

# Mfusis Update

## **TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES**

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From June 28 to July 19, we had opportunity to visit our sending in America, Sterling Park Baptist Church (SPBC). Our arrival date, June 28<sup>th</sup>, coincided with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the McKinleys ministry at this church. It was such a blessing, not only to partake of the celebrations but also to reunite with old friends who had come from different parts of the country and abroad to be a part praising God for all that He has done through Mike and Karen McKinley's ministry in the area.

For the most part, Lwethu stayed at the McKinleys whilst Lungi and I stayed at the Pauken's home for the duration of our visit. Over lunch and dinner, we visited members of SPBC and during the last week of our stay, we spent time with old friends at Winchester Baptist – the church plant of SPBC. It was such an encouragement to reunite with friends and also to meet new people.

## **BACK HOME**

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We arrived back home on MON July 20<sup>th</sup> and had to immediately adjust, not just from hot to cold weather, but also driving on the 'wrong' side of the road. Gratefully, Lungi always nudges me with her right elbow when I take the wrong lane. Lwethu skipped a few days of school to recover and to get over jet-lag. By the end of the week, we had finally settled back. It was exciting to relive the events as we shared them with family members and the saints at Mooi River Baptist Church (MRBC) on July 27 and at Estcourt Community Church (ECC) on Aug 2. Our regular activities commenced right away. We had Lungi's Friday Club on July 24, kids couldn't wait for the club to begin. After the meeting, Lwethu handed out the Ressies he had purchased for them. One of the kids joked saying she felt like she's been to America. I was also back in the swing of things. Every other week, I teach the Bible overview course to students on their gap-year at Treverton Schools and a number of other regular activities. But there are two events in particular which I was 'pre-occupied' with, the African Pastors' Conference and the Zionist Synod.

## **AFRICAN PASTORS' CONFERENCE**

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Since Jan 2014, ECC has hosted this annual conference in co-operation with MRBC. Usually, it takes place in the first week of Jan each year. On request from the delegates, this was the very first occasion in which the second one was held. It was held at ECC on SAT Aug 8<sup>th</sup>. This year's themes were based on the doctrine of justification (*Why does a person need to be right with God?*) and sanctification (*How does a person become more like Christ*). I'm the one who co-ordinates it in the midlands area. The Jan conferences are held mid-week on Tue and Wed all day but this was one was a little bit tricky because it was scheduled to take place on a Saturday. In this context, weddings, funerals and other celebrations takes place over the weekends, and not during the week. This makes it difficult for Pastors, who officiates over these events, to attend. For this reason, we were expecting to be very thin on numbers. But 53 delegates were registered. According to our records, 27 of these delegates had neither attended the APC hosted at MRBC in 2014; nor the one held at ECC in Jan 2015. Also, two of those new delegates are the Bishops of the other Zionist Churches in the area. So they were attending the conference for the very first time. What was even more exciting for us is that, seven of the new delegates were youths from the Zionist Church led by Lungi's grandfather. Part of this group of youths is involved with Buhle Goodwell Dlamini' and some are part of the committee in which he is Chairperson. After the giving of the attendance certificates, Bishop Petrus Zondi, gave a word of thanks to the APC Directors for affording the region a second conference, which is so needed to help us grow in knowledge of the Lord.

## **SYNOD**

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Immediately after the APC, we headed off to Zwelisha for the meeting. It commenced around 10:30pm on SAT night Aug 8 until 8:45 the next morning. Reports from the youth, women's representatives and the national executive council (NEC) are presented and usually dominate the most part of the meeting. But at this Synod, we started off with matters arising from the previous minutes. Bishop Zondi's ordination became the main agenda item. It was approved and confirmed to take place in his home town, Pietermaritzburg on Nov 7-8. Amongst the many other issues under discussion, was the

official announcement by Bishop Zondi that the Mfusis will utilize ECC facilities to plant another church. He clarified that the intention was to plant and the Mfusis will continue with their involvement with the Zionist Church in Zwelisha. There were no discussion or objections and, in fact, those that commented only expressed their excitement and prayed for further growth.

## **PRAISE**

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**USA travels:** Give thanks for this memorable and refreshing trip. Give thanks especially for the time Lungi and I were able to spend together.

**The APC:** Give praise for the many that came, familiar and new faces. Ask the Lord to grant us wisdom how to do follow-up discipleship for these men and women. Give thanks that interpreting from English to Zulu also went well. Pastor Irving Steggles, one of the speakers, has a real thick British accent and there was a concern that this may be a disruption but it didn't.

**50<sup>th</sup> birthday:** Leaders at ECC had planned a secret 50<sup>th</sup> birthday for me. In Zulu culture, birthdays are not a big deal. To be culturally relevant, the leaders insisted that we celebrate now that we live in town (which was once 'whites only area'). Leaders and wives came and we had a braai (barbecue).

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

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**Ordination:** Preparations for Bishop Zondi's ordination would go well. There are many responsibilities placed upon me in terms of preps because of the many privileges which the Lord has bestowed on me. For example, I have access to a vehicle, internet, the only Pastor in this particular Zionist church who's not bi-vocational etc. Please pray for wisdom and guidance from the Lord to discern His will and desire in all of this.

**Church plant:** This will stretch our Sundays even further. Every Sun morning, we either worship at ECC or MRBC and then drive to Zwelisha where the Zionist Church gathers to fellowship there also. This will be the third worship service. Please pray for strength and wisdom how to go about starting.

**APC:** Pray that we'd know how to follow-up and establish relationships with these Pastors. My heart and calling is train and equip Pastors. So many of them have not be trained how to handle the Bible.

**Goodwell's theological studies:** He's been accepted to do his full-time theological studies at London Theological Seminary next year. The bursary only covers tuition and other living expenses in the UK. Travelling, visa application costs etc aren't covered.



*Interpreting for Pastor Irving Steggles*



*Sihle Xulu preaching at one of the sessions*



*During the Q & A. Sihle Xulu on right, Pastor Irving Steggles, and Pastor Clinton Stone on the far right from MRBC*



*Preparing meals in the kitchen*



*Served tea and meals outside, had a lovely day*



*Handing out the attendance certificates*