11 days before our conference, and bringing his burial place near us at UMthatha shook our plans and created uncertainty with the congestion that was expected on the roads and accommodation around Mthatha. Also the unavailability of Walter Sisulu University venue discouraged many people and yet those who came will never forget the extra ordinary conference we had at Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School. Those who were sleeping outside were always on time and ready to enjoy the conference. Praise be to God who enabled Eastern Cape to do excellent work. I personally enjoyed the free range chicken which I was told that different families donated from their yards.

God's perspective becoming ours should be our life style. As the Lord leads us to different people and circumstances it is fitting for us to be unique and special in our walk with Christ. If we adopt that life style many relational problems will disappear. We will mature and be like Christ. We will see things as God sees them, we will understand many things that we think they are mysterious.

✠ HEAVEN REJOICED IN RECEIVING THEM –

Mrs Regina Msweli widowed for 26 years, wife of the late Rev JM Msweli of Mtubatuba passed away on the night of the 1st March 2014 and her funeral took place on the 8th March 2014. When the coffin was laid thundering and lightening flashed powerfully causing most of us to shrink at the sound of His presence and torrents of rain just flooded the place nonstop. The family appreciated the support they got from the church.

Mrs Zandile Sihlongonyane from Swaziland went to glory from Pretoria hospital after her struggle with pain on the 8th March 2014. Her funeral took place on the 15th. I could not attend this funeral due to the conflict of meetings. Thank you for your support and prayer for her husband Past D Sihlongonyane, the family and the church. My special gratitude goes to West Rand leadership and women who literally adopted our beautiful lady and visited her during her last days even on the day of her home going they were the first to witness her remains. Her CD which she presented at the Conference will haunt me for years to come.

Rev P Buthelezi who was retired passed away on the 1st April 2014 and his funeral took place at Esiphondweni on the 5th April 2014. We thank God for the encouragement and the support that we saw for the family and the frail widow who did not even attend the funeral service of her husband. People who spoke thanked the Lord for the ministry and the impact that Rev Buthelezi had in many people for many years. Rev SE Dlamini remarked on the fact that Buthelezi was the last worker who came from SAGM dispensation in that circuit.

Mr J Ntuli, the elderly long time elder, deacon and the father of the Ntulis at Mbazwane went to glory on the 2nd April 2014 after long illness and was buried on the 12th April 2014 at Mbazwane. May the Lord Lord bless, heal and comfort the family and the church at large as all who knew him will miss his presence.

Rev HM Ntongana, the well-loved senior pastor of Eastern Cape went to be with the Lord on the 15th May 2014 and was buried at Lutubeni on the 30th May 2014. The family, the community and the church at large will dearly miss this ever happy servant of God who was given to us. We appreciate all those who heard and stood with the family in all angles. Many pastors from other denominations, teachers from many schools, the children sang beautiful song paying their last respect to the departed gifted servant who enjoyed serving others. Rev AM Zondo reminded all who were there about the beauty of serving by choice not waiting and longing to be freed from slavery.

Mrs Ana Buthelezi (MaKhoza) the wife of the late Rev P Buthelezi of eSiphondweni, KwaNgwanase KZN followed her husband after 76 days to be precise. She was buried next to her husband's fresh grave on the 21st June 2014. Pray for the children and relatives who were left without both parents in less than three months. Without God things might take a turn but with Him they can do all things.

Mr BM Chauke of Thembisa, East Rand also went to be with the Lord on the 17 June and was buried on the 21st June 2014. The church will miss this compassionate and committed Sunday School teacher that we were amazed when he communicated the deeper truths of the gospel message to the young children. To the family and his immediate Thembisa local church we say thank you for sharing him and his gifts to the church at large. Do pray for the widow KaMgayo and her two daughters.

Mr Ernest Mbonambi, the son of Rev EST Mbonambi went to be with the Lord on Sunday 20th July 2014 and was buried in his home at Mseleni on the 26th of July 2014. Mr Mbonambi had numerous health problems for a long time but we all join the family as they will miss him. When our loved ones depart we are all touched with pain because we can never substitute them. Pray for his wife who literally bonded with him from their wedding day.

Mrs Esther S Mtsotso of Lukanyisweni, Eastern Cape the wife of MN Mtsotso went to glory beginning of November and her funeral was held on the 22nd November 2014. Pray for Mr Mtsotso who lost his better half for 55 years. What a marathon of God's grace to this family. She will be missed by all of us who knew her.

✠ ARRIVALS:

We welcome all boys and girls who were born this year, 2014. We embrace them with our prayers, love and faith. We pray and long for their growth, health, security, welfare and participation in new life in Christ.

We also welcome all those who became members of the church from different communities and through a variety of circumstances that came their way resulting in making that eternal decision. We say "Hallelujah" as a sign of joy, thankful heart and appreciation.

We cannot forget those who got married in 2014, some moved to different local churches because of their new status. Strange that most of them even changed their phone numbers, the way they walk and talk, they even smile and laugh differently. Congratulations for that transition. It has been a great stride that the Lord allowed you to take by faith.

