



THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA NATAL COASTAL DISTRICT

DISTRICT COMMUNIQUE

LENTEN / EASTER 2012

Dear Sisters and Brothers



I am about to embark on a journey this Lenten and Easter period. This journey begins on Ash Wednesday 22 February 2012 as I share in the service with our people at Manning Road, South Durban Circuit.

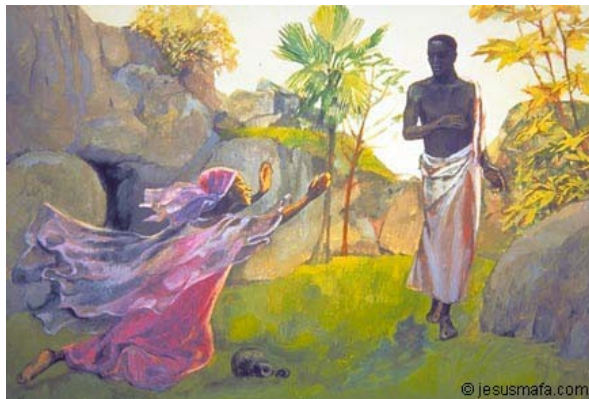
My reading companion for this period is *Wondrous Encounters* by Richard Rohr – a theme that has captivated me since the beginning of 2012. Rohr quoting Saint Theresa of Avila about the totality of God’s love says: “*We find God in ourselves and we find ourselves in God.*” Or as Paul put it “*then I shall know fully as fully I am known (I Cor 13:12).*”

In this book Rohr invites me; you; us during the forty days of Lent to allow “*ourselves to be known! All the way through. Nothing to hide from, in ourselves, from ourselves, or from God. Allow yourself to be fully known, and you will know what you need to know.... It is in this wondrous loop of divine disclosure, our own now safe self-disclosure and healing mutual acceptance – that we grow “in wisdom, maturity, and grace” (Luke 2:40). In fact, that is the way that all love happens, and the only way we grow at all.*” – I look forward to my encounter with this book until my journey for Lent culminates on the Easter weekend which will be filled with ‘Wondrous Encounters’ through:

- Maundy Thursday at Durban North Methodist Church
- Diakonia Good Friday Service, with our wondrous ecumenical family.

- The rest of Good Friday will be spent with our people in Nongoma Circuit sharing in the Seven Words on the Cross.
- Easter Saturday with our people at Mahlabatini Circuit
- Easter Sunday Morning with our people at Melmoth, Eshowe Circuit.
- Easter Monday a 'fish braai' based on John 21:10 to 14, at Virginia Beach 6am, with our people from Umngeni Circuit,

May this Lenten/ Easter period be filled with Wondrous Encounters for you.



MOVES IN OUR DISTRICT

A big welcome to all those who have come into our District in 2012:

- Rev. Phezile Koekoe (Umngeni Circuit)
- Rev Mxolisi Nyembe (Durban Circuit 712)
- Rev Lucky Malotana (Durban Circuit 712)
- Rev Linda Mandindi (Durban Circuit 712 - Superintendent)
- Rev Brenda Timmer (Clerpine Circuit)
- Rev Juan Smith (Clerpine Circuit)
- Rev Michael Bishop (Lower Tugela Circuit)
- Rev Kym Bishop (Lower Tugela Circuit)
- Rev Vusi Radebe (Ndulinde Circuit - Superintendent)
- Rev Selby Madwe (South Durban Circuit)
- Rev Dr. Mvume Dandala (South Durban Circuit)

We hope you are finding your feet and settling in well. You are all in our thoughts and prayers

We remember also those who have moved within our district:

- Rev Sifiso Khuzwayo (Kearsney College - Superintendent)
- Rev Mphiti Sibidla (Central City Mission yase Thekwini - Superintendent)
- Rev Vuyokazi May (Umngeni Circuit)
- Rev Thabo Shabalala (Ntuzuma Section, Umngeni Circuit)
- Rev Reginald Pupuma (Empangeni Circuit - Superintendent)
- Rev Johann Wessels (Lower Tugela Circuit)
- Rev Roy Govender (Secondment)

We welcome our new Superintendents:

- Rev Emmanuel Gabriel (Lower Tugela)
- Rev Willie Liebenberg (South Durban)
- Rev Andrew Robinson (Clerpine)

WHAT AM I READING? WHAT ARE YOU READING?

