

**AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE 2016**



“... by His Spirit...”

YEAR 2017 - VERSE:

“So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel:
‘Not by might nor by power, but **by my Spirit**,
says the Lord Almighty.”
(Zechariah 4:6 NIV)

OUR VISION STATEMENT:

"By faith we see the church 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 disciples 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 –

"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:3 (ESV).

2016 was full of events, some threatening and disturbing, locally, nationally and globally. I feel the agony of the nations, the cry of the needy and desolate, the anguish of the suffering displaced peoples in the world. I was moved when I saw our hospitals full of ailing people, when I watched the opening of gates during visiting hours in hospitals and jails, my heart was saddened. Politically, socially, spiritually and psychologically humanity has just lost it. We witnessed the strange behaviour of destroying, disobedience, self-centeredness and confusion invading humanity proving indeed that we are totally depraved.

We are grateful to all the members of the AEC and prayer partners who carried us through the year with their prayers, gifts, words of encouragement and comfort. It was a difficult year to many of us, but the Lord carried us along. Let us praise Him for that. Thank you!

Personally, I am grateful to my family, home church, leadership groups that I worked with from the Local Church, regions, task teams, structural leadership and the Board. Through it all I learnt to trust in Jesus. It is true that storms produce skilled sailors.

THE 2015 CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS –

Sukuma Comprehensive High School in Pietermaritzburg hosted us adequately in 2015 and KwaZulu-Natal Region did their best. The **"Be Alert"** theme echoed in our minds as we concluded that conference. We will ever remember many things when we reflect in years to come about 2015 Conference. The lessons we learnt from the Corinthian church, the honouring of our four pastoral families, the conference centre graphics, the fire that disturbed us and other small creatures at night, the centre of activities from morning until late at night. The Bible study notes are still available for those who missed them. They were made available in all regions. Some used the booklets for their group Bible Studies and the understanding of "BE ALERT" became appropriate to all of us. It is with sadness that others became careless and ended up being victims of the Devil. Let us pray and love them with the love of Christ. May the good Lord bless us all.

✦ HEAVEN REJOICED IN RECEIVING THEM –

Though death invades and destroys us, the climax of it all is that **DEATH WILL DIE** and resurrection will bring the freedom of perpetual life. Aches and pains, tears and sorrow will all cease.

The **mother** of Revd SE Dlamini went to be with the Lord on the 8 March 2016 and her funeral took place on the 12 March 2016 at Mbazwane. Thank you to all those who prayed, supported and others were present on the funeral day. The family is grateful for your prayer support and words of comfort afforded to them during that sad moment in the history of the family. When something like that happens, we all go through a stage of denial as we are all human.

The **mother** of Revd TE Goboza went to be with the Lord in Lusikisiki on the 28 March 2016 and her funeral took place on the 16 April 2016. Revd Goboza had to leave Limpopo while his mother was sick and he stayed with her until the Lord called her. Thank you for such love and care. May the Lord comfort you and your remaining family.

The **father** of Revd WN Dlodlu in Swaziland went to be with the Lord on the 28 March 2016 and his funeral took place on the morning of the 3rd April at Nkiliji, Swaziland. Continue to pray for the family as they are adjusting to a new life without the father. We realise that the words that we say will never fill the void that is there. May the God of comfort give us all His favour at this time.

Revd Dr CPM Gumede our former President, in Swaziland went to be with the Lord on the 5th April 2016 after suffering pain in his frail body. We all rejoice though painful to continue life with that void. It was very difficult in the family during his last days. But we salute his family who took good care of him until he answered the upward call. His funeral took place at Esitseni royalty during the early hours of Saturday the 16th April 2016.

The family was very thankful to all brethren, friends and relatives for their support during their sad moments. Pray for the adjustments that the family will make to continue life without their father, mkhulu, Mfundisi, friend etc in years to come.

Miss Duduzile Mkhize, of Ekuphileni Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal went to be with Lord who was our beloved lady worker on the 13 April 2016 whose funeral took place on the 23 April 2016 at Mthwalume. Duduzile worked at Dumisa and then went to work with Revd AM Ncwane at Ekuphileni. When our loved ones go, they leave us with a deep wound that cannot be healed by our wisdom. Let us continue in our prayers for the families, communities and the church that the Father of all comforts could heal our wounds.

Revd Themba Brilliant Zikhali of KaNgwanase, KwaZulu-Natal went to be with the Lord on the afternoon of the 19 June 2016 and his funeral took place at his home at Mseleni on the 25 June 2016. Many people came from all walks of life to celebrate this extra ordinary pastor's life who was multi gifted and a passionate evangelist who could compose a song and play it with his piano accordion and move your soul to another level. Continue to pray for the widow KaMlambo and the children that the Lord would continue to shelter them for His glory.

