

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2023

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More Regional Coordinators Needed

A year ago, Mukhanyo employed the initial five Regional Coordinators to support the growing network of local learning sites. Additional Coordinators will be appointed soon, as the first results are promising. The potential has already been proven and the work has started.

Currently, there are about a hundred local learning sites across Southern Africa, with around 180 tutors and over 600 local learning students spanning eight countries. Despite these achievements, the challenge lies in maintaining the vitality of these sites, as some have experienced a slowdown and require additional assistance. This is where the role of the Regional Coordinators becomes pivotal.

Pastor Alfred Masimula stands as an example in this context. Serving as the coordinator of the South Gauteng region, he also fulfils the role of a pastor in Tsakane, situated east of Johannesburg. Additionally, he serves as a tutor for local learning sites in both Tsakane and Witbank, the latter being a recent addition. We are thankful that Pastor Alfred Masimula stepped in to assume responsibility for the Ogies site when the primary tutor passed away.

Pastor Masimula views it as his responsibility to initiate new learning sites, offer encouragement and support to existing ones, and ensure the maintenance of high-quality education. He dedicates time to visiting various sites, engaging with tutors, and delivering presentations at local schools and churches.

Pastor Masimula faces primarily two challenges. Firstly, tutors often bear a heavy workload, not only

as local class facilitators but also as administrators. While Mukhanyo is actively enhancing its ICT systems to alleviate some administrative burdens, it remains a significant challenge for many tutors, given their expertise lies more in tutoring than in administrative tasks.

The second challenge involves guiding students on Mukhanyo's diverse programs, including entry requirements, tuition fees, and the enrollment process. Beginning with the unaccredited Focus program, students can progress through Mukhanyo's two higher certificates, followed by the bachelor's degree (BTh) and the BTh Honours, all offered in various locations and modes.

Local learning sites are now firmly established in all South African provinces and extend to Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The continued expansion of the learning sites necessitates the appointment of more Regional Coordinators.



Pastor Masimula at the 2023 Local Learning Forum

**REGISTRATION
STILL OPEN FOR 2024
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INFORMATION**

How to Reconcile State and Church

For centuries, the relationship between state authorities and church leadership has been a source of contention, a reality that persists in present-day South Africa. The complexities of this relationship were the subject of debate among 60 church leaders at Mukhanyo's annual Church Leaders' Conference on Saturday, 28 October 2023.

While South Africa's constitution upholds religious freedom, and the society promotes religious pluralism, the prevailing influence of the Judeo-Christian worldview from the West remains strong. Despite these constitutional assurances, there is a growing concern that religious freedom is gradually eroding due to certain policies and pending laws introduced by state authorities.

Addressing this critical issue at the conference was Peter Wassenaar, a specialist in public affairs law. Wassenaar focused on 1 Samuel 8:10-18, where Samuel cautioned the people seeking a king to carefully consider the numerous drawbacks and dangers such a central authority could bring. The key message emphasised the potential burden on the people when those in authority neglect God's guidance, leading to the misuse of power.

In South Africa, the national authorities are centralising power. This trend, if unchecked, could pose significant restrictions on the church, echoing Samuel's warning. Wassenaar advocated for decentralised power structures where local authorities actively serve the people, as this approach inherently mitigates the risk of power misuse. Unfortunately, the current path indicates a contrary movement, with the national government increasingly centralising power.

While many laws in South Africa serve the public good, some pose a threat to religious freedom and stand in contradiction to God's Word. Examples include the legalisation of homosexual marriages, a stance contrary to Christ's teachings, and the potential inclusion of certain expressions as hate speech in an upcoming act. This could restrict preachers from freely conveying biblical instructions, particularly on sensitive topics like abortion.

Additionally, there's a proposed law that might mandate the registration of religious workers by the state, without clear justification. The authority of school councils formed by parents is also at risk.



Peter Wassenaar and translator Isaac Maleke addressing church leaders

Religions are prohibited from being taught in schools, with the result that students are taught the humanistic religion of "science", this leads to a lack of biblical knowledge and moral discernment among students.

In a country with a secular government, what role does the church play? The church must articulate, both to its congregation and the broader community, the moral standards derived from the Bible. Christians should actively engage in local communities and state schools within the bounds of the law, advocating for Christian teaching where possible. The pulpit serves as the starting point for initiating change in people's hearts and minds, creating a ripple effect from the grassroots upward, influencing even those in authoritative positions.

During discussions, these issues were vigorously debated. Consensus emerged on the understanding that the highest authority in any country is the Bible. God's Word emphasises obedience to worldly authorities, except when such authorities compel the church or Christians to act against God's commands. Christians, especially church leaders, are encouraged to apply these principles in their communities, even when faced with constraints imposed by state authorities.

In the context of South Africa, secular humanism promotes the South African constitution and Bill of Rights as one of the best in the world. Yet, Christ's authority surpasses all. The Bible stands as God's Word and the ultimate guide, applicable even to practical day-to-day questions. Church leaders, serving under the authorship of Christ, are duty-bound to uphold the truths embedded in God's Word, despite the growing challenges posed by state restrictions.

