



## MIKTAV WAW (LETTER 6)

I greet you with the watchword for 2010:

***Jesus said: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me." (John 14:1).***

This is indeed very fitting if we recall where we left off last year with our global challenges and the Copenhagen debates. Not to be troubled is easier said than done and a challenge, but as expounded by Bishop Ramashapa in the ELCSA Almanac, these last words of Jesus *can* be taken seriously and we can draw strength from the fact that Jesus can indeed come to our rescue if we call upon Him. He is able and willing to neutralize our challenges or to see us through our trials and tribulations.

This newsletter is dedicated to "pauses" before we rush off into 2010. Thanks to Bishop Bowles, Rev's Sidwell Karelse, Martin Louw, Pastors Kawie and Groenewald for their trigger ideas and contributions. I hope that many others will join me in this venture this year.

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

### 1. WALKING IN THE LIGHT

*Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on (epiphantai) those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace. (Luk. 1:78-79)*

Graciously, the Church year pauses a little at the Epiphany season (Greek-*epiphaneia* "appearance", "manifestation), as we in our vacation mode would not have the inclination to meditate on this holiday (holy day) and to be energized with her blessings.

We amongst others in Epiphany, is commemorating the visitation and manifestation of Christ to the gentiles in the persons of the three wise men, whilst the Eastern Church focus on the Baptism of Jesus, i.e. the manifestation to the world of the Son of God.

Of importance to me is this beautiful analogy in the Gospel of Luke of the rising sun disposing of the darkness to indicate what was happening with the Incarnation, birth and revelation of Christ. What a blessing that these precious events were not reserved for a chosen few, but that the Father graciously lifted the veil to let the gentiles(us) in to this holy mystery. What a blessing when the searching comes to an end, when the purpose of our lives is revealed and we can go on our way to be a blessing to others and to share our insight and experience.

May we mirror ourselves in this analogy and ask ourselves (with the help of the Holy Spirit) whether indeed this revelation has touched base in my heart already? Whether a transformation has taken place where despair, fear, ignorance made way for the presence and power of God which is accompanied with a peace that passes all understanding.

It is indeed my prayer that the Son (sun) will rise upon you, illuminate your path so that you can be a blessing to others in 2010. May He be your constant guide in all your tasks and decisions you need to take.

## 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).}

### **Have a proper perspective on 2010**

It is James in Chapter 4 that reminds us not embark on a year in our own strength. Not to venture out into the future as if we are in control of our own lives and destiny. We need to include God, our Sustainers in our plans which bring me to the following quiz.

**Right or wrong? 2010=FIFA Soccer World Cup?** The answer is Wrong! What? How can it be? This is the highlight of 2010. Indeed, but it is a highlight. Only a spoilsport will take such a position, I hear you say, wanting to curb us from experiencing an occasion that many other countries and nations can just jealously dream of.

Well let me qualify myself. The World Cup will be huge! It will be a memorable experience! You should participate in it as far as it is within your means – it will not be cheap! It will bring lots of gain and exposure to our country, however, there is more to the year. Do not put all your eggs in this basket!

Particularly I would like to focus on two aspects. Firstly, do not wish the time away so that the beautiful game can start or on the flipside direct all your time to it, and secondly, beware of greed. When it come to time, there are those that will be paralyzed with eagerness and anticipation, wishing precious God-given time to be eradicated, lapsed, without filling it with content that it valuable to other and the Creator who provide these seconds and minutes to us. To wish the time away impacts those whose time is running out. An example here will be those who will be unemployed when the first whistle blows.

On the other hand, the World Cup will consume a lot of our time and energy in various sectors as we prepare for this marvelous spectacle, but at what cost? Who will bear the brunt of our sacrifices? Will you compromise your relationships, marriages and families with the hope that the affected parties will try to comprehend the seriousness of the occasion and thus the needed sacrifice? Can they really take the strain of your neglect and absence, or do you respond with: “Come on, it is not that much time to ask.

Consider my position, my opportunities, and my privilege. I need to see this through!” Well, I hope you will, you can strike a balance and stay on top of the situation and take your loved ones with you in this venture.

Speaking of opportunities, beware of greed. Again don't put all your eggs in this one basket. By all means seize opportunities, invest if you have the means to do so, but do not exploit people even if their currency favours them above ours. I urge you not to get into debt with the hope to make a profit on the long run.

Predictions and promises might not materialize and you need to be wise to come out better not worse after the World Cup. I am not an economist, but the effects of the recession are still dangerously with us. Be careful of greed. Be wise.

