**FINAL AMENDED ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS 2014**

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**Elders**

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**Munali**

**Ministers**

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**Elders**

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**Thukela**  
**Ministers**

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**Elders**

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**Transkei**

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**Tshwane**

**Ministers**

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**Elders**

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| Mr Vuyani Rashe | M | 78 Taylor Street, Parow Valley, 7750 |  | 071 481 1663 |
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**Ministers**

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| The Rev Handitye | F | 58 8th Street Gweru | [gomom@zimglass.co.zw](mailto:gomom@zimglass.co.zw) | (0)775 717 501 |
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**Elders**

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**THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 11TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD FROM THE**

**12TH JULY TO 18TH JULY 2014**

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| **FIRST SESSION** |

At Mount Horeb Presbyterian Church, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Saturday 12 July 2014 at 16h30, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, convened.

## CONSTITUTING SERVICE

The Moderator’s chaplain, the Rev. C. Judelsohn, led the Assembly in Worship.

The Moderator greeted the Assembly and reminded the Assembly that it was its business to please God. He further drew the Assembly’s attention to the liturgy and the responses.

### Roll of Assembly

The Moderator, the Rt. Rev. Rod Botsis, called for the Roll of Commissioners, which was presented by the Clerk of Assembly.

The Clerk moved:

“The Assembly adopts the Roll of Commissioners as printed in the Papers and the Supplementary Papers as amended.”

This was **agreed** by consensus.

### Constitution

### The Moderator declared the 11th General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa duly constituted.

The Moderator’s chaplain, the Rev. A. Nemaukhwe, led the Assembly in worship and invited the Limpopo choir to render an item.

### Induction of the Moderator

The Moderator’s Chaplains, the Rev. C. Judelsohn and the Rev. A. Nemaukhwe, brought forward the Rev. M. Ramulondi, the Moderator Designate, to be inducted as the Moderator of the General Assembly.

The Moderator-Designate took the Vows of Office.

The Moderator, together with the former Moderators of the General Assembly, prayed for the Moderator-Designate.

The Moderator-Designate was inducted to office in proper form.

The Congregation sang the Aaronic Blessing.

The Moderator signed the Moderator’s Bible.

The Moderator was robed by the retiring Moderator and presented by him with the Tokens of Office, namely the Gown, Stole and the Ring.

The Moderator received the right hand of fellowship from the former Moderators of Assembly.

The retiring Moderator presented the Moderator to the Assembly.

The Moderator’s Lady, Mrs Ramulondi, was presented with the brooch of the Moderator’s Lady by Mrs M. Botsis the retiring Moderator lady.

### The Service of the Word

The Moderator’s chaplains, the Rev. A. Nemaukhwe and the Rev. C. Judelsohn, read the following Scriptures:

1. Psalm 51: 1-17
2. Matthew 13: 44-46
3. 2 Corinthians 11:1-3

### The Retiring Moderator’s Address

The Retiring Moderator delivered his Retiring Address on the theme of “Put Jesus first in everything.”

## Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Moderator

The General Secretary, the Rev. J. Pillay thanked the retiring Moderator.

**Adjournment**

The Moderator closed the service with prayer and the Benediction at 17h48.

The Assembly adjourned, to meet again after supper at 19h00 in the Capricorn School Hall.

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| **CONTINUATION OF FIRST SESSION** |

The Assembly reconvened at 19h00 for the orientation of the Commissioners and Insaka group facilitators.

**Orientation of Commissioners and Insaka Group Facilitators:**

The General Secretary, assisted by the Rev. M. Cook, outlined the procedures related to the Consensus Model of Decision Making and the role and function of the Insaka group facilitators.

**Adjournment:**

The Assembly adjourned at 20h30, to meet again at the Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane, on Sunday 13 July 2014, at 09h00.

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| **SECOND SESSION** |

At the Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Sunday 13 July 2014, at 09h15, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator welcomed all those present in the service and acknowledged the presence of the representative from the Mayoral committee of Polokwane Municipality Ms. M.S. Tjale.

**Introduction of Chaplains**

The Moderator introduced his Chaplains, the Rev. M. Cook and the Rev. P. Neshangwe

The Moderator’s chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook, led the Assembly in worship.

### The Service of the Word

The Scriptures were read from:

Old Testament Psalm 133:1-3

New Testament Ephesians 4:1-6

John 17:20-26

### Moderator’s Opening Address

The Moderator delivered his Opening Address on the theme of “THE CHURCH JESUS PRAYED FOR”.

The Moderator invited commissioners to the Assembly to stand and commit themselves to the Lord.

The Assembly confessed its faith in the words of the Belhar Confession.

### Holy Communion

The Moderator led the Assembly in the celebration of Holy Communion. This was followed by the Offering.

### In Memoriam Minutes

The Clerk presented the In Memoriam Minutes for the following Ministers and elders, who had recently died:

Ministers:

The Rev. Charles Murray Albertyn

The Rev. Max Tongai Chigwida

The Rev. Victor Keswa

The Rev. Thanduxolo G Mcoteli

The Rev. Nomsa Ngwenya

Elders:

Elder Mr Brian Hawksworth

Elder Mr Ben Khaole

Elder Mr Mervyn Carl Nelson Schmidt

The Assembly observed a moment of silence, and the General Secretary led the Assembly in prayer.

The Moderator made intimations and also requested that all the commissioners to rush to their modes of transport to try and catch up with time.

## Adjournment

The Assembly adjourned at 11h44, to meet at 12h30 at the Capricorn High School Hall in Polokwane.

The Moderator closed the session with the benediction and the Moderatorial procession left the church.

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| **THIRD SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Sunday 13 July 2014 at 12h50, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Devotions**

The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer.

**Welcome and local arrangements**

The Rev T.J. Mokoena of the Local Organising Committee made announcements regarding certain local arrangements.

**ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE:**

The Moderator called for the Business Convener to present the Business Committee report. The Convener asked Mr. Wilson to explain the translation system. The Convener then mentioned the request by the Church Associations Convener to move the Church Associations report to be tabled immediately after the General Secretary’s report. The Convener thanked the Clerk of the Assembly for the stunning job he had performed for the denomination and the Assembly.

