

DISTRICT REPORTS



CAPE OF GOOD HOPE (01)
BISHOP MICHEL HANSROD

INTRODUCTION

Situated in the most Southern part of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope District geographically reflects the diversity of South Africa in particular and Africa in general, in respect of the socio, economic, political, racial, cultural, religious and language aspects of life.

The Methodist Church specifically, in this huge geographical area which spans some 500 kilometres to the East and North, and some 700 kilometres to the West, offers ministry through some 23 Circuits, 435 Societies and is served by 79 active Ministers, 64 Supernumeraries, 23 Members of the Order of Evangelism, 1045 Local Preachers and a huge band of disciples who serve as Stewards, Leaders, Carers and Teachers, whose servant leadership is to be commended as they serve tirelessly and fearlessly as agents of transformation, healing and hope.

As a District, we seek through our various ministries, Circuits, Societies and institutions to reflect God's call upon the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to proclaim the *"Gospel of Healing and Transformation"* and to actively participate in working towards *"A Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of the Nations"*.

DISTRICT VISION ON MISSION AND MINISTRY

As a mechanism of the Wesleyan principle of accountability, the leadership of the District continues to meet annually outside of Synod for its Strategic Review and Planning, in which it seeks together to test its missional pulse and through prayer, discernment and conversation, seek God's direction and dream for the future. Following on previous Indaba's the 2015 gathering noted the following:

That God calls us to be a mission-shaped church, living out our Connexionalism through relationships of mutual respect and communication, underpinned and kept healthy by proper application of procedures and processes, and celebrating how far we have already come.

In seeking to become a "Church Shaped for Mission", we heard God's voice, inviting us to see the world through God's eyes and to be brave enough to begin to engage in the messy and difficult ministry of loving the world around us with the love of God, in word and deed whilst recognising the 'warning' that at times, mission requires us to be open to disruptive moments and practices.

We recognised the disruptive nature of God's Spirit drawing our attention to:

- a) The Higher Education Crisis which resulted in violence on the University of the Western Cape Campus.
- b) The desperate need for introspection and prayer regarding our own spiritual, emotional and vocational health as Ministers, and that of the Church as a whole;

We heard the vital call to integrity and excellence in matters like the administration and financial controls of the Church.

We heard God's call to support and help each other in ministry through mentoring, encouragement, inspiration and prayer for one another and for our ministerial staff.

We sensed the inspiration of the Spirit as we considered the plans and hopes that Synod in Namaqualand in 2016 would be an experience of mission and celebration, rather than business as usual.

We heard God's call:

- To ensure the highest integrity in all of our reporting;
- To commit to a high work ethic and to mutual accountability in this regard;
- For Ministers to lead the way in cross-Circuit missions;
- For a renewed commitment to finding ways to equip ourselves and one another for effective cross-cultural ministry.

As a result of #Feesmustfall Campaign we sensed a Macedonian Call to work together as a District to appoint a University Chaplain in the Cape Metropole.

We recognised the need for clearer co-ordination of youth work within Circuits, and the proper recognition of all forms of youth work and formations within our Circuits and District.

We celebrated the missional approach of Organisations in terms of involvement in ministry, to children's homes, homes for the aged, members in crisis, hospitals, jails, skills development programmes, mentorship of members, bursary assistance to students, a counselling project, and particularly the call to all Organisations to collaborate on a single District-level mission project.

The Namaqualand Synod presented us with the unique opportunity of a Cycle-Mission to the Synod, the celebration of 40 years of the ordination of women in the MCSA, a united mission and legacy project.

We heard the clear call that a Discipleship Movement Shaped for Mission should be the platform of work for every member, Society, Circuit, and Organisation for 2016.

We acknowledge and celebrate the rich variety and enormous diversity of the work being done under the banner of the Mission Desk, and the passion and commitment of all those involved in facilitating both 'mission being' and 'mission doing' at a local and District level. From meeting physical needs to justice issues to social and mental wellbeing where we seem to already be touching many aspects of God's mission.

During 2016 we celebrate the 40th anniversary of both the Ordination of Women, and of the June 16th Uprisings and acknowledged the great importance of commemorating these moments in ways that honestly, properly and respectfully engage with the true issues, values and deep-seated pain involved, and offer honest and meaningful individual and institutional confession of our sinful role in the perpetuation of the education crisis and the exclusion of women. In our District this includes celebrating the story of Cynthia Richards.

We heard the invitation to partnership with the Mozambique District through ministerial exchanges.

As a District we heard, discerned and recognised that we are on a journey together. In many ways we are further down the road than we were five years ago and in other ways we are not, and in some ways this is how it will always be because of the ongoing nature of our journey. We resolved to truly commit ourselves to being a Transforming Discipleship Movement Shaped for Mission as the singular call to action in 2016 in all of our Societies, Circuits and Organisations, each doing it in our own unique way, with our own unique strengths and weaknesses, trusting and knowing that others all over the District are doing the same, celebrating our differences and collaborating where we can we shall be getting somewhere very meaningful.

DISTRICT SYNOD

The 187th Synod was hosted by the Namaqualand Circuit coinciding with the historic bi-centenary celebrations of the Namaqualand Mission. In keeping with the Connexional platform of work, our worship, business and conversations centred around God's call to us to become a Mission Shaped Church. We were extremely privileged to have amongst us our Presiding Bishop, Rev Zipho Siwa and Mrs Siwa, the General Secretary, Rev Charmaine Morgan as well as the Mission Unit, Communications and Ecumenical Affairs Unit Directors.

In a moving service commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Ordination of Women, Synod acknowledged the sinfulness of the exclusion of women from the ministry of Word and Sacrament for so many years and gave thanks for those who sacrificed a great deal to help us discover that God's mission includes all. Through a powerful Bible study by Rev Nomsa Nomqolo the Synod was challenged to acknowledge the continued discrimination against women in our churches, and to repent. We recognised that, to be shaped for mission, we must ask whom we continue to exclude from the ministry, as well as continue depending upon God's Spirit for direction, as enunciated through a Bible study led by Rev John Stewe as son of Namaqualand.

We celebrated the various ministries of a number of both lay and clergy, for their faithfulness in fulfilling God's missional call upon their lives through the awarding of Long Service awards, significant amongst these was one of

40 years to Rev Tim Attwell, whilst together with families and friends we gave thanks to God for those who have finished their earthly journey and joined the church triumphant.

Eleven cyclists rode from Nuwerus to Springbok, a distance of 200 kilometres, and raised funds for the Synod Legacy Fund for mission and ministry in Namaqualand. Synod remembered the many who had, sacrificially given of themselves and their resources to share in God's mission over the last 200 years. A very special sacrificial offering was a gift of R4000 collected by pensioners from the Eastern Cape, sharing from their meagre resources with others. A total sum of R 250 000 was raised for the Namaqualand Legacy Fund enabling mission to continue in Namaqualand, whilst the District Organisations handed over school uniforms, books and stationary to the value of over R150 000 to the eleven schools under our Missional leadership.

Liliefontein Methodist Mission and Bethels Klip were the sites for the bi-centenary celebrations where we gave thanks to God for the many who obediently served God and the call to mission and were challenged to continue the Missional Journey for the next 200 years.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Despite numerous challenges we celebrate the ongoing activity of God's Spirit throughout the District in the following:

- The Commissioning of our New District Lay Leader Mrs Ayanda Woji.
- The 200th anniversary of Mission and Methodism amongst the indigenous people of Southern Africa
- The Centenary Celebration of Mission and Ministry at Norwood, 170 years at Raithby and 120 years at Kenilworth.
- The District School of Discipleship which continues to serve as a vehicle for the equipping of Disciples for the work of Mission and Ministry.
- The consolidation of our drug rehabilitation and prevention programme for children at Heatherdale Children's Home.
- The impact of our Ministerial Mission Week exchanges within the District on the various Circuits where these have been hosted.
- The ongoing annual review of ministry by all clergy.
- The Launch of our Gender, Counselling and Care for Creation Desks, in our Mission Unit.
- The monthly theological reflection sessions of clergy persons, District Seminars, Retreats, Consultations and Forums continue to serve as conduits for the empowerment of all engaged in leadership for Mission.
- The huge volume of Missional activity through our Organisations, Units, Circuits, Societies and individual members engaged in amongst many others, feeding schemes, education, poverty alleviation, restorative justice, crime prevention, care for the vulnerable, healing, palliative care, prophetic activism and governance lobbying.
- The interactive and enthusiastic participation of both laity and clergy in the preparation for the ensuing Mission Congress in discovering God's call to us to become more Mission Shaped.

CONCLUSION

Recognising God's invitation to engage in God's Mission, we remain mindful of our many shortcomings and challenges and are aware of the enormity of the task at hand, yet privileged at the opportunity to share God's love, grace, mercy and compassion in the various communities we are found in. We recognise that we are part of God's mission and continue to commit ourselves in working towards God's dream for a healed and recognised world.

GRAHAMSTOWN DISTRICT (02)
BISHOP ANDILE MBETE

2015 has been a wonderful experience in our District – action-packed, full of fun and very successful. Every Minister (active and retired) and every lay leader (at Society, Circuit and District levels) deserves to be thanked for contributing to the wonderful atmosphere we are blessed to enjoy. It is often said that the taller and heavier a building, the stronger its foundation must be. The story of our success in our District is not different. Looking back now we realise that the use of our Ministers’ Retreats in February and in September have been central in shaping the mind and the bond of fellowship among our Ministers. These retreats have provided for us, a platform to forge unity and spirituality that formed a broad foundation that can withstand a multitude of forces.

The spirit of unity purpose in our District has been visible as we inducted new Ministers and during the hosting of the various conventions for our Organisations. Throughout the District, one can observe a desire by regions to work together and support the hosting Circuit. It is that spirit of co-operation that has helped the differences and unite in making our work as best as we could.

The work of God in our District continues to grow around programmers that are linked to the Methodist Mission Pillars. Our Circuits and Organisations continue to be the mission vehicles at Society, Circuit and District levels. Through the use of class meetings, the Manyano as well as mission groups, the District has seen evidence of a spirituality that has minimized or eradicated destructive conflicts and unruly meetings. The result is that the use of our Conflict Resolution Committee and structures such as the Disciplinary Committee has been reduced to a minimum and one hopes they can be found unnecessary in the near future.