### 3. JOY WITH THE SORROW.

We are grateful for this Season of Joy and Rest, however, our hearts go out to those whose loved ones passed away on our roads. May we consider those who make all the efforts to curb these and who sacrifice their time on our roads, to make it safer and to save lives. We also mourn with the loved ones of those thousands who lost their lives in a massive earthquake in Haiti. Let's continue to keep that country and our Africa continent in prayer.

### 4. CHESS (NEE CHURCH) MOVES: OUR BISHOP'S VISION FOR 2010...

Bishop William Bowles' vision for the Cape-Orange Diocese (ELCSA) remains the same since consecrated as Bishop on 22 February 2009, namely: **"LET US BUILD & DEVELOP OUR DIOCESE!"** Thus this will remain core focus for 2010. Bishop wants us all to contribute to the achievement of the following goals:

- a. To build, equip & develop the saints, thus making "spiritual reformation" our Diocese's key focus area.
- b. To let all our Congregants embrace their duties, as stipulated in the ELCSA Constitution (Part IV, Chapter 2).

- c. To improve our office administration on all levels (ie. Congregation; Parish; Circuit and Diocesan Office), thus embracing administrative discipline & order.
- d. To establish a property management company, whilst at the same time maintaining and/or upgrading our church buildings.
- e. To work progressively with our partners & all stakeholders.
- f. To create a conducive working- and church environment, stimulating growth and glorifying God.
- g. Have up-to-date membership registers (census) in place; in order to know exactly how to properly care for the 'flock.'

Your intercession is called for all those who will be traveling to Bloemfontein next weekend for the Induction of Dean Brandt. May we all be safe and may God prosper the plans and preparations that are on the way now. Please take note that the Induction of Dean Bezuidenhout will be the 7<sup>th</sup> February for the Kalahari Circuit and that of Dean Broekstein the 21<sup>st</sup> February at the Moria Circuit.

## 5. WHAT ABOUT....

Two thoughts for 2010

### **ONE**

Greatness emerges from smelly stables, in the aftermath of fireworks displays and empty champagne bottles. Greatness is what we do when we run the gauntlet of life and all its stuff. We are not expected to be without sin. We are expected to live and fail and come back to begin again. May 2010 be a God centered messy adventure laden with errors of commission, failure and love.

## **TWO**

Sometimes you don't even realize the difference that you make!

### ***A Tale of Two Pots***

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. 'I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.'

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them.

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

***Have an awesome 2010 in the Lord!!!!***

## **B. SPOTLIGHT ON....**

### **UNEMPLOYMENT....**

When you read this, chances are rare (but not impossible) that you will be unemployed. So hopefully, like me, you cannot fully comprehend not having a job

and the agony that goes with it and thus the aim of this piece to spare a thought for those struggling to find employment.

This can be a scourge as it is disheartening when able (and very willing!) people are not afforded the possibility to make a constructive contribution and in exchange to provide for their family and loved ones. The self image of male breadwinners is particularly vulnerable, as through socialization it was instilled that they will be the providers.

Temptations to take matters into your own hands can have dire consequences when after countless unsuccessful interviews and applications, simmered with sleepless night, detrimental decisions and shortcuts are made. Likewise, spare a thought for female sole breadwinners when in desperation carrots are dangled in front of them that result in nothing less than exploitation, corruption and dehumanization. When the mind is trapped over the future and bills to be paid, mouths to feed action (resented by the employed) is better than soul destroying inactivity.

So, where possible and where it is within your means, *reach out* – if only to be ear and shoulder to lean on > *monitor* fellow congregants-be aware of what is happening > *support* – without hurting the self-image > *give advice*, solid not cheap talk, > *utilize* the unemployed-as it is within your means-relinquish tasks that you can do by delegating it to them > *empower!* – search for new avenues to harness new talents and opportunities.

## 7. WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Tell us about your efforts and that of your congregation to assist the unemployed. The **Message Board** is waiting to capture your views and discussions (on anything!) Handy spiritual books are up for grabs for the ones posting the most

creative views! Your efforts here can just stimulate others (even internationally to embark on your suggestions and enhance the lives of many!

### WISHFUL THINKING ....

Please encourage others to subscribe to our newsletter which aims to inform, stimulate, to involve and to grow the visitors to our site. It is still my wish to hear from you. Please volunteer to contribute to any of these regular features. You also need to tell us your needs and whether these regular categories in the newsletter are sufficient and cater for your expectations. Any other brilliant ideas will be gladly accommodated. Eagerly waiting to hear from you!

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