

# The 7<sup>th</sup> Sola 5 Annual Assembly



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# SOLA 5

an association of God-centred evangelicals in southern Africa

# Chronicles

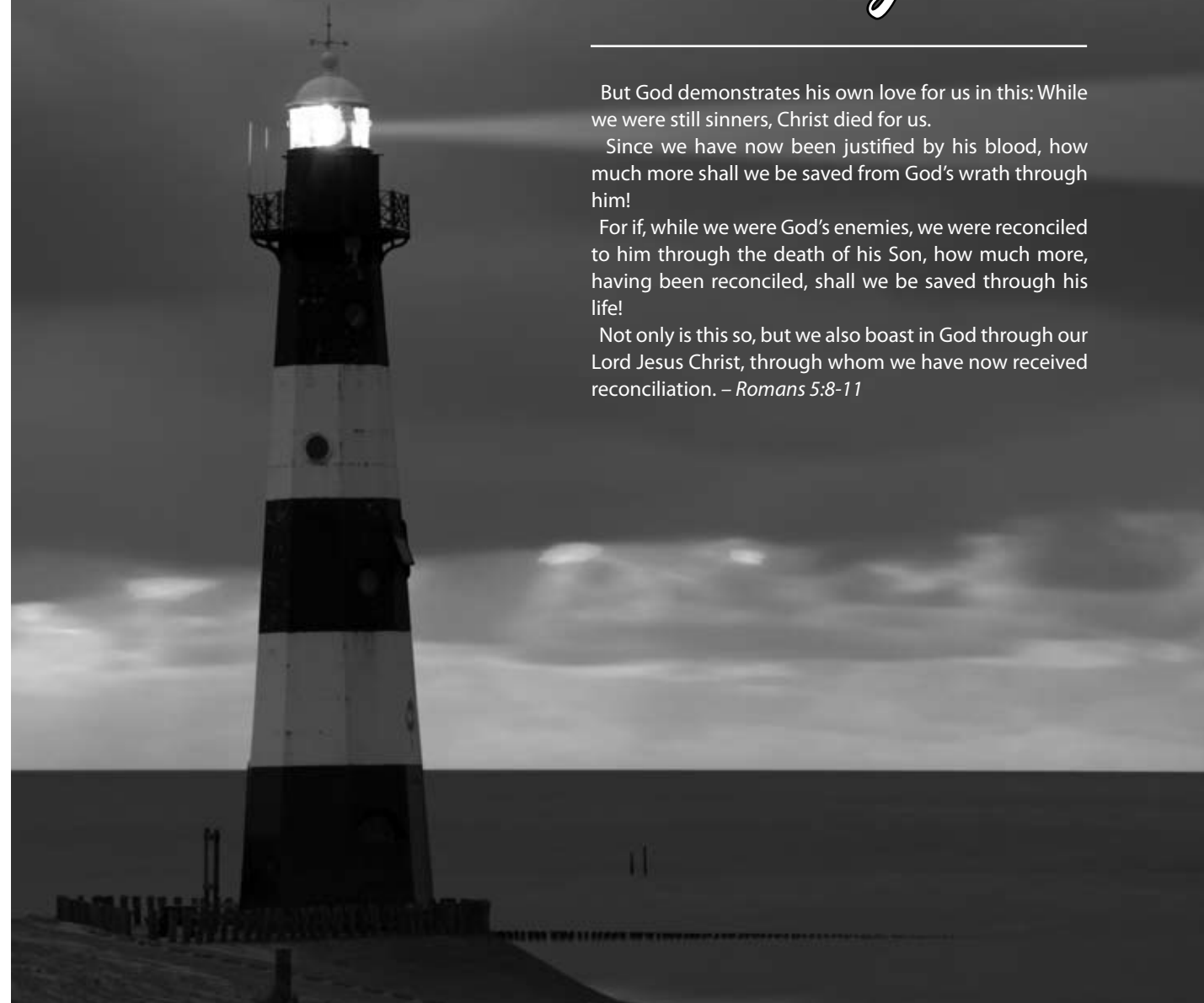
## The Cross of Christ, where wrath & mercy meet

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. – Romans 5:8-11



[www.sola5.org](http://www.sola5.org)

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**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

As Christians there are certain attributes of God that we find difficult. They are difficult because, we either cannot understand them fully, or we struggle to think of God in such a way. One of the attributes we have this struggle with, is the wrath of God. We find certain portions of the Old Testament hard to read when they speak of God's wrath, or record for us the outworking of God's wrath. In fact Church history tells us that the attribute of God's wrath has been a stumbling block for some, causing them to either turn their backs on the Christian faith, or to think of the God of the Old Testament as being different to the God of the New Testament. This hesitation, difficulty and reluctance to understand this attribute is unfortunate, and leads us to have an incomplete picture of God.

The truth of the matter is that if we took time to study the attribute of God's wrath, seeking to understand it better and even spent time meditating upon it we, as believers, would find it to be a tremendous comfort and of help in our Christian walk.

With this in mind you will find in this issue an article further explaining to us the wrath of God, what it means and why we should not only believe in it, but also find comfort and encouragement in it. The second article seeks to draw our attention to the place where we see the greatest display of God's mercy, showing us that it is also the exact same place where we see the greatest display of God's wrath, the cross of Jesus Christ. We shall learn that there, God's mercy and wrath come together in perfect harmony to accomplish our salvation.

These articles are designed to help us think not only more clearly and correctly about God's wrath, but also to rejoice in it, expressing thankfulness to God that He is a God of wrath, and to allow this attribute to have a positive impact upon our Christian walk.

May God in His grace, through His Spirit, allow us to grow in our knowledge of Him, even in the areas which we find difficult and hard to understand.

*Yours in Christ Jesus,*  
**Gordon Bull**  
– Editor

# The Wrath of God



*Romans 1:18-32*  
*ESV Romans 1:18: For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

**INTRODUCTION**

I must confess that when I was asked to write on this subject I felt a certain amount of trepidation and need to repent. This revealed within in me the sad reality of the tendency among many evangelical ministers to avoid or to seldom preach on this subject of the Wrath of God. I quietly asked myself when I last heard or exclusively preached a sermon on this subject. I have, however, discovered that it was a subject constantly preached on not just by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, but was a recurring theme of the Old Testament prophets and evident in the Gospels and Apostolic preaching. I will discuss the subject of the wrath of

God under the following headings: The definition, the rationale; objections, and the motivation thereof.