The Convener moved that:

1. The General Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The General Assembly notes that the Orientation programmes for all Commissioners and all Insaka Group Facilitators are Compulsory.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The General Assembly records its profound gratitude to the Rev. J. Murphy and Mr. I. Wilson and the two translators for the valuable special service they will be rendering for the duration of this General Assembly in ensuring that this first leg of Translation at General Assembly is a success.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The General Assembly adopts the FINAL draft agenda as amended in the Supplementary Papers as the Agenda for the 11th General Assembly 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The General Assembly adopts the Standing Orders as published on pages 11 to 21 of the 11th General Assembly 2014 Papers for use at the 2014 meeting of the General Assembly.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The General Assembly extends the Consensus Model Pilotted by Amathole Presbytery to 31st May 2015; to allow the Committee to present the final report at the 2015 Executive Commission.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The General Assembly appoints the following “Facilitation Team” for the duration of the 2014 General Assembly:

7.1 Drafting Committee: the General Secretary, the Rev. M.A. Taylor (Convener), Miss E. White, Ms K. Mamabolo, Mr I. Wilson and the Rev. A. Nemaukhwe;

7.2 Minute Scrutinisers: the Rev V Mkhungo, Mrs G. Kelly, the Rev. R. Armstrong and Mr. L. Makani;

7.3 Data Projectionist: the Rev. M. Taylor;

7.4 Notices of Motion: Clerk;

7.5 Leave of Absence: Clerk;

7.6 Minute Takers: the Rev. M.E. Mtyhobile and Ms M. Mamabolo;

7.7 Vote of Thanks to hosts: the Rev. R. Armstrong;

7.8 Vote of thanks to retiring Moderator: the Rev. A. Nyoni;

7.9 Press Liaison: General Secretary;

7.10 Records Examiner: Ms. E. White;

7.11 Election Officers: Prof J. Pillay, Ms C. Kasambara, the Rev. M. Taylor, Miss E. White and two youth members from Limpopo;

7.12 Translators: the Rev. M. Tati, and the Rev. M.M. Khetsi.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The General Assembly resolves that the Moderator shall tour the Presbyteries of Mthatha and Zimbabwe during his tenure of office.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

## Adjournment

The Assembly adjourned at 13h35 for lunch, to meet at 14h30 at the Capricorn High School hall. The Rev. C. Judelsohn closed the session with the prayer, and the Moderatorial procession left the church.

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| **FOURTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Sunday 13 July 2014 at 15h12 after lunch, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator called upon the Convener of the Nominations Committee to present the report.

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: (Preliminary Report)

The Rev. Dr. R.Z. Rashe presented the preliminary draft report, and the Clerk moved that

1. The Assembly receives the report

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**CLERK OF ASSEMBLY:**

The Moderator called upon the Clerk of the Assembly to present his report.

The Clerk moved that:

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The General Assembly resolves that the dates for Executive Commission 2015 be set as Tuesday 7th July until Friday 10th July.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly resolves:

i. that all Committee Conveners submit, at the very least, a due diligence report to Executive Commission in 2015;

ii. that all reports to be considered by the Executive Commission in July 2015 be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly by Friday 10th April 2015;

iii. that all Supplementary Reports be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly by the end of May 2015;

iv. that all Papers of Assembly be made available to Commissioners, Presbytery Clerks and Committee Conveners at least 3 weeks before Executive Commission;

v. that all reports be posted on the UPCSA website at least 3 weeks before Executive Commission and that the Assembly encourages everyone to make greater use of the website;

vi. that the Papers, Supplementaries and Proceedings and Decisions of Executive Commission 2015 (Yearbook) be distributed to Ministers and Presbyteries on a CD at the end of the year and that those who do not have access to a computer or the internet can request a hard copy.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly notes the status of the matters concerning Ross and Rainy and Randburg Afrikaanse Presbiteriaanse Kerk.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly notes the challenges concerning the ongoing management of Tiyo Soga House.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly notes the changes to the format for the Papers for the General Assembly and encourages Presbyteries to send comments to the Clerk of Assembly to initiate further improvements that could be made.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly enacts remit i. GA/13/01.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly notes the contents, findings and decisions of the “Report of the Commission to Clermont.”

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Assembly notes the report of the “Pastoral visit to the Rev. Graham Duncan” by the Moderator and General Secretary and gives thanks to almighty God.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

10. The Assembly notes the valedictory report from the previous convener of the Church Design Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY:**

The Moderator called for the report on Changes in the Ministry, which was presented by the Clerk.

The Clerk moved that:

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**OVERTURES AND PETITIONS:**

The Moderator called for the report on Overtures and Petitions, which was presented by the Clerk.

The Clerk moved that:

The General Assembly resolves to deal with the Overtures as follows:

**Overture No 1**

To be dealt with under the Faith and Order Committee report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Overture No. 2**

To be dealt with under the Finance Committee report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Overture No. 3**

To be dealt with under the Church Office report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

The Moderator called for Notices of Motion.

### M1: Notice of Motion

The General Secretary gave notice that:

When the Assembly deals with the General Secretary’s report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move the following:

“The Assembly urges ministers and congregations, who have not sent in their information for the UPCSA Census to do so by the 30th September, 2014.”

### M7: Notice of Motion

The Business Convener gave notice that:

When the General Assembly deals with the Faith and Order report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move that:

1. The third sentence of Par 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order be amended to read as follows:

“Toward the end of each three year period the Minister may, after new discussions with the Session **and Congregation** about the continuance of the arrangements, apply to the Presbytery for approval for a further three year period.”

1. The first sentence of Proposal 2 of the Manual of the Faith and Order Report be amended to read as follows:

“In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session **and Congregation** and to obtain the consent of the presbytery before taking up new secular appointments.”

[Then the paragraphs will be in line with other paragraphs in various paragraphs of the *Manual* that deal with the filling the Vacancy either by a Call or by Appointment, where in both processes the congregation is involved. (See par. 16.35 – 16.40 for the Call and 16.58-16.59).]

The last sentenceof Paragraph 16.127

(a) be amended in a manner that will allow the discussion of the application for credentials where a Minister for genuine reasons cannot be present at a meeting where his application for credential is to be discussed.

Such an amendment will bring uniformity to the entire denomination in dealing with this subject.

### M5: Notice of Motion

The Rev D. Bax gave notice that:

When the Assembly deals with the Church and Society report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move the following proposal:

The Assembly gives thanks to God and to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela for the great courage and integrity that she has shown in investigating corruption in the highest places in the South African Government without fear or favour, despite all the pressures on her to desist and all the criticism and threats that she has had to endure from those in high places.

The Assembly calls on the Government to fund the Public Protector and her staff adequately, so that they can investigate all the many thousands of cases of alleged corruption referred to her instead of being debilitated by severely inadequate funding.

In view of

1. the massive misappropriation, or theft, of funds from the public treasury for the construction of President Jacob Zuma’s palatial home at Nkandla that the press has uncovered and that the investigations of the Public Protector have confirmed and
2. the encouragement that this misappropriation constitutes for the corruption that is otherwise so endemic in the body politic in South Africa,

The Assembly further calls on President Zuma

1. to repay into the public treasury the money that has been misappropriated, or stolen, and
2. to resign his office and step out of the public square.