Mukhanyo as Seen from South Sudan

Journey to South Sudan, where four outspoken and highly positive Mukhanyo alumni share their perspectives. Having pursued their studies in South Africa and residing in the KwaMhlanga hostel, these individuals return home annually to contribute to Sudanese churches during the summer holidays.



Deng Akol Ajuong Garang completed his BTh studies two years ago and returned to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, with a fervent ambition to preach the gospel in line with the Reformed confessions. While assisting the local pastor, he has recently, after a pro-

longed wait, obtained a certificate from local authorities recognising his Mukhanyo degree. He attributes this achievement to the Mukhanyo website, which facilitated the South Sudan Council for Higher Education in monitoring Mukhanyo's activities, accreditation status, and alignment with the national qualifications framework.

Currently assigned to pastor the local congregation of the Grace Sudanese Reformed Church in Khor Wulyang, Juba, near a military base in a challenging and impoverished area, he expresses gratitude to God Almighty for the training received at Mukhanyo. This training empowers him to approach his work with a Reformed worldview and a missional mindset. Rev. Garang urges African churches to consider sending theological students to Mukhanyo. Looking ahead, Rev. Garang's next significant step in life is to marry his fiancée, a milestone he plans to achieve as soon as he secures the necessary finances for dowry and other expenses.

Grace Sudanese Reformed Church, Juba



Isaac Monyung has completed his BTh in three years and is now returning home to Parieng, close to the border with North Sudan, where he hopes to plant a Reformed church.



He was baptised in the Roman Catholic Church in 2010, but by studying the Bible he increasingly became dissatisfied with worshipping idols like Maria and the lack of Bible preaching. Through a friend, he connected with a Reformed church, engaging in various youth activities and evangelism. After a few years he was recommended by his church and supported by a Reformed church in the Netherlands, he was sent to Mukhanyo for pastoral ministry training.

Why Mukhanyo? Isaac cites the institution's well-organised structure, teaching salvation through Christ alone, and a healthy biblical exegesis as key factors. Isaac considers himself blessed to have been sent to Mukhanyo.

Other students from Sudan include **Gatbel Khan** who completed his study at Mukhanyo last year and returned home to his family, eager to embark on preaching, though he awaits his certificate. Additionally, **Stephan Bennykuach**, who completed his studies at Mukhanyo two years ago, is now working as a secondary school teacher in South Sudan.

The Library Collections Are Increasing!

How is it possible for Mukhanyo to receive more than 40,000 theological books in less than a decade? The five libraries at each of the campuses have become one of the largest private modern theological book collections in the country.

The explanation is straightforward. Publishers of Reformed literature from both America and Europe, alongside contributions from local donors, have generously donated these volumes. Furthermore, Mukhanyo has played a pivotal role in distributing

numerous Reformed books to various Bible colleges throughout Southern Africa.

The books came from well-known publishers such as Reformation Heritage Books (RHB), Crossway, Langham Literature, Presbyterian & Reformed (P&R), Ligonier Ministries, and Christian Book Distributors. North American contributions come by container, with three shipments received since 2018. From Europe, these books are dispatched

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annually via surface mail or courier services. Locally, individuals from diverse locations generously contribute their personal collections after years of use, enhancing our libraries.

Cataloguing these books is a task entrusted to a highly qualified librarian, Tienie de Klerk, whose extensive experience in large national and research libraries proved invaluable when she joined Mukhanyo. In the realm of modern libraries with sophisticated management systems, quick accessibility for users is paramount, and Mukhanyo's library is no exception. Maintaining its usefulness demands skill and attention.

How do we thank all these publishers? There is no better way than to assure them that their books are being put to good use for spreading across Africa the Gospel of Christ and the faithful knowledge of God's Word. Publishers of such invaluable literature serve as crucial building blocks in that process!

Right: Some of the titles received from the publishers

Below: Stacks of books for our libraries



Registration Still Open for 2024

There is time to enroll for studies in 2024. Mukhanyo serves Christ's church in Africa and works closely with local church leaders.

To apply for study at Mukhanyo, please go to <https://www.mukhanyo.ac.za/apply.html>.

You can also phone or email one of the following campuses/centres:

- KwaMhlanga Campus 074 139 9348 / 074 137 7050
study@mtc.ac.za
- Durban Centre 067 256 6332
bongile.ntiwane@mtc.ac.za
- Johannesburg Campus 011 339 1223 / 078 6009243
lewis.sibanda@mtc.ac.za
- Pretoria Campus 012 004 1215 / 081 014 7614
adele.loubser@mtc.ac.za
- Rustenburg Centre 067 822 2442 / 071 625 5984
eben.leroux@mtc.ac.za

Enrolled students can apply for partial bursaries that are awarded based on need.

For information about Mukhanyo's accredited theological qualifications, see <https://www.mukhanyo.ac.za/programmes.html>.

Information about each learning centre is explained at <https://www.mukhanyo.ac.za/locations.html>.

Donate to Mukhanyo

Scan the QR code to visit the Mukhanyo donations page.

