

## NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2023

### In this issue:

- FOCUS Awards Ceremony 2023
- ThM Programme Makes Progress
- Light for Mukhanyo Johannesburg
- The Welkom Local Learning Site
- Be a Mukhanyo Ambassador

### FOCUS Awards Ceremony 2023

September 21 marked a significant day of celebration for 44 students at the Mukhanyo campus in KwaMhlanga as they were awarded certificates for completing the church-based Focus program. Some of these students spent four years to achieve this milestone.

The Focus program offers church-based education in both English and Zulu. It was established several years ago to cater to church leaders who did not meet the qualifications for Mukhanyo's accredited programmes, including higher certificates at the tertiary level or a Bachelor of Theology degree. This program plays a vital role in bridging an important gap, particularly for church leaders seeking fundamental training in various aspects of the Bible and church-related matters.

The graduates of 2023 have affirmed that this program has increased their ability to instruct and lead within various independent African churches. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Israel Gumede, from Scottsburg on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, serves as the leader of the Holiness Union Church. He completed the program in Zulu. Gumede asserts that this course has not only enriched his understanding of the Bible but has also transformed his approach to its interpretation. Mukhanyo's teachings have provided him with a biblical perspective on ancestral beliefs, which he now fervently disavows.
- ◆ Thabo Kgomakae, Tsukulu Gideon Thibeng, and Radebe Puseletiso, residents of Welkom in the Free State province, embarked on their studies together, although they serve as preachers in different churches. They unanimously attest that the programme has transformed their spiritual lives. Their comprehension of the Bible has expanded significantly, resulting in a notable shift in their preaching styles compared to their earlier approaches. They expressed a shared aspiration to further their education by enrolling in one of Mukhanyo's Higher Certificate programmes.
- ◆ Amos Nhlapo preaches in the African Free Congregational Church near Tweefontein in the Limpopo province. He also expressed the desire to continue his studies. Nhlapo states that his view of Christ has changed through the Focus study: Christ sacrificed Himself for our sins; we now are His children and should serve Him, not the other way around.
- ◆ Gideon Khamoble, also from Tweefontein, dedicated four years to successfully finishing the Focus programme. This educational journey has been a revelation, significantly broadening his perspective and understanding. He now recognises that a substantial portion of his previous teachings were inaccurate. His former belief in ancestral roles has become a thing of the past.

[Continued on page 2](#)



- ◆ George Masango serves as an elder in the “New Divine for All Nations” church, located in Kwaggafontein within the Limpopo province. He has already enrolled in Mukhanyo's Higher Certificate program. Masango emphasises that he now understands the significance of the Old Testament, of which he had limited knowledge in the past. The Focus programme has shed light on numerous traditional practices, highlighting their inaccuracies such as rituals associated with burials.

The Focus program is tailored to an academic level roughly equivalent to grades ten through twelve. This program places a strong emphasis on enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Christians within a church setting. It is specifically designed for individuals

such as pastors, elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, and other church leaders.

Students are offered the choice between three elective tracks: church leadership, church growth, or church life. The curriculum comprises modules covering a wide range of topics, including Bible studies, the in-depth exploration of specific books of the Bible, apologetics, the practice of worship within the African context, and the cultivation of godly living.

Upon registration, a student joins one of Mukhanyo's local learning sites, each one having a Mukhanyo-trained tutor or facilitator. These sites, numbering around 100 in southern Africa, serve as educational hubs where not only the Focus programme but also a substantial portion of Mukhanyo's accredited programmes are taught.

## ThM Programme Makes Progress

Dr Bruce Baugus, a professor at the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary located in Grand Rapids, USA, came to lecture at Mukhanyo's Pretoria campus from September 20th to September 27th. During this period, he presented two courses, one on the Theology of Augustine and another on the Doctrine of God, lecturing to a group of twelve ThM (Master of Theology) students. Dr Baugus teaches Systematic Theology and Apologetics at PRTS.