The Assembly instructs

1. its Press Officer to communicate this statement to the press within 2 hours of its being adopted; and
2. the Clerk of Assembly to convey the statement in letters to the Public Protector and to the President no later than 3 days after the end of the Assembly.

### M3: Notice of Motion

Mr D. Anderson gave notice that:

When the General Assembly deals with the Finance Committee report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move that:

1. The Assembly records appreciation of the services rendered by the Rev. Dr. Alan Maker on the Finance Committee and as a Trustee of the Pension Fund;
2. The Assembly instructs Presbyteries to collect assessments, pension and medical aid funds by the 25th of each month and ensure that the funds are transferred to the Central Office by not later than the last working day of each month;
3. The Assembly supports the proposal regarding the size and composition of the Finance Committee;
4. The Assembly notes the 10-year Presbytery assessment analysis and the 2013 Congregation Assessment report;
5. The Assembly supports the Assessment proposals as set out on page 162 and the continuation of a 2% rebate on normal assessments payable until General Assembly 2016;
6. In terms of submissions made in Stellenbosch in 2012 the General Assembly instructs Associations to submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of their financial year;
7. The Assembly notes the recording of thanks to the Investment Committee and to the C.F.O. and his staff;
8. The Assembly notes the unpaid outstanding CEA loans and that the Finance Committee will follow this up with the various Presbyteries concerned. If no resolution of payment is made via this action within three months the Finance Committee will refer this matter to the Court of Assembly for their intervention;

### M2: Notice of Motion

The Rev. A Nyoni gave notice that:

When the Assembly deals with the Church Committee Report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move that it adopt the following:

Because the responsibilities of the Moderators are too general that the Moderators of General Assembly be given a specific mandate, agreed upon by the General Assembly, for their specific term of office and that the mandate be measureable and assist with the progress of the denomination.

### M6: Notice of Motion

The Rev Brent Russell gave notice that:

When the Assembly deals with the Faith and Order Committee report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move the following:

The current paragraph reads as follows:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal in exceptional circumstances, as a special dispensation where he/she is situated in a remote location that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly. For this he/she must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice of this Church, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness. (See para 10.93.)

I shall move that this be amended to read:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries and according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal as a special dispensation, either

a) in remote locations that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly; or

b) in other locations where the Presbytery deems that the circumstances make such a step appropriate.

In either case the Elder must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice or the Sacraments, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness.

The Convener of the Faith and Order Committee, the Rev Peter Langerman, has approved the amendment.

### M4: Notice of Motion

### The Rev Jeremy Smith gave notice of motion that:

### When the Assembly deals with the Church and Society report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move:

1. that further investigation be made into the nature of HARM Reduction and the possible effects of its implementation in our country; and
2. that should the said cluster share the concern of the Presbytery of Thekwini, it:
3. informs, via the central administrative body of the Church, members of the UPCSA in South Africa of its findings
4. arranges that a public statement is made opposing HARM Reduction.

### M9: Notice of Motion

The Rev D Bax gave notice that:

When the Assembly deals with the Ecumenical report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move that it adopt the following proposal:

In view of

* our Lord’s prayer that all his disciples might be one;
* the undertaking implicit in our name as the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa; and
* the hope that all Reformed Churches in southern Africa may begin to move towards unity,

the General Assembly mandates the General Secretary, as convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to approach the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk through their respective General Secretaries, Dr. Kobus Gerber and Dr. Dawid Kuyler, to ask the two Churches to consider whether or not they deem it appropriate to invite the UPCSA to be represented, even if only by way of observers, on the combined commission discussing union between them, in order

1. that we may offer any relevant insights we may have from our own experience of unification for their process of moving towards unity; and

2. to open the way for discussions about unity between them and the UPCSA, any such unity being discussed subject to all the parties endorsing the Belhar Confession but leaving open whether unity between them and us should, to begin with, take simple or federal or confederal form.

We recognize, however, that the two Churches should place this question on their agendas for consideration only when their negotiating teams agree that the right time has come for it.

I have discussed this proposal with the Convener of the Ecumenical Relationships Committee, Dr Jerry Pillay and he has supported it and encouraged me to propose and move it.

### M8: Notice of Motion

## The Rev M. Muller gave notice that:

## When the Assembly deals with the Church Office Committee report or at another time convenient to the Assembly, I shall move that:

Given the high costs and substantial logistical challenges involved in arranging General Assemblies, General Assembly rules that:

1. all its future meetings be in Johannesburg because of it central and accessible location;
2. the Executive Committee continue to meet in various Presbyteries; and
3. a Committee be appointed with the sole purpose of organizing the General Assembly and Executive Commission.

**NOMINATIONS FROM THE FLOOR FOR MODERATOR DESIGNATE AND THE COURT OF ASSEMBLY/AARP**

The Moderator called for additional nominations for Moderator Designate and the Court of Assembly.

**LISTENING SESSION 1 (High School)**

The Assembly considered the following reports etc. in a listening session:

* General Secretary
* Notice of Motion 1
* Church Associations
* Church and Office
* Notice of motion 8
* Finance Committee
* Overture 2.

The General Secretary moved that:

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M1:**

The General Secretary spoke to the Notice of Motion.

“The Assembly urges ministers and congregations, who have not sent in their information for the UPCSA Census to do so by the 30th September, 2014.”

**CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS:**

The Business Convener raised the concern raised by commissioners on the issue of the Associations report’s being presented at this stage and the strain it would place on the agenda. He urged the commissioners to understand the reasons behind this decision.

After a long discussion on the Associations report, the Moderator ruled that the Convener of Associations go back and fix all the things that he was talking about which were not presented in his report, and that until then nothing could be discussed by the Assembly.

The Clerk moved those proposals that were Transactional, which were proposal 2, 8, 9, 10 from the G.S report and 2 on Associations Committee report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**CHURCH OFFICE COMMITTEE:**

The Rev. Z. Makalima presented the report on behalf of the Convener.

The Clerk of Assembly moved that:

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Clerk of Assembly moved those proposals in the Church Office report that were Transactional, i.e. Main report proposal 2 and supplementary report proposal 4.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Mr Anderson presented the Finance report.

**OVERTURE 2:**

Concerning the assessments that congregations pay to General Assembly.

Bearing in mind that presently:

1. many congregations face critical financial challenges and are barely able to pay their ministers’ stipends, or any other salaries;
2. every congregation owning any fixed property has ongoing maintenance and other needs that require financing;
3. many congregations do not pay the full amount of their assessments;
4. the denomination is increasingly dependent on a diminishing number of contributing churches for its finances,

the Presbytery overtures the Venerable General Assembly

1. to rule that as from the 01 January 2015 the annual assessment for every congregation be structured in terms of the appended proposal (Appendix 1), which is based on the model used by the Dutch Reformed Church in the Western and Southern Cape.
2. to rule that each Presbytery be responsible for collecting all assessment monies and for forwarding these to the Central Office;
3. to instruct the Clerk of the Assembly to see that all congregations and their financial bodies are informed of this ruling and advised to prepare and act accordingly; and
4. to instruct the General Assembly Finance Committee to monitor the diligence of all Presbytery Finance Committees in this regard.”

