



Bishop's Post June-July

During June and July we are reading from the prophets Amos and Hosea, both of whom lived almost 3000 years ago in ancient Israel.

(the Bible reading plan is available at <http://www.elcsant.org.za/>)

These were highly political writings. In Amos we come across place names such as Damascus and Gaza, and read about destruction and war. It is tragic that 3000 years later people in these places still live in fear of their lives as irresponsible rulers abuse their power. Many of the words spoken by these prophets could have been spoken, word for word, by today's political analysts.

The book of Hosea makes uncomfortable reading for pious readers. Had it been a TV film, it would receive an age restriction and be aired late at night. Prostitutes, illegitimate children and adultery feature prominently. Harsh and shocking images are used to depict the relationship between God and His people.

In July we remember the birth of Nelson Mandela one hundred years ago. If you keep him, his life, his struggle and South Africa of the past 100 years in mind when reading these prophets, you will find many similarities. Mandela, unlike some of his successors, never claimed to be God's instrument, but history shows the enormous impact that he had, to bring South Africa onto a road of peace and reconciliation.

Politics and faith should not be mixed - that is the firm believe of many a devout Christians. Amos and Hosea however seriously challenge this view. They show that we have a God who is deeply concerned about what happens in this world, what is done by its rulers. We, as his followers, should share his concern!

Believers are challenged to be responsible citizens. Rulers, regardless of their religion and belief, are reminded that they are ultimately accountable to God - even if they do not believe in him!

The Bible readings of June and July prompt me to ask: What type of citizen am I? Am I contributing to the upbuilding of society? Do I make no difference at all? Am I part of the problem, a destructive voice with a damaging attitude? We are challenged:

“Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts.”(Amos 5, 14,15)

Yours in Christ

Horst Müller

News from the Church

On 3 June we are celebrating the **Brass festival** of ELCSA (N-T) at the Deutsche Internationale Schule Johannesburg. We thank the Nordrand congregation for hosting us!

On 10 June **Wartburg Congregation** is celebrating its 125th Jubilee. At the same time **Wartburg, Harburg and New Hannover** are concluding the process of amalgamation to establish one congregation with two pastors' posts. When Pastor Dieter Klee moves to Kempton Park in September, that position will no longer be filled.

We pray that the Lord will guide the process for these congregations and the joint venture that continues from here!

Now that **Stellenbosch University** has been identified as our preferred institution for **studying theology** young people are invited to contact their pastor if they wish to study towards the ministry. UELCSA does offer a bursary. Please also keep in your prayer that the Lord will call and the called will hear!