1. **THEOLOGICAL BOOKS AND ARTICLES:** Recently, I have mainly been reading these books related to my passionate desire to know more about Kenotic Christology (if you are deeply committed to predestination, you may be challenged by the notion of Kenosis):

- *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense: The Response of Being to the Love of God* – W.H. Vanstone – this is one of my favourite books. At the heart of Kenosis is the unfathomable wonderfully mysterious notion that God Is Love. “... to interpret creation as the work of love is to interpret it as the new, as the coming-to-be of the hitherto unknown, and so as that for which there can be no precedent and not programme.”
- *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*” (ed) John Polkinghorne – Dedicated to memory of Canon W.H Vanstone with contributions from various Theologians like Jurgen Moltmann; Sarah Coakley; Ian G Barbour etc.
- *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God.* (ed) C. Stephen Evans - much of this work is done by various theologians and gives a good overview of traditional, orthodox and feminist views on this topic. Some good conventional exegesis is given of the ancient Hymn sung by early Christians in Philippians 2:5-11.

Journal of Theology of Southern Africa - articles of interest:

- *Ecological Crises: From the perspective of Christianity and African Traditional Religion:* Izunna Okonkwo
- *Episcopa Mentoring: The Case of Bishop George Bell* –James Harris. Bishop George Bell’s ministry and leadership was marked with Friendship; Ecumenism and Ethics.

2. BIOGRAPHIES BOOKS AND ARTICLES:

- *Lucas: from the streets of SOWETO to Soccer Superstar* –the authorised biography by Richard Coomber. This is my soccer hero – I met him in Lesotho last year (I have the photo to prove it). For those who have been at recent Induction services, will have heard me quoting and using examples from this biography. In Leeds he is known as the Chief; Roo or Raadeebie. Both Lucas Radebe the boy born in SOWETO and David Beckham are described by feature writer Anne Pickles saying that both David and Lucas were a “*much better influence on kids (in Britain) than the likes of pop stars Eminem, Robbie Williams and Liam Gallagher.*” *Of Lucas she said: “he is a man determined to lead by example....” (p163)*
- *Frantz Fanon* by Alice Cherki (I did my Masters thesis on Fanon (1989) – my interest in his thoughts related to social change continues)
- *Methodist Ministry in Apartheid South Africa* by Norman S Hudson – Interesting read and insight into a remarkable servant of God, ministering in the context of Apartheid South Africa.(It is interesting to note who is mentioned and who is not?) I would recommend that all probationers and young Methodist people read this book. Perhaps you can invite Rev Hudson to your youth meetings and allow him to share his journey with you?
- *Mandela’s Way: Lessons on Life* –Richard Stengel (Highly Recommended). I think every Minister should read this. Chapters like “*Keep your rivals Close*” and “*Know your Enemy*”; “*Be Measured*”; “*Lead from the Front*” followed by “*Lead from the Back*”; “*Find your own Garden*” are some of the chapters based on ‘Mandela’s way / style of leadership. It’s the kind of book that remains on my desk for reminders and reference.

Article:

- *Apple without a core: A tribute to the late Steve Jobs.* My favourite quote from the late Steve Jobs founder of Apple and iPhone is how he recalls some of the long summers in his youth and says: "I'm a big believer in boredom. Boredom allows one to indulge in curiosity, and out of curiosity comes everything." The man who popularised personal computers and smart phones ...worried about future boredom. All the (technology) stuff is wonderful, but having nothing to do

can be wonderful, too. (Leadership Magazine Dec 2011: Steve Levy, P 26) I like this notion of not always 'doing' but that 'being' (bored) can be just as wonderful.

3. GENERAL READING:

- *The Four Agreements: A Toltec Wisdom Book* by Don Miguel Ruiz (A book I picked up and read in and Airport) Toltecs were known throughout southern Mexico thousands of years ago. They were known as men and women of knowledge. I struggled a little with the use of the terms 'magic' and 'warrior' and needed my basic training in Anthropology to understand these terms in their cultural context. The insights of this book about forgiveness and a distinction between refraining and repressing, was helpful. The four agreements are: *Be Impeccable with your word; Don't take anything personally; Don't make assumptions; Always do your best.*

AND SO WHAT ARE YOU READING AT THE MOMENT?

HAS THERE BEEN A 'WONDROUS ENCOUNTER' FOR YOU THAT HAS STRETCHED AND GROWN YOU?

DATES TO NOTE:

- **Prevention of Gender Based Violence and Family Focus** – Greyville Methodist Church, Wednesday, 29 February, 6pm. Contact Deacon Michelle Ingram 0832854761
- District Ministers and Deacons' Seminar: **Human Sexuality**. 14 March, 10am, Stanger Methodist Church.
- Diakonia Council of Churches' **Ecumenical Good Friday Service** – phone 0313103500 for more details.

Have a Blessed and Wonderful Lenten and Easter Journey

Shalom

Bishop Mike