**OVERTURE 2, APPENDIX 1:**

DRC MODEL FOR CALCULATING ASSESSMENTS

The Dutch Reformed Church, specifically in the Western Cape, approaches the matter of Assessments in the following way:

1. It determines, given the current financial circumstances, what it would cost a congregation, with:
   * 1. a full time minister, properly paid, with Pension, Medical Aid and various other costs being covered;
     2. a place of worship, reasonably maintained, employing a secretary.
2. Their amount for the annual cost to a congregation is R462 000.00. This figure is then the starting point for the assessment calculation. The following table is then used for calculating the amount due in the DRC, Western Cape:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Minder as R462 000,00\* | | **1% van die bedrag** |
| R462 000,01 tot R693 000,00 | R4 620,00 | plus **6%** van dit wat meer as R462 000,00 is |
| R693 000,01 tot R1 155 000,00 | R18 480,00 | plus **9%** van dit wat meer as R693 000,00 is |
| Meer as R1 155 000,00 | R60 060,00 | plus **10%** van dit wat meer as R1 155 000,00 is |

SCALING THE MODEL FOR THE UPCSA

**The First Amount\***

The DRC has approximately 1162 congregations, while the UPCSA has approximately 473. This represents a ratio of 2.46 DRC congregations to every UPCSA congregation. Even then, the DRC budgets are far greater than that of the UPCSA. The 2011 running costs for the UPCSA was approximately R12 500 000.00.

**The Cost to an Average Church in the UPCSA**

Taking a scenario where the church is already owned by a congregation and using minimum stipends and other almost unrealistic figures, the following table represents a very conservative, hypothetical case to arrive at a “first amount” or baseline cost to a congregation. It also acknowledges that some changes to minimums have not been used.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Minister** | **Notes** | **Per Month**  **R** |
| Minister's Stipend | (above min. for 0-5yrs) | 6765.00 |
| Pension |  | 1275.00 |
| Medical Aid | (For a family of 4, conservative estimate) | 4088.00 |
| Car Allowance | To pay for one, including fuel | 4400.00 |
| Housing Allowance | Rental or purchase  Even if a church has a Manse, the other estimated costs still keep the total cost down. | 6000.00 |
| Rates (Water, refuse, electricity) | House or manse | 700.00 |
| Telephone |  | 450.00 |
|  | Sub-total | **23678.00** |
| **Church (assuming existing building already paid for and no secretary)** | | |
| Rates (Water, refuse, electricity) |  | 1000.00 |
| Secretary |  | 0.00 |
| Telephone |  | 450.00 |
| Stationery |  | 250.00 |
|  | Sub-total | **1700.00** |
|  | Monthly Total | **25378.00** |
|  | Minimum running costs/annum | **304536.00** |
|  | Round up to the nearest R10 000 | **310000.00** |

With this in mind, it is proposed that the General Assembly Finance Committee begin with a baseline figure of R310 000.00.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Annual Congregation Income** | | | **Minimum Assessment Due** | **Method of Assessment Calculation** |
| 0 | to | 310 000 |  | 6% of the amount up to R310 000.00 |
| 310 000 | to | 499 999 | 18 600 | + 9% of the amount greater than R310 000.00 |
| 500 000 | to | 699 999 | 35 700 | + 12% of the amount greater than R499 999.00 |
| 700 000 | to | 899 999 | 56 000 | + 15% of the amount greater than R699 999.00 |
| 900 000 | + |  | 78 000 | + 18% of the amount greater than R899 999.00 |

CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD

1. It must be conceded that, while the above model is conservative, our current system completely ignores these very real running costs. For congregations that do not yet have a building or a manse the future is indeed bleak.
2. It is simply no longer viable to impose a standard formula on congregations to calculate assessments whilst ignoring the very real basic running costs congregations have. Many congregations have as a result become inward-focused, maintenance minded, survivalist in their way of thinking and functioning, some even plain dishonest as to how they handle assessments, instead of outward-focused and generous.
3. The argument that a drastic reduction in assessments would result in the Assembly’s no longer being able to function needs to be considered in light of the fact that congregations are not functioning. If the current trend persists, the handful of congregations paying assessments will continue to decrease and eventually stop altogether. Additionally, we have lost sight of the fact that a congregation should function healthily in order to pay assessments. The Assembly and Central Office exist to help and support congregations and Presbyteries, not the other way around.
4. Furthermore, poorer congregations are well able to pay a more reasonable assessment. For example, based on the above model, if a congregation had an annual income of R50 000.00, it would be paying R3 000.00. This is certainly achievable, instead of paying only R300.00 as things stand now! Again, if a congregation had an annual income of R90 000.00, it would be paying R5 400.00. This is not such an unachievable shift from the current amount of R2 400.00 being asked of it.
5. It is time for all congregations to pitch in. The above model radically reduces the assessments that congregations will need to pay, allowing for growth and ministry to take place. But this can work only if there is a concerted effort by all to share the load, thereby creating the possibility that that there may be an increase in assessment income to the Central Office.

ADDITIONAL MOTIVATING FACTORS

(Figures sourced and supplied by the Convener of the Finance Committee of the Presbytery of the Western Cape)

The current assessment formulae have not changed for years. This means that no consideration has been given to what it costs an average congregation to be effective in ministry and economically viable.

1980 1990 2000 2010

Cost of a minister 2 500pm 4 000pm 15000pm 25 000pm

(Stipend, Medical, Pension)

Average other Church costs. 1 000pm 2 000pm 8000pm 15 000pm

(Phone, printing, staff and utilities)

Cost of a house 40 000 80 000 300 000 1 200 000

(Average cost of 3 bedroomed home)

Cost of a vehicle 3 000 12 000 80 000 160 000

(1600 family car)

Cost of fuel 47c /L 1-25/L R4-00/L R9-00/L

The costs therefore have risen from an average of R50 000pm in 1980 to R90 000 in 1990, to R300 000 in 2000, to R540 000, just to have ministry. These amounts do not include the 18%+ amount in paying assessments. While the R2400 assessment for the first R100 000 set decades ago has not been adjusted and should be.

The Clerk of Assembly moved those proposals that were Transactional.

The Moderator called upon the Business Conveners to address the Assembly on the program for the day.

**Local arrangements**

The Moderator’s Chaplain the Rev. M. Cook made announcements regarding local arrangements.

## Adjournment

The Assembly adjourned at 18h36, to meet at 19h00 at the Capricorn High School hall for the Insaka groups. The Rev. S. Loni closed the session with prayer, and the Moderator pronounced the benediction.