The Master of Theology (ThM) is a prestigious academic qualification that has gained significant popularity among church leaders and theological educators in southern Africa. Mukhanyo is one of five worldwide locations where this program is offered, facilitated by experienced visiting professors who teach in a block module structure.

One of the students in this program is Okuch Andrew Ojullo, who holds the position of lecturer and serves as the academic dean at the Knox School of Theology in Mbale, Uganda. In 2019, Okuch completed his MDiv degree from the African Reformation Theological Seminary in Kampala. He hopes to continue with a PhD in theology once he completes his ThM studies.

The seminary where Okuch serves is driven by a mission to establish Reformed churches throughout East Africa, countering the prevalent influence of the prosperity gospel and strong adherence to traditional African religious beliefs. Despite Uganda's limited resources, Okuch expresses gratitude for the freedom of religion in the country, which enables the unhindered spread of the gospel.

Okuch is one of several students in the ThM programme who are already serving in theological education. Other such students include Christo April, who teaches at the Bible Institute, and France Mookisi, who teaches at Mukhanyo. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to raise and equip many more faithful men to educate and inspire others across Africa.



Dr Bruce Baugus with the ThM Students

## Light for Mukhanyo Johannesburg

South Africa has experienced a severe electricity shortage for several years. Eskom, the state-owned power utility, has been unable to cope with power production and maintenance. Consequently, the entire nation has had to endure sporadic, unanticipated power interruptions, along with regular "load shedding" periods, lasting four to eight hours daily without electricity. While politicians offer assurances that a solution is coming within the next few years, the complexity of these issues suggests that resolving them may extend well beyond that

timeline.

This situation caused a significant challenge for Mukhanyo's Johannesburg campus, as they have few windows in their classrooms. This resulted in dark classrooms during load shedding, which, in turn, brought the lectures to a halt and prohibited the use of computers and other office equipment. Unfortunately, the campus's emergency battery backup power has proven to be insufficient to address these issues adequately.

Several solutions were considered, including the installation of solar panels together with an inverter and lithium batteries which are estimated to cost around R240 000. Mukhanyo approached a donor organisation, De Verre Naaste, in the Netherlands to request support for this project.

The Mukhanyo operations team expresses deep gratitude for the generous assistance provided by De Verre Naaste for this initiative! Thanks to their support, a system comprising 16 solar panels has been successfully installed. This installation now ensures that the campus can resume its regular operations without any interruptions.

Rev. Lance Laughton, senior lecturer in Johannesburg, says "On behalf of the students, staff and faculty of the Johannesburg Campus, I'd like to express our sincere appreciation for the solar panels and inverter which were recently installed on the property."

"This year, our students do not need to write exams by the light of suspended LED lamps in the exam room because of load shedding – which was far from ideal. The

faculty and staff have enjoyed uninterrupted wifi and some other comforts as well, all of which have greatly enhanced the teaching and discipleship on the property."

"Thank you so much. I'm reminded that 'every good and perfect gift comes from the Father above' but his gifts often come through human hearts and hands. Please relay our deep appreciation to all who made this possible."

The most pressing requirement for solar power was undoubtedly at the Johannesburg campus. Moreover, Mukhanyo is initiating research efforts for two other campuses facing similar energy challenges. KwaMhlanga, our largest campus, is next in line. We anticipate a need of around R400 000 for a comprehensive solar system at this campus.



Johannesburg Campus

## The Welkom Local Learning Site

"The most rewarding aspect of operating a local learning site is when you are discussing a specific topic from Scripture, and the lightbulb goes on for the student. In several cases, we at Mukhanyo's Welkom learning site, had students share in class that they now realise that their churches and teaching need to change to conform to the Word of God."

"I believe that this is the greatest aspect of local learning sites' ministry," says Rev Louis O'Tool, a tutor at the Welkom learning site in the Free State province. He is one of Mukhanyo's 165 tutors who serve in sites across South Africa and beyond.