Though we continue to be bankrupt with workers, the Lord of the harvest also chooses His best who are our best too and calls them home. We cannot understand His eternal plan, but may we encourage all those who feel that the Lord is calling them to emerge and take that step of faith without delay. The Lord is faithful to do the rest.

Ev J Lugxoko of Zithutha, Eastern Cape passed away 14 September 2016. It was heart breaking to me since when I visited Zithutha in April we had wonderful fellowship with him and he promised to be in this conference. His funeral took place on 29 September 2016 and I could not be there because of other commitments. Do pray for the family and the church as they will miss that tall leader in that community.

I report that **Mrs Nontombi M Ndlovu**, the wife of the most known by many nicknames (Indoda yenhloko, President's driver or the ordination Videoing man) from eSikhaleni lost his wife on the 5 October 2016 after a brief severe illness and the funeral took place on the 8 October 2016. This happened during the very week when the KZN Women were going to start their Retreat and as a result some did not go and others did not conclude their sessions at the Skogheim.

The family and the local church are grateful for support that they received from far and near during that time. Mr LTD Ndlovu himself wants to let you know that he was deeply moved by your condolences, presence and prayers. He apologizes to all those who did not hear or heard late. The Lord bless you all.

Miss Lindelwa Phumlile Nxumalo (the late Revd EH Nxumalo's daughter, Mbazwana) went to be with the Lord on the 25 October 2016 and her funeral took place at her home on Saturday November 05 2016. The amazing thing about this funeral was the presence of SAPS entourage as she worked for this department at Empangeni and Mbazwana clusters. The testimonies of the impact of the gospel in the life of that young lady was encouraging. It was fulfilling to see and hear testimonies from the SAPS senior officers. We heard that she practically lived Isaiah 41:10 and used it in her life. This was our 1996-year verse.

Mrs Nxumalo (MaMbatha) and her children were grateful to God for the support, prayers and encouragement she received from the church and people who knew Lindelwa. Let us not forget to pray for her and the responsibilities she will be having. Thank you for the AEC pastoral leadership and families that graced that funeral.

Mr William Mbhamali, Mbabane, Swaziland, the news came on Sunday evening that he went to be with the Lord on the 20th November 2016 and was buried on the 26th morning. This came as a shock to me as when I last talked with him he was in jovial spirit and promised to attend this conference. He worked whole-heartedly with many structures in the church, he was good in doing many things well. He was a humble gentleman indeed. I will personally miss him because of his height, love, laughter and smile, generosity, wisdom, interpersonal and listening skills.

Thank you for all who played a supportive role since he became physically challenged. We are all thankful to God for allowing us to rub shoulders with such a man. Pray that Make Mbhamali (LaNkambule) and children continue with that unique legacy. We thank God for his life.

✠ **ARRIVALS:**

We welcome all boys and girls who were born this year, 2016. That is one of the indications that we are still here on earth where we continually welcome the new generation that God gives us.

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 body of Christ and of AEC this year.

We cannot forget those who got married in 2016. In all regions, there were weddings, even this month we welcome the Newly Weds and pray that the good Lord might guide and direct them as they minister to one another.

✦ **SOARING HIGHER:**

2016 saw some of our members graduate from different fields of learning. Even though in South Africa we were crippled with #FeesMustFall campaign but some did graduate and others will graduate at the beginning of the year. It was not safe at our tertiary institutions but the Lord kept most of them safe. Children and adults became excited when they accomplished their goals. We should be grateful to the Lord for many of His gifts that He has allowed us as the church to enjoy. Many of our members do fly to many countries in the world representing many areas of industries, disciplines, responsibilities etc. We owe our Lord, indeed our all.

HERE AND THERE

FEBRUARY 5 - 7 BOARD MEETING AT IHAWU - DURBAN

This is usually our evaluation meeting and looking ahead of many areas of the church. It is always trying to finalise the outstanding items. We were joined by the task team that was requested to work on our Basic Discipleship Manual. Though we worked until very late, we were grateful that we finished our agenda. May I say a word of gratitude to all board members who have dedicated their lives to serving the Lord well! Your participation, wisdom and love have made our business meetings to be a ministry indeed.

February 7 – AEC Nkwambase - Durban

After the Board Meeting, I decided to stop at AEC Nkwambase and the Durban Circuit Chairperson Revd BT Chonco joined me. Memories of yester years came back when I arrived. This is where Revd TM Gambushe spent most of his life. This is where we had a Natal Transvaal conference going back to the early 80s. This is the local church that now is led by Revd & Mrs MA Ngcobo. I always thank the Lord when I meet happy people in the church. It was a blessing to see a number of Senior Sisters who are now assisted by a third leg when they walk. These are the seasoned prayer warriors of today. May we bond with one another, mainly with our Senior members as well as the children because if we don't do that, they will feel neglected in the fast lane of present life.