## INSAKA GROUPS (1)

The Assembly considered the proposals under the following reports as dealt with in the Insaka Groups:

* General Secretary
* Notice of Motion 1
* Church Associations
* Church and Office
* Notice of Motion 3
* Finance Committee
* Overture 2.

|  |
| --- |
| **FIFTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Monday 14 July 2014 at 08h20, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Devotions**

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook called the Assembly to worship, reading from 1 Chronicles 29:10-13, followed with a prayer.

The Moderator welcomed and introduced the Guest Speaker as Dr. M. Cassidy from African Enterprise. He read the Scriptures from John 17:1.

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook called the Rev Dr E Germiquet to thank Dr. M. Cassidy on behalf of the Assembly.

**DECISION SESSION 1**

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

The Clerk of Assembly moved proposals 2, 8 and 9 from the General Secretary‘s report to be transactional.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Clerk of Assembly moved that:

2. The Assembly requests its committee conveners to send details of their committee meetings and events to the General Secretary for the coordination of the ‘Events Calendar’ by 30th October each year.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly requests:

a) the outgoing General Secretary to draft notes on the envisaged restructuring of the Central Office in order to facilitate a smooth handing over and;

b) the Church Office Committee and the incoming General Secretary to consider the recommendations offered by the current General Secretary for the restructuring of the Central Office.

This was **agreed** by consensus

4. The Assembly instructs the Priorities and Resources Committee to work with the Assembly Committees in attempting to adjust their respective terms of reference to make them more specific, where necessary.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly instructs every congregation to financially support the ministry of its local church and minister, as well as that of the wider UPCSA (through assessments to Presbytery and General Assembly) as part of its covenant, and not intentionally to withhold such contributions for whatever reasons.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly urges

a) the General Secretary to send a draft version of the “Presbytery Tool Kit” to Presbyteries for discussion and comment and thereafter to make it available for distribution by Executive Commission 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

b) Presbyteries to use the information provided in the “Presbytery Tool Kit”, when it becomes available, to help strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of their work.

This was **agreed** by consensus

c) Presbyteries to promote the relevant information from this resource to congregations within their boundaries.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly:

a) condones the decision of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe to delay the implementation of the decision of the 2012 Assembly to establish two Presbyteries in Zimbabwe;

b) affirms the envisaged work of the Presbytery Reformation and Vision Committee to consider the strategy of the life, work and witness of the UPCSA in Zimbabwe; and

c) instructs the General Secretary to monitor the progress and development in this endeavouring partnership with Prof. J. Pillay and the Presbytery Reformation and Vision Committee, and to report to the 2015 Executive Commission.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8.The Assembly instructs the incoming General Secretary to ensure that regular and proper reports accounting for the use of CWM money be given to the CWM as expected to secure further funding for the UPCSA Mission Priorities.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Assembly refers the research on Faith and Culture to the Faith and Order Committee to work on and to report on to the 2015 Executive Commission.

This was **agreed** by consensus

10. The Assembly:

a) Instructs the Chief Financial Officer to circulate the “Moderator’s Expenses Policy” to all Presbytery Clerks, and

b) directs Presbyteries, Congregations and Associations to familiarise themselves with the “Moderator’s Expenses Policy” as approved at the 2013 Executive Commission and reminds them of the need to adhere to this at all times.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly refers paragraph 135-171, the section in this report entitled “A Challenge to the UPCSA”, to the Priorities and Resources Committee and the four Mission Priorities Committees (Mission and Discipleship, Church and Society, Stewardship and Faith and Order) to study, reflect and act on within the UPCSA.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

**Supplementary:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly:

a) agrees that for the sake of the unity of the UPCSA we should not compromise the Basis of the Union at any cost. Going back to adjust the Basis of the Union to the interest of the different groups can be dangerous to the life of the Church and can create larger conflicts in the Church.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

b) instructs the Clerk of Assembly to make the Basis of the Union documents available to Presbyteries and Congregations (as an appendix to the Manual of Faith and Order).

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly strongly calls all members of the UPCSA, its Associations, ministers and elders to uphold the Basis of the Union as their mutual covenant with one another before God and God’s people, to respect and maintain it without prejudice towards any people, and to adjust any other documents in the Church (UPCSA) to its principles.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4) The Assembly

a) acknowledges that the two Groups will continue to work together for a period of three years;

This was **agreed** by consensus.

b) establishes a Working Group with the following terms of reference:

i) It is to organize meeting points for (representatives of) the two groups of the Associations to interact in all possible ways, to help build their relationship towards unity. Such coming together should take place at least every six months, or more often as deemed necessary.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

ii) It is to look at the role and function of the Church Associations and formulate this into a common Constitution using the existing constitutions, without being restricted to them, addressing the issue of uniforms, and other such details pertaining to Associations.

This was **agreed** by the consensus.

iii) It is to facilitate the interaction of the Associations at Presbytery and congregational levels.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

iv) The Working Group is to report every year during this time period to the General Assembly or Executive Commission on the progress being made.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

v) In the third year it is to conduct a final comprehensive review and report to the 2018 General Assembly.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly agrees that the Working Group consist of the Rev. Prof. J. Pillay and the Rev. Rod Botsis as co-conveners, the Moderator, the General Secretary, the Convener of the Associations Committee and 8 further members; the names of whom must be provided by each of the Associations by 30th July 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The General Assembly thanks the mediators for their work and care in this matter.

This was **agreed** upon by consensus.

**M1**

The General Secretary moved:

Assembly instructs

1. Ministers and congregations who have not sent in their information for the UPCSA Census to do so bythe 30th September, 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M2**

The Rev. A. Nyoni moved:

Because the responsibilities of the Moderator’s are too general, Ι move that the Moderators of the General Assembly be given a specific mandate, agreed upon by the General Assembly, for their specific term of office and that the Mandate be measureable and assist with the progress of the denomination.

This Motion was **lost.**

**CHURCH OFFICE:**

The Clerk moved the following proposals:

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly thanks Ms Tshepiso Mokwana for the work she has rendered to the denomination.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly thanks the Rev. Dr. J. Pillay for his most outstanding and visionary leadership as the General Secretary of the UPCSA over the past 6 years. He has been an excellent ambassador for the UPCSA and he has taken the denomination to a new level.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Supplementary:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly appoints the Rev. **Lungile Mpetsheni** as General Secretary of the UPCSA from 1 September 2014, for a period of 5 (five years) with the option of a second term, in accordance with the Manual of Faith and Order.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly

a) instructs the Assembly Office Committee to initiate and complete the search for a new Clerk and to bring recommendations to the 2015 Executive Commission;

b) appoints Mr T Coulter as acting Clerk of Assembly, from 1 January 2015 to 31 July 2015.

c) instructs the Church Office Committee to attend to the details of the contract with Mr T Coulter.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The General Assembly notes that the appointment of a new receptionist at the Central Office will be made without any undue delay.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**OVERTURE 3:**

**3. CONCERNING THE FREQUENCY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COMMISSION MEETINGS:**

The Rev. M. Muller moved:

Bearing in mind that presently:

1. the denomination faces very real and pressing financial demands on many fronts;
2. the current cycle of General Assembly meetings every two years is very costly; and
3. the General Assemblies of some Presbyterian denominations as well as other mainline churches meet less often.