**DEFINITION OF GOD'S WRATH**

This is an extremely misunderstood topic. Many assume that the wrath of God is equivalent to or similar to man's anger. Man's anger is sometimes uncontrolled and is a fit of rage. This is not only too simplistic but is inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture. The wrath of God must be seen as part of the inherent nature and character of God. It is His moral reaction to the appearance of/or actual sin, as it is in conflict with His holy character. A good definition of God's wrath has been articulated by Professor John Murray. He says: "Wrath is the holy revulsion of God's being against that which is the contradiction of his character." (Murray).<sup>1</sup>

**THE RATIONALE FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD**

The question is why should we preach or speak about such a seemingly unpopular

subject? I owe these reasons to the ministry of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones during his series of sermons through the Epistle to the Ephesians.<sup>2</sup>

Firstly it is part of Scripture. The Bible teaches it clearly. We are not to be selective in our teaching or preaching of God's Word. Surely this is what defines reformation the whole of life and the whole of preaching under the whole of Scripture.

Secondly its factual. This is not taught in Scripture as an alternative theory or as an abstract but something that happens, and will have its final fulfilment on the day of judgment.

Thirdly, we can never understand the love of God wholly unless we understand this vital doctrine of God's Wrath. In simple terms the wrath of God and the love of God are like the two sides of a coin. To use the words of Dr. Lloyd-Jones-*I suggest that we can never truly understand why is it that the*

Word of God was faithfully preached. It was now up to us to shake ourselves out of our dull sloth and get to work in looking after God's world in a God-centred way. By grace, we shall be obedient!

**Direction - Peter Sammons**

The business matters Sola 5 has to attend to are mainly addressed by the Annual Business Meeting, the 2011 ABM being the 7th meeting of its kind.

Fifteen Sola 5 member churches were represented at the ABM, far exceeding the constitutionally required 30% for a quorum. The conference was attended by a significant number of non-member churches: one from as far afield as Kenya, five from South Africa, six from Zambia, and even two from the United Kingdom. Regarding the latter, the meeting received with thanks the greetings brought from the Evangelical Movement of Wales by Joyce Steven who was attending her 3rd Sola 5 Conference.

The meeting approved new membership applications from three churches:

- Birchleigh Baptist Church which is in Kempton Park, South Africa,
- Kafue Baptist Church in the town of Kafue about 50 kilometres south of Lusaka, and
- Midrand Chapel which is halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Membership renewal applications were tabled and approved for 21 of the 23 member churches. Unfortunately Grace Bible Church (Nelspruit, SA) and the Fellowship of Believers in Christ (Nampula, Mozambique) did not apply for renewal of membership and the meeting agreed that according to our constitution, their membership would lapse. This brings the Sola 5 church membership total to 24.

Apart from church membership, Sola 5 also has individual Associate Members. The purpose of Associate Membership is to provide fellowship, encouragement and teaching for believers who are not able to find a like-minded local church in their area. Associate membership provides such individuals the opportunity of participating in activities of the Association, and to facilitate the process of church planting. The 2009 ABM amended the constitution by adding a requirement for associate members unable to attend the annual conference and ABM, to show how they participated meaningfully in the activities of the association in the preceding year. This requirement has naturally led to a drop in the number of associate membership renewal applications. The renewal applications of Gordon Bull and Paul Karstens were tabled and approved. The new application of Boyd Scriven was also approved.

Between the ABMs the business of the Sola 5 association is handled by the steering committee. Kobus van der Walt (Vereeniging SA); Christo Beetge (Alberton SA), Jeff

Gage (Boksburg SA), Ronald Kalifungwa (Lusaka), Conrad Mbewe (Lusaka), and Pieter Slabber (Windhoek, Namibia) were elected for 2011-12 to serve with current members, Roland Eskinazi (Cape Town), OB Macwele (Manzini, Swaziland) and Peter Sammons (Germiston SA); Peter was subsequently chosen by the committee as chairman for the term. Ronald and Conrad requested Grave Singogo and Isaac Makashini be co-opted onto the committee in their place.

The main business of the 2011 ABM revolved around Sovereign Grace Theological Seminary (SGTS) and the African Christian University (ACU).

SGTS. Bruce Button, head of the SGTS, reported that SGTS was established 5 years ago. In 2008 it was decided to relocate SGTS to Zambia where it would fall under the joint oversight of Lusaka, Kabwata, Evangel, and Mount Makulu Baptist Churches. An administrator was appointed a few weeks prior to the ABM. Bruce reported a current enrolment of 16 students: 7 from Zambia, 2 from Malawi, 3 from Zimbabwe, 3 from South Africa, and 1 from Namibia. Despite progress made, SGTS still faces a number of challenges, the biggest of which remained the addition of full time staff. It is envisioned that the SGTS would become the theological faculty of the ACU. Bruce challenged the member churches of Sola 5 to consider tithing an amount equalling 10% of their pastor's salary to SGTS.

ACU Ken Turnbull, director of ACU, provided background and led the discussion. ACU is a mammoth project under the oversight of the same four churches as SGTS. Ken showed an inspiring DVD which provided detailed background as well as outlining the ACU vision and strategy. Readers requiring more information are encouraged to have a look at <http://acu-usa.com> as well as an article in a recent edition of the Sola 5 Chronicles (No 13 see also [www.sola5.org](http://www.sola5.org)).

Future Sola 5 Conferences were planned as follows: 6 to 9 September 2012 in Manzini (Swaziland) – to be hosted by Manzini Fellowship Church and 2013 in Windhoek (Namibia) – to be hosted by the Windhoek Sola 5 churches.

We request that you please, not only diarise the dates of our next assembly and seek to make the necessary arrangements to attend, but also that you pray for the association and for the assembly. We look forward to seeing you in Swaziland and will give you further details of the assembly as the time draws closer.  
– **Conrad Mbewe**



Direction - Peter Sammons



ACU - Ken Turnbull



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## Preachers



Bruce Button



Joachim Rieck



Jeff Gage



Conrad Mbewe



Ronald Kalifungwa (top)  
Choolwe Mwetwa (right)



pointed to the statement “formless and empty” in Genesis 1 as the problem and then went on to show that in the separating of things and the filling of the earth God was bringing order and beauty to his creation. The climax of all this was the creation of man in his own image and giving to him the cultural mandate. Bruce explained the cultural mandate in a very practical way so that we could see how all our activities in the realm of law, science, art, etc., are an act of worship. We briefly saw how this was affected by the Fall and redeemed in Christ. The first three chapters are crucial in grasping what we are supposed to be doing on earth as God’s image bearers.

Jeff Gage preached on the topic, “The theological basis of the cultural mandate.” Having begun with the creation of Adam and Eve, he went on to trace three pairs of words in Scripture—kingdom and king, temple and priest, and covenant and prophet. He showed how these three pairs of concepts applied to Adam before the Fall, through the days of Noah, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, in the person of Christ in the New Testament, and in the church’s role in bringing about the consummation of all things when Jesus returns. It was eye opening to see how the whole of human history can be summarised through the eyes of these theological concepts.

Joachim Rieck spoke on the topic, “The historical outworking of the cultural mandate in Western civilisation.” From the very onset, Joachim made it clear that he was not going to glorify Western culture because there is everything wrong with where it is today. However, he traced Western civilisation from the end of the Roman Empire, through the split of the church into the Western and Eastern church in the 11th century, the renaissance in the 14th century, the Reformation in the 16th century, the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th century, etc. The central place of the Reformation, in bringing the Bible to the people, was emphasised. It was the root from which we have seen the explosion of

knowledge in the last 500 years. Joachim ended by reading two articles that showed that even the current boom in the economy of China is as a result of the Christian work ethic!