MARCH 10-11; JUN 30-01 JUL & 27-29 OCT – SIM-SA COUNCIL MEETING: CAPE TOWN

We are grateful to God who allowed me to attend all three meetings of SIM-SA in 2016. It has been a financially challenging year to attend these meetings which are important for our shared vision. The July meeting was held at Skogheim and it was a blessing to me not to incur flying costs to Cape Town. The fields are ever white for harvest. It appears that as population grows the workers dwindle. Unfortunately, the world is moving towards the spiritual darkness as the wisdom of this world grows.

April 24 – Zithutha, Lusikisiki – Eastern Cape

“It’s a wonderful day Oh Yes, it’s a wonderful day.” The song rang meaningfully on the Zithutha hills from Young people, and coming from their loving hearts. Revd PM Mgevu and his wife MaMzelemu couldn’t believe that the day came. He organized a convoy of cars from nowhere and they gently negotiated the winding and ascending road towards Mzimvubu river. Some of the things you only realize after the event. Arriving at Zithutha was humbling to see young and matured dancing, singing, waving their scarves, shawls and hands.

The visit was long overdue as I wanted to see where our pastors’ labour and meet the people who support them and thank them on behalf of the AEC and impart in them that they are important in the church. Revd TG Ntongana, the Regional Chair was there with his wife and other ladies from Mthatha, Revd Cingo was there and his wife from Lukhanyisweni, Mrs VV Magubheni, Mrs Maqutywa, the Gcingcas etc when I saw the people I know, I really felt at home. The people were full of joy, very generous in everything, I was very encouraged to see children in good numbers and being grounded in the Word of God by seasoned teachers. Well done Children’s Ministry team. You are doing a good job.

May 6 - 8 – Skogheim Workers’ Seminar: Port Shepstone – KZN

About 180 happy and very energetic workers came from all of our four regions at this 14th seminar and the programme was challenging as we thought of what will happen when we are no more. It is something that we often shift away. Our built seem to tell us that we will still live many years to come. We also looked at developing a leader which is another thing that we become self-centred and forget to pour our lives to the others as Christ did.

We also took time to pray for many things affecting us in the church, communities and the world at large. As always, we celebrate our fellowship and love by having the Lord’ Supper on the last evening together. The Lord has raised up His choicest servants and blessed them with many skills, knowledge and gifts. We thank the churches that made it possible for their leaders to attend this seminar.

It was the exposure time for learning, networking, laughing and relaxing. Thanks for such commitment. Our next meeting with these dedicated leaders of AEC will be on **4 – 7 May 2017**. Pray, plan and be there if you are an AEC worker. This will be held at Meet Mekaar Resort, near Mtubatuba, KZN. We apologize to Eastern Cape delegation as they have to drive extra kilometres to the North. We congratulate Swaziland who will drive less kilometres. We also apologize to those who wanted to fly to King Shaka International from OR Tambo, but they can still do that but they will drive more than two hours after they land. But it will be an experience not to be forgotten.

May 8 2016 – AEC UMkhomazi - Dumisa

On the way back from the Seminar, I was so privileged though it was raining all the way to visit this church which is led by Revd & Mrs MP Dladla. We were welcomed by happy young and matured people that God has raised. I was impressed when I saw their heart for the work of the Lord in that area.

I was grateful to meet the church leadership, the children, the youth, the seniors of the membership and the visitors though it was raining. I was moved when I saw their

building project and the quality material they are using. Let us indeed encourage one another to do well. My heartfelt thanks go to the Dumisa leadership team who made it possible for me to enjoy that stop over.

Board & Denomination Committee - July 22-24 – Meet Mekaar- KZN

This was a new venue for most of the committee members. The place is near Mtubatuba fully surrounded by nature. The leaders came from all regions for a weekend of planning and stretching our vision to the future after this conference. It was the last time for all structures to meet in this way as we all anticipated new leadership that is going to be elected in this conference for the next term. The Lord brought us together to the strong 66-member team. Beautiful memories will linger on for years to come as we reminisce hard working leaders. May our good Lord multiply the talents and gifts He has given you in years to come as you continue serving Him in other areas of ministry.

July 30 2016 – AEC KwaMlamula – Mseleni - KZN

The local church of KwaMlamula organized this day to thank God for the exceptional service of Revd & Mrs MS Phoseka who were retiring due to ill health and the circuit of Mseleni joined in to celebrate the ministry of this family.

There were sombre moments and happy moments. This family since posting at Mseleni Circuit had a rare privilege of pastoring different local churches within the Circuit and because of that, had a vast experience and knowledge. He was driven by the Ordination verse that was assigned to him in 1999.