✠ SOARING HIGHER:

During this year and in this conference we thank the Lord for allowing some of our members to graduate from different fields of study and expertise. Others were promoted to higher position, some went through rigorous interviews and succeeded, some of our members were introduced to more responsibilities in their work place. Others drive new cars, stay in new homes etc. We say Congratulations! We pray that you glorify the Lord in your new position or stage in life. *Remember to do everything well.* We are proud of you!

HERE AND THERE

DECEMBER 7 – 8 2013 - SWAZILAND

Usually I close my report at the end of November of each year to allow time for editing and printing during the first two weeks of December. But somehow, the activities never end within our regions. This is why my early December saw me in Swaziland before our conference in the Eastern Cape.

DECEMBER 8 2013 TRIPLE STOPS – AEC - MBABANE

Our stopover at Mbabane had a delegation of the Honourable Senator N Mdluli, Board members RS Maseko and MTE Mtetwa as well as Revd WN Dlodlu. I was encouraged in seeing our clean and upgraded buildings with air-conditioning and good padded chairs. Indeed I understood why young people say "I LOVE AEC". I briefly greeted the vibrant worshippers and since this was my first stop with other two local churches to dash to, I became dizzy in my focus when we moved out the door leaving the saints in the service. But I was grateful to Rev NB Maseko for allowing me to disturb the congregation he leads the way I did. They have a massive building project in their plans. Do pray for them and if you have extra thousand Emalangenani you will not regret when you give it to them.

AEC - HLOBANE

We drove through rocks and really rocks down and up and around hanging rocks to Hlobane where Rev P Nkambule and LaDlamini are in charge. It was breath taking to experience that route of God's creation and a human being becomes a tiny creature when compared to God's power, wisdom, creation design and beauty. There were turns that seemed to lead us to nowhere. But at last we saw a road sign and then a beautiful church building and wonderful brothers and sisters ready to welcome us.

There were digital screens telling the story, the microphones were more than people could use. I even asked for one cordless to take with me but the request was neither refused nor entertained. I had heard about AEC Hlobane years ago and I was grateful to God to see my desire fulfilled. How I had wished to spend time with each and every member of that local church, but this was just a "vusela" stop. May the good Lord reward the hard work of toil and sweat of the Nkambules and the leadership down that valley as they produce fine Christians. Thank you!

AEC – EDAMU

I thought going to Hlobane was a challenge, little did I know that more challenging drive still was waiting for us as we dashed to Edamu. We were against time as we started the day at Mbabane and then Hlobane and Edamu was to complete my triplet stops. It was amazing to know that Rev Dlodlu who was with us used to pastor that church which was now led by the SL Stewart's family.

We finally arrived there in the afternoon, and the people were overjoyed to see some members of the Executive. I just wondered whether they did have time to worship because after our short greetings we were taken to the pastor's house and late lunch was served to everyone who came to the church that day. Preparing such meal for the whole church, I figured it needed the whole church to be involved. Indeed it is said that the early church: *"Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved."* Acts 2:46-47. Thanks be to God for Edamu enduring congregation.

JANUARY 11 – 17 2014 ADDIS ABABA – ETHIOPIA – EVANGEL FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

Leaders of eleven Evangel Fellowship members met in Addis Ababa to look at the whole thrust of Discipling the Next Generation. I went with Rev Benjamin Pillay, President of ECSA. We were privileged to rub shoulders with great evangelical leaders. Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church was founded in 1927 and today they have two wings of Ministries: Spiritual and Development; 8070 local churches; 8 million members; 1050 local cross cultural missionaries; 24 global missionaries; 6 Theological and Ministerial Training Colleges and 145 Vernacular Bible Schools to mention the few.

I discovered that we are members by the virtue of our founding mission together with another big church in Nigeria – the ECWA

ECWA Nigeria – 6 million members

1. Discipleship programme done in Ethiopia (EKHC) and spreading to other countries - Train the leaders for a week, the facilitators come in their cost and the church provide accommodation, food and training venue; thereafter there should be a country coordinator who will monitor the groups, after six months he or she is expected to visit Addis Ababa and see their groups in action for a week and then comes back, after a certain period the original facilitators visit the coordinator and see the groups in action.
2. In Nigeria (ECWA) they have other discipleship programme but also implementing the Ethiopian Model. They have resolved not to build big churches (500 max) because of discipleship of believers.
3. This Discipleship program is said to be going to all Evangel related ministries in different countries. My SA partner, Ben, proposed that they come to ECSA in September. I did not commit myself to that as our case is unique which will need our own system of operation. Basically is letting people read, live, discuss the Word of God in a systematic, Intentional, Relational, Transformal and Doable manner.

Finance:

- 1-49 churches you should pay \$100 to join and \$50 as an annual subscription.
- 50-199 churches should pay a joining fee of \$200 and annual subscription of \$75.
- 200-499 churches should pay a joining fee of \$300 and annual subscription of \$100.
- 500-999 churches should pay a joining fee of \$400 and annual subscription of \$125.
- 1000 or more churches should pay a joining fee of \$500 and annual subscription of \$150.

Next Host: South Africa – Africa Evangelical Church & Evangelical Church of South Africa – Nov 29 – Dec 4 2015. New Exec. GS – Prof Sam Kunhiyop (ECWA Nigeria); DGS – Rev Ben Pillay (ECSA) & Treas. – Bishop Paul Mususu (Evangelical Church of Zambia).

