

## NEWSLETTER - JULY 2023

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### TEASA Consultation: Many Challenges and Our Only Defense

The Church in Africa is facing many challenges and threats, perhaps even more than our counterparts in the Western world. However, this should not discourage us from recognising the potential to address these issues. Ultimately, the African Church needs to re-establish its firm foundation in the comprehensive teachings of the Bible and relinquish all heresies and superstitions.

This conclusion emerged from a three-day consultation of Bible colleges held north of Pretoria. Delegates attended from various African nations, including Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as well as South Africa. It was arranged by Mukhanyo on behalf of the Theological Education Association of Southern Africa (TEASA), centred around the theme “God’s Word for Bible Education in Africa.”

The presentations delivered by confessional theologians in Africa demonstrated their comprehensive understanding of both Western and indigenous African heresies.

In his opening keynote address, Rev. Dr Siegfried Ngubane, the regional director of SIM (Serving In Missions), highlighted various concerns within the church, including disunity, materialism, the lavish lifestyles of church leaders, ethical shortcomings, moral misconduct, and the emergence of self-proclaimed “apostles” who lack understanding of Christ’s teachings and propagate their false doctrines. He pleaded for the establishment of a network of sound Biblical education institutions with collaboration and fellowship based upon the whole Word of God.

During the meeting, Rev. Isaac Makashinyi, academic dean of the Lusaka Ministerial College and lecturer at African Christian University, shed light on the perilous influence of liberal theologians who manipulate the interpretation of the Bible to conform to specific cultural contexts. Additionally, he emphasised the escalating challenge posed by the authority of the senior pastor figure, commonly referred to as “papa”, within African societies. Despite the teachings of Scripture,

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the statements of this revered church leader are revered and regarded as infallible truths.

In the realm of Bible education, it is vital that every course in the curricula recognises and honours the authority of the Bible. It is imperative to guard against succumbing to temptations such as “democratising” the curriculum, yielding to political correctness, or commercialising the pursuit of Bible education.

Makashinyi strongly criticised endeavours to “Africanise” hermeneutics as a means to distance oneself from “Western” hermeneutical approaches. Such efforts, he argued, often involve the promotion of African culture and traditions, which may lead to incorrect contextualisation and the blending of ancestral beliefs and practices, including those associated with sangomas (witchdoctors), with biblical truths.

According to Rev. Rodgers Atwebembeire, the regional director for Eastern Africa at the Africa Centre for Apologetics Research in Uganda, African cults misinterpret Scripture by blending its truths with their ancestral beliefs. These cults claim to accept the Bible but assert that its understanding necessitates additional revelations.

Scripture is distorted through various means, with a minimum of twenty identified methods. These include the employment of erroneous or selective quotations and the assertion that the Bible bestows divine authority upon particular individuals.

Rev. Dr Victor d’Assonville, dean of the Reformed Theological Seminary in Heidelberg, Germany, and a seasoned cross-cultural missionary who dedicated around 20 years to his work in South Africa drew upon J. Gresham Machen’s famous book *Christianity and Liberalism*. He expounded on the prevalent tendency in Africa where humans endeavour to shape God in their likeness. Christianity is firmly rooted in the Bible as the divine Word, forming the bedrock for both its belief system and way of life. Conversely, liberalism finds its foundation in the transient emotions of fallen mankind.

The consensus among all twelve speakers was resolute: the authority of the Bible should remain unviolated and unchallengeable. They emphasised that the true understanding of God’s Word can only be attained by attentively heeding the Bible and employing hermeneutics – a God-given method that has proven its efficacy throughout the ages – to faithfully expound its teachings.

All keynote addresses of the Consultation are available at [www.TEASA.co.za](http://www.TEASA.co.za). This year’s event was another great blessing for more than forty Bible education institutions. It was a collective affirmation, recognising Scripture alone as the ultimate authoritative source: *Sola Scriptura!*



## Biblical Piety and Preaching

The Reformed view and comprehension of the Bible transcend what is commonly recognised by many Reformed teachers and Christians. Its profound, extensive, and abundant nature can be explored through experiential or exemplary preaching, fostering a genuine longing to faithfully apply the depths of God’s Word in every aspect of life.

Dr Joel Beeke explained this concept during a two-day seminar hosted by Mukhanyo at the Pretoria Campus on the 21st and 22nd of June. The seminar drew an audience of around a hundred participants, primarily composed of Reformed preachers and theologians. Dr Beeke is president and professor of systematic theology and homiletics at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregations in America.

Delivering a series of five lectures, Dr Beeke delved into the marrow of the Five Solas and the heartbeat of



Reformed Theology. To illustrate these principles, he presented a compelling case study on the piety of John Calvin. He emphasised the importance of knowledge and comprehension of God permeating not only the mind but also the heart and actions.

Dr Beeke highlighted the significance of experiential preaching. In summary, experiential preaching can be encapsulated as follows:

- Faithful proclamation which unveils the full power of God’s Word.