I preached on “The place of Christian education in the cultural mandate”. I sought to show that the concept of the cultural mandate principally seeks to answer the question, “Why am I here?” We are on earth to grow up, marry, have children and rear them, and then discover the principles of nature, harness these laws for the good of humanity and for the glory of God, according to the gifts that God has given us. Having said that, I showed the role that education—and especially Christian education—plays to ensure that this takes place. Education played a foundational, stewardship, and redemptive role. We need to know what God says as to why we are in his universe, we need to pass on this truth to future generations, and we need to do so cognisant of the effect of the Fall and of the redemption Christ brought to us through his death on the cross. Sadly most of us were brought up on atheistic and humanistic education. We must reverse this trend so that our children, our fellow church members, and the people in our community can know why they are on God’s planet.

Ronald Kalifungwa preached on the topic, “The place of a biblical work ethic in the fulfilment of the cultural mandate.” Ronald bemoaned the absence of biblical work ethic in Africa and saw that this was one reason why Africa lagged behind in development. Ronald showed how work was from creation, how the Fall affected work, and how redemption in Christ is supposed to produce a working people. He implored us to evangelise the people around us and at the same time seek to transform Africa into garden cities through hard work. There is no doubt that if every Christian in Africa appreciated the place of hard work in the Christian faith, this continent would be transformed to the glory of God.

Finally, on the last day, Choolwe Mwetwa preached on the topic, “The application of the cultural mandate in Africa.” He identified the Christian as salt and light in the world, using the concepts the Lord taught in Matthew 5:13-16. He argued from this that we have the duty to explore, to exploit, and to beautify this degenerating world. Choolwe traced a number of hindrances to the cultural mandate, including cultural enslavement, which is one of the biggest hindrances in Africa. He ended by drawing our attention to perceptual, structural, and relational adjustments, which needed to be engaged in as a way of coming out of this malady that has crippled us in Africa and caused us to fail to apply the cultural mandate. The gospel, he asserted, is the chief weapon in producing a people who would work hard in God’s world.

From this summary, one can immediately see that God spoke to us, leaving us with no excuse for our failure to live out the cultural mandate that he has given us. The

*Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, had come into the world unless we understand this doctrine of the wrath of God and the judgment of God?*<sup>2</sup>

## THE OBJECTIONS TO THIS DOCTRINE

Largely the objections to this attribute of God, are not based on Scripture. The underlying reason is that this doctrine is naturally opposed to our human sinful nature. We do not like to hear anything that will make us so accountable before God as to send us to hell.

But let us very briefly examine some of the reasons advanced for rejecting this teaching.

The first group objection comes from secular psychology, which argues that all religion is based on fear. They argue that the wrath of God is just one way of instilling fear.<sup>2</sup> They deny the very existence of wrath arguing that it is a man made idea to make men afraid.

A second objection arises from liberal theology. They argue that one must distinguish the God of the Old Testament from the God of the New Testament. To these liberal theologians—“...*Jehovah of the Old Testament was a terrible being, and ‘blood thirsty’...that ‘blood thirsty god’, that ‘angry god’. That is a tribal god...that is not the God of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...that is incompatible...with Jesus’ teaching about love...to them this conception of wrath is not only unthinkable but also blasphemous...*”<sup>2</sup>

A third objection is quite subtle and can be found among people everywhere. These are people in evangelical circles and do believe in the wrath of God, and accept it in theory, because it is in the Scripture. However, they never proclaim this doctrine of the wrath of God because it is not attractive to the modern man. Their argument is that man is different now. The times are different and preaching on the wrath of God will drive people away.<sup>2</sup>

## THE MOTIVATION TO TEACH THE WRATH OF GOD

The primary motivation for exalting this teaching is that we must remember its source. Quite to the contrary the wrath of God should point us to the goodness of God. This is somewhat a seeming contradiction but Spurgeon in his sermon sheds a lot of light on this point and I quote —.

*God will not acquit the wicked, because He is good. What? Does goodness demand that sinners will be punished? It does. The judge must condemn the murderer because he loves his nation. ‘I cannot let you go free. I cannot and I must not. You would slay others who belong, to this fair commonwealth if I were to let you go free. No I must condemn you from the very loveliness of my nature...the kindness of king demands the punishment of those who are guilty. It is but love toward the rest that sin should be restrained.’”<sup>4</sup>*

The second motivation is to remember that God’s wrath is God’s means of justice for his people. This justice is sometimes immediate but sometimes it is delayed both in Biblical times and outside of Biblical times. Consider in Biblical times how when Adam and Eve sinned, God’s wrath drove them out of the garden of Eden immediately (Genesis 3v24). Sometimes it is delayed as in the case of Noah who for 120 years preached and God’s wrath was revealed (Genesis 7). Noah was ridiculed for his preaching and obedience of God, prior to God’s wrath being manifested. There are so many examples of God’s acts of wrath in Scripture. But the heart warming part of the wrath of God is it is the means through which He accomplishes justice on behalf of His people. Sometimes this justice is immediate as was the case with Cain. The Lord metes out his wrath onto Cain who had murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4v8-16). In fact we are urged not to avenge ourselves but this is what we read in Romans 11v19—“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

The Lord executes justice on behalf of His people when injustice has befallen them. This is comforting we must never seek revenge through human hands but rather we are to pray for justice! Of course we may not see justice in some cases now, but certainly we can expect it on the last day.

The third motivation for teaching the wrath of God is that it is one way evil is restrained. Were certain men unrestrained by the wrath of God, evil would abound. Examples are rife in Scripture and outside Scripture. We think of how the tower of Babel was brought down in Genesis 11. Men were wanting to dethrone God! The wrath of God restrained this. We read in Genesis 6:6-7 “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was very great in the earth and that

*every intent of his heart was only evil continually....so the Lord said ‘I will destroy man. ...’ then of course follows the famous story of the ark when God executed his wrath to restrain further sin. I believe that some cruel leaders in history who have been removed by the means of the wrath of God.*

Fourthly, this doctrine of the wrath of God should point us to future bliss. There is a final day when Satan, sin and suffering will be dealt a final blow by the wrath of God. The elect will be set free forever from the harassment and interference of Satan, sin and suffering because God will pour out his wrath against these things. We who have believed on Christ will enter into the wonder and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. The second letter to the Thessalonians Chapter 1v7-10 is one such example—“...*when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the government, glory of His power, when He comes in that Day to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe....”* There are several more example found in the Book of Revelation, showing that there will be a final display of God’s wrath against Satan and his allies which will usher the believer into eternal bliss!