Despite limited financial resources in our District due to the largely rural nature, we are proud to report that Circuits continue to pay their assessments to the District and the Connexion. A number of Societies and Circuits have reported through Synod, various outreach programmes that help feed and clothe the poor. Organisations like the Women’s Manyano, the YMG, Local Preachers Association and the Wesley Guild are supporting a number of students at Tertiary level with fees and accommodation.

Perhaps the centre of our mission goal in the past year has been the effort to revive the Healdtown Mission School again. With the assistance from the National Government Resource fund led by Arch-bishop Ndungane and the involvement of the provincial government, the Healdtown project has taken a giant leap forward. While a lot still needs to be done, the current progressive mood by other stake-holders has added energy in the District to dream big about the Church’s role in education.

In preparing for the Connexional Mission Congress in November 2016, our District had since 2015, crafted a District vision and thrust for the future. This vision and the District mission components specifically, have been debated by the District Executive and the Ministers. Put simply, our goal is to develop a creative and imaginative environment which will promote young minds to think “out of the box”.

As we face the rapid and ever changing landscape of being a church in Southern Africa, is it not wise to invest our resources in young minds in a broader context where innovation and creativity are actively encouraged and promoted?

Given the context of a retiring Bishop who is not bound by the limitations of another election and facing the realities of a District that is about to celebrate 200 years (1820-2020) since the Rev. William Shaw planted the seeds of evangelism at Salem, it is time for this District to realise its potential for greatness, using the foundations a and legacy we have, and strive for excellence.

As we close this year just passed, we hold dearly to our success filled with the memories of a great and wonderful time which helped shape our character. We leave this past year with lessons we have learnt from our mistakes – lessons that will help us in our endeavors to come. Even as we celebrate the past, we cannot forget to trust in Him who alone is our strength and source of wisdom. We thank Him for what has passed, and we trust Him for what is to come. To God be the glory!

QUEENSTOWN DISTRICT (03) BISHOP MTHOBELI E MATYUMZA

INTRODUCTION

Queenstown District continues to strive towards its vision of becoming an 'Oasis'; A place without dividing fences/boundaries, where all are welcome to contribute and participate irrespective of race, colour, gender, ethnic group without prejudice. This we strive to achieve through encouraging principles of team work amongst ministers and partnerships between ministerial and lay-leadership.

We also strive to make the District a place of peace by attempting to creatively address matters pertaining to conflict pro-actively and decisively. This we do because we believe mission can only happen where conflict is managed and eliminated. I am pleased to report that even though we had situations that almost turned uncontrollable in a particular Circuit, but when the District was allowed to intervene the way forward was chattered and the situation has been brought to normal.

The District Theme for the year 2016 is '**Reclaiming a forgotten but essential Wesleyan approach to Ministry and Discipleship**'. This theme seek to redirect the District towards reclaiming spiritual Leadership for both Ministerial and Lay people, but also to reclaim class meeting as a primary focus where personal transformation begins and can be sustained and is under-guided by Wesley's thought that; "there is no holiness without social holiness".

So then our approach to Ministry and Discipleship should reclaim Spiritual leadership for all-yet should be practically expressed through class/small group meetings as a strategy to bring about personal and social transformation.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

a. Ministerial

The District Ministers retreat was led by Rev Vido Nyobole under the theme '**Living out our Calling**'. This retreat served as a reminder of who are and the purpose for which we are called as we were reminded, inspired and encouraged towards living out our calling through cultivating the following;

- An experience of personal encounter with Jesus
- A burning desire to preach the word
- Compassion for the least
- Readiness and availability to serve and
- Willingness to sacrifice (suffer)

The District Ministers Convocation a day before Synod which is an attempt to empower ministers for their vocation focused on the following;

- The calling and character of the ordained (Clergy ethics) – Rev. VG Nyobole
- A theology of Sacraments Baptism & Holy Communion - Rev Nathi Mananga
- These were through presentation of a researched paper followed by discussion. And we concluded our Convocation by a service of re-affirmation of the Ordination vows and Holy Communion.

LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & EMPOWERMENT

The District annual Strategic workshop which serves as a means to bring on board newly appointed Superintendents, Circuit Stewards and Treasurers met in King Williams Town on the 05-06th February 2016. We have discovered that this approach assist in eliminating confusion and conflicts in Circuit, and re-enforces collaboration amongst Circuit Leadership. The standard content of the workshop is as follows;

- Re-visioning and Evaluation of the District
- Conference decisions and resolutions for discussion and implementation (New Stationing Procedure)
- Role of Circuits Stewards & Treasurers- Powers of Duties of Superintendents (Chapter 7 of L&D).
- Strategies for financial management, Budgeting and Administration
- It is this leadership workshop that has recommended to Synod via District Executive that the District should develop Mount Coke as a Centre for a Methodist Work in the area by:
- Building a District Manse to accommodate a Bishop
- Building District Offices

- Form partnership with government in re-developing Mount Coke for a convention centre, early childhood development centre, Methodist Lodge and Heritage Site.

DISCIPLESHIP COURSES

Discipleship courses as coordinated by the District EMMU (supervisor of Studies and the Lay Leader); focused on development and empowerment of class leaders in the light of the District theme and Synod address. We have spread the discipleship workshops by grouping circuits into regions –in order to make them accessible to as many leaders as possible and minimize travelling. The meetings are budgeted by the District. These meetings were well attended, very successful this year.

The area of focus were the following;

- Origin, Purpose and value of class meetings
 - The content of small group/syllabus
 - How to reclaim-conducting a class meeting for our present context
- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Border Region | Rev ME Matyumza Bishop |
| Queenstown region | Mr Zandile Jakavula |
| Gcaleka Region | Mr Fungile Dotwana |
| Drakensberg Region | Rev VG Nyobole |

DISTRICT MISSION

Bursary Fund: Queenstown District continues to pride itself through Dr TSN Gqubule Bursary Fund meant as an access to tertiary Education for Children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Bursary Board recommended and accepted all 10 new applicants for the year 2016 for funding excluding those who are currently in the system (2nd & 3rd year students). We continue to value our Circuits, District Organisations for their valued commitment and contribution to the Fund.

Mission: It is worth mentioning that the District Organisations have made Mission work a priority and has come up with creative initiatives and formed Mission Funds that are specifically meant for Mission Work.

- Rev Mvume Dandala Mission Fund (2002-District Wesley Guild)
- Rev Vuyani Nyobole Mission Fund (2014-by District YMG)
- Mr Zandile Jakavula Mission Fund (2016-by District Local Preachers Association)
- Inkanyamba Mission Fund formed (District Womens' Manyano) as a means to reclaim Methodist Heritage of assisting our people for Education initiatives (TSN Gqubule Fund)

The District Organisations have contributes towards Building houses for the homeless, supply school uniform, computers /laptops furniture for the poor and the marginalised people in the District. These Organisations collecting thousands of rand annually not only for maintaining the Organisations but for responding to the Needs of our people in the District. We thank God and sincerely appreciate these initiatives and sacrifices from Methodist people in the District and the Leadership who implements them.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

The District continues to use the strategy of combining the District Evangelism and Biblewoman Convention with the District Mission Outreach. This year the focus is at Tsojana Circuit 323. Spiritual Leadership Development and Empowerment Workshop was led by Rev MG Caba and Rev. Khaya Makhumsha-in preparation for the Mission Outreach week which is led by District Ministers, Mission Unit and District Convention of the Order of Evangelism & Biblewoman and is funded through District budget.

This strategy has yielded positive fruits as it has assisted this circuit to pullout of non-viability status. We recognise with great honour the co-operation of Rev Sizwe Dlamini and the Tsojana Circuit Lay Leadership for their sincerity in approach together with District Mission Unit as led by Rev Thembile Pimpi. This approach focuses more on the sustainability which depends entirely from within the Circuit. It has made great strides in Kei Circuit 310, Ngqamakwe 333 and now Tsojana 323. We are re-examining how it can also assist Centane Circuit 321.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH BUILDING

This part of Mission work is very important in a rural District as our context is because a congregation that has no place to worship struggles to grow and eventually dies.

- I am delighted to report that this year East London 314 will dedicate three churches: (Nondlwana, AM Mbete, Mission at Mncotsho 2 and T Rweqana and Mncotsho 1 (leadership of Rev Matyumza)
- King Williamstown 312 will dedicate two churches as part of celebrating ten years of Ministry for Bishop AM Mbete (leadership of Rev Nkomonde)
- Gompo Circuit 340 dedicated two churches on the 09th August at Mpintsho (under the leadership of Rev Lofafa)
- Butterworth 322 will be dedicating two churches in September (under the Leadership of Rev Makananda)
- Kei Circuit 310 will be dedicating two churches on the 13th November under the leadership of Rev Gobingca
- Woodehouse Forest Circuit 326 has dedicated ten churches buildings out of fourteen on the 9-10 July, built during the term of Rev AM Dondashe in recognition of his role and celebration of his Ministry in Circuit 326 over a period of 18 years

CONCLUSION

I am pleased to report Presiding Bishop and Conference that the Queenstown District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa is still and very much alive to the mission and vision of God and continues to strive for becoming a transforming discipleship movement’.

I humbly express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all Circuit Superintendents and Ministers, Circuit Stewards, Organisation Leadership and All Methodist people in the District-most in particular circuit 314 where I am currently stationed-for the enormous and unwavering support they afforded me thus far-also for their affirmation, encouragement. I continue to plead :_

Let us do our best; Let us do our very best; Let us do it every day

We praise God for the life and Service of Rev Dr Simon Gqubule who has served as a Superintendent in Mt Coke on two occasions and as a District Bishop. And for the life and service of Rev Nkululeko Tunyiswa who served in Kamastone Circuit. May their labourers continue to disturb us, May their good works continue to live amongst us. May their souls rest in Peace.