- Drawing contextual relevance by bridging the gap between the timeless truths of Scripture and the contemporary needs and challenges faced by the congregation.
- Experiencing God's power as pastors opens the door for the Holy Spirit to work powerfully through faithful exposition of the Scriptures, illuminating hearts and empowering individuals to live out the truth.
- Scriptural authority, guarding against the dangers of preaching human opinions or personal agendas.
- Focus on Jesus Christ as the central figure and core message of the Scriptures. Through exemplary Reformed preaching, believers are guided towards a transformative encounter with the living Christ, where they can intimately experience His love and mercy, finding their ultimate hope and salvation in Him alone.

As expressed by a participant, this seminar will serve as an inspirational catalyst for numerous preachers, prompting them to re-evaluate their preaching and teaching methodologies as well as especially deepening their relationship with our risen Lord.



## Breakthrough in Kenya

Over the past year, Mukhanyo's educational courses have experienced a significant breakthrough in Kenya. Presently, four sites collectively accommodate about ninety students engaged in Mukhanyo's Focus programme and a separate group dedicated to teaching Mukhanyo's diploma-level Higher Certificate courses.

The journey began in a providential manner when Rev. Eric Ngala Mutumbi founded the Reformed Theological Seminary in Western Kenya in 2013. Having previously pursued studies in the Netherlands, he shared his vision to establish a rural training programme for Kenyan pastors and church workers with Christian friends in the Netherlands in 2012. It was during this exchange that one of his friends introduced him to Mukhanyo Theological College in South Africa. Promptly, Rev. Mutumbi initiated correspondence to start a local learning site offering a Diploma through Mukhanyo, which has now expanded to include the Higher Certificate programme.

While attending the annual TEASA consultation in 2016, Rev. Mutumbi had an encounter with a team from the Net Foundation of the Netherlands. Recognising their shared objectives, they

swiftly agreed to form a partnership and expand the training programmes for church leaders in Western Kenya and the Rift Valley. This collaboration has experienced remarkable growth, with learners from this group seamlessly transitioning into Mukhanyo's Higher Certificate programs.

Rev. Mutumbi is convinced that Mukhanyo's Focus programme will provide essential foundational training that equips church leaders to effectively share the Gospel and educate church members to identify the prevalent cults operating in Kenya.

He expresses deep gratitude to the Lord for these providential connections with faithful brothers who have provided support in their commendable endeavours. The previous year a generous donor facilitated the training of two potential Focus tutors at the Mukhanyo campus in Johannesburg and has extended support by covering their attendance for this year's TEASA Consultation in Pretoria, South Africa.



Rev. Mutumbi



## Ways to Enrich Your Marriage

Exhort, love, respect and give yourself right through your whole married life. These are some of the main points stressed during a Couples Conference held on 8 June at Mukhanyo's KwaMhlanga Campus.

Pastor J.V. Sukazi, the pastor of a church in the wider KwaMhlanga area, spoke on "Building a Fulfilling Biblical Marriage". He read from Mathew 19:4-6 and touched on several points regarding marriage, including that the husband should love his wife and the wife should respect her husband as the head of the home. He especially stressed Jesus' teaching that "from the beginning" marriage was meant to be for life. It was encouraging to hear such a clear reminder of the basic truths, also since there is so much unbiblical teaching about marriage these days.

Pastor Jacques Malan, full-time lecturer at Mukhanyo, spoke on the topic "Biblical 'One Another Commands' in Marriage". The commands he touched on are:

- Exhort one another – to come alongside and help.
- Submit to one another – to respect one another and follow the one God has put in authority.
- Love another – to willingly give yourself to help, bless and meet the needs of the other one.



Attendees and speakers at the recent Couples Conference

The conference was well attended. During the group discussions for men and women separately, several questions were raised. On the ladies' side, most of the time was spent on how a wife should communicate with her husband and what her role should be in handling finance in the family.

The men discussed the need for churches to better provide the much-needed role models of a biblical husband. Many boys grow up without men – let alone godly men – to mentor them. This discussion was followed by an uninterrupted string of questions and answers on the matter of fulfilling the husband's role.

May the Lord help those who attended to implement what they learned, to His glory!

## A Huge Shipment of Books!

Mukhanyo is once again the grateful recipient of a remarkable blessing – a huge shipment of theology books from various American publishers. The shipment is estimated to have about 17,000 books, totalling an impressive weight of eight tonnes!

The books were unloaded at Mukhanyo's KwaMhlanga Campus and will be catalogued before being distributed to the five campus libraries across the Mukhanyo network. Apart from enriching Mukhanyo's own library holdings, surplus books and duplicates will be shared with other seminaries and theology colleges.

The last arrival of such a substantial load from America was in 2018. Furthermore, Mukhanyo receives an annual gift of its own choice from Langham Literature, a non-profit distributor of theology books from London.



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