September 3 2016 – AEC MaLindza – Bethany - Swaziland

This was a unique special day for Revd M Maseko and his wife LaShabangu family as the local church, the circuit and the region were thanking God for the faithful service of this servant. It was a beautiful day for the brethren to organize the exceptional day thanking God for the services of these servants.

It was clear that Maseko was a visionary leader. He had the blue print of the AEC MaLindza. He saw the pastor's manse being built; he saw the church building being realized which was used for this service. The beautiful building was still in the building process with the roof on. The windows and doors were yet not installed but we all enjoyed the open access we had while there. Maseko was well spoken off by the local chief representative and he had that respect from the outsiders. We congratulate the Masekos for those good testimonies and for an AEC pastor to be well spoken of, that invites others to be part of this warm family. We are grateful to God.

September 4 2016 – AEC Mtimane – Mankayane- Swaziland

I was honoured to have the Honourable Senator N Mdluli pick me up where I was, to this amazing church on one of Mankayane majestic hills where the Makhubu's lead that work. We were joined by the Circuit Head Zwane, S Simelane, B Zwane and the scenery was adorned by special people. Pastor V Makhubu became so excited and he took time to introduce many people to us individually. My mind couldn't memorize many of them even the young people.

This church has so many projects in their plans to really become a "Mission Station" that will serve the community at large. I stood inside the pastor's manse which had walls going up. On the list, they mentioned making fish farm. Hmm harvesting fish

up on the hills of Mtimane? Hard to believe, but it is their vision. I can hardly wait to see and taste Mtimane fish and chips in few years to come. What an innovation!

Let us pray for such innovations, trusting the Lord all the way to do beyond what we could imagine. The Makhubus became so excited when they shared their passion about this life as they feel that they were given second chance after their gas mishap.

November 20 2016 – AEC Manzengwenya – KwaNgwanase - KwaZulu-Natal

It was in my heart at the funeral of Revd TB Zikhali to visit his last local church and share with Saints there the good times that the Lord gave them that servant. A man who was multi gifted in every way. The weather on the day was cloudy and cool and I requested two men from Esikhaleni to accompany me (PZ Mdletshe and B Dlamini).

This local church has two preaching points viz. Esikhayeni and Ntombemhlophe. They all decided to meet at Manzengwenya. The embryo of the branch dates back in the mid-1950s. This is where our Rev SE Dlamini attended Sunday School. Ev F Mkhize who could walk from KwaMabibi and come back the evening became one of the first visiting preacher in the 1960s. The church has a rich history and their worship and passion is very deep. It resonates with deep understanding of what it means to be a Christian. This is where Revd TB Zikhali last pastored before going to glory. Pray for this beautiful place that the Lord through His riches might send another humble servant to take this group to another spiritual level.

OUR GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Hebrew scholars – our African languages as they develop will need Hebrew scholars to properly translate the Word of God. This will be a long lonely road. It will demand faith, passion, support and vision. Education has become very expensive, translating the Scriptures is a very tedious job. If we don't engage, we will end up having non-Christians translating the Bible because of their intellect.

Innovative businesses –

Innovative Apps – I heard that by 2023 or earlier we might have fully automated vehicles. These will take you to where you want to go after you enter destination. They will not even need a licenced driver. Hey young people pray that God give you something that might change and enhance our way of doing things.

Stretching our involvement –

Healthy Local Churches – I believe that healthy local churches will yield good dividends in all we do. Let us be the most sort after members at home in our local churches. Let us be visible and be available in our local churches. Our members will be better tomorrow if we invest in them today in our local setting. Let us **upgrade** in all areas of our lives. The way we accept one another, give, help, learn, listen, love, manage things, pray, preach, speak, understand, visualize the future, write minutes in various structures indeed, the list is long.

MISHAPS -

June **07** 2016, the Hams family were attacked, traumatized and their car taken mid-morning and never recovered. Early morning around 2:30 on the **07** September 2016 the Ntonganas were assaulted and car taken but recovered on the same day with their belonging but Revd Ntongana had to be admitted for about five days. When we heard about these extra ordinary near-death situations we froze and were all driven to the

throne of grace for safety and thanksgiving. It is our daily prayer that the Lord should protect us from the disturbing sufferings in our world.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

1. KWAZULU-NATAL: 05– 09 JULY 2016

The KwaNgwanase circuit hosted this conference at Khulani Special School at KwaMduku off Hluhluwe,. As always, committed members converged from all circuits and they had visitors from Eastern Cape and Swaziland. The organizing team worked very hard to organize water through water trucks. Congratulations!

Young and matured looked happy to be there. They enjoyed an unfamiliar facility. Their theme looked at those who will do the will of God during the time of lost generation. Avoiding compromise during such testing times which are already with us. I was encouraged to see all age categories being present at this conference. Be it young people, women and men. May we grow as a family, lovingly caring and encouraging one another.