KIMBERLEY, NAMIBIA AND BLOEMFONTEIN (05) BISHOP LESIBA NKHUMISE

*There is a famine in the land
There is not a single ear of wheat, a mielie or a bean to be seen anywhere.
Our livestock is dying, O God
Our sheep and cattle and goats are panting from thirst and there is no grazing anywhere.
Our chickens lie listlessly in the sand
The milk in the breasts of the breastfeeding woman has dried. And children whimper continually with hunger and thirst. O, God lead us safely. Amen.*

In most instances this is where we find ourselves in most parts of our vast District. The KNB District is geographically located in very arid parts of the land, areas stricken with a high rate of unemployment resulting in a myriad of social problems. The recent image depicted by the Statistician-General of South Africa presents a gloomy state of affairs mirrored in youth unemployment statistics. These statistics present a clear-cut status quo of our District and has negatively affected our propensity to do mission. Our District has seen itself go through dire financial constraints and we have joined the lament: *there is famine in our land...* Yet it is with hope and a renewed spirit that we look ahead as the people called Methodist in this District that *God will lead us safely...*

INTRODUCTION

It is prudent that as I write this report I begin with the planning meeting we held as a District in an attempt to re-define ourselves and map a way forward for ourselves. From our planning meeting we reflected and proceeded to evaluate our past to reimagine a future with success. We set ourselves goals beginning with the clergy, setting values that we believe can drive us to a restored way of relating with each other, and acknowledged our differences; we emerged visualizing ourselves as a **“Melting – pot”**, and concluded that going forward we are going to embrace our diversity – expand our comfort zone. In an effort to foster and continue intentional diversity, for the Ministers it has been maintained in our quarterly fellowship meetings referred to as *‘Kopano’*. For the laity, in an effort to extend the process of the *“Melting Pot”* we have laity-training that enhances knowledge of process and procedures in the church. Our *“Melting Pot”* anchored by three core values as is with the traditional African *“drie-voet”* (three-legged-pot) is to form the focus of the District over the next three years. For 2016 we will focus on diversity; proceeded by a focus on heritage during 2017 and in 2018 spirituality (diagram 1).



We have tasked ourselves to follow these three values that form the lays of our pot. These values will be explored over the next three years guided still by the Presiding Bishop’s theme *“Together a transforming discipleship movement”* and the sub theme **“Shaped for Mission”**.

DISTRICT SYNOD

The year 2016 was a historic year for us as a District as we held our 135th Synod in the Archbell and Tweespruit Circuit which in many ways is the Mother of the two Districts: KNB & NFS&L. We met at St. Paul’s Methodist Society in Thaba ‘Nchu where many of our forebears in the faith met, a chapel built 183 years ago by the Rev. James Archbell and the first batch of Methodists amongst the Sotho-Tswana. The theme of our synod was *“We are the body of Christ, A transformative movement”* with our focus being *“Embracing our diversity”*.

Thought provoking bible studies were led by the Rev. Vuyelwa Sebolao, and tribute to women in the Ministry was done by the Rev. Otto Mbangula and his old question about the calling of women reverberated *“If God has called them who are you to stand in their way”*. Rev. Winifred Van Rooi-Baumann also delivered a moving sermon as she

charged the Candidates and Ordinand at the Witness Service. Synod reflected and interrogated the report that expressed the wish of the Namibians to be a District again. Synod approved the request, however, there are areas that still need to be investigated. This is also a matter of listening to God and to each other. The Synod also celebrated the work of women in the ministry, reflected on it and resolved on certain motions that aim to enhance the life of women in the ministry. The District Synod resolved that mission imperatives sub-committees be appointed to drive mission within the District. The life of mission in the District is as follows:

SPIRITUALITY

The KNB District has one of the broadest varieties of worship in the connexion. These spiritualities continue to be harnessed in our conventions and regional gatherings. Our District conventions went well despite a few unsettling things in terms of venues. We are thankful to the Bloemfontein Circuit, who on two occasions came to our rescue under these dire circumstances. Mission work was the focus in all those conventions and the organisations are the backbone of our ventures. We as a District have rediscovered who we are spiritually, surrounded by limitless hope. *'Share in the Spirit, allow for the Holy Spirit to transform you' - Anonymous*

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

This mission has been well executed by the order of evangelism in our District. In 2016 the KNB District joined hands with the NFS&L District in their annual alternating conventions. We had the convention this year in the Vaal River Circuit and spread our door-to-door campaign across the Barkley West area. Ministers in the District joined the mission campaign and a lot was achieved with the joining of hands between the clergy and the laity. The District has further observed exceptional growth in the 'sewing of the seed' through the nurturing and growth in the Junior Manayno across the District, this has been collaborative efforts in an effort to preserve both Methodist ethos and Christian values.'

'Hold your head high, stick it. It gets dark sometimes but morning comes, keep hope alive' – Jesse Jackson.

JUSTICE AND SERVICE

The organisations have been the leaders in the execution of this mission pillar. The Women's Manyano and the Young Women's Manyano have continued to drive programmes on the observance and education of the 16 days of activism against Women and Children Abuse (Thursday's in Black). In further efforts to preserve souls and the soil, the Young Women's Manyano have heeded to the call to alleviate poverty, hunger and HIV/AIDS by registering a Non-Profit Organisation in the Zastron Circuit to feed child-headed households and address other social ills affecting the community. The Young Men's Guild has not grown weary of engaging in marches against the abuse of women and children in their conventions. The children's ministry has also done well in this regard by also raising their voice in marches across our District.

'Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much' – Helen Keller.

HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

This mission pillar has not been given much attention across our District however, increased efforts and energies will now be put into it. It has dawned to us that we need the collective in order for us to attend to bigger tasks. An evident and sporadic growth in food gardens has seen the point of departure in better addressing this mission. Specifically for this pillar of Development and Economic Empowerment a task team has been formed to co-ordinate the proposals coming from the different conventions.

EDUCATION AND CHRISTIAN FORMATION

It is the role of education to remedy an aligning economy and an educated economy to transform and reform the job market, education is the most efficacious instrument in the forming of a society. Across the District at varying levels organisations have responded to this mission with the uttermost commitment. The Youth Unit has done considerable work and has focused on the education of young poor children throughout the District. The youth further launched the campaign "Educate a child" in which members of the MYU in the District shall embark on ensuring that members of our church take part in educating our society. Each circuit is to identify 10 children from very needy families, perhaps some within the church and some outside the church that can be assisted with school

uniform every three years. The drive is to buy school uniform, shoes and pay their annual school fees if payable until the child reaches matric. The Women's Manyano as well as the Young Women's Manyano have also heeded to the call by investing in the educational space (procurement of educational toys and uniforms) to ensure children are afforded the opportunity to be educated. 100 school uniforms we donated to disadvantaged schools in Botshabelo and 100 school shoes in Kimberly in an effort to protect the child and ensure access to education is not hindered. We continue to pray over the higher education space that while #FeesMustFall lingers the spirit of reformation may settle and probe the space to educate and form

'Education is the 21st century graduate we yearn for as a nation.

'You can never be overdressed or overeducated' - Oscar Wilde

'the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world' - Nelson Mandela

CHALLENGES

We have on-going challenges financially, geographically and diversity in ideas and ideologies, but with the help of God we are confident that we shall overcome. We will be intentional in trying to attend to these challenges, knowing that God will make a way where there is no other way. Time will tell and time will heal. Genesis 3 says: *"And God said: Adam where are you?"* We took note of the fact that Mission is God's initiative and we join God in search of Adam, beginning with the society, circuit and District we dream of. We intend to be Mission intentional, knowing that a mission-less church is not worth its salt.

CONCLUSION

It is at this time that we as the KNB District find ourselves as this living melting pot yearning to be moved as Methodists who are called into this harmonious whole. I take this moment on my journey to thank my family, the District Management Committee, the District Executive Committees and Ministers for expanding their comfort zones to embark on this journey thus far with me. May the discerning Spirit fall upon us all as we descend to depths unknown and emerge with strengths unimagined because of His presence with us through this journey. I pray God's blessings and breakthrough as we look ahead through the window pane of hope to see His deeds of mercy.

God Bless Africa and this District.

NORTHERN FREE STATE & LESOTHO DISTRICT (06)
BISHOP ANDREW MOTSWENYANE

INTRODUCTION

The Methodist Church is found in cities, town or “dorpies”, townships, in formal settlements, villages and the mountains of the **Kingdom of Lesotho** across the “plateland” of the **Northern Free State**. Our places of worship where ministries emanate comprise of both formal and informal structures even some from the Farm “Skuur” which is a barn. In every meeting place we seek to fulfil God’s vision for the church in general and the **Methodist Church of Southern Africa as Healing centres** to proclaim the **“Gospel of Healing and Transformation”**. All this we are longing to work towards

“A Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of Nations”.

We believe that we are still embracing God’s call to be:

“Together a Transforming Discipleship Movement”.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

The Women’s Manyano are still pursuing their focus of **“Turning the Role of Women’s Manyano into that of the Mission Warrior”**. Also they have set themselves goals which are complementary with church’s theme: **“Together a transforming Discipleship Movement”**.

We have witnessed our mothers becoming real disciples of Jesus Christ when they donned their uniforms and confronted moral degeneration at schools addressing gangsters, teenage pregnancy, abuse of alcohol and drugs at Police Stations addressing and submitting memorandums that cried out to actions stopping rape and abuse of women and children. Lastly Women’s Manyano has committed to taking full responsibility of raising and parenting the triplets young girls they have adopted at Kroonstad.

YOUNG WOMAN’S MANYANO:

The Young Woman’s Manyano continue to donate groceries to the needy, and also uniforms to the orphans and needy learners. The Young Woman’s Manyano has started with chain prayers with fellow sisters in Christ. Every convention they are having reading corners and also circuits are encouraged to have reading corners. This development into other circuits opening their buildings for homework centres.

YOUTH UNIT:

The Youth Unit acknowledges the drug and substance abuse challenges in the youth ministry, this has received attention hence the Youth Unit have established a **Youth Ministry Against Substance Abuse** which is guided by the Masa program. Youth Synod strategies to deal with drug and substance abuse in the District were formulated. The only challenge which remains is the integration despite means to integrate other entities including Youth Pastors, Youth Groups, Youth Fellowship, Youth Association, Teen Church’ alienate themselves from the Youth Unit. Poverty alleviation in this District is a concern especially with the Youth Unit.

The Youth unit donated about 100 sanitary towels to learners of a Primary School so as to restore dignity to these girls who missed school due to this problem. The Youth Unit in the District established and launched the Solomon Thekisoie Mission and Educational Fund that seeks to provide and also assist individuals within the unit in their Educational Journey. The Children’s Ministry continues to grow both at District and Regional levels. The Children’s Ministry held a successful weekend at circuit 611 where the event was packed with Debate, Public Speaking, Spelling Bee and Poetry. The children did not miss the opportunity to display their polished talent.