Lastly, another motivation is that it is essential from the standpoint of true evangelism<sup>2</sup>. Every evangelistic message in Scripture mentions the wrath of God. Why? Because it is the heart of the matter in our relationship with God. If it is not right with God, then you are under the wrath of God. True evangelism addresses the issue of our relationship with God FIRST! In the text quoted at the beginning of the article from Romans 1. We see what drove the Apostle Paul to preach the Gospel “*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*” Dr Lloyd-Jones preaching on Romans 1v18 puts it like this - “*My dear friends, it is not enough that you and I should be clear about the evangel; our methods of evangelism must correspond to the Scriptures as much as our message does...He starts with the wrath of God, not with the needs of the people as such, not with the things which worry them, not with the sin which gets them down...Not at all! He does not mention these things. Instead, he speaks*

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# The Wrath of God

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of the wrath of God!"<sup>3</sup>

The Old Testament prophets spoke about the wrath of God always in the context of bringing people back to God. This is true in the New Testament when John the Baptist was approached by the people the message was not, 'Have you come along to have a given experience? but *'Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'*<sup>3</sup>

The wrath of God in one form or other is traceable through the Gospels (example Luke 12v4-5; John 3v36). Also through the Pauline epistles (Romans 5v8-9; 1 Corinthians 3, Ephesians 2v3; Colossians 3v6; etc.) and in the other books of the New Testament, such as Hebrews 2v1-3; 2 Peter 3 and of course the Book of Revelation.

Furthermore we find in it the preaching of the great men of church history. They repeated and taught it. Consider Luther, Knox, Augustine, Calvin, John Wesley preached it

and so did George Whitefield. Think of the sermon by Jonathan Edwards preached on "Sinners in the Hands of an angry God, " it is on the wrath of God and it was used and continues to be used to the salvation of both young and old. It was preached on 8th July 1741 in Enfield, Connecticut. I am proud to say I was born on the 218th anniversary of this sermon! And of course let me quote Spurgeon the Prince of Preachers preaching on the wrath of God, one cannot fail to see the evangelistic element - *"But some of you never fled to Christ for refuge? Do you not believe in the Redeemer? Have you never confided your soul to His hands? Then my friends, hear me. In God's name, hear me, just a moment. My friend, I would not stand in your position for an hour-for all the stars twice spelt in gold! For what is your position? You have sinned and God will acquit you. He will punish. He is letting you live; you are reprieved....how in hell you will curse him (Satan) and curse yourselves because you procrastinated; how in seeing that God was slow*

*to anger, you were slow to repentance, how because He was great in power and kept back His anger, therefore you kept back your steps from seeking Him. And here you are what you are!"*<sup>4</sup>

Beloved here is an example of preaching on the wrath of God with true evangelistic effect. May the Lord rekindle a flame within every believer to speak on the wrath of God that was satisfied at Calvary.

– **Dr. G. Singogo**

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# The Goodness and the Severity of God



In this article I aim to focus on the glorious truth that in the cross of Christ, God's mercy and His wrath are congruently matched for His glory and for the believing sinner's good. When we 'survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died' we can relate to Paul's admonition to *'Behold both the goodness and the severity of God'* (Romans 11:22).

For many in our day such a declaration of this biblical revelation of God seems very incongruous. After all, the prevailing notion seems to be that of a 'user friendly god' and so to even speak of God's wrath is not deemed to be acceptable. To then speak of God's mercy in the same sentence, well that is considered ludicrous! Yet this is the message of the Bible from beginning to end; the satisfying of God's wrath in order for Him to show mercy is in fact the essence of the biblical gospel. To come to grips with this truth is vital for the good of our soul; but more importantly, a biblical understanding of this is essential for us to appreciate the glory of God.

Adam and Even originally had no problem

grasping both the wrath and the mercy of God. It did not sound strange to them to hear from the Lord, *'Of every tree of the Garden you may freely eat'* ('behold the goodness of God') nor the converse, *'but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'* ('behold the severity of God'). Love and Light, Grace and Truth, Mercy and Justice were couplets of truth that presented no theological problem for them. After all, they enjoyed God's mercy as He walked with them in the cool of the day and so such attributes were welcomed by them. Even after the fall it appears that they still had little problem with the apparent tension between God's mercy and His wrath.

Their collective response to the conviction of sin was to hide from the Lord which indicates they fully expected the wrath of the Lord. Contrary to many in our day, it was not God's wrath which surprised them, rather it was His mercy. God had promised that if they disobeyed Him then He would bring death upon them. No doubt after they sinned they were more than a little surprised that they were still alive! It would

seem that they were not surprised by the wrath of God as much as they were by the mercy of God in His redemptive handling of their sin. As God pronounced a curse upon the ground and upon Satan, God was at the same time declaring His mercy. By these judgments, fallen man was being given a means to highlight his need for God. Such judgments were protections against a further pursuit of autonomy. The shedding of the blood of animal as the means of covering their shame was the ultimate display of God's mercy to sinners. For Adam and Eve, God's severity was to be expected, after all, He is the Sovereign; His mercy however was not something to be taken for granted.

As a local church we have spent the last couple of years studying the book of Exodus. In our studies we are constantly being exposed to what appears to be the 'tension' that presents God as wrathful on one hand while also revealing God as merciful on the other hand. For instance, in the Lord's judgment upon the nation of Egypt we have observed the Lord's wrath while at the same time marvelling at His merciful goodness in preserving and protecting the children of Israel. In short, Egypt is destroyed, while

# The 7<sup>th</sup> Sola 5 Annual Assembly



Since the inception of Sola 5, the importance of all the member churches coming together for fellowship, edification and direction, was recognised. Thus it was agreed that there would, on an annual basis, be an assembly of all the churches within the Sola 5 Association which would

be held in the month of September. Seven years have gone by since that very first assembly, and in that time by God's grace, we have witnessed the growth and progress of our association, to which we give all the glory to God. For those of us who have been to these assemblies we know that they are of incredible benefit not only to our own souls but also for the association itself. Below you will find a threefold report of the last assembly held in Livingston, Zambia. To give this report some more flavour and perspective we have asked three men to write on the three different aspects of the assembly. We trust that this report not only gives a faithful and accurate reflection of the assembly, but also for those of you who have not been to an assembly, that it will entice you to come to our next one. For those of us who have been to previous assemblies, we trust that this report will whet your appetite for our next assembly and set us all to prayer for it.

## Fellowship - Joachim Rieck

Sola 5 was born in fellowship! When pastors get together to talk and pray, things happen! A good number of pastors that were meeting together (during the course of some of our Spurgeon fraternal) in the very early years of the 21st century began to feel the need for a fellowship or closer association of God centred churches, and it is in this spirit that our first annual conference was held at Antipas Baptist Church in Pretoria in 2005.

Central to our annual assembly is the proclamation of the Word of God. The Word of God gives us our theological cohesion, but it is the loving fellowship of such like-minded brethren that makes the Word come alive: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35). At our SOLA 5 meetings one senses that here is the "truth on fire" and "in action".

