

## Chairman's Address by Sox Leleki

### Time to turn potential into achievement

To the Presiding Bishop, Executive Secretary, Past Presidents of our church, District Bishops present, members of our executive, distinguished guests and members of our movement at large, allow me to greet you all in the wonderful name of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By the honour of the Almighty, I have the privilege to address the 35<sup>th</sup> BMC July Consultation, here at Parys in the Northern Free State and Lesotho District under the leadership of Bishop Andrew Motswenyane. Parys is the home of the Free State Premier in the name of the Honourable Ace Magashule. Welcome to our consultation and I hope you make a great contribution in making sure that this movement is walking straight with a living God.

This year's consultation occurs in the midst of the World Cup held here in Africa. It is for the first time in its history to set its foot at Emhlabuhlangene. There is no denying the fact that the World Cup has done wonders in our nation. The last time it felt this good to be a South African was in the 1990s when the Spring Bok won the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which was followed by Bafana Bafana lifting up the African Nations Cup the following year. Every second person you see on the street is either wearing the national colours of one of the 32 participating countries, waving a flag or blowing a vuvuzela.

We gathered here today at a time when many boys are butchered in the name of culture. Many boys, sadly so, are left without their manhood and a bleak future.

About Jackie Selebi's case, I am not going to say much, except to say the clearest message, though, is that everyone in this country is equal before the law and that even the person who heads the police service can be put in dock, tried and convicted.

On the other side of the world there is a huge environmental disaster happening. The culprit, BP, has been fined billions of dollars for the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that has even prompted the US president (Barack Obama) to become personally involved. In 2009 we saw one of the worst recessions the world has ever experienced.

I have been privileged in the past year to visit some of our districts and pick up a sense of despondence in our people. It is now our time to prove that we are worthy of the legacy that was bestowed on us by those who came before us. People like utata Baartman, baba Mgojo, ntate Losaba and many more had made their contribution and history is filled with stories of their honour, glory, self-sacrifice and undying devotion to our movement. They have changed the course of history, even with their most precious possession (life), to give us a church better than they had known. It is now time to redirect our movement back to the earlier path carefully crafted by our parents in the struggle. We wish to call on this consultation to take a decision to financial help both tata Baaartman and baba Mgojo to attend our July Consultations, starting from next, as a sign of gratitude for ilifa labazali bethu.

The BMC has once again drifted itself to the periphery, in the life of the Methodist Church and this consultation must help us all to reclaim, the lost ground, to help our church determine her own destiny.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude as the executive for the confidence shown by electing us to lead for the period of three years starting from 2009 to 2011. We wish to thank leaders of this movement and the church at large for their support and prayers.

Last year's chairperson address raised the issue of conflict in our black circuits and that led to the formation of a task team under the leadership of Highveld and Swaziland District Chairperson by the name Mr. Percy Nthlapho. I know he is going to give a progress report but I want to say this consultation should work hard to make sure that this project does take off the ground as soon as possible. Those involved in Conflict Management should be people with a sense of humility, creative thinking and gentle in attitude but firm with an ability to engage others in a truthful manner. Good communication and listening skills are vital. If we are serious about this project maybe it is high time that we identify one or two persons and ask the BMC to provide financial support to send them to a credible institution to be trained and come back to lead this project.

Many organizations set goals that are not realistic and are in the habit of not meeting their objectives. Others achieve some of their goals by accident, and some could achieve a lot more. If our goals are mandatory, then I suggest that we make sure that we are planning for success instead of failure. Many organizations set their goals without considering the obvious reasons that make them not to be achievable. By addressing these reasons up front an organization can dramatically increase the likelihood of success or know that they must adjust them to something more realistic. The role of the Implementation Strategy School will be to help this consultation to decide on those realistic and achievable resolutions and come up with a strategy aimed at making implementation possible.

