

# Department of Community Safety and Transport Management

## MEC's SPEAKING NOTES

19TH MARCH 2017

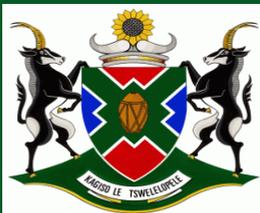
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**“Together Moving Bokone Bophirima Province Forward”**

# Speaking Notes for MEC for the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management , DR. MOKGANTSHANG MOTLHABANE as he Addresses the SOD TURNING and UNVEILING of the Church Legacy Project on the 19th March 2017

## OBSERVING PROTOCOL

- Bishops
- Church Pastors
- Church Leaders
- Church Elders
- Deacons
- Members
- Fellow Worshipers
- And Proud South Africans

## PURPOSE

I am invited to speak here on the occasion of the sod turning and unveiling of the Legacy Project for the Church.

### 1. What is the definition of the church?

The church as a building specifically for worship for believers of a particular denomination. Christ is the head of the church, and the church is the body of Christ as [Ephesians 1:22-23](#). The local church is where the members of the church can apply [1 Corinthians 12](#) which speaks to: encouraging, teaching, and building one another up in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Church to Meet the Needs of the People**

People need to have their spiritual, emotional and physical needs met. We are living in a crazy world today. II Timothy 3:1 puts it properly and said, “but know this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”

I’ll take the liberty to say that difficult times are here and this is what I mean by that:

- More and more children are growing up in broken homes,
- unemployment is on the rise and
- Christians are sinking deeper into debt like never before.
- Many churchgoers are struggling to make ends meet in their everyday lives, and we feel the pinch of reality just like everyone else.

Remember that believers are not exempted from trials of the world. We are living in drastic times and drastic times call for drastic measures. Churches must be available to meet the needs in each believer’s life. Irrespective of church size, each church can provide effective group ministries and outreach services. This services can then be spread out beyond the walls of the church and be incorporated into the community where the church serves. To the best of its ability, the church can provide services, counselling and advice to those in need.

One of the greatest lessons of meeting the people’s need was demonstrated when the Messiah fed the 4,000 people (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus gave us this blueprint of meeting the needs of the people. Before Jesus gave His sermon, He fed the “churchcomers.” They came to hear the Messiah, and after feeding them with physical food, He then gave them spiritual food for the soul. Both their physical and spiritual needs were met. This is the classical role that Jesus conducted and we must emulate it.

The basic function of the church is to be involved in every facet of the life of the believer. This mission starts with looking at the needs of the people, providing such needs and then begin to preach about the good work. Crudely put, the ordinary people, the alcoholic, the sick, the disabled, the vulnerable groups, (children, elderlies, youth) and the poor should be able to receive assistance.

## **What is the purpose of the Church?**

The purpose of the [church](#) in essence is;

- to worship God ([Luke 4:8](#); [John 4:23](#); [Rev. 4:10](#)),
- to study God's Word ([2 Tim. 2:15](#); [1 Cor. 4:6](#)),
- to pray ([Acts 2:42](#)),
- to love one another ([John 13:35](#); [Phil. 1:1-4](#)),
- to help each other ([Gal. 6:2](#)),
- to partake in baptism and the Lord's supper ([Luke 22:19-20](#)),
- to learn how to live as godly people ([Titus 2:11-12](#)),
- and to be equipped to evangelize the world ([Eph. 4:12](#); [Matt. 28:18-20](#)).

God has given us church elders, pastors, apostles, prophets, Sunday school teachers to equip and interpret miracles, show us gifts of healings, helps us and become administrations,

The Bible reveals additional aspects of the purpose of the church that are worth viewing:

- **To guard the proper teachings of the church,**
- **To discipline believers,**
- **To become more like Christ,**
- **To be subject to pastoral leadership,**
- **To be unified in Christ,**

## **The Role of Christian Leaders in the Formation of the ANC**

In His maiden sermon Jesus Christ citing the prophet Isaiah said these words: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19).

On the 8th January every year we celebrate the birthday of a gigantic organisation the ANC, the oldest political organisation in Africa yet was the latest to attain freedom. Jesus Christ indeed freed and released us from slavery and bondage as South Africans in general and blacks in particular.