YOUNG MEN’S GUILD:

The Young Men’s Guild visited the Orphanage in Phomolong, Kroonstad. All circuits in the District were requested to donate R100.00 towards this home and Kroonstad circuit was mandated to facilitate the adoption and care of the home. Anti-Xenophobia march was conducted together with the Ministers from the Fraternity and led by the Young

Men's Guild. The organisation donated 14 food parcels to the needy families. An outreach was organised to Likubu Primary School where a donation of R2 000.00 was made for education purpose.

LESOTHO:

All Circuits in Lesotho as far as mission is concerned, are trying although poverty is rife. The Unemployment here is due to the closure of mines. The economy of Lesotho depends mostly on South Africa especially with employment. Circuits cannot be viable as far as assessments are concerned due to this rate of unemployment. In other circuits life is improved by having vegetables gardening and fruit tree nurseries although the past year was hit by drought. Even as the picture looks so dim, there is a silver lining. It is always with great pleasure to announce that two particular schools namely Hlotse Methodist Primary School achieved 100% pass rate and Methodist High School also produced 100% pass rate. In Leribe the circuit is in the process of getting a site for the Hlotse Methodist High School.

Parents from the Hlotse Primary School do not want to lose their children from the discipline of the school. This says a lot about us as the Methodist Church in Lesotho. We thank God that even in the whole situation where our property is still not with us, there is a need to celebrate God's grace.

CHALLENGES:

- Circuits in Lesotho cannot meet their assessments. Most circuits especially in South Africa have improved;
- Unemployment that is rising in this District;
- Lastly the unending case of Maseru and Ficksburg/Ladybrand Circuits.

FUTURE PLANS:

- Minister's Pre-Synod convocation; where a platform of accountability, developments and mentoring will be experienced;
- District Mission congress in the early year;
- Development of Laity and empowerment which will be led by the Lay Leader and team.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion the Northern Free State & Lesotho District still continues to proclaim that God Calls the Methodist people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation. Also in this District we are **Together a Transforming Discipleship Movement** which is shaped for God's Mission. In his book, **Transforming Discipleship making disciples a few at a time**, Greg Ogden says,

"Following Jesus' example, it is vital that we issue a call to the journey of discipleship. This means that the invitation to discipleship should be preceded by a period of prayerful discernment. It is vital to have a settled conviction that the Lord is drawing us to those to whom we are issuing this "invitation". (Pg 177).

NATAL COASTAL DISTRICT (07) BISHOP MICHAEL VORSTER

Ecumenical affairs should be and is a cross-cutting matter in all that we do in order to become an inclusive Mission shaped body of God's people for Justice and Service. For many years we have not always known what to do with our Church's Ecumenical affairs Unit. We have correctly set aside fulltime ministers to be Directors of the Mission unit, and EMMU and several other fulltime staff. Through this the church says we take Mission and training for ministry very seriously, (our treasure lies where our hearts are). Yet is the MCSA not supposed to run on two tracks: God's Mission and Unity? Yes we have made great strides through the Church Unity Commission who have facilitated agreements between the former British based Mission churches. For years Ecumenical affairs was not even in our L & D. yet we stumbled on trying to understand how this fitted in to the MCSA.

The MCSA Conference of 1958 stated that we are one and undivided meaning that we need to address the divisions within the church which were and still remains a gender, race, age, sexuality, clergy vs laity and ethnic divide. In later years we have become more vocal about our ethnic divide. One need only read the articles in New Dimension 'The Elephant in the room', to get a sense of this.

We attempted to address the gender divide by ordaining women 40 years ago. However **we need more women to be invited into our District and we need to appoint more women Superintendents.** As a Synod and Circuits we need to be more intentional and courageous about this. I fear that the **new system** of CQM's nominating Bishops **will work against women being nominated.**

WE endeavour to address the racial/ethnic divide through **the formation of Geographical Circuits and cross-cultural stationing.** Most former 'white' churches are now mixed in our District. We have yet to see 'black' churches transform in a similar way, whereby 'white' Methodists become members in township and rural churches, embracing essentially black Methodist worship. However within our 'black' Methodist churches, transformation is steadily growing as different languages from our connexion are introduced through hymns. Our pace is slow but it is sure, and there is much room for improvement.

We need to work on clergy/laity divide through the promotion of a better understanding of our MCSA structures and processes. A special training and mediation team will be set up to address this issue.

Let us together transform Sundays into the most united time of our Christian witness away from, as it is at the moment, the most divided time.

We also need to pay more attention to our divisions on denominational lines. Lines of division have also been drawn between South African Council of Churches (SACC) aligned churches and those churches allied with National Interfaith Council of South Africa (NICSA). Our experience is that goes all the way to grassroots Church fraternal in our District

It is encouraging to note that in recent years the MCSA has taken Ecumenical affairs far more seriously, shown in particular when Rev. Dr Mvume Dandala; Rev Purity Malinga and now Rev Musi Losaba were appointed as Directors of the MCSA Ecumenical Affairs unit. During their period of leadership the MCSA Conference has solidified Ecumenical Affairs as can be seen in the latest edition of the L & D (MBO) para. 8.5 pp 89 to 92. In addition to this, District Ecumenical Affairs Secretaries (DEAS) and the Ecumenical Affairs advisory Committee (EAAC)¹ have together developed a user friendly handbook entitled: *What is Ecumenism?*²

All of these developments, the establishment of a Connexional Ecumenical Affairs advisory Committee; the annual DEAS consultation; the booklet, all assist the communal body of the MCSA strengthen our vital united witness and mission of the church universal. After all did the Head of the Church universal not pray: **"That they may be one...?"** (John 17). I am bold to say that every book in the canon of Scripture points us toward the unity of humanity; nature and the cosmos. This is the essential transformational mission of the church.

The need for a separate Ecumenical affairs emphasis is a corrective to what ought to be normative. If this is not flagged constantly we so easily sink into our own self-preservation and selfish interest to protect our denomination

¹ Bishop Mike Vorster chairs the EAAC on behalf of the Connexion

² Approved by Conference 2015.

and MCSA. Is not the secular corporate language of protecting the branding of the MCSA logo, one indication of this? Can there ever be a copyright on that which promotes the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Re Philippians passage *Chapter 1: 17* "...the others proclaim Christ out selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment (18). What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice...."

Ecumenism is at the heart of all we do as we participate in God's transforming mission in the world. One need only understand the **word Oikos the root word for Ecumenism** to see its centrality when engaging with **Methodists Ignited for Mission**. Allow me to offer a fuller understanding of Ecumenism from the *Oikos Journey* monograph; it is worth quoting in full to capture its richness:

"The meaning of Oikos³

One approach that can help us gather the necessary biblical and theological resources to engage the world of economics from the perspective of the God whom we worship is to focus on a Greek word in the New Testament: Oikos.

Literally, Oikos means 'house', 'household' or 'home'. It becomes a powerful term for us because it is the root for three significant words – economy, ecology and ecumenical – and therefore points to the interconnections between the church, God's creation and economic justice. The English word 'economy' comes from two Greek words: Oikos-nomos, meaning the rules of the household. In seeking to understand God's economy, we must step back from a limited notion of 'economics' meaning a specialised academic subject understood only by experts, and return to these original, basic roots.

To speak of God's economy is therefore to speak of the rules that God has established for our household, the world in which people live, work, struggle, flourish and die. This earth that God created, this sphere that spins through space, this globe, the household in which humanity lives and seeks meaning, our only home – this must be the place where we start to think theologically about economics.

For millions of years God has shepherded the earth into existence so that it can sustain life. To do so requires a delicate balance between human life and other life; between life, death and rebirth; between production, consumption and waste; between the needs of the current generation and the needs of the many generations still to come; and between our creative ability to shape and reshape nature, and our sinful desire to do so for selfish ends.

From God's perspective therefore, economy – Oikos-nomos – is directly related to ecology – Oikos-logos. Both concern the earth as our Oikos, our home. God's economy concerns how the bounty of the world in terms of earth, water, air, plants, helps human life to flourish. It cannot be separated from ecology, from the intricate web that sustains life on the planet.

Since the advent of science, technology and the industrial revolution, however, the economy and ecology have split apart. Economy now means generating wealth, using the earth as natural resources or as a receptacle for our waste. The world economy has to do with seeing everything as a commodity to be bought and sold, removing the role of governments in supplying basic needs to their people by handing this duty over to private companies, and making maximum profit out of every single transaction that happens. It no longer sees the relationship with ecology, with keeping in harmony with the wider Rhythm of the earth. And in so doing, it no longer seeks to keep in harmony with fundamental biblical principles to do with God's economy.

A third word that comes from the root Oikos is 'ecumenical'. In this case it is from the Greek word oikoumene, meaning the 'whole inhabited world'. The idea of the house or household of God here refers to the church – fellow-citizens in the household of God – and provides the grounding for the ecumenical movement of Christian unity. The word 'ecumenical' carries with it some of the meaning of both economics and ecology. God has created this 'house' and is busy at work seeing to justice and equality, reconciliation and the flourishing of all creation. The church, the 'household of God' is called to be a community of faith showing God's purposes in creation as a sign to others, through

³ The Oikos Journey – published by Diakonia Council of Churches.

seeking not just the unity of Christians, but of all the people of the earth. Down through the centuries, the church has turned to the bible in the context of crisis, to find meaning and a way forward....”

There is no doubt that Mission and Ecumenism are inextricably linked. To speak of one without the other is a false doctrine. Ecumenism is not an optional extra. In NGO language it is a ‘cross cutting issue’ in all that we do in obedience to our Lord. Mission must be done in unity together with others, or else the church should be honest and register as a charity organisation.

In this District we are grateful to have significant ecumenical bodies like Diakonia Council of Churches; KwaZulu Regional Christian Council, the KZN Christian Council and the KZN Church Leaders Group.⁴ For instance together with other churches:

- As Methodists we were engaged in the so-called xenophobic attacks and continue to assist with the reintegration process since March 2015.
- We continue to monitor and engage with broader social and economic justice issues

Two noteworthy local ecumenical initiatives are:

- Ingwavuma Circuit who have built five church buildings together of with five other denominations. Rev Lucky Momezulu has played a pivotal role.
- The Umlazi Ecumenical Council plays a very significant role in bringing churches together in that area. Rev Linda Mandindi and Rev Sandile Dlamini (Uniting Reformed Church) are playing an important role within the UEC and are engaged with a very sensitive ministry at Glebelands Hostels where more than 50 people have been killed.