The conferences usually begin on a Thursday afternoon and end on a Sunday afternoon. Meeting the brethren upon arrival is such a wonderful experience in itself! Ronald Kalifungwa and I have developed the practice that upon seeing each other in the distance we would get on our knees and bow with our noses in the dust of the country which we happen to be in. I normally call him "your eminence" - whilst he bestows upon me one or the other unspeakable title! Christo Beetge gives me a bear hug, while Pete Sammons, Brian Stone, Conrad Mbewe, Roland Eskinazi, Des Baker and other SOLA 5 veterans greet with a warm handshake... "it's so good to see you, brother!" says Hein Strauss, our faithful administrator and coordinator through all these years, who reserves a special place in all our hearts.

These initial meetings were some of the defining moments of true fellowship in my own experience. As the years have past these relationships have become treasured, to the point where we share in each others sorrows and joys. Now a few years later a new team of men and women are arriving and being integrated into this wonderful fellowship.

Getting to know a man like Dr. Grave Singogo from Evangel Baptist Church (Lusaka), Isaac Makashinyi from Emmasdale (Lusaka) or choice men like OB Macwele, Pastor Andy Simelane from Manzini Fellowship Church in Swaziland and Kobus van der Walt from Antipas Baptist Church in Vereeniging, is a real treat.

And now, lest I give a skewed report, and make it appear as if only pastors and elders were meeting at this conference, let me hasten to add that this is assuredly not so. Every year faithful members of our association of churches (men, women and children) make time to attend these conferences, thereby adding to the rich flavour of the conference. The flavour is often enhanced by being in a particular country. Thus, just having been in Livingstone, Zambia, we were out-flavoured by Zambians! Being in a particular country also means that some time is given to visit the tourist attractions of that country. I assure you that this year we had not come to Livingstone to catch up on sleep in our respective lodges, for we were irresistibly drawn to the place of the noisy waters, the majestic Victoria Falls!

SOLA 5 is an association of churches in Southern Africa. We have managed to meet thus far in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Next year we shall, God willing, be in Swaziland. I for one look eagerly forward to that occasion when we shall continue to prayerfully consolidate the vision of our great God who calls us to subdue Southern Africa and this earth for His glory. I shall look forward in due time to be with you all, and I shall trust in the meantime that you also shall be there!

## Edification - Conrad Mbewe

A Christian conference is not only a time to meet with other Christians to "confer" with one another but also a time to be challenged afresh from the Word of God. We had plenty of this during the 2011 Sola 5 Conference in Livingstone. This year our attention was drawn to the theme of the cultural mandate and the need for us to take it seriously. Different preachers handled various aspects of this to bring about a good and complete meal for the conferees.

Bruce Button preached on the topic "The biblical basis for the cultural mandate." He handled this under three sub-headings: The cultural mandate established at Creation, affected by the Fall, and restored in Christ. He

Pastors of the new churches



Kennedy Sunkutu



Chris Woolley



Iving Stegglis

Report on:

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# Eastside Baptist Church in Windhoek, Namibia

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we however, have seen many people come and go over the years, and our abiding interest is whether people have left us in a better spiritual shape than when they first arrived. I thank God that we can testify that our church has provided a haven of spiritual nurture, comfort and growth for the many that have come and gone over the years.

The Lord has favoured us with a stable core of leaders and member, and of late we have seen some that had left us for studies elsewhere in the world, but have returned to work in Windhoek and re-joined the church. This makes us very glad indeed. It is also a blessing to know that our young people have developed an appetite for sound doctrine even when they were away from home for a while!

## Talking about young people!

This year we have been able to start a "Young Adults Fellowship group" with about 25 people. This I find very exciting, and I am looking forward to the God centred productivity of this group.

I am so glad to be in a church where the doctrines of Grace may be preached and are increasingly appreciated. As I too grow in grace, I see the ugly side of legalism and its distorted and sour fruit, and I have a growing appreciation for why the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul had such strong words of disapproval about religious systems which enslave people to outward performance rather than to heartfelt love for Christ. The Lord has been sending us a number of people who were wounded in such environments. It is heart-warming to see the fear of man melting away as Christ takes His proper place in their lives, and as delight in Him takes away from a past sense duty and false guilt.



Young Adults

## 3. The Gospel in Namibia

Eastside Baptist Church continues to encourage our sister churches in Namibia through conferences and fraternal meetings, and we thank God for the good fellowship that exists between our churches.

One of our home fellowship groups has adopted a poorer sister church in Lüderitz, in the far south of Namibia. Some of our members will soon travel 800 km's to go and encourage the church there.

The opportunities for sharing the gospel remain positive, although genuine conversions are not plentiful. We thank God however for the remarkable growth and expansion of our reformed Baptist Churches in Namibia.

Brothers and sisters, as you read this, please put us on your prayer list and keep us in your hearts!

## 2 Corinthians 1:10-11.

**"He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many."**

– Joachim Rieck

Israel is delivered. That is, we see both the wrath and the mercy of God. Consider the original Passover night when God killed the firstborn sons of all those who were not 'behind' the blood stained doorways. We see God's wrath meted out upon the Egyptians while at the same time we see God's mercy upon the nation of Israel.

So, whether in Genesis or in Exodus (or in any other scriptural accounts), we have the display of both God's mercy and wrath. Clearly, however, all such examples are preparatory for the clearest, the most profound display of all in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was 'at the Cross, at the Cross' where most of us 'first saw the light' of both the goodness and the severity of God. God's wrath and His mercy may appear to be an unsolvable tension but in fact they are the truthful revelation of the character of God; a 'truthful tension' that is at the root of the gospel as seen in the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a lesson that the Church must constantly keep before Her.

On that famed Day of Pentecost two millennia ago, Peter proclaimed both the goodness and the severity of God when he said, 'Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: (Acts 2:22-23).

Peter was proclaiming that in the cross of Christ we see both the goodness and the severity of God. On the surface, one may not see this but a careful observance of these words points us to both aspects of God's character.

First, we see God's mercy in that He sovereignly (freely) determined to hand His Son over to ungodly men to be crucified. As John wrote, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' If God had not 'delivered' Jesus into the hand of sinners then He would not have died and we would still be in our sins. There is a reason for the designation 'Good Friday'; the crucifixion of our Lord occurred because of the Goodness of God. The cross highlights the mercy of God in His doing to Jesus what He rightfully could do to us.

I think that it is almost a truism to say that when people think of the cross work of Christ that they clearly see the love and the mercy of God. Greg Gilbert writes, "Most people have no problem at all thinking of God as loving and compassionate. We Christians have done a bang-up job convincing the world that God loves them. But if we're going to understand just how glorious and life-giving the gospel of Jesus Christ is, we have to understand that this loving and compassionate God is also holy and righteous, and that he is determined never to overlook ignore, or tolerate sin."