Today the site offers the Focus programme as well as both Higher Certificates,

The Welkom site was established in 2015 with an initial group of six students who completed the accredited Diploma in Theology. Since then, seven more students have achieved one of the Higher Certificates there. The site provides the Focus programme in addition to both Higher Certificates, one on church ministry and one on Bible teaching. Currently, there are 20 active students enrolled at the Welkom site.

The group has had the privilege to assist with the rollout of the Bachelor's degree in theology (BTh) at local learning sites. Reverend Louis shared that they have five BTh students enrolled, and are in the process of completing their third module.



Welkom Local Learning Students and Their Families

"Our group meets weekly, and we discuss topics related to the module at hand, address any student questions and dig more deeply into the module materials. Many of our students have come from other towns in the region. The furthest travel from Wesselsbron, about 45 minutes away."

"Our students range from mid-60s to just out of matric. All of our students are engaged in church leadership on some level, while 14 are serving as pastors of their local congregation. Two of our students, who are just out of matric, hope to enter pastoral ministry upon graduation."

"We've had several students beginning their studies but not able to complete them. Some have stopped due to



financial constraints, moving to another community, or facing other challenges.”

“By far our most significant marketing is word-of-mouth, where students recommend our group to other church leaders whom they know could benefit. Most minister in township churches. Many of the students have other occupations as well since they are not receiving a full-time salary for their pastoral work.”

“The advantage of the Mukhanyo Local Learning programmes is that it brings sound theological education to those who otherwise have no access to it. While our re-

gion of the Free State is majority Christian, you will find that most church leaders have no understanding of basic doctrines. When challenged as to why certain practices exist in their churches, they respond that it comes from what they’ve learned or seen, without having any theological or biblical basis.”

Rev Louis explains that “since many of these pastors are married with children, and have other occupations as well, they would never be able to attend a traditional campus-based seminary. Local learning sites allow Mukhanyo to bring these educational resources to men and women who are thirsting for deeper knowledge.”

## Church Leaders Conference



### God's Church and Our Government

The biblical relationship of church leadership, government authorities, and Christian citizens.



*God's Word and His two servants: church and government*

Dr Brian DeVries

Saturday

28 October 2023

10:00 - 15:30



*Expert advice on church-government relations*

Mr Pèter Wassenaar

R50 per person, lunch included.

Mukhanyo Theological College,  
Plot 1 Solomon Mahlangu Drive, KwaMhlanga.

RSVP before 24 October at  
[lolo.cindi@mtc.ac.za](mailto:lolo.cindi@mtc.ac.za) | 013-947 2179

Christian books will be for sale for cash.

**Donate to Mukhanyo**

Scan the QR code  
to visit the Mukhanyo  
donations page.



## Be a Mukhanyo Ambassador

“Each of us is connected to a network of churches and Christian communities. We are Mukhanyo’s representatives in these places. We want to encourage each of you to share in your congregation the incredible work that God is doing through Mukhanyo, for the spread of His Kingdom.”

This was the instruction recently given by Dr Japie Malan, Mukhanyo’s academic dean, to a gathering of Mukhanyo faculty and staff members. The same applies to everyone connected with Mukhanyo in different ways.

Let your congregations know that they too are a vital part of this work through their prayers and support. We ask that you consider sharing Mukhanyo’s prayer requests at your churches several times each year. By doing so, you will create awareness and invite others to participate with us in this important ministry. Please pray for the needs of

our college, our staff, and all our students.

“We also encourage you to seek opportunities to address your congregations about Mukhanyo or share other possible ways to engage your church community. Keep in mind that as ambassadors of Mukhanyo, your words and deeds hold significant influence. You are the voices of Mukhanyo, and together, we can be a beacon of light in a world that desperately needs it.”

Did you know that Mukhanyo publishes a monthly prayer letter? This prayer letter can be posted on your church’s notice board or distributed via email or WhatsApp. There are also posters and pamphlets available for sharing with those who may be interested.



Dr Japie Malan