2. EASTERN CAPE – MTHATHA - 13 – 16 JULY 2016

The venue of this conference was Ikhwezi Lokusa Special School where we held our last conference in the Eastern Cape and where we are today. Memories of the big tent, the rainy arrival day, the warmness of the Eastern Cape brethren and the buses that came in and out through that security gate.

The difference was that it was cold winter week and it was the Regional conference. May I say thank you to the Chair Revd TG Ntongana and his leadership team. Let us not forget that this Region is rich of Missionary history of yester years and they are making land marks even today. Their theme was really a family talk – “My Church My Pride.” It was encouraging to hear and see people who are committed to their church of choice. “AEC my spiritual home of Choice” as some young people boast about their church. I am grateful to God when such things are said in public.

3. GAUTENG – SUNDAY – 18 SEPTEMBER 2016

This Region had one session of celebration as usual this year and they met in Mamelodi Town Hall. People came by buses and cars and spent most of the day together. The unusual venue also added a lively spark to many people who were walking tall on the day.

The day was chilly but that did not dampen the fellowship spirit. Rev K Riba spoke as if he memorized and linked all his sentences with minimal punctuation. All the Hallelujah and Amens gaps were eliminated because of his speed.

There was a new initiative that the region has taken of acquiring a big site which was previously owned by Grinaker. They have plans for those facilities which is too early for me to say much about it. I did see the place, but the official publication had not come to my desk by the time I wrote this report. The development of the site will need faith, unity, commitment, focus, hard work and God’s favour to realize their dream. Let us pray for them that they should be encouraged as they see the Lord work in their lives in this long journey of faith.

4. SWAZILAND: MBULUZI - 25 - 28 AUGUST 2016

Swaziland has been meeting at Mbuluzi for most of their regional conferences. 2016 was no exception. The alert theme continued to ring in many people's ears. I was very encouraged to see the theme ringing in many people's hearts. Others have suggested that we continue with the theme even this coming year. But these themes and year verses brethren are designed to be for life. They should be stepping stones to maturity and grace. Let us live the Word of God and see people come to know Christ because of the kind of life we live.

I had a special honour after conference of paying afternoon visits to few people who were going through difficult moments in their lives and because of that they missed the conference.

We visited **Mrs N Shabangu** the wife of the late Themba Shabangu the Mbuluzi High School Principal. Mr MTE Mtetwa and Mrs ET Mndzebele dedicated their cars to take us to the Shabangu home. When we arrived, my heart was comforted seeing Mrs Shabangu, though it was sad to see and feel the void but she was thankful to God for the good times they had during their married life. We sang and prayed and thanked the Lord as the inevitable slit was tangible.

We visited **Revd EZ Dlamini** at Mbabane Clinic with the same group. To our joy Mrs Dlamini (laBulunga) his wife was there alongside. Revd Dlamini was encouraged and we also were joined by the Mkhontas. His room became warm and he became excited as he shared his journey with us.

The last stop was at **Mr W Mbhamali's** residence in Mbabane. We were encouraged to see Mr Mbhamali though he couldn't walk because of his legs which were being worked on to rectify his lower limbs coordination by his physiotherapist. He was happy, laughing and even said he wants to attend the 2016 AGCC in the Eastern Cape. We sang and prayed with the family and we left there very encouraged. I was expecting to see him in this conference as he wished but the Lord had other plans for all of us.

FROM OUR STRUCTURES:

EXCELLENCE honours God and inspires people. Let us upgrade ourselves in all spheres of our activity and leadership. *Let us do well.* The way we counsel, dress, give, pray, preach, sing, speak, teach, worship, write, etc., let us just upgrade ourselves. As I said in the Regional conferences, **"Upgrade! Upgrade! Upgrade!"**

The Women's leadership is grateful for steady growth in their attendance in conferences and conventions, finance, younger women participation, going to Bible Schools. In some regions and circuits, they have initiated pension schemes and medical assistance for their pastors, assisting the bereaved families and being handy in time of need.

They are requesting all of us to join in praying for:

1. The zeal and commitment of women to their local churches and affairs of the kingdom of God.
2. The void created by the departure and loss of loved ones, partners, children, siblings and parents.

3. The growth and deepening roots by our women in Christ and not be tossed to and fro by the trending beliefs.
4. That God may prosper the women and increase their giving so that the realization of our projects could be faster.
5. Creativity and innovation to improve our programs during our conventions and conferences.

Yes, we can do it “... *by His Spirit...*”

The Children’s Ministry:

This should be the backbone of our ministry and vision. The numbers that have come in show us that we have about 10,000 children in this structure. We are grateful to God for those who have dedicated their lives in teaching our young ones. This structure reported that they had workshops, Sunday School lessons, in other regions exams, rallies, camps, issued Certificates. Let us assist this structure with finance and other personnel. It could be a good thing if we designate certain portion of our budget from the local church to the AGCC to the Children’s Ministry. These teachers do this out of passion and love. No wonder our Children Workers are happy people, always smiling and laughing. Join them and enjoy life of service.

