



**The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern
Africa
*John Knox Bokwe Memorial
Congregation***

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LIFE AND WORK OF REV JOHN KNOX BOKWE IN UGIE

The John Knox Bokwe Memorial Congregation in Ugie, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Mthatha, are the direct recipients of the legacy that was built by the Rev John Knox Bokwe. Rev Bokwe left Lovedale Mission in 1897 to join John Tengo Jabavu in producing the Xhosa newspaper, "Imvo zabantsundu". The two years that he spent producing the newspaper and being a journalist were very frustrating and that affected his health in so much that he decided to quit and went to Transkei to recuperate and start a new life. In 1899 he stayed in Tsomo, a small town in Transkei at his wife's place of birth. He recovered very quickly and moved to Ugie, as he realized that his calling was not to be a journalist but to be a minister.

The following could be highlighted as his achievements during his years in Ugie:

- He became an Evangelist and, later, served as a probationer. He was ordained in 1906 as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church.
- While serving as a minister, he opened a school for children, as there was no school for both black and white children. That he did without any government grant. Around Ugie and in the congregation, there are still some people whose parents or grandparents were taught by Rev Bokwe.
- Other schools were, later, opened in the surrounding places. After his efforts and hard- work, a European school was built in Ugie town. Unfortunately, after some time, some of the schools that he started were forced to close, due to the Native Private Location Act 27 of 1913, which restricted blacks to small pieces of land. He played a tremendous role in shaping the future of a black child through education.
- During his ministry in this small town, he also served as a town clerk. (John Knox Bokwe – The Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia).

Today, there is a street named after Rev Bokwe, which is called Bokwe Street and it is where John Knox Bokwe Memorial Congregation is situated. There are still the descendants of Rev Bokwe (the grandchildren and great grandchildren) who are residing in a neighbouring town, Maclear. The Congregation maintains cordial relations with them.

Prepared by:

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