FEBRUARY 7 - 9 BOARD MEETING AT CONCORD GUEST HOUSE - DURBAN

This is usually our evaluation and looking ahead of many areas of the church. It is always encouraging to me to meet with 100% members of the Board ready and willing to contribute with their skills and gifts. Also the Women and Men Committees did their handover meetings during this time.

FEBRUARY 9 – AEC N730 MLAZI – As usual after Board meeting if time allows, I prefer to stop in one nearby local church. N730 was in my heart after they lost many members through death. Though I was happy to see the brethren but really to miss the faces I knew in that church because of death brought a reality that we are on the way home indeed. I appreciated Revd BT Chonco and kaMagwaza his wife for allowing me to stop in their church that very morning.

MARCH 14-15; AUG 1-2 & 14-15 NOV – SIM-SA COUNCIL MEETING: CAPE TOWN

We are grateful to God who allowed me to attend all three meetings of SIM-SA in 2014. The Council go through various reports and needs in the Mission. The amazing thing is to hear the progress and the problems, the encouragements and the disappointments, seeing the grace of God as He calls missionaries and provides. To spend time in prayer for Missions and needs therefore gives exposure of realization that still the harvesters are few and the harvest huge! As AEC, we encourage the passion for missions in our walk with the Lord. Think of sharing the good news wherever we happen to be. Should the Lord lay in your life for outreach, mission, other communities or countries, let us know. We will pair you with SIM if need be, so that you will find peace in serving the Lord.

MARCH 22 & 23 MAGEWU FAMILY / AEC MZIMKHULU

The Magewu children wanted to appraise their mother while she was still with them; they invited people that they thought were close to their Mother and the Kheswas. It was a special day for all who were there as the life history of the family was played by different speakers. I could not help it but to reflect again to what God has done in the church through this family. They were involved in the then Transkei, in Swaziland, in the Eastern Cape as well as Natal-Transvaal Regions.

It was a time of reflection, laughing, fellowshiping and listening to the children saying something about their parents, more especially their mother. I remember words from one of the daughters saying: “Mom you have been a mother, a role model, a teacher, a mentor, a coach, a guide and an encourager.” May the Lord continue to embrace that family in every way. We also honour you Magewus!

May 1 - 4 – Skogheim Workers’ Seminar: Port Shepstone – KZN

Attendance at this 12th seminar was superb and the programme was very refreshing and challenging. We looked on God’s perspective with regards to the church, leaders’ unity, leader’s family and leader’s lifestyle or wellbeing. In the evening we jointly prayed for the church and may I say, we prayed for you and leaders do pray for you as you pray for them. We sang and lingered before the throne of grace. We felt that there are many things that we should take to the Lord in prayer. May I thank all the churches who did their best to let their leaders go and learn together at that seminar. Unfortunately there are still few churches that cannot budget for their leaders to attend these great forums of inter-regional fellowship. May I humbly request those churches to do their best for 2015. The dates will be **May 7 – 10**. KZN attendees were far better during our last seminar; all other regions excel in their attendance. I salute them.

MAY 4 – UMZUMTHWA – KZN

Revd MX Dladla lost his daughter on his brother’s side and the funeral took place on Sunday. It became obvious to share their sorrow on the day. I am grateful to the AEC leadership from Durban that was led by Rev & Mrs BT Chonco; Rev & Mrs F Mashiyane, Rev & Mrs SMZ Mkhize and to my surprise Miss JH Makamu from Mpumalanga graced the sad day. We were privileged to share the day with the family and saw the saltiness in our life as we interacted with others.

MAY 24 – EKUPHILENI K440 – KZN

Revd AM Ncwane and family invited some brethren who worked with him in the past as well as Ekuphileni Circuit to a thanksgiving service, in which he wanted to quote Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to

one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” He pleaded with all who were there to forgive him if in any way while working together he might have offended some. After that moving exhortation, Rev Dr G Mnisi gave us a challenging topical message from Matt 25:14-30 - warning the leaders about their pitfalls which hinder them from finishing well. These were summed up by these pitfalls: Failing to accept ourselves and the gifts that the Lord has given us; Failing to use our gifts to the fullest; Wanting to be famous and listening to other people.

JUNE 8 – NKILIJI - SWAZILAND

Due to the fact that Mr N Mdluli had become the Honourable Senator in the Swaziland Parliament he saw it fit to request his local church, Nkiliji to hold a thanksgiving service in which many dignitaries from the Parliament toping the guests list was His Excellency the Honourable Prime Minister, who due to international call out did send his deputy to read his address, and other ministers who were present to honour our dedicated member in his new position.

The church building was dripping and oozing with symbols of God’s grace in His church. This was the building that in excitement after they had put the roof on, the storm decided to wipe it off. This local church did not accuse the Lord, but they said, “Let us rise and rebuild”. This was the choice building which witnessed accolades from young and old, high profile and simple which were directed to God, and the Mdlulis. For somebody who might see the pictures thereafter might wonder whether it was the official opening of that great church in the valley. The local pastor, Rev ED Nhamposse with his wife LaDhuba said to me when I arrived, “Babe did you see our sign 5KM away, and did you see what we have at the gate?” That was great welcome by the pastor who had completed his assignment. Thanks you!

