



Transformation Christian Network (TCN)

Annual Report 2021

“Closing the gap between the pulpit and the community.”

TCN is an informal network of volunteers supporting and encouraging Church leaders to work together in NM Bay. We believe a Church working together guided by John 17:21 and Psalm 133.1 will make a major contribution to Church unity and social cohesion in our metro and beyond.

Different ministries in the metro who share a Kingdom vision meet regularly to support each other. The TCN volunteers are held together by a compelling vision set out in the SACC document “The SA we Pray For” set out in the “Regina Mundi Declaration” on 16 December 2015.

2021 was the year that we understood the real meaning of “social cohesion”. After a year of Covid-19 lockdowns, which continued into 2021, we started losing touch with key family members, friends and fellow parishioners. We had to make a special effort to rebuild social networks and reconnect with friends. Going back to physical church services took a conscious effort for many of us.

The year was once again full of highlights and disappointments. Many churches seem to focus their attention on an ongoing battle with the government about the number of people who should be allowed to attend church services and whether vaccinations should be compulsory or not.

Regrettably, these highly emotive issues have had a detrimental effect on church unity. Church leaders appeared to be more committed to fighting institutional issues than being concerned about the challenges facing their communities.

A further disappointment was the realization that the church leaders had very little influence on the morality and the corrupt activities of our politicians. Leaving the future of our country in the hands of our politicians has resulted in our local, provincial and national governments being on a knife edge of collapse.

On the other side of the coin, the Church Leadership Network continued to meet on the second Thursday of each month. This regular meeting has now been taken a step further by the introduction of an open weekly prayer meeting each Thursday morning.

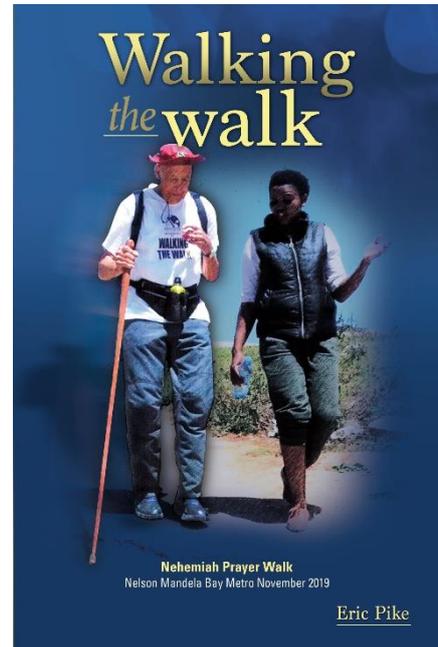
Our “Church in the Community Column” published first in the Herald, is distributed weekly to a number of publications, social media platforms and circulated to all churches, continues to provide our Church Leaders with an opportunity to communicate regularly with citizens of NM Bay on important issues affecting their lives.

A record of all the articles published by Church Leaders can be found on www.tcn.org.za

Other highlights of the year included:

- Raising awareness of what churches and their congregants can do to combat corruption and poor governance in the metro

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- The launch of “against Hunger” a major initiative to fight hunger in all 60 municipal wards in NM Bay (www.tcn.org.za - Against Hunger)
 - Speaking out as the church leadership against:
 - Supporting the launch of the “Defend our Democracy” campaign led by the Reverend Frank Chikane
 - Looting that broke out during July in Kwazulu-Natal and Gauteng after the incarceration of former president Zuma
 - A media release outlining how church leaders in Nelson Mandela Bay are speaking out against corruption and social ills
 - Supporting the fight against food insecurity through promoting “Gardens of Faithfulness”
 - Assisting SACOFF to provide food parcels to needy struggling communities and church pastors
 - Increasing communication reach to 720 local churches in the NM Bay metro
 - Launching the “Pastor Connect” initiative
 - Distributing resources helping pastors to advise their congregations on how to vote in the municipal elections
 - Introduction of a closer working relationship with NMB SACC Executive Committee
 - Launching “Father’s Matter” with Heartlines
 - Special working session with Reverend Frank Chikane and how he saw the church rolling out the SACC “The SA we Pray For” at local ward level.



Although NM Bay is considered by outsiders as a city where we enjoy a high level of church unity, we still face a number of huge challenges.

- Firstly, after 27 years of democracy, many white churches have still not endorsed multi racism/culturalism in our urban churches
- Secondly, the influence of the church to fight corporate corruption and social injustice has been dismal
- Thirdly, the church’s role in addressing the burdening issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment in the community is minimal.

The time has arrived for the church to follow Archbishop Tutu’s example and tackle issues of social injustice and our collapsing service delivery at community level. Speeches and sermons from pulpits have been ignored by greedy politicians.

We can all walk in the steps of the former bishop of Port Elizabeth, Eric Pike. One of his last of his many contributions to the people of the metro was to walk through all 60 Nelson Mandela wards. The resulting book highlights many of the challenges facing communities who are seemingly ignored by the political elite outside of election time.

Thank you for your ongoing encouragement and ongoing support during 2021.

Trevor Jennings

January 2022