It is said that by 2050, with 9.7 billion population, Africa as a continent will be number one populous continent with 2.5 billion. UNICEF further projected that the continent’s population will double in size; and its under-18 population will increase by two-thirds to reach almost a billion children. Projections indicate that by 2050, around 40 per cent of all births, and about 40 per cent of all children, will be in Africa, up from about 10 per cent in 1950. Not only that people live longer now. It is said that many people who reach 60 should look forward to another 20 years of good life. Our church tomorrow will have these two groups of ages to be cared for – the children and the elderly. This should position us properly in investing in our children who will face the congested global phenomenon in less than 40 years. Grounding them in Christ, we will be guaranteeing a Christ like life in them. Let us hear the little voices pleading with us all saying: “*Teach us about Jesus.* We are everywhere, in schools, streets, communities, churches, malls, homes and in playing fields. Don’t tell us about other programmes, camps, fun plays, but *teach us about Jesus.*” Yes, we can do it “... *by His Spirit...*”

The Youth Ministry:

This structure reported successful year in all our regions and also attendance to conferences with their zeal for the Lord. We are thankful to God for various innovative drives in their places of worship. Some of our young people are clear with salvation and what is required to be a balanced Christian. We do have a number who still need our prayers, tutoring and mentoring. Our AEC young people should know that after salvation they need to be baptised and then learn deeper things about God, leadership and fitting them in our global village. They should not be the so called “church goers” as such does not transform a life but they should be choicest, credible and committed members of good standing, ready to be used by God anywhere, anytime and anyhow.

Our world has so many challenges that draws our youth away from total commitment to the Lord. Let us help them avoid the bait and enjoy really balanced food. We should all be readers. Let us read books. Develop yourself with the great global thinkers. Let us not be slaves of social network and technology in a negative way. Google may be

googled but you still have a God given unique gift to add to Google what has never been discovered by Google.

To see you, our young people crisscrossing our halls with your smiles and laughter and hugs, makes us say, *“Thank You Lord for these young people. Preserve them even in this confused generation.”* Tomorrow you will grow into adulthood but be a blessing today. Tomorrow you will face hard choices and you will be alone to decide and be happy in your decisions. Yes, you can do it *“... by His Spirit...”*

The Young Adults:

The Young Adults will take time to come into full bloom because of a number of things. But we are grateful to God for the united effort demonstrated by the interim committee. They have worked on the guidelines for this structure and it is towards finalization as a working document. The needs of our growing church population demand our submission to God and discover the new avenues of multiplying and maximising our outreach to regions beyond what we know.

As a church, we cannot restrict people by age, the spiritual need should be the driving force. We must guarantee maturity in all levels of AEC. We have a growing number of young professionals who have matured and they have wide experience in many areas of life. They need to be consolidated, channelled and unleashed to the world that is languishing for real life in Jesus. This structure, I believe may be the structure that can stabilize the pendulum of mediocre Christians.

May I encourage the young people to be active in their local churches. Be visible and available there. We don't want to see young people being involved in our conferences and yet in their local churches they are not active or even known. Yes, you can do it *“... by His Spirit...”*

The Men's Ministry:

Let me express my deepest condolences to the AEC Men's Fellowship Committee for the loss of Mr W Mbhamali, who was the chair who went to be with the Lord on Sunday 20 November 2016. We thank the Lord that Mbhamali was a committed member endowed with good humble spirit. With this loss, may I encourage men to work hard in consolidating this structure.

Men have been ridiculed in many areas of life, my prayer is that such should not dampen our spirit in the kingdom. We are not alone. Let men show their determination in all areas in the church. It is true that all our structures need the involvement of men.

We are encouraged when we hear about the planned men's retreats in different regions from time to time. Those who attend do come back different in the local churches. What I said to other structures that we need involvement and visibility more in the local church than in other forums is also applicable to Men's Fellowship. Whatever men do, let them do in a uniquely manly manner. Yes, you can do it *“... by His Spirit...”*

OUR HORIZONTAL INVOLVEMENT

UNION BIBLE INSTITUTE – www.ubi.ac.za We thank God for another year that has gone. May I hasten and say if the Lord is calling you respond without delay. Visit UBI webpage for more information. UBI is registered, accredited, approved and credible institution offering *Higher Certificate in Theology; Diploma in Theology and Bachelor of Theology*. The request is still pertinent that fees should be paid in advance. Let us make our partnership tangible through finance. UBI is celebrating 75 years of God's faithfulness in providing personnel, finance, students and many other gifts over the years. The institution is indeed for higher learning and sound Biblical training for those whom the Lord has called. We pride ourselves with many pastors who graduated there. It could be a heart-warming gesture if we could give no less than R75 or better R100 per person to mark the 75 years of His Great Faithfulness over the past three quarters of a century. There are many needs, inter alia: renovations, new mattresses, re-paving, married students housing and general expenses. May I still invite you to give generously so that we can bring change in the school through our participation as an extension of our missionary zeal. I am attaching these banking details if you don't have them:

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

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.

