A PERSPECTIVE ON THE PAN-AFRICAN BRETHREN CONFERENCE ON MISSIONS 2009, KABWE, ZAMBIA.
Towards a Life of Integrity: Colossians 3:17

It is over a year since we held the Second Pan African Brethren Conference on Missions in Kabwe, Zambia.

It is hard for me to give an objective account and perspective of what happened in Kabwe last August, as Christians from various African and Western countries met together in the Pan-African Brethren Conference on Missions. It's hard for me because it is very easy to blow one's own trumpet! I was in the thick of it and also chaired the conference with a very competent team of co-workers.

One delegate told me afterwards of their impression of the conference, and I quote: ***"In my memory it will remain as a turning point in my personal experience with the Lord. He prepared for me a special encounter with Him there and that has made a difference in my life. However it's no wonder that it was through that Conference that I was challenged by the Lord: it was packed with challenging teaching, challenging reports and challenging people."***

It was particularly amazing to hear about the phenomenal progress that Brethren churches are making in countries like Angola and, in general, the rapid spread of the gospel in Africa. It was inspiring to hear about the wonderful way in which many courageous Christians are showing God's love to the disabled, HIV patients, street children, the deaf, the poor, etc. It was inspiring to hear George Verwer's unconventional calls for mission, prayer, social action and integrity. It was fascinating to learn about African missionaries being sent to other African nations. And from my point of view, there was something else that was heart-warming: How wonderfully we Africans can sing (especially the Angolans, South Africans and the Malagasy)!

We (PABCM organisers) honestly did not fall into triumphalism or exaggeration in order to make things appear more attractive than they really were. Our facilities were not good and very basic but we provided what we had. In fact, our weaknesses in our African churches were exposed together with our strengths, and tricky issues in the missionary field were addressed with sincerity and respect. In fact, the topic chosen as the Conference motto was bold enough: "Towards a life of integrity".

Any visitor who was ready not to let any of God's words fall to the ground, must have left Zambia carrying a full backpack. Full with a vision of how the Lord is working all over Africa in many different ways. With a renewed commitment to serve Him in whichever end of the world he has been placed. With a deeper thirst and hunger for integrity in one's own life and justice in the world. With a burden to pray for the Lord's Work and his workers. With a holistic concern for our neighbours' needs. And, in my personal case, also with a stronger conviction of how vital prayer is in the life of a Christian.

In my closing remarks, I said that the PABCM in Kabwe would become a milestone and a benchmark in the history of the Brethren Assemblies in Africa.

We thank God for his blessings and provisions and want to thank all who contributed and made this conference a reality.

For His glory and in His Grace,
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