

NEWSLETTER - JULY 2022

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Bible College Consultation: How Bible Colleges Should Serve the Church

“O God, please help transform Your churches and Bible colleges here in Africa, making them able and devoted to equipping church leaders to understand Your Word and to preach it faithfully, so that Your people in Africa will honour You and live according to Your will.”

This prayer was on the minds of the 120 delegates, representing some 40 Bible schools, at the end of the 11th annual Bible College Consultation. This event was hosted on 14-16 June 2022 by Mukhanyo and the Theological Education Association of Southern Africa.

Fifteen speakers addressed nine plenary sessions and eighteen workshops in which the many present challenges were discussed, especially concerning the relationship between churches and Bible schools. The theme of the consultation this year was “Serving the Church in Bible Education.”

At the end of the three days together, the main conclusion was that churches and Bible colleges in Africa need each other. Yet there are various reasons why vital synergy, collaboration and cooperation are seriously lacking.

The keynote addresses and some workshops are recorded online at www.teasa.co.za. Here are some extracts of the many salient points made by some of the speakers and workshop facilitators:

The reasons why churches and Bible colleges do not cooperate as they should was addressed by many speakers. In the words of Prof Joseph Mutei, dean of students at St Paul's University in Kenya, theological education in Africa is in crisis; it is not healthy and vital: “As a discipline, theology is bankrupt.” While around 90% of pastors have little or no theological education, churches are attacked by worldly challenges such as secularism, the prosperity gospel, nominalism, syncretism, and compromised Bible teaching.

What should be done? “The prominence of theological



education as a tool for church reformation is paramount.” Prof Mutei mentioned the need for collaboration, lifelong learning opportunities, sharing of library services, more research, as well as good literature, and also for the youth.

To address the state of affairs, it is necessary to refocus the mission of both churches and theological education. According to Dr Brian DeVries, principal of Mukhanyo, the response can be summarised under five actions: review, refocus, regroup, revive and reform. Why is synergy often so limited? Colleges find fault with churches, and churches are doing the same with colleges. But both should stop blame-shifting and instead work together to address present challenges.

Churches and colleges need each other. Furthermore, Christ commands church leaders in Matthew 28 to teach all nations. Christ also provides grace for this mission, promises to give wisdom, and leads us through various ways and means, because He knows what churches and colleges need.

Rev Ronald Kalifungwe, a senior pastor and lecturer at the African Christian University in Lusaka, argued that what is urgently needed is the right kind of mentoring (in Jesus' way) for the right kind of leadership, both in the church and in theological institutions.

Dr Charlie Rampfumedzi, principal of Christ Seminary in Polokwane, said colleges need a curriculum keeping the requirements in sight, including the right students who are qualified to study, and gifted teachers who develop teaching strategies to produce fully equipped students. To qualify as a church leader a person must be knowledgeable

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(content), able to apply the content (competent), and be a changed Christ-like person (character).

Curricula should be reviewed according to three perspectives, argued Dr Richard Seed, an education consultant and lecturer at George Whitfield College. These three perspectives are the coherence of the curriculum, the progress of student learning, and feedback from external stakeholders.

Rev Joster Jumbe, lecturer and translator at Zomba in Malawi, believes that biblical principles should be used to confront the many unbiblical churches. This should be done with various methods: open-air evangelism, translation of sound biblical books and tracts in local languages, inviting church leaders for lifelong training and organising study centres.

Rev Brian McLean of the John Wycliffe Theological College led a workshop that highlighted five training lessons about reform: according to the Bible, for the church, aimed at the heart of students, consequential to impact all as-

pects of society, and for evangelistic witness.

Instead of employing pragmatic methods to grow the church, church leaders should simply use God's ordained means of grace: the faithful preaching of God's Word, administration of the sacraments and prayer, according to Rev Antonio Coppola, senior lecturer manager of Mukhanyo's Durban Centre. God promises that the use of these ordinary ways will revitalise His church.

At the end of the three days, delegates were asked for their comments. Was the Consultation worthwhile and did it help them in their mission and training work? The answer was unanimously positive! Many are looking forward to next year's Bible College Consultation.



Two Steps Forward

New facilities for Durban Centre and an expanded vision for the distance group programme – are two exciting steps forward, taking place right now at Mukhanyo.

The paperwork and finances to acquire the new facility in Pinetown for Mukhanyo's new Durban Advanced Learning Centre are almost finalised, and some minor work to prepare the centre for the staff and students has started.

The other step forward is the appointment of seven regional coordinators to assist and promote decentralised facilitated learning support centres. The fast growth of Mukhanyo's distance programme in the last few years is a clear indication that there is still enormous potential for further growth. The task of the regional coordinators will be to guide and build on this potential while also providing more assistance to existing centres so that they continue to function effectively.