Please take note that every year the prices of Bibles are adjusted at the beginning of November. Also, when you transfer the AEC donation to the Bible Society of South Africa use this new donor **reference number 700876** so that your gift will go under AEC. When you fail to do this your gift will go under unspecified column. Last year it appears that we gave less than R7000. Just wondering as to how many had a part in this important participation in Missions. In 2017 it is said that South Africa will need 23 million Bibles. We should encourage the printing and distributing of the Word of God as we are what we are because somebody gave.

MODERN SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONS

May I salute those who have put up their AEC place of worship signs in 2016. It appears that some local churches have not as yet and others marketing is not in them. Well, unfortunately we rather not push one another too far. But it is difficult to direct somebody to a place which has no directional signs. At times, we are forced to use a tree, a landmark building, a first left turn and then second right turn or even a shop to direct people to our place places of worship. Signs are visible and carry the meaning with them. GPS also is here to stay we must know how to read and key coordinates on our smart phones at least. Times have changed.

HIV/AIDS & TODAY FOR TOMORROW –

We praise God for Mrs Mndzebele for availing herself on behalf of us all, as our passionate nurse. Once a nurse always a nurse, what a noble calling. During our

Workers' Seminar in May we were honoured to have Revd Chris Maphosa from SIM who addressed us. We were all challenged as our hearts went to the needs of children.

Since we have had this programme for 13 years now, we need to evaluate the impact of these lessons. Most of the teachers are enjoying the lessons which is encouraging, but at times the translation and printing of these is not timeous or user friendly. It is true that the knowledge on HIV has increased as we have contributed a small portion to the global interventions.

Concerning the books or lessons we are using in our regions, we are in different levels and it is a bit difficult to have systematized progress reports due to funding, translation, printing, training, transportation, storage and administration. May I request that we be patient with one another. We work in diverse communities with many constraints.

We are so grateful to the Xabas who organized training for different churches in Pietermaritzburg and invited Revd C Maphosa (all the way from Zimbabwe) and Mrs ET Mndzebele (all the way from Swaziland) who ran those workshops with great success under the auspices of SIM. If you have a passion for the next generation let nothing hinder you in jumping into God's heart and seize the opportunity. The road is still long, but each journey is accomplished by each step at a time. Let us daily systematize our steps in our communities for the glory of God.

GRANDPARENTS DAY – SEPTEMBER 11 2016

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.” II Timothy 1:5

Most of us have fond memories of grandparents who hold a special place in our hearts. The Bible has much to say about grandparents. They play a major role in the Kingdom of God. The book of Genesis is a foundational book. It tells about *families, births, deaths, marriages, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren*. By these records, God is showing us the importance of each position. Godly grandparents bring *stability, experience, and wisdom to the family, church, and community*. As they are dear to the heart of God, we must honor them and lift them up in high esteem, for they are a gift from heaven.

Mrs Marian McQuade, a native of Fayette County, Virginia, USA, and her husband Joe were the parents of 15 children. They have 40 grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren. In 1978, five years after its West Virginia inception, the United States Congress passed legislation proclaiming the first Sunday after Labour Day as National Grandparents Day. The proclamation was signed by President Jimmy Carter. (September was chosen for the holiday, to signify the "autumn years" of life.) We salute all those churches that made this special day a success in their local churches. Our next day of warm fellowship with our grandparents is on the **10 September 2017**.

✠ CLERGY APPRECIATION DAY – 09 OCTOBER 2016

Some local churches shift the date to any later date in October because of different pressing programmes on their calendars. That is acceptable as in other countries they consider October as the month of appreciating the clergy. It is time to reflect on God's

great provision in our spiritual lives by giving us shepherds or spiritual guides. I thank God for the love and consideration that is shown by most local churches. It is true that some have not even started that good habit. May I remind the members that our next **Clergy Appreciation Day** is **08 October 2017**. Some people have requested me to explain how it started. Fortunately, any question you might have I have a friend who is there to help you. The name of this friend is called Google. Thank you!

Conference Centre Project – It is a common thing that those who hardly give demand financial reports in the churches. Likewise, those who are not faithful or reliable in their giving would like to know the progress. How can we progress without giving our resources for the kingdom sacrificially?