The Presbytery of the Western Cape overtures the Venerable General Assembly to mandate the Priorities and Resources Committee in consultation with the Finance Committee to:

* 1. explore other models currently in use which may be adapted to our context, including with reference to frequency and venue, with a view to creating an economically sustainable future for the UPCSA; and
  2. report their findings with proposals at the Executive Commission of General Assembly.”

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M8:**

Notice of motion 8.

**Fell away,** as it was incorporated in Overture 3.

The Business Convener addressed Assembly on business procedures. The Moderator requested prayer for the decision taken on Associations.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 10h37 for tea, to meet again at Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane at 11h15.

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| **SIXTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Monday 14 July 2014 at 11h21 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator requested the Rev. P. Baxter to pray for the appointment of the new General Secretary.

**LISTENING SESSION**

The Assembly considered the following reports in the listening session:

* Finance
* Pensions (UPCSAPF and PEPF)
* Court of Assembly and AARP

The proposals to receive the reports were **agreed** **on** by consensus.

**EXPLANATION OF THE VOTING PROCESS**

The General Secretary explained how the voting process would take place as contained in the Standing Orders.

The Moderator called for the 1st election for the Moderator Designate. The General Secretary explained the procedure and confirmed the number of commissioners (162).

The Moderator led the council in Prayer.

The General Secretary informed the Assembly that the Rev. M. Thema had withdrawn his name for the position of Moderator Designate.

The Assembly voted.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The Rev H Hans, P Bedeni and M. Nxawe requested leave of absence from the General Assembly from 16 -17 July. Mr Bedeni’s brother had been shot dead at his family home at Fort Beaufort and the funeral was to be held on Saturday 19 July. The Rev. Hans was to conduct a funeral on Saturday 19 July at Bedford.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Moderator informed Assembly that the Rev. Chris Judelsohn’s father was not well, and the Rev Petson Kabala was requested to pray for him.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 13h17 for lunch, to meet again at Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane at 14h30.

|  |
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| **SEVENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Monday 14 July 2014 at 14h34 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

Mr Z. Gebeda opened the session with prayer. The Moderator called the General Secretary to report on the first round of the election of the Moderator Designate.

**ELECTION RESULTS**

The General Secretary reported to Assembly that 162 eligible voters had been counted and 162 ballot forms distributed.

The results were as follows:

* I spoilt ballot had been received
* 4 abstentions had been received
* The Rev. E. Mzinyathi had received 41 votes
* The Rev. R. Munthali had received 44 votes
* The Rev. M. Young had received 72 votes

The General Secretary informed Assembly that the name of the Rev. E. Mzinyathi would now fall away and Assembly would vote on the other two names.

**LISTENING SESSION**

The Assembly considered the following reports in the listening session:

* Ministry committee
* Faith and Order committee
* Confessions

**M6:**

The Rev B Russell spoke to the Motion of which he had given notice, namely:

that paragraph 4.17 of the Manual be amended from reading as follows:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal in exceptional circumstances, as a special dispensation where he/she is situated in a remote location that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly. For this he/she must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice of this Church, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness. (See paragraph 10.93.)

to read as follows:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries and according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal as a special dispensation, either

a) in remote locations that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly; or

b) in other locations where the Presbytery deems that the circumstances make such a step appropriate.

In either case the Elder must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice or the Sacraments, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness.

**M7:**

Τhe Rev S Loni spoke to his Notice of Motion, namely that

a) the third sentence of par 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order be amended to read as follows:

“Toward the end of each three year period the Minister may, after new discussions with the Session and Congregation about the continuance of the arrangements, apply to the Presbytery for approval for a further three year period”; and

b) the first sentence of Proposal 2 of the Manual of the Faith and Order Report be amended to read as follows:

“In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session and Congregation and to obtain the consent of the presbytery before taking up new secular appointments.”

[Then the Paragraphs would be in line with other paragraphs in various paragraphs of the Manual that deal with the filling the vacancy either by a Call or by Appointment; where in both processes the congregation is involved (see 16.35 – 16.40 for the Call and 16.58-16.59).]

c) the last sentenceof paragraph 16.127 be amended in a manner that would allow the discussion of the application for credentials where a Minister for genuine reasons could not be present at a meeting where his application for credentials was to be discussed.

[Such an amendment would bring uniformity to the entire denomination in dealing with this issue.]

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The Rev. V.S. Vellem tendered his apology to Assembly in requesting the right to leave that afternoon. Urgent business that he did not expect required him to be at work the next day. He had disclosed the nature of this business to the Moderator of the General Assembly. Leave of absence was granted.

**LISTENING SESSION**

**CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS:**

Proposals 4, 5, 6 and 7 were **withdrawn** and referred to the special working committee on Associations.

**OVERTURE 1: CONCERNING THE PREACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES**

The Rev MV Tati having been appointed by the Presbytery of Limpopo presented its overture.

**1:**

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are all inspired by God and the Holy Spirit used His servants to pen them. During the reading of the Torah the Israelites used to stand. However, it has been observed in the UPSCA services and in some specific congregations that

1. congregants stand for the Old Testament only;
2. others stand for the Gospels only;
3. others stand for both the Old Testament and New Testament readings;
4. others do neither of the above;
5. during the introit, when the service is commencing, the elders and the minister enter the Church led by the clerk with the Bible and the members stand as the word enters.

The Church gives liberty for difference of opinion on issues that do not affect the substance of faith. This may not affect the faith, but it has liturgical implications that cause the practice to be questioned by many observant members. It is with this in mind that the quest for a resolute position that can easily apply to all our membership should be found.

Since it is one denomination, I overture the Venerable General Assembly to re-evaluate and review the practice and take a stand that will be the standard practice for the whole denomination. The theological basis of the practice should be investigated and then a resolution be found as to whether the denomination continue to practice standing when reading the Scriptures in its liturgy.

The Clerk moved that the Assembly adopt the proposals under the Church Associations report that were transactional.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Announcements**

The General Secretary made intimations on what was to happen before and after supper.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 16h21 for tea, to meet again in the Insaka groups at 17h00.