Striving for unity is the essence of transformation. It is the raison d’etre of the Church. The first thing our Lord says is we must repent (metanoia) of that which impedes and blocks the work of the unifying Holy Spirit who leads us to bring Good news to the poor; liberty to the captives and every other instruction in Luke 4.

I am pleased to say all Circuits are involved in mission in one form or the other. However we still have shortcomings as a District when it comes to Unity in Mission but there are promising signs.

Let us affirm where we have come from and assess where we are now. The elephant in the room is becoming more visible because we are more willing to have honest discussions with each other.

At Synod 2015, I believe the Lord led me to say, I said that we need to wake up because the ‘Madiba bubble’ has popped and that there has never been a rainbow nation. Not long after these words were spoken, we saw our youth’s impatience with the pace of change as expressed through #rhodesmustfall/ #feesmustfall protests; racism reared more of its ugly head mainly through social media; white privilege is in the spotlight and is in the process of being exorcised; black hurt is voicing itself through the expanding de-colonialisation movement; growing corruption within Government and business is worsening economic disparity. Is this not all symptomatic of how we have fallen short of God’s Mission and unity for us as South Africans in particular and humanity in general? **Should we as church not to be at the forefront of just transformation?**

Our **Courageous conversations** need to continue, which moves us into the costly process of reconciliation; confession; repentance and restitution. We delayed our District Imbizo for February 2016 to pause and find the best way to have our conversations. However we have not been idle, we have begun to talk about some parts of the ‘elephant in the room; through the conversations begun on Conventions.

We need to be more intentional to be in touch with the realities and experiences of our youth at tertiary educational institutions. Where there are such places in our Circuits we me assign a minister (or two) to have pastoral oversight. At the moment we tend just to put it under the general umbrella of the Circuit.

Ecumenical opportunities for us to make a real difference to the state of our Province and nation are growing. For instance:

- Under the umbrella of the Church Unity Commission’s Centre of Hope trajectory a national hearing and healing programme is underway in all Provinces. Here in KZN we are part (the Bishop chairs) The

⁴ (Bishop Mike recently elected as chair).

Indlebe*(Ear) Programme: Towards truth, justice, healing; reconciliation and peace in KwaZulu- Natal. This programme aims to **create safe spaces and hearings for the purpose of truth, justice healing and reconciliation** for those among us who: Previously were unable to tell their stories to the TRC; Have been traumatised by current poverty and poor service delivery; Have been re-traumatised through Xenophobia; Are women who have been affected by Gender Based Violence; Children who have been traumatised, through abuse.

Already work has begun with those who were traumatised by so-called xenophobic attacks. Continued building of better business and human relations between us locals and our African compatriots in places like Isipingo continues to be facilitated.

- The **'shot at and the shooters'** is the start of a journey of repentance and restitution whereby former members of the Apartheid SADF will publically confess that what they did was wrong on June 16 2016 in SOWETO. They are in conversation with the June 16 Foundation facilitated by the SACC. How do we embrace a similar process within our District?
- The SACC initiative: **The South Africa We Pray For** campaign is a commitment to all three aspects of the prophetic tradition. The disposition of the Church in this regard is prayerful – seeking to “soak the country in prayer!” It certainly cannot be triumphalist or arrogant, but it has to be accompanied by a confessional and penitential dimension, in recognition of its own gross imperfections as individuals and institutions; and for being knowingly and unknowingly complicit in the injustices that pervert the country.

Attending an anti-Corruption symposium recently, there was a **cry for life-style audit** for all those in government. I would amplify this call for a life-style audit in business and the church as well.

Now is the time to act, now is the time to get on the bus of costly reconciliation. We can no longer live in a fool's paradise, all is not well, yet together as people of faith we can make things better.

I conclude with these words from Philippians 1: 27 to 30: *“Only, **live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,** ²⁸ and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well— ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.”*

Shalom

NATAL WEST DISTRICT (08) BISHOP WILLIAM DLAMINI

Since the beginning of 2016, I met with the Ministers at a Ministers Retreat, had Superintendents' Meeting, established District Mission Committee, established District Glebe Committee, met District Circuit Stewards, met with active Ministers' Wives, Regions of the district and Midlands Council of churches, visited District Mission Projects and met with District Executives of Organisations.

DISTRICT RETREAT

The theme was, "Here I am Lord, send me". This retreat was soul searching, leading to commitment, God being the Helper. Rev David Barbour of our District professionally led this Retreat at Africa Enterprises in Pietermaritzburg.

SUPERINTENDENTS' MEETING

Here we explained in detail the new stationing procedure and planned for the 2016 Synod.

DISTRICT MISSION COMMITTEE

We realised that the District Mission Secretary needed more people around him in this Ministry. We added each person for each Pillar of our Mission Imperatives. We added one for environments, one for HIV and Aids, one for Child Care.

DISTRICT GLEBE COMMITTEE

The District has some Glebes, some have been lying neglected and were threatened by informal settlement. The Committee will identify all those Glebes and we are going to seek professional advice as to how to use them effectively. We have started to use one for gardening. Indaleni families are leasing plots for their subsistence gardening.

DISTRICT CIRCUIT STEWARDS

Natal West District had not District Manse and Office. We discussed the idea of a permanent District Manse and Office, we introduced and explained in detail the new Stationing Procedure, District Finance Position, District Office Secretary and the up-coming Mission Congress. What transpired in the meeting was:

- (i) The Methodist Church is already a Church in Mission.
- (ii) Our Mission is not well co-ordinated and managed at Society and Circuit Levels.
- (iii) Our Church Structure needs to be re-visited by way of identifying people, equipping and job description.
- (iv) Circuit assessment methods must give a space for financial strength at local level.
- (v) A proportion of Ministers per Societies need to be looked at.
- (vi) Mission Congress to be regional rather than Connexional so as to allow greater number of people per District.

ACTIVE MINISTERS' WIVES

Women form the majority in our Church. Ministers' Wives have more time than Ministers, meeting with women in our Church. We drew attention to the importance of attending Sunday Services more than Organisations' Gatherings, we talked about the importance of respecting, showing love for all and taking care of them. We also talked about the importance of being a Minister's wife.

REGIONS OF THE DISTRICT

Natal West District is divided into four Regions. Bishop visits these Regions twice a year, to meet with Ministers. What I have heard from some Ministers is that some Circuits still follow the Quarterly Method of Pledging and I was told that to bring these Circuits of monthly contributions will be a struggle. I am planning to hold workshops on Giving with these Circuits, one at a time from next year 2017. Though we are all in an economic down-turn, the principle of giving to God still needs to be upheld with what we can afford.

MIDLANDS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Kwa-Zulu Natal Council of Churches has mandated Church Ministers in the so-called Midlands to form Council and I was nominated to be to be Board Member. We are going to Train as “Election Observers” for the up-coming Local Government Elections in August and we are going to attend to many issues local that affect the lives of people.

DISTRICT MISSION PROJECTS

- TVET Construction at Indaleni at Richmond is in good progress. Mobile class-rooms have been assembled and put in position.
- School for the Deaf still in normal progress at Indaleni.
- Gardening in family plots in good progress at Indaleni.
- Hospice clothing project at Estcourt.
- Day care at Umtshezi.
- Computer Skills Training at Newcastle.
- Thembelihle Primary School at Howick.
- Alcohol Anonymous at Portshepstone.
- Marlewood crèche at Portshepstone.
- Thandumtwana crèche at Portshepstone.
- Zizameleni crèche at Portshepstone.
- Nakekela Sawing Project at Portshepstone.
- Siyakhula crèche at Portshepstone.
- Soup Kitchen at Portshepstone.
- Bursaries and School uniforms to different Schools.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVES OF ORGANISATIONS

Here we talked about Conventions in Circuits that are struggling financially, about being mission oriented, themes to be in line with Connexional theme and rosters.

WHERE WE NEED HELP

- a) Training on Mission Pillars.
- b) Training of Project Management.
- c) Training on How to Start a Project.

CIRCUITS

Now only three Circuits that are not yet at Peace. These are:

Southdale 0803

This Circuit is divided into two if not three factions. There is history behind this division. We need a Minister who is able to unite people. Any Minister who would take any side will never be able to lead that Circuit.

Bulwer 0809

The previous Minister did not allow the over-stayed Circuit Stewards to carry one. Now the incumbent Minister inherited the situation of the aggrieved Stewards who are now against anything done by the incumbent Circuit Stewards and the Minister.

Newcastle 0803

This Circuit is financially going down with high speed and this is going to affect the District because Newcastle is one of the Big Circuits in the District. The problem here is Circuit leadership-style of leading.

CENTRAL DISTRICT (09)
BISHOP GARY RIVAS

Firstly, please allow me to say thank you for the opportunity to serve the MCSA in this capacity. It has been a great joy for me to experience the richness of the Methodist people who live in this vast District who serve and worship our great God.

The first six months of 2016 has been what I would classify as an orientation period. It has been a tremendous gift for me to be able to experience the different communities found in our District.

The theme for 2016 has been 'A healthy organism is a growing organism'. In it we have taken opportunities to examine our Spiritual Health, Emotional Health and Physical Health. This has been covered at retreats and business meetings.

The theme for Synod was ' Servant Leadership that gives shape to Mission'.

The Synod address interrogated the transformation from the 'pew to the pulpit, the pew to the palace and the pew to parliament'. We asked questions about how we can easily lose our servants' heart on the journey. We all started in the pew, as new believers, transformed by the Grace of the Gospel, but our walk was hijacked by power, greed and compromise.

We were introduced to Martin Luther King's words,

"Not everybody can be famous. But everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato or Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love."

God calls His leaders to have humble hearts, honest hearts, unselfish hearts and giving hearts.

One of the greatest challenge we face in the District is the imbalance of resources. The West of our District needs far more resources to do its work effectively. As a district we are continuously looking at creative ways to deal with the imbalance.

In saying that, the tireless work of the laity and clergy in these areas is a witness to all of us and I am grateful for their commitment to sharing the Gospel despite the challenges they face.

The work of Mission is evident throughout the District, The countless programs that are running to serve the homeless, widows and orphans is without any doubt making an impact. We continue to provide a ministry to the marginalised, the refugees and asylum seekers.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Rev Witbooi who has helped me make the transition into this position of leadership. His commitment to the church and the legacy he left has made an indelible mark on the District. Thank you too to the Executive of the District and the Connexional Executive, for their support and guidance.