But it is of vital important to note and always remember that it was Christian leaders who influenced the formation of the African National Congress (ANC). It was the Christian values which shaped the establishment and sustainability of this movement.

Several founding members of the African National Congress (ANC) were devoted Christians and actually most of them were pastors and/or church leaders.

These include leaders and ANC Presidents like:

- Rev Dr John Dube, the founding President who led from 1912 to 1917),
- Sefako Makgatho (1917 - 1924),
- Rev Zacharias Richard Mahabane (1924-1927),
- Josiah Gumede (1927-1930),
- Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme (1930-1936),
- Rev Mahabane (1937-1940),
- Dr Alfred Bitini Xuma (1940-1949),
- Dr James S Moroka (1949-1952) and
- Chief Albert Luthuli (1952 - 1967).
- Sol T. Plaatje (the founding Secretary- General) was also a staunch Christian.

So, South African National Native Congress (SANNC) the body that was to become the ANC was established and influenced by Christian leaders? Actually, in 1899 Martin Luthuli (uncle of Chief Albert Luthuli), Saul Msane and Josiah Gumede met with Henriette Colenso (daughter of Bishop John Colenso) to discuss the founding of an African political organisation.

The Natal Native Congress was then established in July 1900 and Iliso le-Sizwe Esimnyama was founded in 1908. Almost all the leaders involved were members of missionary societies. These leaders also founded and sponsored Ipepa lo Hlanga, a newspaper edited by the local Methodist preacher. However, the paper was soon closed down because of its perceived political propaganda and it was replaced by John Dube's Zulu and English newspaper, Ilanga lase Natal. Dube used this newspaper to draw attention to the socio-economic and political plight of Africans.

John Dube, the second son of James Dube, was pastor of the American Zulu Mission at Inanda. He was not the only leader who was a Christian. So did John Tengo Jabavu, editor of the Eastern Province Xhosa-English newspaper 'Imvo Zabantsundu' also his son D.D.T. Jabavu and Rev P. J. Mzimba. Pixley ka Isaka Seme is the one who convened the inaugural meeting of the SANNC. The meeting took place in a church in Waaihoek, Bloemfontein.

Even as the movement grew and developed it continued to be led and influenced by Christian leaders. As late as 1934, ANC leaders were very strong Christians. These include D.D.T. Jabavu, James Calata, Selby Msimang, Rev Z. Mahabane, Dr A.B. Xuma, Z.K. Matthews, Dr James Moroka, Chief Albert Luthuli, and many others. Calata was largely influenced by the African Minister's Federation which worked in close cooperation with the ANC and stressed the link between Christianity and political life.

Two particularly strong individual influences on the African Nationalist Movement during the thirties and early forties were Tengo Jabavu and Dr A.B. Xuma, both of them strongly committed Christians, whose promotion of Christian ethics and values as the key to fighting for black rights is evident everywhere in their writings and speeches.

Rev James Calata, for example, secretary –general of the ANC from 1936-1949, believed that the church would make it possible to 'build up the Bantu into a Christian Nation', while Rev Z. Mahabane, another president of the ANC, believed the solution as dependent on the 'evangelisation of Africans'.

We salute these leaders for their courage and indefatigable perseverance. We honour them for their singlemindedness, sagacity and sacrifice.

### **10 Reasons Why the Church Should Not Abandon Politics**

Recent events have raised the issue, Should the pulpit always avoid politics?

Here are ten reasons why I don't think politics and religion should (or even can) be completely separate:

**1) The Word of God has something to say about all of life, beyond just the spiritual.**

**2) The Bible itself addresses the issue of governing in different texts.**

- we hear that God has established the civil magistrate, and we are to obey the government. In Exodus, we see Moses rebuking Pharaoh for mistreating the Hebrews.

**3) The Scriptures also teach that on occasion, there may be a need for civil disobedience.**

**4) Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."**

- Nature abhors a vacuum. Someone will be involved in politics, hence we have a positive duty to render certain obligation to the state.