The 35<sup>th</sup> July Consultation of under the theme: "walking straight with a living God" is raising five priority areas aimed at taking our movement one step forward. The various schools within the consultation are going to offer each participant a wide range of choices. Once you have made your choice you are expected to make the contribution required of you in the development of our church. The first one is Transformation. We are hopeful that our consultation will decide on concrete, implementable steps to advance our transformation agenda. We all in agreement that, we are still lagging far behind on issues of transformation in our church. Transformation means Methodists will have to struggle together with the poor, oppressed and displaced, not to perform acts of charity for them. Transformation is for both black and white. Steve Biko puts it well in his book called "I Write What I Like" *It has been said by many men, that whites are in power within the churches, because the churches are modeled on Western lines which white people know best. In order to be able therefore to change the churches, we have first to gain ascendancy over them in that white model, then thereafter turn that model into one we cherish, we love, we understand and one that is relevant to us* (Biko,1978:63)

The second one is on leadership excellence and succession planning.

Even for transformation agenda to be implemented we need transformed leaders or at least those who believe in it and know that is possible to lead an agenda of transformation in our church. How do we elect people to leadership positions of our church and processes employed must be revisited. And this consultation the must help us to come up with a clear criterion to be followed to get right people to right positions. There are those who believe that there is no excellence in African leadership. We must prove them wrong by identifying potential in our people and raise leaders with passion to see black leaders taking their rightful position both inside and outside the church. The biggest stumbling block to credible leadership is the lack of confidence and political will to swim against the tide for a better life for all. *“A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way”* – John Maxwell

### Education

This school is aimed at continuing the tradition of the BMC of producing critical thinkers through empowering education. The task team on education will help us to look at the models, and structure used for education. The appointment of the President at Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary will be look at in relation to transformation and excellent African leadership. The Conference took a decision to employ a black academic to lead (SMMS) and that dream is not being implemented and not in the near future. It is high time that the BMC should help the church to realize her dream.

### Current Affairs

This task team will help us to identify those areas which warrant the attention of this movement. They will look both inside and outside the church. This movement cannot keep quiet in the face of the endeavours made to reverse the very gains made by the struggle of our people.

Last year we were given a mandate to consult with black led churches with an aim of forging a working relationship with them. It is with pleasure that we have consulted with two of them namely, A.M.E. and the Order of Ethiopia. The A.M.E. is here with as observers and the O.E. is still considering our proposal.

This consultation mandated us to sit down with the Presiding Bishop's office and formalize working relationship. Part of the report of the General Secretary will explain details about that.

The Umrabulo Business Programme was born out of a mandate of the 2009 July Consultation to embark on a vigorous campaign to communicate what BMC is all about. It is at this that the executive wishes to thank the Cape of Good Hope district for helping us to kick start this programme.

It is with great sense of encouragement to note that the two of the three stages are almost complete. The Mrabulo Business leaflet is ready for distribution. The good working relationship between the movement and the Dimesion is evident by the press statements we see every month.

The third stage is the official launch of the Mrabulo Business Programme. We proposed that it be on the 12 September 2010 and this day be declared BMC day in the calendar of the connexion. On that day in all churches we distribute our leaflet, have a talk on BMC by sharing the information on one on one basis. Our members should be encouraged to visit white evening worship services that day.

The core function of the BMC remain transformation and empowerment, education and community engagement but the way we experience them is unique for each individual. In the year 2009 and few years before then the BMC went through a process of developing a new strategic plan which will carry us to the future, only if that plan is religiously implemented.

The implementation of the Grand Plan as agreed upon last year must be attended to as in many of our District this plan is not yet operating. I hope the School on Implementation Strategy will help us with a practical strategy to take this BMCGP forward.

Let us be reminded of Steve Biko's words that *"the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed"*. Therefore it is important that the BMC plays a role in the liberation of the mind of a black person.

The transformation agenda must be in support of women, youth and people living with disabilities. This consultation must create space for the groups mentioned above to consult among themselves on issues affecting them in relation to transformation. Let's discourage people from speaking on behalf of others.

There are those districts that made us proud as the BMC in the past year, the Cape of Good Hope, Grahamstown, Natal West, Natal Coastal, K.N.B., Clarkebury, Queenstown, Limpompo. The hosting district promised to wake up and walk straight with a living God. We promise to spend time working with Central district and the Bishop of that district is here to preach on Sunday.

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to members of our executive for promoting the spirit of working together as one team.

In conclusion I wish to remind this consultation that the majority of our people still put their hopes on the shoulders of our movement. Let us join hands and work harder for a common future.

Shalom