HIGHVELD AND SWAZILAND (10)

BISHOP JONATHAN ANDERSON

INTRODUCTION

It is a profound privilege to report on another year of God's work within the Highveld and Swaziland District. Through the year we have been sustained by God's Mercy, Love and Power. It has been a year of some struggling and faith, but much progress and rejoicing. We have witnessed increased poverty, drought, violent crime and protest. Often the Church has responded to these difficulties with increased faithfulness and effectiveness. Sometimes our response has been unfaithful or inefficient. Yet God is still good. God remains present with us and in us, through Jesus Christ and the Comforter and Encourager (the Holy Spirit) equipping us in every way to be increasingly faithful disciples.

SIGNIFICANT MISSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Since our 2015 Synod significant missional developments have taken place. Some of these relate to the appointment of Rev Ntsikelelo Zabeko as our District Mission Coordinator. A competent and enthusiastic Mission Desk has been established with more effective attention and leadership being offered to key aspects of mission. Swaziland Schools and ministry to those affected by drug and substance abuse were identified as two major foci. Our hope is that by intentionally focussing on these two opportunities, improved togetherness, buy in, and coordination will develop at District level. Evidence of this is already emerging.

Many of our Schools in Swaziland have become neglected and, as a result, our daily witness to over 20 000 children and their families has been compromised. The region (3 Circuits within Swaziland) have been quite intentional in setting an example by offering renewed investment of resources and energy to our Schools. More of our District Organisations have begun to contribute to the well-being of our Schools. Much of the responsibility of running the Schools has been devolved to competent lay people from the Superintendents. Prospects of funding and financial support from the European community and the Methodist Church in Germany have opened up. A strategy to twin individual Schools with Church communities within the District and beyond is being developed.

Our District Youth Unit has taken on a project of establishing a Drug Rehabilitation Centre. Much planning and initiative is being put into this. Unused and underused Church properties within the District are being considered as prospective permanent venues for this project. Several awareness events and marches against drug abuse have taken place in both countries (South Africa and Swaziland) and training courses for those who want to minister and care for those affected by substance abuse have also taken place.

The District Leadership and District Mission Leadership are of the mind to make economic and employment capacity building a third priority focus within the District. This decision is substantially as a result of the emerging realities of increased poverty and unemployment levels within our two countries. The District Finance Committee and a District Task Team have taken up the responsibility of researching and responding to emerging trends. This includes giving attention to Circuits and Stations that show evidence of coming under financial stress.

The District is also giving renewed attention to ecumenical work and ecumenical relations (under the leadership of our newly appointed Ecumenical Affairs Coordinator - Rev Stephen Day). In this regard several important developments have occurred within Swaziland. Our previously neglected relationship with the Council of Swaziland Churches has been improved. Our participation has been very much welcomed by the Council. Our involvement in the Council's programme for political and economic justice within Swaziland will strengthen the witness of both Organisations in the quest for political justice in the country. Our engagement with the recently published CSC "Kairos document" in Swaziland, opens up opportunity for further progress in this regard.

Initiative has been taken to improve our processes for pastoral care and vocational accountability for our Ministers and their families. The introduction of a Day of Vocation for the Presbyterate Order was successful and well received. The event facilitated an opportunity for deeper reflection on our discipline questions. Much of this time was given to consider the care and treatment of our women in ministry. Out of this engagement a research and study initiative to investigate the effects of patriarchy on ministry and society was introduced and a resolution to this effect was sent to our Synod.

EVALUATING ESTABLISHED MISSION ACTIVITY

SPIRITUALITY

Generally the tried and tested Methodist resources are relied upon. We recognise the need to be more innovative and intentional in promoting spiritual discipline and discipleship support. Some of our Ministers and Circuits have been innovative. We celebrate an increase in the number of weekday Prayer Meetings and Devotional Groups. A number of intentional discipleship orientated initiatives have been attempted but some have failed. Yet we are resolved to continue exploring effective programmes for discipleship and disciple making. Other activities of a devotional nature include Bible Studies, Retreats, Quiet Days, Prayer Meetings and various Seminars.

JUSTICE AND SERVICE

It remains of concern that the *service* aspect rather than the *justice* aspect of this imperative remains dominant in our witness. A wide range of activities, mostly of a welfare nature, continue to exist within the District. Many of these have been reliant on reduced South African Government subsidies. Careful and innovative management has been necessary to keep some of our major initiatives going. It is pleasing to note that most of our Churches offer some form of relief or service ministry to the wider society. Some are reviewing the use of buildings in order to make better use of them during the week.

One recognises an increased awareness of justice issues in many communities. Matters of economic justice are receiving increased attention in the light of increased poverty. Much of our input in equipping clergy has been aimed at increasing our prophetic consciousness. Our increased involvement and influence within the Councils of Churches, SACC (South Africa), CSC (Swaziland), has contributed to, what I believe to be, improved levels of awareness among our people.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

Traditional methods continue to dominate in most of our communities. Revival Services remain a primary tool for evangelism in most of our Township communities. Use of Alpha, with various levels of effectiveness, is still employed in some communities. Our ineffectiveness in respect of evangelising was raised at our Synod and the need of a more intentional and coordinated initiative is evident. Some effective work has been done in developing and growing areas in Gauteng (Hillside is a good example of this) and pockets of significant numerical growth are evident in Swaziland.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

As noted above, we recognise that what remains a neglected area needs to become one of greater priority with the emerging demographical realities of our context and time. We have extensive under-utilised and unutilised property and other resources which need to be used better for economic upliftment. Yet several skills and employment creation activities do exist within the District, most of these offer basic skills training to assist disadvantaged people to find low level employment. Other initiatives include an entrepreneur mentoring programme and assistance to people who may be entitled to unclaimed pension payouts. A new skills and employment creation initiative has been launched in the Central Swaziland Circuit. Some evidence of improved initiative for economic development and empowerment is encouraging but will need to be nurtured and promoted.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S WORK

Education and children's work remains, possibly, the highest priority and the greatest strength of the Highveld and Swaziland District. We retain four residential Children's Homes (2 in South Africa, 2 in Swaziland). In all four cases we are facing sustainability and funding challenges. In the case of Epworth (the grand old dame of children's work in the District) this is most evident. Decreased and unreliable Government subsidy and the fact that corporate sponsorship is more difficult to raise, remain the cause of anxiety and challenge. Epworth's work is not merely that of a Children's Home but extends way beyond the residential facility to impact the lives of many children in need. At Synod we were made aware of the need of increased support from the Church if this institution is to succeed in keeping it's doors open.

Swaziland Schools (referred to above) remains our most wide-ranging ministry to children within the District. In addition, we are able to report an increased number of crèches, early childhood development centres, tuition

support schemes, feeding schemes, partnerships with Government Schools, etc. It is pleasing to note that several Churches have responded positively to open up their buildings during the week as Reading Centres.

We celebrate an introduction of a District Child Care Desk with Rev Debbie van de Laar being appointed as Coordinator. Important initiatives have already taken place to ensure improved safety and care for the children placed under our care.

CONCLUSION

I conclude this Report very aware that there is much of great significance that has not been touched on. Mention might have been made of further initiatives in education and health care, particularly.

I rejoice in the truth that this Report cannot be exhaustive as I submit to the requested length.

I rejoice in the gift of life and ministry in this time and place.

I rejoice in the gifts of support and encouragement, and some for criticism, from people who care about the Kingdom of God.

I rejoice in the gift of our District Leadership Team who work to make the Church a better and more faithful institution.

We rejoice in the Grace and Provision of God for a District that is becoming more and more interesting.

LIMPOPO DISTRICT (11)

BISHOP THEMBA MNTAMBO

INTRODUCTION

This has been said about the church, that it should be the only Organisation that exists, not for its members but for those outside of it. This among others is what continues to inspire us, challenge us and give us reason for our existence. This is the reason we continue to engage in mission and ministry to the world. We are deeply aware of the need to take the gospel especially to those who need to hear about and to know and experience the saving love of Jesus Christ. We continue to be conscious, as reported last year that we are called to move out of our places of worship to meet the world instead of waiting for the world to come to us; we are called to be incarnational in a world that desperately needs to encounter the Lord Jesus; our presence must be transformative, changing lives for the better, giving hope and bringing new life among God's people. This challenge means that we must then think, not whether people can afford ministry, but whether they need it. The challenging question then continues to be whether we focus only on those who can 'come' to church or whether our focus is for us to 'go' to those who cannot come.

SYNOD THEME

The Synod Theme continued to be the same as last year. We believe this is the focus we should continue to give to our work for the foreseeable future, and to make this theme not simply words we put on every year but to let this be part of our being, our DNA so to speak. So we continue to focus our energy, vision and planning around "Transformed Disciples in Mission".

MISSION AND CHURCH PLANTING

Over the past two years we have sought to continue with our focus on mission in our District. We believe mission is at the heart, at the core, and must be the business of the church wherever God's people and disciples of Jesus Christ are found. We have been consistent in keeping this focus before the District. While we do have many mission related activities, these have been operating independently and apart from other similar activities in Circuits. Many of our Circuits and Societies have child learning centres in different forms, Crèches, ECD Centres, after-care centres; others include feeding schemes, soup kitchens, and self-help and skills development projects. The District has now embarked on a programme to bring together all mission projects to share ideas and resources with the view develop these in a more united and focussed manner? To this end the District Mission Field Worker will conduct an audit of all the mission activities and to convene a meeting of all involved in this work to find ways in which we can cooperate for the benefit of all.

A large part of our vision for mission is how we fulfil our church planting vision. In 2015 we identified three potential areas for church planting and mission, namely, Lephalale, Maun and what used to be called the Far North Mission. We committed to raise funds and establish a District Mission and Church Planting Fund through which we will resource mission in these areas. At the writing of this report an amount in excess of R500 000.00 has been raised. Other sources have been from the 60% return on our Mission and Extension Fund contributions to the Mission Unit, the Mission Resource grant from the MCO and from Circuits who have heeded to call to contribute 10% of their total Rhona to this fund. Besides these Circuit contributions, we will still invite every Methodist in our District to contribute a voluntary amount of between R20.00 and R50.00 in order to make this fund sustainable over the next number of years.

