

## National Ministry Leader (interim) – 2021 Report

I thank God and the Baptist Family for the privilege afforded me during the last two years to serve as President / Interim National Leader. Prior to Covid 19, the national lockdown and the ban on interprovincial travel, I had the privilege of visiting some pastors. I also preached at several churches, ministered at graduation services, and conducted Combined Revival Services. Despite the numerous restrictions placed on individuals and churches, I have marveled at the innovative ways implemented by pastors and leaders to communicate the Gospel. I am privileged to have witnessed the love, care and compassion of local congregations who tangibly demonstrated the Gospel by serving the vulnerable, the unemployed and the needy in their communities.

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa, despite our own financial needs, was able to help many pastoral families through the BU Covid relief fund for several months. Furthermore, we assisted our brothers and sisters of the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe during the pandemic. I thank churches and individuals who gave so generously into the Covid fund, allowing the BU to be an extension of your love and care.

Throughout the lockdowns, the National Leadership Council remained committed to keeping Baptist family informed about ministry within its different constituencies. Communication via email, Zoom and Webinars was increasingly used as in person gatherings were restricted.

Ministering during Covid remains an area of uncharted waters and I admire our local pastors and leaders for the way they are still encouraging the spiritually downcast, the bereaved and the disillusioned. Many pastors have suffered the loss of a spouse, family member or a church member. Further, there was also the loss of personal and congregational income to deal with, yet they continued to minister faithfully to others.

Ministering among our culturally and theological diverse people opened my eyes to the richness of our diversity, but also to the challenges that we face in living together as the 'new humanity' in Christ Jesus. I am absolutely convinced that no difference among us as God's people is insurmountable. We have far more in common than the 'nonessentials' that seek to tear us apart. I am optimistic that if we focus our lives upon Christ Jesus who builds His Kingdom, then *'the Lord will add to His Church daily those who are being saved'*.

I further believe that there are areas of ministry that must be addressed and reassessed to move forward to build on our unity that we already have in Christ Jesus. I have received both constructive criticism and support, encouraging me to continue seeing our Union of churches as God's ambassadors in our country and the world.

My extended term of office was not characterized by what I was honored to perform initially, however I was privileged to learn from churches and saints within our union. I believe that I am all the richer for having learned from such a wealth of experience found among our church leaders.

I continue with you in prayer for the man of God's own choosing to respond to the call of becoming our full-time National Ministry Leader. In the meantime, let us all work together in building each other up and seeing God's Kingdom extended across our land and abroad.

Yours in Christ Jesus.