Furthermore, we will never truly appreciate the love and the mercy of God if we do not first come to grips with the just wrath of God. In other words, if we will be properly moved by God's mercy then we must be moved to appreciate the wrath that we deserve. As Michael Horton has said, "Where God's wrath is no longer a problem, Christ's cross is no longer the solution." Neither will Christ be savoured. The mercy of God is seen in glorious brightness when it is viewed on the dark canvass of God's wrath; and the cross of Christ was the darkest backdrop possible for such a luminous display. It is here that we see the mercy of God in that God Himself designed this.

When Peter declares the guilt of the Jews who were humanly responsible for the death of Christ he makes it very clear that ultimately God was the One who had 'delivered' Jesus into their hands.

Several years ago much debate was generated by the movie 'The Passion of Christ' over whom was responsible for the death of Jesus. Many said that the Jews were responsible (and such were deemed anti-Semitic). Others laid the blame at the feet of the Romans and still others said that all sinners were responsible. What most people missed was that actually God was ultimately responsible. Peter made this clear in his sermon. God crucified His Son through the 'lawless hands' of the Romans by the deicidal actions of the Jewish leaders. God did this because of His mercy and His wrath.

The wrath of God had to be satisfied because His justice had to be satisfied for Him to forgive sinners. Paul recognized this when he wrote that God set forth Jesus Christ as the "...propitiation ...to demonstrate His righteousness... that He might be

just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26). In other words, for God to be merciful to sinners He withheld mercy from His sin-bearing Son and rather poured out His just wrath upon Him." Paul wrote elsewhere of the Father's commitment to mercifully reconcile sinners to Himself through His pouring out His wrath on His Son, 'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross, 'My God, My God why have you forsaken me' was testimony to the wrath of God kissing the mercy of God for it was in that wrath bearing work that God's merciful love to believing sinners was secured. In this display of the severity of God, we have the greatest display of the mercy of God to sinners.

I said earlier that on the cross God showed no mercy to His Son in order that He could show mercy to undeserving sinners. Three hours later, Jesus cried out 'It is finished' (John 19:30) and there was no need for Him to receive mercy – for the sinless Son of God had satisfied the righteousness of God! Three days later Jesus was vindicated by the resurrection from the dead and this is the note that Peter then drives home when he says, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:24). The long history of types and pictures from the book of Genesis onward, which God used to prepare the world for the Saviour, had now been fulfilled. For centuries God's people had seen 'through a glass darkly' the characteristics of God's wrath and mercy. The so called 'tensions' between these attributes may have been disconcerting to many but now the cross of Christ has profoundly displayed how they are two congruent sides of the character of God. For all of eternity His people will give Him all the glory that at the cross, mercy and justice kissed each other to the eternal blessing of saved sinners. Indeed, to God be the glory, great things He has done.

– Doug van Meter

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# Brakenhurst Baptist Church



We value our fellowship within the Sola 5 family of churches, and would appreciate your prayers with us and for us on the following fronts:

1. We are very excited and thankful to God for supplying the funds to purchase the property next door to our main church property and adjacent to our church offices. This double stand has been used by a group of doctors for many years, and although the buildings on it are not immediately of great strategic value to us, the 60 parking spots on it, which we have sorely depended upon in the past three years, certainly are. Once we take occupation in March we will be happy to have extra Sunday School classrooms, and possibly some accommodation for other ministries. We are challenged by the privilege and responsibility to use our expanding campus to its full potential. God has certainly given us a prime spot on a busy main road!

2. Some years ago God convicted the leadership and many individuals in the congregation regarding the subject of abortion. We committed ourselves to observing an annual Sanctity of Life Sunday. Out of this development has come a Pro-Life ministry, comprising a pregnancy crisis-counselling and support ministry, known as Eva's Hope. This is run in the centre of Alberton town, and is staffed by volunteers from the congregation. Alongside this has also developed an activism arm known as Abort 97, which seeks to raise the level of awareness in the community regarding the abortion holocaust.

3. We were shocked (and excited!) recently to realize that God has blessed our congregation members with no fewer than 97 children under the age of twelve years. This is in addition to other children belonging to visitors and friends who are exposed to the church's various ministries. We realised that we had to be far more focused and deliberate in our planning as we undertook a revamp of our Sunday School ministry. We have been

thrilled to be exposed to curricula such as is put out by Children Desiring God and Praise Factory from Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington DC. Many members have risen to the challenge to be trained and involved as Sunday School teachers.

4. We have valued our partnership alongside Constantia Park Baptist Church in Pretoria and Antioch Bible Church in Randburg in the planting of Heritage Baptist Church in Parkhurst by Tyrell Haag and Michael Rogers. We were asked to be the overseeing Eldership in nurturing this fledgling work. On the 5th Feb Doug Van Meter preached their Constituting service with 12 founding members. They are excited at recently having been given very suitable premises in Bompas Road in Illovo.

5. God has recently opened a door for us, in partnership with Dennis Hustedt from the USA, to be involved in training men who minister in the Indian communities of Natal and Lenasia. Many promising contacts have been made, and there seems to be an opportunity for regular pastoral workshops to be attended by men already engaged in ministry but without the requisite training.



BBC Property: The largest building, at the bottom, is the church building proper. Diagonally behind the church building is the existing church offices. Above the church building, and to the left of the offices in the picture, is the new property.



6. For some 25 years we have hosted a missions conference through which we have sought to keep our Great Commission zeal current and authentic within the congregation. This is known as our World Outreach Celebration. In March this year, from 7-11, each evening Wed through Sat, culminating on the Lord's Day morning, we are praying that God would use Phil Hunt, who for many years has planted a church and trained men for ministry in northern Zambia, to challenge us in our willingness to attempt great things for the Kingdom.

We would value your prayers for these endeavours, in addition to our desire to be faithful witnesses and servants in our homes and in the wider community, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

– Christo Beetge

The church can be a source of help for a studying student. This can be done by affording him the opportunity to 'practice' what he learned by letting him apply it. Feedback would also benefit him as he would see his weak points and strong points and thus improve for the better. Pastors can be a source of encouragement by making certain things the student is struggling with clear to him. They can also help him apply what he studies by affording him opportunity to do what the studies

sometimes require.

Prayer requests

- Pray that the studies will not only be book studies but will be applied in my life
- Pray that I find a suitable institution to further my studies (SGTS is unable to offer a 2nd year)

– Japhet H Kazavanga

# Eastside Baptist Church in Windhoek, Namibia



I will share three things with you in this brief article: A word from me personally; a word about the church and a word about the gospel in Namibia.

## 1. From my heart

Eastside Baptist Church in Windhoek, Namibia is now in its 27th year of existence. I am a founding member of this church and a pastor of the church now in my 23rd year. I have only spent 4 years away from this congregation, the years during which that I undertook my theological studies in Cape Town. As you can then imagine, this church has been my life, and I count it a privilege to have been enabled to persevere here, by grace alone. There are many valuable lessons gained by walking through the many challenges which pastoral ministry affords. One of the richest little books on pastoral ministry in my library is, "The work of the Pastor" by William Still. William Still laboured for 51 years in his congregation in Scotland, and the book is a wonderful reflection of a pastor who had, "learned his trade", in the crucible. The insights he gained in the art of pastoring, came by walking through issues, and not away from them.