JULY 2-4 – LUBANGO - ANGOLA

Rev. Eduardo Chiquete, the President of the Union of Evangelical Churches of Angola invited us for their 100 years celebrations. When I got the invitation in Addis Ababa I thought it was a 2015 event. But when he sent me a personal invitation, I was humbled and yet afraid. Confused and yet directed. With the Ethiopian trip which happened in January and then in July this trip, indeed we faced many challenges. I therefore could not go. When I received a report of the celebration week that more than 17000 people came, I could not believe the numbers. I missed the opportunity of witnessing some ways how they do things, but the prayers made were successful as always.

JULY 25-27 – BOARD AND DENOMINATION’S COMMITTEES

We praise God for good attendance of Committee members to this meeting which is usually a rigorous working meeting. We met to plan and project in the future as well as plan the logistics of this conference. All committees were present and worked until late at night and the board worked until early hours of the morning. We had all structures viz. Children’s Committee, the Youth, Young Adults Interim representatives, Women, Men and C.C. Task team Reps.

The way those leaders sing, pray and lead is something that only happens there. I still remember a loving mother praying for the youth, a disciplined man praying for the church and a young man giving Rev Bodibe another name. Indeed rubbing shoulders with all leaders in their levels gives us a foretaste of our heavenly massive gathering soon.

NOVEMBER 16 – KHAYELITSHA AEC

Having concluded the SIM-SA Council meeting on the previous day, I saw it fit to spend another night so that I could fellowship with Cape Town brethren.

When I came there I discovered that the Lord is doing a wonderful work. On the 10th to the 19th of October 2014, Pastor L Ndzimba took a leave of absence from work at Matatiel, and went to Cape Town and joined Fikile. He was given the evening of the 12th to speak at the community radio station between 19h00 – 22h00 and on the 16 – 19 they had an outreach at Villiersdorp and today we have a preaching point there. We praise God for such people that God is raising. In talking with him he would like to see AEC being established in Port Elizabeth and in Bloemfontein.

These new faces from Villiersdorp were guests of honour when I visited Khayelitsha on the 16th. The fellowship and the joy was captivating. Pray intentionally for that work as the contact members are spread out covering Villiersdorp; Delft; KTC; Langa; Gugulethu; Cross Roads; Nyanga and indeed Khayelitsha.

NOVEMBER 22 – DOBSONVILLE AEC - GAUTENG

The Dobsonville local church in the West Rand had a thanksgiving service thanking God for the ministry of Revd ES Hlongwane and his wife MaMokoena which spans about 44 years when we consider his salvation, calling, Bible training, ministry commitment and pastoral period. We can safely say he was saved to serve.

I was grateful to be part of that service which brought into realization that God 'calls' and we need to respond when He calls, so that we may enjoy being centred in His will as we serve one another. The Dobsonville local church was grateful to God for the 24 years that the Hlongwane family shared their life with them. There were tangible footprints that he left in that region.

As the product of the late Rev SN Bhengu, his ministry touched the birth of Pretoria circuit, the development of other young leaders like Rev Ndinisa, Rev Gqoba and many others. Most of the people who came to Christ under his ministry have remained rooted in Christ. We are all grateful for such active leaders we have in our church. As he moves to KwaZulu-Natal we pray that the calling will continue to burn in his bones, so that he might say with the Psalmist of old: *"that still bear fruit in old age and are always green and strong. This shows that the LORD is just, that there is no wrong in my protector."* Psalm 92:14-15 (GNB). Pastor N Jiyane has stepped in those shoes leading that historic and energetic Dobsonville church.

NOVEMBER 23 – MOTSHANE AEC - SWAZILAND

The Motshane AEC building stands alone in her uniqueness inviting whosoever to enter the building and explore the inside. This beautiful local church is under the leadership of Revd WN Dlodlu with his wife LaShabangu celebrated its centenary on this warm Sunday with all skills that we have in AEC being displayed. The logistics were tops. The signage from the road, leading to the gate which needed more than five minutes to appreciate the welcoming art that is seen when you enter, the car park bays were marked with white wash and the people were everywhere. I was reminded many years ago when one would see swallows flying crisscrossing the lowest altitude, and in the early summer evening when the bats dive and dance the open space.

It was joy, fulfilment, Thanksgiving Day spanning a century of God's faithfulness. When I scanned the history in my mind, thinking of 1914 and flying with light speed to 2014 I could silently hear our Christian faith being personified crying like Moses of old, *"Their rock is not like our Rock..."* Deuteronomy 32:31.

Strange enough that Mr *NM Nkambule* in his book **"HISTORICAL FOOTPRINTS OF MOTSHANE AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH (HOPE HILL)** concluded in 2011 on page 334 by saying: *"In conclusion, I would like to challenge Motshane AEC (Hope Hill) to start planning for the church's centenary in 2014. Hope Hill which was established in 1914 shall have existed for 100 years in 2014. Indeed, it is time to celebrate Hope Hill's legacy as a visible banner of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Motshane/Kupheleni area over the century long period of the church's existence."* This book is still on sale. Do get your copy before it runs out of print.