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| **EIGHTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Monday 14 July 2014 at 17h00, the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**INSAKA SESSION 2**

The Assembly considered the following reports in the Insaka groups**.**

* Ministry
* Faith and order
* Notice of Motion 6
* Notice of Motion 7
* Manual
* Confessions
* Overture 1

**Adjournment**

The Insaka groups adjourned at 18h00 for supper.

**EVENING DEVOTIONS**

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Monday 14 July 2014 at 19h00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator’s chaplain the Rev. P. Neshangwe called Assembly to worship.

Devotions were led by the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches the Rev M Pataki .

The Scripture reading was from Matthew 11: 25-0. The Rev. M. Pataki spoke on “ The identity of Christ”.

The Moderator’s Chaplain the Rev P. Neshangwe led the Assembly in prayer.

The Moderator of General Assembly thanked the Rev. M. Pataki, said grace for supper and pronounced the benediction.

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| **NINTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Tuesday 15 July 2014 at 8h30 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Devotions**

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. P. Neshangwe, called the Assembly to worship. The Moderato’s Chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook, requested the Assembly Commissioners to sit in threes at their tables and to fill in the evaluation forms distributed by Dr M. Cassidy during devotions the previous day as part of the devotions for the day.

The Moderator‘s Chaplain, the Rev P. Neshangwe, read John 17:4-18, led the General Assembly in prayer and reflected on the Scriptures.

The Moderator introduced the worship team to the General Assembly.

**FRATERNAL GREETINGS**

The Moderator called upon the Rev. Keith Griffiths to speak as a representative of the Church Unity Commission, which he did.

The Moderator asked the Rev. G Goyns to pray for Mr P. Bedeni and family on the loss of his brother.

**Announcements**

The Moderator’s Chaplain made announcements and introduced the Minute takers to the Assembly.

**DECISION SESSION 2:**

The Clerk of Assembly proposed the proposals that were transactional: 2,4,5, and 8.

These were **agreed** by consensus.

**MINISTRY**

The Clerk moved:

2. The Assembly notes the list of Students for the ministry for 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly:

a) notes the removal of Mr Mbhele from the roll of students, for the second time and urges the Ministry Committee (Fellowship of Vocation) of the Presbytery in which Mr Mbhele resides to provide pastoral care to him;

b) urges the Assembly Ministry Committee to investigate ways to recover whatever has been spent on Mr Mbhele’s studies; and

c) urges the Assembly Ministry Committee to consider possible procedures that could prevent such an occurrence in future.

As the Council could not reach consensus, the Moderator ruled that all those with blue cards should meet with the Moderator, members of the Ministry Committee, the General Secretary, the Clerk of Assembly and the Assembly Business Convener sometime during the day to discuss the information presented and report back to the Assembly at a later stage.

4. The Assembly notes the list of Probationers for 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly notes the list of Ministers receiving grants in 2014 for Post Ordination Studies.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly notes, with regret, Prof. G Duncan’s refusal to make himself available for an appraisal.

The Assembly **passed** from the matter.

7. The Assembly ratifies the appointment of the Rev. Prof. J.Pillay as Associate Professor in Church History and congratulates him on his appointment.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly gives the Rev. P. Nyawuza permission to seek Secondment to the SANDF.

This was **agreed** by consensus

9. The Assembly seconds the Rev. C. Rautenbach to the Seafarers’ Mission, and places him under the care and discipline of the Presbytery of Thekwini.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

10. The Assembly seconds the Rev. M. Brand to St Luke’s Hospice, and places him under the care and discipline of the Presbytery of the Western Cape.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly notes that Prof. G. Duncan’s Secondment to Pretoria University falls away.

This was **agreed by consensus.**

12. The Assembly grants the Rev. Dr. A. Kasambala a seat on the Presbytery of Thekwini.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

13. The Assembly confirms the admission of the Rev. G. Langeveld into the UPCSA ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

14. The Assembly confirms the admission of the Rev. S. Silver into the UPCSA ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

15. The Assembly confirms the admission of the Rev. K. Sihlahla into the UPCSA ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**SUPPLEMENTARY - MINISTRY**

The Clerk of Assembly moved the proposals that were transactional: 2, 8 and 10.

The Clerk moved:

2. The Assembly notes the list of selected candidates for the ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly provisionally admits the Rev. S.T. Nedohe into the ministry of the UPCSA.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly instructs

a) all Presbyteries to contribute R2, 000 (or the equivalent in kwachas or US dollars) to the Ministry Committee for every candidate they recommend to be invited to the Selection Conference

Assembly was **unable to reach a decision** by consensusat this time.

b) the Presbytery Ministry Committees to be diligent in screening candidates for the ministry before forwarding their applications to the Assembly Ministry Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly seconds the Rev. Barbara–Anne Hoy to the staff of the TEEC and places her under the care and discipline of Highveld Presbytery.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. Assembly seconds the Rev. Prof. Jerry Pillay to the University of Pretoria and places him under the care and discipline of Highveld Presbytery.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly seconds the Rev. Fezeka Jobela to the Correctional Services (S.A.) and places her under the care and discipline of Limpopo Presbytery.

This was **agreed** by consensus

8. The Assembly notes that the Secondment of the Rev. Ann Woodhurst to the UPCSA falls away.

This was **agreed** by consensus

9. The Assembly declines the request by the Rev. S. Zungu to apply for secondment as a Chaplain in the SANDF.

This proposal was **withdrawn.**

10. Assembly notes the withdrawal of Daniel Adams as candidate for the Ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. Assembly places Chantal Riley on leave of absence, this to be reviewed after one year or until such time as she is able to resume her studies as a candidate for ministry

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**FAITH AND ORDER**

The Moderator called for the notices of motion to be dealt with.

**M6**

The Rev. Brent Russell moved that paragraph 4.17 in the *Manual* be amended in the following way:

The current paragraph reads as follows:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal in exceptional circumstances, as a special dispensation where he/she is situated in a remote location that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly. For this he/she must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice of this Church, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness. (See paragraph 10.93.)

The Rev Brent Russell moved that this be amended to read:

4.17 Presbytery may grant a member of the Order of Lay Preachers who is also an ordained Elder authority to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion within its boundaries and according to the forms of service in the Service Book and Ordinal as a special dispensation either

a) in remote locations that cannot easily obtain the services of an ordained minister to dispense the sacraments regularly, or

b) in other locations where the Presbytery deems that the circumstances make such a step appropriate.

In either case the Elder must first have been instructed in the doctrine and practice or the Sacraments, and have satisfied General Assembly’s Committee on the Ministry as to his/her fitness.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M7**

The Rev. S. Loni moved that:

a) the third sentence of paragraph 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order be amended to read as follows:

“Toward the end of each unbroken three year period the Minister may, after new discussions with the Session and Congregation about the continuance of the arrangements, apply to the Presbytery for approval for a further three year period”;

b) the first sentence of Proposal 2 of the Manual of the Faith and Order Report be amended to read as follows:

“In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session and Congregation and to obtain the consent of the presbytery before taking up new secular appointments.”