## 2. About Eastside Baptist Church

It takes a long time to get a church established in a community. Trust and a good name are not built overnight in an age where unfaithfulness and betrayal, even in the church, are the norm. The faithfulness of a church is frequently tested by cultural, spiritual and theological influences that bear upon it from the outside. The members of our churches are made up from the community in which we live, and they come with those current perspectives which the culture and worldviews have imprinted upon them. Our challenge is to help people think biblically and "Christ centeredly" about the ultimate meaning of life and from



Eastside Baptist Church



Eastside Baptist Church Elders & Deacons

there to help people to adjust their lives in the light of God's Word.

Eastside Baptist Church exists in a transient, mobile community where people often don't think deeply about ultimate issues and sound doctrine. In addition people are often reluctant to get involved, because they are in high powered, demanding jobs, and thus depriving themselves of spiritual growth experiences. Thankfully,

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## The life and times of a SGTS student



I am Japhet H Kazavanga, a SGTS student residing in Windhoek, Namibia and would like to tell of some of the aspects which are important in the life of a student studying at a distance. I shall briefly discuss the benefits and blessings I, and I suppose others studying through the SGTS have received through our studies, my favourite subjects, the challenges facing a student who is both working and studying and how others can help in the studies.

### Benefits and blessings through studies

The greatest benefit of theological studies is that one comes to learn and know more about our triune God and then what the Bible teaches is our responsibilities and reactions to these truths. It is through theological studies that the responses of others to the truth through the ages are known. From their responses to the Scriptures, we can learn to think soberly, not only of ourselves but also about others and issues taking place around us. We learn from that how we should conduct ourselves.

It is a great blessing to know the Lord and to make him known (Mat 28:19). That, in one sentence is the blessing I derived from my studies through the SGTS. At SGTS, the truth is laid bare and one gets the tools as to how we can unearth the Scriptures and apply them, not only to oneself, but also to the church and the community. This is a part of being a light to the people around you.

The greatest challenge of such studies remains the aspect of application, as it is with Scripture as a whole. Does one hear and understand what the Scriptures are teaching, and does one then apply these teachings to one's life? If the answer to this question is a yes, then all would be loving Christians who not only teach and say Christian things but live as Christians as well. The greatest challenge is therefore applying the teaching of Scriptures in our everyday life.

### Favourite subjects

Favourite subjects would be subjects which one not only scores high marks, but which one truly enjoy and find great benefit from. Except from scoring high marks, my favourite subjects are those which I enjoy. In that sense I would mention all the subjects I studied through SGTS. All the subjects I went through thus far are favourite subjects. If I had to narrow down to one or two subjects, although I did not score high marks in them, I think I like the most, the first one would be Greek. Although this subject is difficult, it has great benefits. The New Testament has been written from Greek manuscripts and in most cases our translators have been faithful. There are areas which when you read the text in the original language (Greek) you get new insights and understanding than that given by our translators. From the reading of the English Bible you would not come across certain ideas and understandings which are possible through reading the text in the Greek. That makes Greek to be my favourite subject.

The other subject is systematic theology. This subject gives an overall picture of the teachings of the Bible. This is important for not only our understanding but also our teaching of the Word of God. It is important to have an overall teaching of the Bible (in this case given by Systematic Theology) so that you would be able to understand and teach a particular teaching. You will be able to know how that (what you are teaching) relates to the whole teaching of the Scriptures.

### Challenges

Studying at a distance has its own benefits and challenges, which need to be overcome by good planning and time management. Both planning and time management is important aspects when it comes to someone who is working and at the same time also studying. These are not just the only aspects which need to be taken into consideration; there are also other aspects like family, church life (prayer meetings, Bible studies, Church meetings, etc.) and social life which all demand a share of your time and attention.

It is only fair to plan the time you have available for your studies and how many subjects you will be able to handle in a given time. You need to plan how you can handle your studies within the given time available for your studies. The most important issue is to stick to the time you allocated for each subject per day or week. They say one can eat an Elephant by eating it slowly but surely, chunk by chunk. You can manage if you stick to your time and accomplishing each aspect of your study in a small but manageable time available.

To work and study is really a challenge and one needs to take all the aspects in one's life into consideration when planning to study at a distance. As for the SGTS students, the SGTS personnel are only a phone call (even a sms) away; they can be contacted by various means when one gets stuck and does not understand the material.

### Help from others

The issue then is if it is so difficult to study at a distance, how can others help students in this regard? Help can come from various angles, being the family, the church and the pastors.

The family can help by encouragement, support and affording free (study) time. The wife can be a source of encouragement for a studying husband. This encouragement can be in the form of urging the partner to go and study when it is time allocated for studies. The partner can also be a support pillar by asking your studying partner what he studied last time and how he can apply that. This not only brings to memory of the student the things studied but also the benefits that it has for himself and others. The whole family needs to be aware of the importance of the studies as well as the need to give time to daddy for studying. Always remind him of his commitment.

## Kraaifontein Baptist Church

Kraaifontein Baptist Church will celebrate its 40th birthday this year being constituted on 28 June 1972 in Kraaifontein, on the northern outskirts of the greater Cape Town area. The church consists of about 40 members with a number of regular adherents. The church has been a middle-of-the-road Baptist church for most of its existence but accepted the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith more than 10 years ago and have been reforming ever since. In characterising the church, one can say that we earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the apostles, striving to walk in holiness and love to our Lord, while preserving the mutual love in the church family. This translates into regular times of corporate worship, mid-week Bible studies and fellowship in homes and once a month at church lunches after a Lord's Day service.

At the end of August 2011, our pastor of eight and a half years, Mark Powell, accepted a call to a church in the USA and we have been without a pastor/elder since. It has been a challenging, but also a blessed time, with the subsequent leadership of the church consisting of the deaconate and the pastoral intern, Gary Isaacs, with Roland Eskinazi of Goodwood Baptist Church acting as an advisory elder in the absence of a pastor. Though we did lose about five members during this time, the Lord kept us safe and has preserved us as a fully functional church while blessing our pulpit with excellent men from the area. A number of men from the Bible Institute have ably supplemented our pulpit, relieving the burden on our pastoral intern and the ministers from the area, which has increased our gratitude and thanksgiving to the Lord.

In addressing the absence of a pastor, a call committee has been formed which consists of the deacons and three church members. The call committee has been labouring at considering different candidates for the position of pastor and we have experienced our share of disappointments, long hours of reasoning with each other,

and searching the will of the Lord on who He wants us to call to pastor our church. We remain ever confident that in His time, the great Shepherd of the sheep will provide an under-shepherd for his flock in Kraaifontein.