FINANCING MINISTRY

Our country is still going through a difficult economic period and this affects the ability for many Circuits and Societies to finance ministry and mission. Over the past year a few Circuits have struggled to meet their financial obligations and have indicated that they will have difficulty in retaining ministers in the next year. It would be grossly negligent of us as a collective to let these Circuits struggle to the point of giving up agency. We have to consider some possibilities to assist them to get back on their feet.

DISTRICT AND CIRCUIT BOUNDARIES

As reported last year, the matter of District and Circuit boundaries is still on our agenda. We now have become intentional about clearing these barriers to effective mission where the District Vice-chair has begun consultation

with those Circuits that need to reconfigure their boundaries. It has come to our attention in these consultations and discussions that a number of Societies that were established within the boundaries of other Circuits are a result of conflicts that took place and some people chose to establish new Societies. Such past conflicts make it extremely difficult to work on realigning our boundaries. In many of these cases there needs to be a process of reconciliation and healing of past hurts before any discussion about boundaries can happen. The District Boundaries Committee has begun consultations with affected Circuits to work on the matter.

The Bishops of the Limpopo and Central Districts have begun preliminary discussion about a Society situated within the Central District and yet belongs to the Limpopo District. There is openness with all parties concerned to bring this matter to two Quarterly Meetings affected and then to Synods of both Districts in 2017. We believe that the matter will be resolved to the satisfaction of all and for the benefit of the church and its mission and administration.

BOTSWANA

The matter of Botswana becoming a District continues to be under discussion. The Connexional Boundaries Committee has had a consultation with the people of Botswana in order to hear their request and give some guidance on what would be necessary in order for the region to become a District. A report will be presented to Conference by the Connexional Boundaries Committee. Needless to say that all who were part of the consultation understand that much work needs to be done to realise this vision.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ORDAINING WOMEN

2016 is the year in which the MCSA celebrates 40 years since our church ordained the first woman to the ministry of word and sacrament. Since then there has been a steady increase in the number of women ordained. Our Synod gave time to recognise the women in the ministry, to celebrate with them and give thanks to God for the gifts they bring into the life of the church. We also gave women ministers a prominent place at our Conventions and other events where they were recognised and affirmed. We are conscious of the need not to make this a once-off event but the beginning of continued recognition for a section of our society who make a valuable contribution to our ministry even in the face of still present gender stereotypes.

EDUCATION

Ministry to Educational Institutions

Our District has a number of tertiary institutions within its boundaries and the need has been recognised to strengthen the church's presence in these institutions. To this end Circuits that have tertiary institutions within their boundaries have been encouraged to be intentional and focussed in their ministry to such institutions. Consideration has also been given to the possibility of establishing chaplaincies to institutions of learning, linking them to nearby Circuits. One of our Societies in Pretoria has offered some ministry to a University in the form of their Youth Pastor. We are happy to inform that as of next year (2017) there will be a minister stationed in that Circuit with the specific brief to be a chaplain to University students. We see this as the beginning and that as this ministry develops so will we find the means to extend it to other institutions.

Branches of Methsoc do exist in most of the tertiary institutions, but mostly linked to the Wesley Guild and connected to local Circuits. This is another vehicle through which we may offer ministry to Methodist students in educational institutions.

School Visits

During the past year the Bishop visited schools, particularly those that are headed by Methodists. It has been encouraging to see the commitment of our people to education and we commend and continue to pray for them. We became aware of the immense difficulties under which educators are expected to work, often burdened by administrative work that takes away their time from the classroom. During these visits we became aware of children who live in poverty, many of them without shoes. At the beginning of this year the Bishop initiated an "All God's children got shoes" effort. We had a fairly good response from people who gave money for shoes to be bought and delivered to schools. Others were challenged to buy shoes for children in their local schools. We will continue with this campaign in the future.

XENOPHOBIA AND RACISM

We have had a number of incidents of Xenophobia and Racism throughout the country in the past year. This is a symptom of hardening attitudes and discontent with the way our country and society at large is going. This is not a result of one, but many factors and problems we have to face as a nation. We believe the church should be in the forefront, offering alternatives to hate speech and destructive behaviour. Our Circuits and Societies are encouraged to make space for conversations around these issues, allow people to articulate their concerns and fears, and to offer possible solutions. We have started with a plan to establish an anti-bias and pro-diversity working group who will assist our District in finding ways to assist us in dealing with these issues. We hope to introduce discussions at our ministers' Summer School, organise training and discussion events in our Circuits and Societies in order to give support, bring healing and enable our people to become agents of reconciliation in the world. This working group will finalise its plans and present it to the District for implementation in the next year.

MINISTERS' WELLNESS

We are glad to report that our District has established a ministers' wellness programme through which care and support is given to ministers and their families. This is not only when there are problems but also to encourage ministers to care for their complete well-being. The initiative has drawn the interest of the Presiding Bishop's office and we have been asked to share this idea with other Districts throughout the Connexion. Circuits have been asked to support this initiative and take an active part in any way that will promote the wellness of our ministers.

USE OF KILNERTON PROPERTY

We have a valuable Connexional resource which is under the stewardship of our District, and that is the former Kilnerton Institution, which later also accommodated John Wesley College after the closer of the Federal Theological Seminary in Pietermaritzburg. The property has been utilised by various groups for training and meetings. The fact of the matter is that it is not being used to its full potential. The call has been made to our people to consider ways in which we could fully take advantage of this available property. Some of the ways that have been suggested are the following:

- The 4G Youth Pastor's Training to use it as the training venue.
- A residence for University of Pretoria and other institutions nearby to cater for Methodist students.
- A Lay Pastors' Training Centre, including Bible Women and Evangelists.
- Make it available for Holiday School especially for Matriculates.

MISSION PILLARS

CONCLUSION

We express sincere gratitude to all our people for keeping the Methodist flag flying even in these challenging times. We regard our District as one among those who continue to seek ways through which the mission of the church and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ is advanced. We have a hard working complement of ministers who do their best to exercise their ministry, we have committed lay leaders who are custodians of the life of the church, and who wish to see the church growing, but most of all to see the church influencing the world in meaningful and transformative ways.

MOZAMBIQUE DISTRICT (12)

Bishop Dinis Matsolo

INTRODUCTION

As Fernando Sabino correctly puts it “no fim tudo dá certo, e se não deu certo é porque ainda não chegou ao fim”, meaning, “at the end all is right, and if it is not yet right it’s because it has not yet reached the end”.

We thank God that this saying has inspired us to keep it up even in the midst of so many adversities. Galvanized by God’s mission we can but only move on and keep on keeping on, believing that “that which is to come is better than what it was, and what it is”

And it’s in this context that we, as a District continue to look forward with our eyes focused on Jesus Christ, and pursuing God’s purpose, the owner of the mission.



COUNTRY OVERVIEW

God has been good to us, we experience His mercies and compassion in the midst of turbulent moments that Mozambique has gone through due to the socio-political, military and economic crisis which impact affected the most vulnerable of our communities and tested the future of our younger generations. Your continuous support and prayers are deeply appreciated and indispensable for our survival. We would not like to see our children experience the shame and the devastating effect of war that we experienced in the past.

Since the November 2014 electoral process and the establishment of the new government at the beginning of 2015, Mozambique has been going through a very troubled time. The opposition party not accepting the results and demanding talks and negotiations on one hand, and/or threatening to govern those provinces that it won on the other hand. Talks were conducted between themselves, then with domestic facilitation/mediation but did not earn desired results. Now a so called “Dialogue Joint Commission” assisted with International Mediators has been put in place, this has become the hope for the nation, yet there has been a growing demand for the Commission to be more inclusive because peace is of interest for the whole nation and thus, the involvement of other interested sectors of our society is of paramount importance and deemed unavoidable, just as we have been advocating for.

It is becoming clear that the contesting parties have lost mutual trust which affects the whole nation and we believe that it is time for us to invest in restoring that trust which has been lost and it is on that understanding that we have embarked on that initiative as our prophetic role engagement, as it will be seen further in our report.

ANNUAL SYNOD

Our Annual Synod which met at Limpopo Norte Circuit – “SILASI TIVANE” Local Society (Chókwe, from the 26th to the 29th May, 2016) was Mission-oriented (missional in purpose), starting with our God inspired theme “As a true and perfect Discipleship Movement, **‘Let us fish according to Jesus guidance if we are to be successful’**” (St. John 21:6).

This theme indeed challenged and continues to challenge and inspire us to do Mission not our own way, but God’s way, according to what Jesus commands us to do and in the way He instructs us to do it. Throughout our deliberations we became more than ever convinced that sometimes we miss it up because we are not into His business but into our own businesses. So, the call is indeed to do it God’s way, with a clearer understanding that it isn’t ours but His, that we are but just invitees and that certainly we are just privileged to be invited to such an important and revolutionary endeavor, because in reality God can (and if necessary, He will) do it even without us.

We also had a joyful moment of celebrating the 40th year anniversary of Women Ordination in our Church by recognizing women Ministers in God's Mission in our Church. From the District Retreat to the Synod itself, our women Ministers led and inspired us by work-shopping us on the basis of their experience in ministry and by challenging us through Bible Studies. We indeed salute women ministry and we thank God for the gift it represents to the Church.

We deeply and prayerfully reflected about our prophetic responsibility in times like these and the call to be deliberately and progressively more of a Mission-minded Church, we re-examined our Connexional challenges like "how connexional is our connexionality", the socio-political dynamics of our Region, the Education crises, the issue of droughts ravaging our countries, the issues of minority groups discrimination including the tragedy of Albinism and human trafficking in our Region, as well as the undertakings and challenges of our District.

Synod challenged Young People to be more organized and focused to God's Mission and above all, work towards galvanizing the spirit of togetherness not only within the Church but also throughout the country in order to capture young people from all various groupings of society to promote and work for peace (Youth for Peace). Young People on the other hand expressed their need for more and closer accompaniment by the whole Church and parents.

ACHIEVEMENTS/MAJOR CELEBRATIONS

God is strengthening His work in our expansion strategic areas. We are thankful to Him and to all of you for your prayerful support that allowed us to experiment new horizons out of the "comfort zone". God's work in "Zona Centro" (Cruzamento de Tete) and in "Zona Norte" (Nampula) is growing. Negotiations with the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe to station a Shona speaking Minister from Zimbabwe in "Zona Centro" are at an advanced stage, in the spirit of a partnership between Methodists in Mozambique and Zimbabwe and between our two countries. And the presence of a Minister in Nampula is galvanizing God's Mission in "Zona Norte".