I note his prophetic grammar, though writing four years ago used present tense when he said, *"Indeed, it is time to celebrate..."* This was fulfilled on the 23rd November 2014. To me as a visitor, though home coming in a way, we were honoured by the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Tsandzile, who is the Minister of Home Affairs. When I saw the Members of Parliament and the highest protocol executed by Mr C Nkambule, seeing my former President of AEC, Rev Dr CPM Gumede and all Swaziland Board Members, pastors and members, made me say: "Praise the Lord." Ending her address HRH Tsandzile said: *"Take note however that your journey along the sands of time has not ended. It has just begun. Don't use your past accomplishments as mere trophies and symbols of glory. Instead, use them as stepping stones and ingredients in crafting new church policies and strategies that will take this church to another level in the next 100 years. The harvest is ripe; the workers are few."*

Perhaps Motshane AEC will break a historical record of becoming the only church that was dedicated officially after 100 years. Do pray for them and visit them as they engage on the next lap.

NOVEMBER 30 – MALANGENI AEC - KZN

It was a fulfilling joy for me to have an opening to visit Mseleni circuit's local church at Malangeni which Revd SE Dlamini and his wife MaNgubane are based. The day was cloudy and cool for a good and whole day's service. What I learned was that most of the people who came budgeted to be there for the whole day. It dawned on me that starting on time was not necessarily crucial, but being there was the main thing.

My visit coincided with appreciation of the graduates they have in that local church. They had nominated two of their learned members to give a motivational talk on the day. They delivered good addresses that one would pay a lot of money to attend in today's era of workshops. The speakers spoke from experience from the Department of Education. Everyone was challenged young and old to consider education. That day was conceived by one elderly man who donated the whole cow to cater the guests on the day. Sunday School and Youth were very active on the day, a good sign of a growing church. Indeed little is much when God is in it.

ISRAEL TRIP: - 2014

We promised you that there will be another trip to Israel in 2014. We are sorry to say we were compelled to cancel our planned trip with huge cost because of conflicts that took toll in that region. Some people had paid their deposits and others in full, yes; it was a painful thing that happened. I am saddened to note that refunds are still outstanding and going through the legal route. Indeed I am embarrassed and very sorry.

STRUCTURES – CHILDREN, YOUTH, WOMEN AND MEN DEPARTMENTS

AEC is very unique in that it has these growing departments within the denomination. We have a specific committee for each grouping. They develop their innovative programmes centred on the theme for the year of the entire denomination and share it throughout the year in various angles. May I salute all the committees for doing that great work in body life of the church.

The Women presented their report and I did notice that there is still a desire to grow. I personally picked up one of their goals, namely: *"To promote good financial practices making use of budgets and sticking to plans."* I will say more later on the finance handling by all of us. May I commend the Women leadership for stability that we have all noticed over the years. You always manage to sail safe even though you handle huge amounts.

Women, may I say thank you for what you do in your local churches, supporting the ministry in full, be it Sunday School, pastors family, the needy members in our communities. Your dedication to pray for the church is applauded. Your commitment to foster unity is noticeable. I also noted that most of our women who serve in the committees have phones as well as emails. Please do budget minutes when you call your friends so that you will be a good example to our young people who are hooked on social network.

I did not receive reports from other structures, may be they did not know the deadlines. But I am grateful to God that when you elect people for leadership you pray and the people become available.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

1. KWAZULU-NATAL: 2 – 6 JULY 2014

The Dumisa circuit hosted this conference at Sidelile High School at Magabheni community south of Durban. As always the spirit was electrifying to see the happy and expectant audience. It was a blessing to see our young people invading that High School. Rev MP Dladla, the circuit leader was filled with joy as he witnessed innovative spice in their hosting. I also observed many children who attended this conference and they had a missionary theme which was properly handled.

I only sat through Bible Study where Rev SE Dlamini was creatively teaching the daily Christian living challenges facing the customs and the practices that have polluted the gospel and many people's thinking to an extent of believing false teachings which are so prevalent today capturing the minds of many people. The interaction with the audience made the truth to sink in people's hearts. We are grateful to the Word of God which does

not change. I am grateful to Rev MX Dladla the Chair and his committee who welcomed me as if I was from other world. In praise to God, I lift up my heart to Him in thanksgiving.

2. EASTERN CAPE – 9 – 13 JULY 2014

The venue of this conference was Ikhwezi School where we held our AGCC 2013 at Mthatha. After hearing the kidnaping and murdering of the Sister Mary Paul who worked at the school for many years the AEC has indeed bonded with the leadership of this school. The Conference reminded me of the 2013 AGCC in many ways except that there were no buses, big tent, different languages in the hall ways and other things that were there in December.

I thanked the Lord for the growing commitment that I have observed in the Eastern Cape. The young and the matured, the frail and the fit all desire to grow deeper in the knowledge of the Word of God. Drapery in the hall reminded me of our golden jubilee in 2012. We hope and pray that our young leaders will catch the vision and fly with it. I am grateful to Rev TG Ntongana the Chairperson who gave me an opportunity to greet the Conference.