The Treasurer will tell us how we stand. But we are not encouraging one another as we should. The minimal proposal was R400 per person per year which is not coming in as expected. May I challenge all the leaders to give multiples of this during this coming year. If the pastors, committee members of all structures, from the local church churches, circuits, regions would catch the vision, our goal could be met quicker.

But the fact is, AGCC 2018 will be hosted by Swaziland. Mankayana Conference Centre started or not started, let those in South Africa prepare their Passports for Swaziland in 2018. I am glad that Swaziland is already planning to host that conference. Let us have a united faith and focused vision to see God doing great things through us in this generation. It may delay, but it will happen because we believe that we can do it with Him helping us.

PLEASE NOTE

May I say thank you to all committees who served in the past as this year, we conducted elections and saw new committees in place from local churches, circuits, regions and AGCC. Let us acknowledge the work they did and truly thank God for their passionate lives. May I say to them that it is not important for people to remember you or what you said; the most important thing is for the people to remember the work that Christ did for them. When the world pushes leaders to leave a legacy, I beg to differ in this family of God – the most important legacy that was left for us *is the Christ like lifestyle*. God first, selflessness, humility and focus. Remember the words from the Lord, **“Do this in Remembrance of Me.”** Not by might, not by force, not by anger, not by your power, not by your authority, not by your knowledge ... but **by His Spirit**.

Let us pray for the new leadership in all levels and embrace them. They are leading the children of God in difficult end times. When everything trends let us remain resolute *“by not becoming like the people of this world. Instead change the way you think.”* (Romans 12:2). Paul also warns Timothy to *“Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”* 1 Timothy 6:12.

In 2016 the statistics did not come early enough from other circuits and the Eastern Cape did not submit their statistics.

I thank God for the opportunity He gave me to serve so many beautiful people. During my tenure, I learnt that people matter. I learnt to appraise and applaud; to lead and to be led; to invest in lives, give and encourage; to laugh, listen and love; to observe and to pray; to read and to smile; to think, touch and trust; to reach out and solidify those contacts.

There were things that I wanted to do, but the Lord allowed me to do what we did with the entire leadership. I thank my local church, Esikhaleni for taking great strides so that I could do most of the things. The joy of their faces inspired me to inspire others. The difficult time came when the Lord called His Saints from us. Indeed, we have learned to trust in Jesus. There were numerous Sundays that I was away in a year, but the Lord closed the gap. When the body complained, your prayers refreshed me with new energy. When problems came our way, the Lord opened my eyes to see the enemy behind what could be seen.

There were local churches that I wanted to visit but it did not happen because we are a vast denomination with footprints everywhere. By not visiting those places was not because I undermined them, but time just could not open up.

Finally, brethren, *“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.”* (1 Corinthians 16:13 NIV). Let us be **alert** on these last days! It is the explosion of many things. Be firm as you stand in the faith. Be courageous and resilient. Be immovable! Have thick skin and soft heart of faith in the living God! To the Young Children, the Youth, the Young Adults, the Women and Men, our Elderly prayer warriors may the Lord protect and warm your hearts as you face daily responsibilities in life. He is Able!

May I take this opportunity and wish all members of our church a joyful, fruitful, healthy and industrious Happy New Year 2017. Let us bond with one another as we jointly linger before the throne of grace, until we meet again, next December God willing in Gauteng.

I thank God for the privilege of being nothing but a servant, seeing Him increase while I decrease. Yes, by His Spirit!

Humbly presented by



Rev. P. Mntambo

PRESIDENT, AFRICA EVANGELICAL CHURCH
29 DECEMBER 2016

Prayer Pointers for the Year 2017:

1. The new Board and the entire leadership as they execute policies in different levels for the glory of God.
2. Let all of us live the Word and do it.
3. Upgrade, good health, safety, fulfilment and joy in our communities and families.
4. Tangible brotherly love that will draw many to Jesus.
5. Biblical and cheerful giving within our denomination.
6. Important dates to note:
 - ✓ 03– 05 February 2017 [Board Meeting]
 - ✓ 04 – 07 May 2017 [Workers' Seminar]
 - ✓ 14 May [Mother's Day]
 - ✓ 18 June [Father's Day]
 - ✓ 04 – 08 July 2017 [KZN RCC]
 - ✓ 12 – 16 July 2017 [EC RCC]
 - ✓ 21 – 23 July Denominational Committees Mtg.
 - ✓ 24 – 27 August 2017 [SD RCC]
 - ✓ 10 September 2017 [Grandparents' Day]
 - ✓ 08 October [Clergy Appreciation Day]
 - ✓ 16 - 20 December 2017 [AGCC] Gauteng hosting

Let us be controlled ... by His Spirit ... as we serve Him!

Due to the fact that the New Board was to be introduced to the assembly, there was nobody who could respond to this address. Revd WTA Xaba who introduced the New Board gave words of appreciation to the outgoing Board before announcing the new Board.