We thank God for the signs of true connexionality. We have successfully stationed an Evangelist from Natal West in Macie Circuit and a Minister from Natal Coastal is in his way to Matola Circuit. We pray, believe and hope that many other Ministers and Evangelists from throughout the Connexion will rise up to their call and take heed of Wesley's call to "go not just to those who need us but to those who need us most".

- SPIRITUALITY

Groups of Intercessors are emerging in most of our Circuits which is a clear indication of spiritual revival that brings Spiritual growth which is expressed in a devote and devotional life of our members that make them to grow closer to God and improve in Giving and Thanksgiving as well as in Missional mind-likeness and Evangelism outreach which gains momentum in our Circuits.

Ponta d'Ouro was the place where we held our Ministers Retreat this year mid-February. Our time together there helped us to discover the potential for Mission that Ponto d'Ouro offers. We reflectively revisited our Calling and God's Mission as we celebrated Women Ministry in our Church. We closed our Retreat on Sunday by a Service with Holy Communion with our KwaNgwanazi Society fellow Wesleyans in Manguzi - South Africa, in an effort of building partnership with our neighboring District of Natal Coastal.

- EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

We praise God for His blessing on our challenging work of strengthening the Expansion of His Mission throughout the country and we consider this to be the ripe time for this purpose.

We have successfully concluded and dedicated three new Church Buildings one of which was built on a record time which generates enthusiasm on the efforts of building new places of Worship as well as shelter for our Staff. As a matter of fact we envisage to finish and dedicate at least three more Church buildings by the end of the year even as the "District fund raising" initiative continues to inspire Circuits initiatives.

Support is required to galvanize the ongoing good Missional work that is been carried on at “Zona Norte” for it to gain the status of a Circuit.

- JUSTICE AND SERVICE

In partnership with our Korean Missionary Partner we managed to provide potable water to two Communities in Boane and Matutuine Districts by developing “bore holes”. This is an ongoing project that we hope will help a lot of Communities in need of that precious and indispensable commodity.

We are proud of our Children’ Ministry activities which have given joy and hope to our children throughout all Circuits, especially with the awareness workshops on Children’s Rights and Protection that are being carried out throughout our District. We enforce that our Churches become a safer place for our children and many of our Church buildings (properties/halls) have also been used as Crèches.

The Fighting Malaria Initiative under the Mozambican Inter-Religious Program against Malaria (PIRCOM) of which we are part and play a leading role continues to make a huge impact in contributing to the reduction of deaths caused by malaria and because of its potential in impacting social behavior change through communication (SBCC) is gaining respect and admiration even by the Ministry of Health.

The stage that our Country is at present in terms of the ongoing socio-political, military and economic crises has led us to embark on an initiative tending to “restore trust” as our contribution towards building a Culture of Peace and Social Cohesion within our Communities.

We have been inspired by the reading of the book entitled “*The Speed of Trust*” - by Stephen M. R. COVEY in which he outlines ‘*The 13 Behaviours that Generate Trust*’ that we believe if well understood, embraced and implemented can indeed restore the trust that has been lost.

- ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In our District we continue investing on human capital by capacitating our Leaders for efficiency and effectiveness in empowering our people and our Communities at large. Thus, training/capacity building workshops for the various Church groupings and/or Organizations/Departments on Church Structures, Class Leadership, Leadership and Development, Stewardship and Giving, Peace building and Conflict Transformation “ToTs” training with the purpose of cascading it to Circuit and Society levels continues to be our focus.

We are conceptualizing an ambitious “Food Security” project to respond to the cyclic food shortage provoked by recurrent droughts that affect our communities time and again. The Agricultural project in Mapandzeni at Limpopo Norte Circuit serves as our inspiration that gives us hope that challenges and crises are but opportunities for learning and activating the potential for imagination and creativity that are within us.

PERSPECTIVES

As a way of expressing our obedience to Jesus orientation, we plan to undertake the following:

- To invest on restoring trust in the country and create a movement for Peace “Wesleyanos pela Paz” as our contribution for building a “Culture of Peace” in the country
- To formalize the ownership of the land where we envisage to establish a “Hope to our Children” Center in Chinhacanine to galvanize Children Ministry in the Northern part of Gaza Province that goes as far as to the border with Zimbabwe in Chicualacuala, which will also serve as an arch of salvation in time of floods, as indicated in our previous report.
- To strengthen work in “Zona Norte” (Nampula Mission Station) and galvanize the expansion of God’s Mission and Evangelism in the Northern part of Mozambique. We need your support to build a Mission House there and carry on several mission projects related to Children Ministries and Agriculture & Life stoke. We have already acquired plot for that purpose

- To continue investing more and improve accommodation for Workers (manses) which remains a continuous challenge for our District
- To print our produced and/or translated training material in Portuguese
- To strengthen our now established Mission Chaplaincy for the Seafarers in Maputo and Nacala
- To strengthen our partnership with the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe and materialize the stationing of a Zimbabwean Minister in “Zona Centro”
- To establish partnership with Natal Coastal District for “Projects beyond Borders” initiatives and embark on Missional endeavors together in Ponta d’Ouro

CONCLUSION

May our being be to do His Mission the way He commands us to do it, with a clear understanding that only then we are to be successful, but if we do it our own way we will labor in vain just as it was with the Disciples away from the Master.

Let us therefore, *cast the net on the right side (according to the Master’s orientation - as a True and Perfect Discipleship Movement), so that we may catch.*

To God be the Glory.

Shalom...

CLARKEBURY DISTRICT (13)

BISHOP THEMBINKOSI FANDALEKI

First of all it give me a great privilege to take this opportunity in extending my gratitude, as a newly inducted Bishop of the Clarkebury District, to all my co-workers in collegiality, District and Circuit leadership an all people called Methodists in the District for their confidence in electing me into the office of pastoral responsibility in the District. This is the District which is situated in the rural areas of the mountains of Drakensburg, Mbhashe and Mgwali rivers to the beautiful sea points of Port St John's up to Mzamba Holiday Resort and Umzimkulu i.e old borders of Transkei. The commitment and dedication of 68 ministers (inclusive of 4 probationers) into the pastoral management of 53 Circuits sustains the uniqueness of this District in maintaining *mutual respect and the value *

CONFLICTS IN THE DISTRICT

Upon my arrival the District certain circuits was in the mist of very volatile conflicts, through mediation and communication we have been able to resolve most conflicts. We are currently in the pursuit of resolution of all the remaining conflicts so that those circuits too, can enjoy the blessings of a harmonious Circuit . The main issues that fuel conflicts are; constant power struggles within the congregation, miss management of circuit resources, the seamless integration of church agents and the existing church officials within the circuit. It has been a strainous journey for the District yet it has proven to be rather full filling. Seeing the spiritual growth that has transpired within the District is further affirmation that anything done within Christ prospers.

SPIRITUALITY

The Methodist people annually gather for conventions where bible studies are conducted to contextually broaden their understanding of scripture. These conventions are the corner stone of maintaining the churches spirituality. Each year our congregated gather to replenish their thirsty souls. It is of vital significance to also indicate the dedication and commitment of our Circuit leaders not only to the street revival or house pastoral visitation but also to broaden Christ followers in their understanding of the bible.

We salute the formation of a group of intercessors who are continually, in the prayer services, communicating with God to committing God's people into not only accepting Christ as the Lord and Savior but also to walk onto his footsteps. Healing ministry is taken seriously in this regard.

EVANGELISM & CHURCH GROWTH

Without any hesitations it is of crucial importance to recognize the excellent work done by the Oder of Evangelist and Biblewomen in the District, for it is commonly known as a place of Mission. Again with partnership with Undzondelelo certain circuits benefited in the complains which many times leaves the communities with an educated understanding of what it means to be a "Good Methodist." Hence our before in this theme for 2016 was calling for the connection of the 'Unconnected ' to God as a Discipleship Movement. The District is therefore committed to use any relevant tool of Evangelism for the purpose of growing this church. Nevertheless our statistic circuit report still need monitoring and review in this regard.

We are pleased to report that the Synod 2016 recommends to Conference a new station that was established as a result of the growth within the Circuit.

JUSTICE AND SERVICE

Clarkebury District, being rural of cause, have introduced a range of projects and programs as a response to the eradication of poverty. Land has been and is being identified for the implementation of huge envisaged as proposed projects whose intention is to create jobs, so to respond to poverty eradication. The success of this dream will only come through the partnership with government, relevant institution and/as business sector. Organizational outreach ministries always leave impact in the communities.

The significance of fighting against all forms of abuse, inclusive substance abuse, in our communities is now clarified as we continue to establish centres in the regions or circuits for the purpose of awareness campaigns, as well, sometime using 'Sexual Harassment Document ' agreed at Conference.

We are grateful to the Mission Unit with the establishment of the desk like MASA, Health, Child care and Human Trafficking which are directly responding to these mission stumbling blocks.

HUMAN EMPOWERMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our District developed a partnership with E.C.R.D.A (Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency) and the Department of Agriculture whose aim is to empower small farmers to grow. With governments appeal of going back to basics those circuits with Agricultural land avail the land not only for crop cultivation but also for skills development. Young people are also encouraged to join Agricultural farming and M.E.C of Agriculture was invited to address, encourage and urged to participate in programs of "All Go Green", etc. Livestock upgrade has started in the area of Tabankulu under Mnceba Circuit. This is aiming at changing the livestock in the surrounding communities, to produce quality wool and marketable as valued lamb/sheep.

EDUCATION AND CHRISTIAN FORMATION

A Convener into this desk has been nominated and already began to participate to most of Eastern Reginal / District activities within the Clarkebury District.

The commitment in participating by conducting schools morning prayers by most of our Circuit superintendents, ministers, evangelist, bible-woman and preachers has been applauded by the synod 2016. Negotiations with Department of Education regarding of hostels are continuing with an acknowledgement of church's commitment to the provision of sleeping facilities and/or renovation to certain extent.

Young Men's Guild and Women's Manyano took initiative of painting and donating to schools during their gatherings at conventions.

CONCLUSION

Agreeing fully that the church will continue to be watchdogs to these in governance, we continue encouraging the members of our ecumenical community to continue voting for the betterment of our people's lives. It is my wish and hope that together we continue to be 'A Transformed Discipleship Movement' for the healing and economic empowerment in our land.

Shalom!!!