3. GAUTENG – SUNDAY – 20 JULY 2014

This Region had one session of celebration this year and they met in Soweto, Protea North Hall. Mr LT Ndlovu was willing to accompany me we flew to ORT Airport and rented a car at the airport as we had errands to take on Saturday afternoon seeing different people.

Since I was informed about the passing away of Mr Mchunu from Chiawelo, Mr Chauke from Thembisa and Mrs Goboza from Soshanguve, I originally intended to spend few minutes per home and share words of encouragement and thanksgiving to God and cover all three. Due to distances I could not cover Soshanguve. But I was grateful to the pastoral leadership of the said families. They made a smooth network. May I say thank you to Rev G Ntshangase who really dedicated his time to be with us through the busy highways and calling people as well as us. To Baba Ziqubu and Xaba who just appeared while we were at Chauke's home, Rev Dube and Msibi who accompanied us to the Mchunus. My desires were fulfilled beyond my expectations. Amazing warm love indeed!

4. SWAZILAND: 29 AUGUST 2014

Swaziland had a different Regional Conference in 2014. They met during the weekdays. The delegates arrived on Monday and finished their business on Tuesday about noon. Then the evening was when the conference started and ended on Friday afternoon. I only joined them in the morning of their last day.

Another praiseworthy thing was that they invited all their senior membership citizens who are 60 years and above to come to the conference and their conference registration was paid by the Executive. I don't know how many did come. Keep it up Swaziland that was a good innovation indeed. Other regions have noted that come 2015, I don't know whether it will continue or it was a once off.

Another coincidence was that we had to sign the Agency Agreement with the Conference Centre Task Team. This was a solemn moment of faith. Each step that we are going to take from here on will be a giant step of faith. I must say thank you to Rev N Maseko and his executive for allowing that session to take place during your RCC.

OUR HORIZONTAL INVOLVEMENT

UNION BIBLE INSTITUTE – www.ubi.ac.za We thank God for another year that has gone and saw five of our students graduate in 2014. May I hasten and say we had no first year in 2014 at UBI and at the time of writing we had no AEC applicant for the 2015 school year. This, as I said last year is very unusual. We have been having our AEC students for many years and every year at this institution. Let us continue to pray that the Lord of the harvest should send forth His servants to study His word and prepare for the full ministry that our present time requires.

The financial appeal we made last year seemingly did not bring expected results from many local churches. Other people forgot about it, others requested for extension but even after extension there was no encouraging response. That informs us what kind of a church we are and how do we respond to the Macedonian call. We haven't transferred the minimal gift that has come in since the beginning of the year because there is no project that we could tackle with it so far.

Also other disturbing factor is that next year the school might not have three missionaries who have been a blessing over the years in the lives of many students. Should that happens the institution will have to get resources and personnel to fill those positions.

Finally, the greatest praise item is that UBI has been officially accredited by the Commission for Higher Education to confer BTh degree from 2015. This is a break through after years of struggle. With this comes added needs of accommodation, lecturers, study helps etc. thus the expectation for our support is higher than before.

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. The IsiZulu translation is still going on in Durban and some people have already had a taste of the language that is used. Still very few of our churches remember this yearly commitment. Freely we received; freely we should give so that other person should discover new life in Christ.

Some people are blind and deaf, but still need the Bible. Some too busy but still need the Bible. Some have challenges with their eyesight they too need the Bible, in summary we all need the Bible. That is why the Bible Society has initiated many formats of the Bible but the greatest honour we have in our countries is that we have the Bible in all eleven of our official languages.

To hear that last year more than 41 800 Bibles were given to Grade 7 learners in schools which are in poor areas during the past year is heart-warming. But the question comes back to us, how much was our involvement in that gesture of good will and commitment as a church?

MODERN SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONS

May I salute the great initiative and art I saw in some churches that I visited this year. I am glad to let you know that some churches have finalized this assignment of putting signs directing people to Africa Evangelical Church. I was amazed to see Nkiliji putting signs from 5KM away directing people to Nkiliji and at the gate they have big sign and information and the theme of the year. I just wonder whether they will change the theme now for the 2015. That is a wonderful innovation. You need to stand at the gate and read all that information.

When I went to Motshane AEC in Swaziland, same thing was seen, what an upgrade. I appreciate people who take the project and vision seriously. Also, when you enter that property you need time to appreciate the art and the beauty of the creativity and skilling that the Lord has given us. I am happy to belong to such a church!

When I went to Malangeni AEC – Mseleni Circuit where Rev SE Dlamini and his wife MaNgubane are based, I was amazed when I read a sign “Malangeni AEC – 1,3KM” and also the gate wall – with big letters “Welcome to Malangeni Africa Evangelical Church.”

I did not manage to find out whether the desire was fulfilled by youth and women to run with this project in different areas where it is still pending. We still encourage you to market the full name of Africa Evangelical Church in our communities.

HIV/AIDS & EBOLA VIRUS –

We have been having programmes designed to curb HIV/AIDS for few years it is now time to evaluate the T4T programme and see whether we are still relevant in our communities. When the world was struck by Ebola the global pendulum changed. Our sister church in Liberia was struck very hard with Ebola in such a way that people were not allowed to visit others in their communities; No caring of the sick, No proper burial for the loved ones; Families wiped out; Parents deserting their children with the disease; Migration; Stigma perpetuating the disease; Break down of the Health System; Closing of cross border trade; Shortage of Food; Cancellation of Africa Cup of Nation by Morocco.