**5) When the Church does not speak out, evil can fill that void.**

- Christians went against Hitler and the Nazis: "Not you, Herr Hitler, but God is my Führer". These were the defiant words of Pastor Martin Niemöller during Hitler's attack on Jews

**6) The Church is called to be salt and light. Salt preserves and prevents decay.**

- Christians in society should help prevent corruption. As goes the pulpit, so goes the nation.

**7) We pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."**

- Surely someone's morality is always being legislated. It is not a question of "if," but of "what" and of "whose."

**8) Christians bless everybody when we properly apply our faith to politics.**

- Our Constitution derives in much of its form and content from the Christian tradition

**9) Politics may be the calling of some in the congregation. Therefore, ministers should encourage political involvement that is motivated by the desire to serve.**

**10) Religion and morality are "indispensable supports to our political prosperity."**

- Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people.
- In short, our problem today is not too much Christian influence on society, but not enough.

## **FOCUS ON THE BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH**

Every church needs to be a healthy church and a healthy church will have a balanced approach to the basic functions of the church. Everything a church does should relate to one of the following basic functions.

- **WORSHIP**
- **EVANGELISM**
- **DISCIPLESHIP**
- **PRAYER**
- **FELLOWSHIP**

God made us social creatures. We want to interact with other people. Activities should be planned to give the members plenty of opportunities to fellowship with one another.

### • **MINISTRY AND MISSIONS**

If a church focuses on these basic functions it will be quite busy and will maintain a healthy balance. It would be wise for a church to periodically stop and evaluate its programs and activities to insure that it is keeping a balanced approach to ministry.

## **The Role and Importance of the Church in the Community**

Today, humans have acquired more knowledge than any other time in history. Science and medicine are going places never before imagined. We have bigger jets and cruise liners, faster computers, and helpful drugs for certain diseases are being discovered everyday. Daniel envisioned a time when knowledge would increase (See Daniel 12:4). We have much evidence today of our successes in these and many other areas. We have improved on just about every area of life.

Every year *Forbes* magazine publishes a list of the richest people in the world. This list continues to grow longer and longer. More people can afford vacations, purchase houses, and buy brand new cars. Some car dealership will have cars for sale that can be purchased with zero percent down. Life, overall, seems comfortable for most Americans. When life is good, most people tend to forget about church... well, until something happens that turns their lives upside down.

The role of the modern church in the life of the 21st-century believer is critical because it fills a void only the church can. If a car needs fixing, it is brought to the mechanic shop. If someone is sick, the health center or hospital is the best place to seek medical attention. Church is where people should go if they are in need of a “spiritual fix.” The church is really a hospital for sinners and not an exclusive club for saints.

So why would someone want to attend church? Regardless of what is said about churches, people expect that their life problems can be addressed in some fashion or form. With all the weight and pressures of their world weighing down on their minds, people expect the church to provide Bible-based answers that no other institution can provide.

### **In Conclusion**

[Martin Niemöller](#) (1892–1984) was a prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken public enemy of Adolf Hitler, the German ruler. He had to forcefully spend the last seven years of the Nazi rule in concentration camps.

Niemöller is perhaps best remembered for this quotation which he writes facing death in the concentration camps:

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Socialist.*

*Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

The quotation is profound and demonstrates the need to stand by each other, fight each other's battles, take care of each other and help those who are in dire straights, without exception.

The Pastor's point is; believers and the churches were complicit through their silence in the Nazi imprisonment, persecution, and murder of millions of people.

Che Guavara said: The silence of my friends when am in trouble is as piercing and painful as a sword my enemy uses to butcher me, (sic).

Simply put; let's not ignore the plight of the poor as a church and say the government must see to finish.

All leaders of churches, big or small, must recruit more young men and women to serve in diverse capacities in the ministry. The responsibility of guiding the next wave of leaders weighs heavily on those in leadership positions now believing in the believers. In return, the challenge to prepare a Christian for leadership will take proper training and a willingness to accept a role in church in order to face the many challenges ahead in the community.

We must start to look deep within ourselves and arise to serve the needs of all people in the name of Christ. The time is closer until the coming of Jesus Christ and the church has much work to do. Now is the right time to become the church Christ expects it to be.

## **I Thank You**