### Future ministry plans

With the focus currently on calling a fulltime pastor, ministry to the lost has suffered, but the Lord has at the same time opened doors in the community. During 2011 two primary schools in the area invited Gary Isaacs to share in a ministry of counselling and assisting some teachers. This gives excellent opportunity to minister to the children and a number of these have been seen at the youth meetings on a Friday evening. The work is currently run solely by Gary and his wife, Ruth, but the desire is for the congregation to own the work and start labouring alongside Gary.

Once a month a couple of volunteers from the church minister to the Shelter, an overnight place of refuge for homeless people. A sermon is preached by any of a number of brothers while the rest give support. This has met with more responses during the last few months and though no confirmed conversions were recorded, a number of "almost there" cases resulted in much thanksgiving.

Recently, one of our dear and respected adherents challenged the church to reach out to the lost men waiting nearby the church for work. We are currently praying that the Lord will show us how to initiate this ministry.

The mid-week Bible study is turning out to be a time where the men of the church that so desire, exercise their gifts at leading the Bible study going through the gospel of Mark. This is something new in the church and is considered a time of training while serving the need in the absence of an elder/pastor.

– Jimmy Meyer

### Key points for Prayer

#### Please pray:

1. That God will supply us with a pastor, a man after His own heart.
2. That He will mould us to be the people of God, fit for the new pastor of God's choice and fit for Christ's coming again.
3. That our unity and mutual love will be a witness to all that, "By this all people will know that [we] are [His] disciples".
4. Thanking and praising the Lord for His faithfulness to KBC and in maintaining a Baptist witness in the Kraaifontein area for 40 years.
5. For an outward focus while remaining God-centred and Christ-focussed.
6. That we will fulfil the work that the Lord has ordained for us in reaching the lost of Kraaifontein for Him.





# Vaal Triangle Baptist Church (VTBC)

**Yes! You're reading correctly – Vaal Triangle Baptist Church! This is not a new congregation but a congregation that is starting anew, hence the new name.**

Antipas Vereeniging was founded in July 1984 with Nico van der Walt as the first pastor. When he left for Pretoria in 1999, Johannes de Koning was pastor until 2003. In January 2005 Kobus van der Walt and his wife Jeanne joined our congregation.

Three years after Kobus was ordained as pastor, the congregation experienced a painful and traumatic split. Within the following two years a large number of the congregation left. Currently our congregation consists of only 14 members of whom the oldest is "Tannie" Fréda, almost 83 and the youngest is 25. Our pianist, "Tannie" Louie turns 82 in June. There are 4 children in the congregation: 2 toddlers and two primary school learners.

You might be gasping for air and wondering whether such a small band of believers has any right to exist as a congregation. We can assure you, that we do! God has taught us that He is not concerned primarily about vast numbers, but rather He is interested in the hearts of His disciples! (Matthew 18:12-13). On looking back at the last few years, we can only thank and praise our Heavenly Father for keeping us safe through our trauma and trials. We actually thank Him for enabling us to suffer because we would not have learnt otherwise. As a result of this situation, we have decided to change the congregation's name to Vaal Triangle Baptist Church, or in Afrikaans: Vaaldriehoek Baptistegemeente – in short VTBC.

The "remnant" that stayed behind in Antipas Vereeniging, experienced trauma on various levels, but the Lord is faithful and He carried us through with His grace and patience. He forgave us for what we did wrong during the whole process and blessed us with healing. We realise that we are now experiencing a season of restoration and we are careful not to become complacent about our situation for that might cause us to become stagnant. How blessed we are to experience joint responsibility and accountability towards one another on a completely new level! We are one of the few – if not only – congregation that sees all our members when we spend precious time in prayer and with God's Word every Sunday



Hasaam Abdul



Frieda



Kobus & Jeanne

and even on Wednesday evenings. There is the odd day when job responsibilities and holidays prevent a 100% attendance.

**It is however not always easy to be such a small congregation. There are a few disadvantages:**

- People who are searching for a new congregation, find attending such a small one quite intimidating.
- It is definitely not easy for Kobus to preach to so few Sunday after Sunday. He is however convinced that this is where God wants him at present and he does it conscientiously and with joy each week.
- It places enormous financial pressure on the members to meet their obligations regarding Kobus and Jeanne as well as our social responsibilities both within the church as well as outside the congregation.

What is astounding is that this congregation reaches people, especially Afrikaans speaking people, not only in South Africa but also throughout the world!

**Activities:**

- Kobus just completed the course, "Growing Kids God's Way", which he is going to present as ministry tool in our community. Churches that are located near Vereeniging can contact him as he is willing to present this 18 week course for their church.
- Every Sunday, the sermons are translated for Hassam Abdul (as well as English speaking guests). Witnessing the spiritual growth in this ex-Muslim and Malawian resident's life is truly wonderful! He soaks up the Word of God like a sponge. Isn't God awesome!
- Bible Studies:
  - o The men study "The Way of Purity" by Mike Cleveland on Tuesday mornings.
  - o Kobus also started with a Bible Study for men in Meyerton – these men are not part of VTBC and the majority don't even attend any other church. At their request he works through the Gospel according to John.
  - o "A Quest for More" by Paul Tripp; "The Excellent Wife" by Martha Peace and "Relationships – A Mess Worth Making" by Timothy Lane & Paul Tripp are the three books that are discussed in

Bible Studies held for the women of the congregation. All three Bible Studies are also well attended by women from outside the congregation.

- The prayer meetings and the Bible Study for the congregation are well attended.
- We also have a blog (dienaarheidmaakvry.blogspot.com) and it is well worth visiting this blog, where you will be able to find weekly Afrikaans sermons.

We are constantly waiting on the Lord about the road that the congregation has to follow. One matter that we are currently praying about is for guidance regarding the start of English services on Sunday evenings, as well as a new venue where we can meet on Sundays.

**Each member was asked to summarise the way they see the congregation. This is what each person came up with:**

Trudie and Riaan: "Practical preaching and unity"  
"Tannie" Louie: "Stickability"

Charlene: "Dedication"  
"Tannie" Fréda: "I learn so much!"  
Ruth (one of our regular guests): "Nurture. It's like when you replant small plants. These plants need soil that has been prepared as well as nurture. This is what happens in this congregation".

Sonja: "A spiritual home".  
Eugenie: "A safe haven".  
Johan and Marius: "Unity".  
Hugo: "Truth".  
Wendy-Leigh: "Family".  
Kobus: "Willing to serve and accountability".

**Prayer requests:**

- Financial burden.
- New members.
- Blessing on outreach and preaching.
- Spiritual maintenance of members.
- Possible English services.
- Direction the congregation and Kobus must follow.
- A new venue to meet on Sundays.



Lindi, Sonja, Louie Oosthuizen & Jeanne vd Walt



Riaan & Trudie



Hugo & Wendy-Leigh



The Du Toit Family



Johan & Eugenie Jacobs