We as a church should work with governments in trying to reduce the HIV/AIDS and other stubborn diseases. It is true that people young and old will continue to be sexual active and discover too late that they are positive. If Malaria was fought and we won, the same applies to this demanding epidemic working together we can see the results. Let us read and follow what comes out from various global conferences on HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

GRANDPARENTS DAY – SEPTEMBER 14 2014

We salute all those churches that made this special day a success in their local churches. I have discovered that other local churches don't have grandparents because of their youthful membership; others have many of them because of their endurance over the years. I salute that local church that appreciated one grandparent in their midst. Next year the day falls on the **13 September 2015**.

Our Grand Parents are the symbol of His grace, and the proof of resilience and endurance in the faith once given to us.

✠ CLERGY APPRECIATION DAY - OCTOBER 12 2014

Again the 2014 Clergy Appreciation Day was celebrated in a variety of ways. Some pastors get spoiled, please don't spoil our leaders, just appreciate them before the Lord and also merge your thanksgiving to God for placing you in those churches. May our good Lord richly bless you and meet all your needs. **11 October 2015** will be our next **Clergy Appreciation Day**. Thank you!

Vision for our Conference Centre – I am happy to report that during our last conference in the Eastern Cape, we all agreed to target Mankayane in Swaziland as our conference centre. The Lord gave us us unity when we took that resolution. That decision has a target date of 16 December 2018. Our AGCC will be held in that place. I foresee many things happening. There will be joyful singing in all languages that we have in the church, the dancing of women around the property in their different regalia reliving our Jubilee joys. The official opening of the AEC Centre in Swaziland will be a historical event. Tears of remembrance of the past will gush out uncontrollably. We will feel the reality of the words of the Psalmist when he said: *“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!”* Psalm 100:4.

The task before us now is to give our resources faithfully. If only we could be obedient to the prompting of the Spirit and give generously. We debated a long time; we gave minimally for many years. Now it is the time to give until it hurts. But may I request that all financial drives and innovations that we might engage in bring glory to God. Let us be Biblical, clean and blameless. This is a holy task. Let us be careful not to offend our brother or sister. May this project mature our faith and trust in God! On that day we will all say: *“It was worth it all!”*

A SERIOUS TOKEN OF UPGRADE

I have pasted a full financial statement of a SAGM meeting which was held on the 2nd May 1929 in Durban, to draw your attention to faithfulness in reporting our finances. It is wise to evaluate yourself and know whether you are weak in handling finance. If you are careless, greedy or not principled please refrain from handling public money. The churches are handling big monies because of inflation. We thank God that we do have qualified auditors in our church to help us. May I request that we start auditing our books. It is an easy exercise once we begin. Next year I would like to publish people within AEC who can help us. Though it comes with cost

but it will not be like going out to commercial companies out there for your auditing. I will request few churches from each region to do this exercise next year. Let us all begin keeping our financial books in order.

Since we are a registered company under section 21 Act, under Companies & Intellectual Property Commission we are expected to submit our annual returns every year. This is a serious step that we must honour as a church. We hope to process millions of Rands through our church accounts for buildings that we are busy with. The Lord will not bless us if we are unfaithful, flippant and just shabby in our dealings. The Lord Jesus asked this question many years ago and He is still asking: *"If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?"* Luke 16:11. **'Let us do all things well'** – it's my humble request!

We are not making profit but we should be wise and faithful stewards of His gifts to His church. That is my plea from now on to be different from the world. Transparent, generous and holy in all we do with money. If we think we are not to the standard let us ask for help.

IMPORTANT INFO

ABRIDGED CHURCH STATISTICS 2014:

Thank you for the positive response we received this year from all regions on this much needed yearly exercise. Other regions were delayed from certain local churches. It is unfortunate that others still struggle. If you need help please let your immediate leadership know so that they may help you in time.

Let us invest in our children and young people more. I am grateful to God for the great teachers of our children workers. We stand at about 40% child population which should be more than 50%. Let us have spiritual eye to see beyond what we see in a child. Let us adopt a group of young people in our hearts for the glory of God. Let us not be so excited when we enrol new members in our local churches and forget that young one. May we intentionally desire to have the mind of Christ in all our activities.

Finally brethren, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 2:5 NKJV) The mind of Christ according to David Sper in his devotional *"Experiencing the joy of the Christlike Difference"* sums it up by saying it entails the unselfish, sacrificial, servant, humble, obedient and patient attitude. Therefore, brethren, none of us are qualified to lead until we are willing to lead with the heart of a true servant.

May I take this opportunity and wish all members of our church a joyful 2014 Christmas as you sing the old favourite:

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!
Long lay the world in sin and error pining, Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices, For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Likewise, joyfully welcome the faith packed New Year 2015 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 2014

**AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
PRESIDENT'S REPORT – REPLY - Soshanguve
19 DECEMBER 2014**

1. Salutation: Mr. President, the Board, Pastors & Wives, Regional Executive Committees, various committees, all brethren in their different levels, I greet you all in Jesus name.
 - a) I am deeply honoured to make a commentary on the President's report.