For example, there is a great need for faithful pastors and other church leaders in the greater George/Mossel Bay region. This includes existing church leadership as well as the need for more Biblical church planting. A coordinator is needed to network with existing church groups and find synergies for starting several more facilitated learning support centres in this region.

The same is true in KwaZulu-Natal. Over many years, much mission work was done within this region; and there are at least twenty reformed churches as well as many preaching points. Yet many local pastors are close to retirement and there are not enough young church leaders to succeed them. Reformed Bible schools in two KwaZulu-Natal regions had to close down when financial support from overseas decreased substantially.

The present distance centres in the KwaZulu-Natal region offer Mukhanyo's two Higher Certificate, an accredited qualification (NQF level 5). The Durban Centre in Pinetown also offers this Higher Certificate, as well as the BTh Degree in Theology (NQF level 7). But many more distance groups need to be established across the whole of KwaZulu-Natal, to serve many more churches with quality accredited Bible education.

These two steps forward – the new Durban Centre facilities and the appointment of regional coordinators – are advancements to serve a greater number of churches and potential ministry students.



DID YOU KNOW



- ◇ Mukhanyo has more than 35 highly qualified lecturers, both full-time and part-time, who teach in the five regional centres. There are also more than 170 facilitators – many of whom are qualified ministers – who serve at various learning support centres across the country.
- ◇ Over 20 new study guides with DVDs are very close to final publication. The professionally published study material for more than 90 modules is making steady progress.
- ◇ Mukhanyo's five regional libraries already have over 33 000 theological books, with more titles on the way for cataloguing next year.
- ◇ Mukhanyo gives close to R1 million in bursaries to needy students each year. This excludes the bursaries provided by other institutions, such as churches both local and international.

New Distance Learning Centre: Independent Church Leaders Want Training

In July, after months of preparation, a new facilitated learning support centre started functioning, consisting of senior Zulu independent church leaders. This new distance group in Kwaggafontein, north-east of Pretoria in the former KwaNdebele homeland, could prove to be an important breakthrough for several reasons.

As generally acknowledged, leaders of African independent or indigenous churches (AICs) often have no theological training and limited Bible knowledge, but many are faithful spiritual leaders. So it is very significant when another group of these leaders personally request training, asking Mukhanyo to provide them with Bible knowledge so that they can preach from the Bible correctly.

Mukhanyo was stated in this way more than three decades ago, and this ministry's focus continues unhindered. We thank the Lord for the opportunity to be involved in the further training and future development of local independent church leaders.

Rev Tebogo Mogale, lecturer and co-marketer of Mukhanyo, says it is promising that this group's participants indicated they want to be biblically equipped to lead their congregations better. They now will also ask their branch churches to start distance study groups.



Pastors in training in Kwaggafontein

Over and above the present twelve church leaders in this study group, another six have applied to join the group. These are very senior leaders, all over 60 years old. This group is facilitated by brother Given Ngoma, a student who just completed the BTh degree at Mukhanyo KwaMhlanga.

Please pray for God's blessing on this Zulu group! Pray that this is the beginning of a growing trend with many more leaders from independent churches wanting to be trained in the Word of God.

Mukhanyo's Board: Two New Directors and Two Reappointments



Mr Riaan Bartlett and Mr Neels Kloppers

Mukhanyo's Board of Directors was expanded at the Annual General Meeting of Member Churches (AGM) on 14 May 2022. Two new board members were approved – Mr Riaan Bartlett and Mr Neels Kloppers. In addition, two existing directors were reappointed – Pastor Joshua Bolaji and Prof Patrick Palmer.

Mr Riaan Bartlett replaces Marthinus Erasmus who passed away last year. Riaan has extensive experience in business governance and management, with specific experience in risk management. He has already helped the Board improve in this area; he is a new member of the audit & risk subcommittee of the Board.

Mr Neels Kloppers worships at the Gereformeerde Kerk Waterkloofrand where he serves as an elder. He is also the chairman of their evangelism commission and a member of the finance committee. His extensive experience in the area of finance and accounting will be of value to Mukhanyo. He also now serves on the audit & risk subcommittee.

Pastor Joshua Bolaji is a church planter at the Welkom Baptist Church in the Free State. Joshua was born in Nigeria but trained in England with a background in the corporate world (town planning and operations management). He has also served as a missionary, first in London and since 2011 in Welkom, South Africa.

Prof Patrick Palmer is a professor emeritus of international business at UNISA with more than 40 years of academic experience. He has published many articles, and papers for conferences, and co-authored a textbook on global business. Prof Patrick serves as an elder at the Constantia Park Baptist Church in Pretoria. He continues to serve Mukhanyo as the chairman of the board's education subcommittee.

We are thankful for Mukhanyo's strong governance team. While these men are often serving unnoticed behind the scenes, they have a vital role in the long-term stability and sustainability of Mukhanyo. Please continue to pray for the Board of Directors as they oversee the growth and maturity of the Mukhanyo ministry.