



Bishop's Post
April May 2019

Three events of cosmological significance are remembered in April and May.

The first one is the death and the second one the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are not only Christian events. We confess that God so loved the WORLD (literally: Cosmos) that he gave his only Son (John 3,16). Jesus died for the mess-up of the whole of humanity. And then he rose. With this he conquered death. Death too is cosmological - no one escapes it. But Jesus conquered. And whoever believes in Him, shall have eternal life.

None of these verses are aimed at a limited audience, a select few. They are cosmological. Over the Easter Weekend we are thus celebrating much, much more than a "Christian festival".

And then, on the 30th of May, we celebrate (if we do not forget) Ascension day: the day of enthronement of Christ, the risen, conquering King. My Saviour is also the Lord of the Universe.

Between these three events we have the choir festival in Braunschweig on 12 May. It is a jubilant celebration that we have a wonderful Lord.

And then, 4 days earlier, on 8 May we have the national elections. They will receive much more attention than Easter, Ascension, not even to mention the choir festival.

Some people refer to Election time as "Stupid season", because politicians think that we are stupid and believe all the promises they make.

This election will be difficult for the voters - there is so much mess, dishonesty, corruption across the party lines. Whom can I trust with my vote?

Although many believe that you should not mix politics and faith, I disagree. Easter and Ascension are of cosmological significance. There is nothing that I can separate from my faith in Christ, the Lord of the Universe. This means: I can approach the elections prayerfully, listen to elaborate speeches and identify the lies and empty promises. (I must be careful not to turn a blind eye to the lies and empty promises of my favourite party!) I can examine the policies and the likelihood of a party delivering. I can cast my vote, praying that God will have mercy on us and grant us better leadership and government -regardless of who wins.

Our country needs healing. I believe that much can happen when at least Christians take the Easter and Ascension events seriously again, and live as followers of the saving King of Kings.

May our King bless you abundantly!

Horst Müller

News from the Church

- **The biennial Choir festival** takes place on 12 May in Braunschweig, on the border of Mpumalanga and Kwazulu-Natal. You are welcome!
- Remember to put **Ascension day, 30 May**, on your congregation's calendar!
- A report on the fire disaster in **Wupperthal** can be found on our web page www.elcsant.org.za

eEquip 2019 – Participants share their experience

The sixth eEquip happened from 2-6 January 2019 and it was again a wow experience. Attended by old and young (10 to 83) from many of the ELCSA (N-T) congregations, it was a wonderful opportunity to breathe the eEquip air and get in touch with the fundamentals of our existence as the people of God.

The theme for this year was "Hope and a future!". The program was largely led by Bishop Horst Müller, Rev. Dr. Gertrud Tönsing and Rev. Dr. Detlev Tönsing. But, it was a humbling experience when the learned took a back seat and gave the little ones an opportunity to be our teachers, certainly keeping us on our toes with their questions. The topics were: the cause of our mess - an examination of the spiral of sin in which we are caught up, in our personal lives as well as in our Church and society; the importance of really understanding the mess in the light of the ten commandments; and then the message of hope or: Mess – Age of Hope.

If there's a big mess, it takes an age (a lifetime, not only a generation) to mend it. The challenge is that if we want hope, things must be different - we can't still play the same old game. We read Jeremiah 29 & 32 and understood just how Jeremiah speaks into our situation. What will come is not always so clear, but what is clear is that God will do God's own thing in God's own time. And right in the middle of the mess, we can plant and nurture signs of the new life that God brings.

But eEquip is not only about bible study and input, there are many creative activities. The gentle flame of hope was kindled by sharing what congregations are doing in our country and elsewhere in the world.

There was an installation in the chapel each afternoon centering on the elements of fire, water and earth. Here we were invited to become still before God and experience his presence.

On Friday evening we experienced, that the best way to explore and celebrate our diversity, is to tell our stories to each other, blending the serious and the light hearted. We laughed and laughed, and when we thought we couldn't laugh anymore, we laughed some more. One of those that were nicknamed the V8s (because of their insistence on being accepted into congregations used to their monolingual ways), remarked, 'This is the best eEquip ever!'

What are you waiting for? The invitation is out there. It's better to get the message than to remain in the mess, so don't miss the seventh eEquip - 1st to 5th January 2020.

Ann Mokhine, JP Hanekom, and Tessa Welch.