2. Mr President, I see that you are Open Minded on Worldly Events
 - a) You keep tabs on what is happening around the world: good and bad.
 - b) We as Christians have a duty to influence what is happening around the world.
 - c) As the world is in total confusion we need to influence what is happening around the world; after all we are the salt of the earth! *It would help to share your thoughts on the worldly events.*
 - d) Mr President, I also note that you are appreciative of meeting brethren in various spheres, and you also appreciate their different forms of assistance given forth.
 - e) You also highlighted that the death of Dr Nelson Mandela affected the 2013 conference coupled with venue changes, but of note, is that accommodation changes did not dampen the spirit of those in attendance, this shows commitment by AEC brethren.
 - f) The year 2014 was marked by the passing away of our beloved brothers and sisters who went to be with the Lord.
 - g) 2014 newly born and new members of the church, newlyweds and academic achievements of brethren cannot go unnoticed. Congratulations are in order. *It would add value obtain statistics in this regard.*
 - h) I see the dynamic AEC in all this: a church unified in diversity.

3. Activities in late 2013 and 2014
 - a) Mr President, you had a busy year as you visited churches in Mbabane, Swaziland (including the Regional conference), Gauteng, KZN and Eastern Cape; you also visited other countries. Of note is your visit to Evangelical Fellowship International in Ethiopia where you learnt about their membership program which may have financial benefits if the membership and annual subscriptions can be custom made for AEC.
 - b) The various forms of meetings and seminars throughout the year cannot go unnoticed. *Reflecting the lessons from such events would give weight to their importance to your office and AEC as a whole.*
 - c) Mr President, we were also honoured to see you sharing the stage with Swaziland dignitaries and politicians during the thanks giving of Senator N Mdluli. Swaziland brethren are greatly honoured by your untiring visits.
 - d) Mr President, we are also grateful and happy to see Brethren equipping themselves through studying at the Union Bible Institute. Surely AEC will immensely benefit from the fruits of dedicated seeking of Christianity qualifications.
 - e) Of note again is that in all the activities that you embarked on Mr President, is that you came back with some learning experience; your speech shows that you are a very observant leader.

4. Mr. President, your observations on AEC milestones cannot go unnoticed:

- a) The modern signage in some of our churches has increased the visibility of AEC, I urge those who do not have signage to prioritise it. *It would help to guide this brand i.e. colours for consistency.*
 - b) Mr President, you also touched on the vision of our conference centre, our own conference centre if I may emphasize, with a target date of 16 December 2018. To me this shows proper planning and our prayers are that the captains of this historic centre should press on undeterred. Communication is key in a project of such magnitude. The church will expect accurate and timely information from the Conference Centre Committee in order to keep the momentum of the project. Visibility of the project status in all the AEC structures is very important.
 - c) Mr. President, I was taken aback by the SAGM financial statement of 1929 in Durban. Surely the church should consider having its own library, but above all you touched on proper handling of finances and the need to have audited books. I am happy to announce that the Swaziland region has already started putting structures in place, we now have an Audit and Finance Committee with specified terms of reference.
 - d) Mr President, the surplus of R145, 753 in the 2013/2014 financial year shows strong financial controls by the Treasurer Rev. J Shoba.
5. Structure not working at full potential
- a) Mr President, allow me to borrow from the 1st sentence of our objectives: *"To plan specific activities and projects where we are working together, in mission and outreach programs both locally and abroad"*. This is a very strong objective and deeply touches my heart.
 - b) I am sorry that we do not fully assist your office in executing its mandate; AEC has intellectuals who can be able to craft a vibrant strategic plan of the Board that can be cascaded to the regions, circuits and locals thus having the church working like a well-oiled machine. The strategic plan will explicitly show strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is important that the church develops its strategic plan so that, Mr President, on your report you address successes based on timelines, responsible people and well planned financial resources.
 - c) Mr President, my appeal is that AEC should have a register of all the qualifications of all brethren from different fields so that any task for the church can be expediently executed.
6. In conclusion: Mr President, I see you as a leader who rely on four things:
- a) *Relationships*: you connect with all Christians and people from all spheres; I see personal growth here which is a plus for the whole of AEC.
 - b) *Equipping*: Mr President you help others to achieve their potential, when you asked me to do a commentary I was greatly humbled, grateful and happy. Today i am standing here which is a great honour to me in 2014!
 - c) Mr President in you i see a *Positive Attitude*: attitude is everything, this is a deal breaker: brethren, a bad attitude is like a flat tyre, you cannot go anywhere until you fix it. There is another saying which says: your smile is your logo (your identity), your personality is your business card (Christianity card in our case), how you leave others feeling after having an experience with you becomes your trademark.
 - d) Lastly, Mr President, I also see true Leadership in you: you influence others around you to believe in themselves.

Thank you all for attentively listening, Nkulunkulu anibusise!

Presented by

PETER MGCINI SHONGWE

at Africa Evangelical Church Annual General Conference 2014,

Filladelfia School, Soshanguve

19 December 2014