



# ADVENT 2010 NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

This last newsletter of 2010 is a reflection on choices. Choices that were made on our behalf and choices that we will need to make these next few weeks and for the New Year.

For our good the most supreme Choice was made by our Lord and Saviour to humble Himself to a human state in Bethlehem and Calvary to reconcile us to Him. Let this fill our hearts and minds with thankfulness. Be careful and sober in all your doings so that God be glorified at all times.

Thanks to Gwen Alexander and Maria Petersen for trigger thoughts and contributions that gave rise to some of the contributions.

Blessed is the one who takes the time to read this newsletter.

# 1. Walking in the light

*He is the image of the invisible God... For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Col.1:15a, 19, 20.*

Christmas –a time of self-sacrifice, the surrender of the will and heavenly power , humility, want, poverty, but also giving, receiving, of love, joy, peace, hope, righteousness, reconciliation - all initiated and secured by the Christ, the promise of God. May this Love surprised us ever anew this Season and do not allow “Santa Clause” to take His place and fill your lives this special commemorative time.

Remember to thank Jesus and say: ‘This tremendous reconciliation was done for me, for my peace, for my future.’ Once you understand and accept this make others also aware of this tremendous Father and Saviour that is prepared to still enlarge His fold.

It is also a time to follow the example of Christ to reach out to others in need and to spread the true Christmas cheer.

Time to listen, to lighten burdens, to reach out to others, to encourage relationships, to bring hope and a new vision of a better future with the Heavenly Father.

Pray the Holy Spirit to direct your mind, heart, hand where to be of help this time.

## 2. What shall we say about all these?

{Reflections on the current national and international news events will be mirrored by/in the Word of God to console, direct and challenge (where needed).}

*The timing is all wrong for the 16 days of Activism many say and think. The perception is that at this time of the year no-one wants to be confronted with the real challenges of life. It was a challenging eleven months and now we only want to kick off our shoes and relax*

a little. We don't want to be bothered with the problems of others. We do not want to be reminded: Don't look away.

To make the situation worse the 22nd World Aids Day coincide with this period-bring the focus to a pandemic so immense in South Africa that we rather just acts as if everything is going all right and all is well.

But when will be a good time to focus on abuse of women and children? One advert depicts how in a Housing Complex people will immediately complain about too loud noise, but sounds of family quarrels and violence never get attention or investigation by the neighbors. Will South Africa ever be ready and prepared to tackle/ talk about this issue? I hope that we can try to comprehend the conditions under which certain women and children are living. Imagine that this is yourself .What would you expect other people to do, how to come to your aid? I'm just trying to bring us back to: You must love your neighbor as yourself. What is within our means?

We must realize that as a Church, the spiritual dimension and solution of this issue, the change of heart that will release men from abuse and related actions, is our domain with the help of the Holy Spirit. We are in the conversion business and cannot neglect this as the kingdom plans depend thereupon. We can focus on the empowerment of women, the role drugs and alcohol abuse, unemployment, etc. but a change of heart is the key.

Sow the seeds now and see the fruit in the future, neglect this now and do not be surprised if we are irrelevant to people, because when they were in need no Christian came to their aid.

### **3. Who is to blame for my abuse she asks?**

Maybe the Church is to blame? What? How?

Does the teaching in the Bible or the interpretation of the Bible contribute to the attitude we bestow to women. How does the Bible that emanates from a patriarchal and paternalistic society treat women?

Does the Bible give women the same roles with the related rights and privileges as men? Could this still permeate the minds and hearts of men today?

Should the Church and related monotheistic religions not rectify the perceptions they have created and if so how?

Taking too long? Nothing forthcoming? How can women initiate this debate and keep it on the agenda?

#### **4. To those who mourn the loss of a loved one today.**

*We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses... Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. (Heb.4:15-16)*

The Christmas season is probably the saddest time to miss the fellowship of a loved one. Without nullifying your loss, remember that the fellowship of the Trinity was shattered just as you experience now. A perfect union was broken in heaven too because of love and concern for human beings, so that we can be united forever in the New Jerusalem. Do look forward to the re-union. In the meantime approach Jesus, your mediator and Comforter to see you through in this difficult time. May the Holy Spirit comfort you!

#### **5. Chess (nee CHURCH) moves: Bishop to...**

{All the movements of the Bishop (and deans), where they sow, plant, water will be made known so you can pray to God for these ventures at your Prayer groups and during Worship services}

Our Bishop and the General Assembly delegation have just returned from this very important gathering. Hopefully the decisions will be shared with us as soon as possible by our Executive Secretary. For now, congratulations to Bishop Dithlale for being elected to the Presiding Bishop with Bishop Phaswana as his Vice.

The COD Kimberley Head Office will close for the Summer recess on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December. We thank God for His protection on our Bishop and office staff. Thanks to the COD clergy for your efforts and for your contributions. To all our members and friends who have supported us this year and made the Diocese viable we call God's blessings upon you. Have a blessed rest and may you return with a revived spirit in the New Year.

**Herewith the summary of the Norway visit by the Bishop:**

**The delegation comprised the following people:**

1. The Rt. Rev. W.R. Bowles – Bishop
2. Mr. M.W. Jongolo – Chairperson Diocesan Partnership Committee
3. Rev. M.Z. Manong – Diocesan Executive Secretary
4. Ms. Lerato Chotetsi – Secretary Diocesan Youth Committee
5. Mr. Karabo Sebeela – Member Diocesan Youth Committee

We arrived in Stavanger Norway at Sola Airport Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2010. We were met by Pastor Gunther Theis the Ecumenical Secretary for Stavanger Diocese. This was the handshake for a new relationship. The afternoon we had lunch with Bishop Erling Petterson and the Diocesan Council. This proved to broaden the relationship and we could really meet each other.

We were really in the business of relationship building as our programme was intended to bring us together with the Pastors of the Diocese, the schools and also the Young people. In the short time of a week's visit to Stavanger we really saw quite a lot of the Diocese and the people.

Our talks concentrated on how we could strengthen our relationship. How could the Diocese of Stavanger support our programs?

1. HIV/Aids
2. Leadership Development, especially our Youth
3. Multi-skilled personal
4. Staff Development, etc.

We hope that through this relationship we can start something that is beneficial for our Diocesan.

God bless our Diocese

Let us build and develop

**Bishop W.R. Bowles**

## **6. Spotlight on a Christmas wish list or rather prayer list?**

Will the focus be on *yourself* and *your* needs or also that of others?

Please make a list now and send it to ....(Our) Father Christ(mas) in Heaven.

Amongst others ask for:

The Presence of God this Season

A spirit of Sharing

Enriching relationships

Forgiveness

Good decisions towards a healthy lifestyle

Bad memory - to forget the past and set others free.

Employment opportunities

Good judgment on the road

Support structures for those in need

Victory over temptation

Wise leadership

## **7. What about.... Trusting God and venturing out with Him.**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5, 6)*

If God can move you from January to December,

He will move you from

**Shame to Fame,**

**Insult to Result,**

**Sorry to Glory,**

**Disgrace to His Grace,**

Labour to Favour,  
Mockery to Victory.

May the Lord raise you from Glory to Glory!!

## Conclusion:

Wishing you a Blessed and Christ filled Advent and Christmas Season. For 2011 may the Good Lord shower you with His grace and guidance.

Don't be afraid of the space between your dreams and reality. If you can dream it, you can make it.(Belva Davis)

All our dreams can come true –if we have the courage to pursue them (Walt Disney)



*Wishing you a splendid 2011!*

The editor can be contacted at [newtonbrandt@gmail.com](mailto:newtonbrandt@gmail.com)