[Then the paragraphs would be in line with other paragraphs in various paragraphs of the Manual that deal with filling the vacancy either by a Call or by Appointment, so that in both processes the congregations would be involved (see 16.35–16.40 for the Call and 16.58-16.59)]

c) the last sentence of paragraph 16.127 be amended in a manner that will allow the discussion of the application for credentials where a Minister for genuine reasons cannot be present at a meeting where his application for credentials is to be discussed.

**[Such an amendment would bring uniformity to the entire denomination in dealing with this subject.]**

The Assembly adopted the proposals and sent them to the Presbyteries to consider and approve under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**MANUAL**

The Clerk moved:

1. Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly amends paragraph. 16.104 to read:

(a) In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session and Congregation and to obtain the consent of the Presbytery before taking up new secular appointments. The Presbytery must then appoint an assessor to the Session to assist the Session in negotiating the new arrangement with the minister.

(b) Those who have secular employment when these rules come into force are required to report to their Sessions and to seek to obtain the consent of the Presbytery, giving full details. Should the Presbytery not approve, the position must be renegotiated. Where Presbytery agrees to the minister's taking up secular employment, Presbytery appoints an assessor to the Session to oversee the process.

(c) If the minister wishing to take up secular employment has been inducted into the Congregation, then the induction ends on a date that the Presbytery sets. The minister must then be appointed for a specified period under new terms and conditions that the minister, Session and the Congregation mutually agree on. This agreement must stipulate all the emoluments, the terms and conditions of the appointment, including, but not limited to, working hours, leave provisions and related matters. This appointment, including all the terms and conditions of the appointment and the emoluments, must be approved at a special congregational meeting moderated by the assessor appointed by the Presbytery. Presbytery must then approve the appointment and all its terms, conditions, emoluments and other relevant matters.

(d) If the minister wishing to take up secular employment was appointed to the Congregation, that appointment ends on a date set by the Presbytery, if it is not in any case due to end prior to the date on which the secular employment starts. The minister must then be re-appointed for a specified period under new terms and conditions mutually agreed to by the minister and the Congregation. This agreement must stipulate all the emoluments and the terms and conditions of the appointment, including, but not limited to, the working hours, leave provisions and related matters. This new appointment, including the terms and conditions of the appointment and the emoluments, must be approved at a special congregational meeting moderated by the assessor appointed by Presbytery. Presbytery must then approve the appointment and all its terms, conditions, emoluments and other relevant matters.

The Assembly adopted proposal 2 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.104 of the Manual of Faith and Order and sent it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

3. The Assembly amends paragraph. 16.25 to read:

When a pastoral charge becomes vacant or a specific date on which it will become vacant is set, the following steps are taken:

(a) the Presbytery appoints an Interim Moderator/Assessor;

(b) Presbytery stipulates the remuneration to be paid to the Interim Moderator or Assessor as a per kilometre travelling allowance and pulpit supply, provided that the amount for pulpit supply and per kilometre travel may not be lower than that of the Presbytery or General Assembly minimum for pulpit supply and travelling allowances,

(c) the Interim Moderator or Assessor, on the first convenient Sunday, notifies the Congregation of the vacancy or impending vacancy and instructs the Congregation to fill the vacancy as soon as possible;

(d) whenever possible the Interim Moderator or Assessor interviews the outgoing Minister; and

(e) with the outgoing Minister and the Assistant Minister, if there is one, not present, the Interim Moderator or Assessor meets with the Session and then with the Congregation.

The Assembly adopted proposal 3 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.25of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

4. The Assembly amends para.16.47 to read:

Before considering the Call the Presbytery must

(a) approve the emoluments offered;

(b) satisfy itself that the Congregation is not in arrears in the payment of the previous Minister’s stipend and other emoluments;

(c) satisfy itself that the Congregation is not in arrears in the payment of the assessments of the Councils of the Church or, if it is in arrears, that the Congregation has explained the circumstances of its failure to pay its outstanding assessments and that adequate arrangements have been made to the outstanding assessments; and

(d) ascertain whether the incoming Minister has any outstanding loans either from the Church Development Loans Fund (or its successor, if any) or from any Presbytery and, if such loans exist, decide how they are to be handled.

The Assembly adopted Proposal 4 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.47 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

5. The Assembly inserts a new paragraph. 14.18:

**Rescinding a Decision**

(a) Any member of a Council who was present or had registered an apology for the meeting where the decision in question was made, may, in a meeting of that Council, move that the Council rescind a previous decision of that Council. The Council must fully investigate the implications of rescinding the decision. If after such an investigation the Council is reasonably satisfied that no person will suffer prejudice if the decision is rescinded and that the implications of rescinding the decision will not adversely affect any person or party, it may rescind the decision.

(b) Except where a party is or will be prejudiced as a result of a decision of a Council or if a decision of a Council is found to be unlawful or illegal, or made in error, a Council may entertain a motion to rescind a decision only at a subsequent sitting of a Council;

(c) An Executive may not rescind decisions of a full Council, unless the Council grants permission to its own Executive to rescind decisions of the full Council. A Council may rescind decisions of its Executive.

The Assembly adopted proposal 5 regarding a new para. 14.18 of the *Manual of Faith and Order* and sent it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

6. The Assembly inserts a new paragraph. 15.4:

No Council of the Church may pressure an applicant who has made application for review to withdraw his/her application, either by threat or otherwise, prior to the Administrative Review Panel's hearing of the pending application. This rule applies inter alia to any Council whose decision is to be subjected to review.

The Assembly adopted proposal 6 regarding a possible new paragraph. 15.4 of the Manual of Faith and Order to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

7. The Assembly amends paragraph. 17.27 to read:

17.27 At the end of each academic year the Committee reviews the Student’s academic, personal and spiritual progress and approves or else declines to approve the Student’s year. The Committee may also review the Student’s progress at any time during the year. Any sanction by a Court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of para.18.6 counts against the student in this review. The Committee informs the Student of its decision within two weeks of the review.

The Assembly adopted proposal 7 in its amended form and referred it to Presbyteries for their consideration and approval l under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

8. The Assembly amends paragraph.17.39 to read:

a) The Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Ministry Committee, may review the Probationer’s progress at any time during the period of probation and has the authority to remove a Probationer from the roll of Probationers. Any sanction by a Court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of paragraph.18.6 counts against the Probationer in this review. In the event of the Committee's deciding not to issue a Ministry Certificate it advises the Probationer of this and of his/her right to appeal to the General Assembly.

b) When the Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Ministry Committee of the Presbytery that licensed the Probationer, is satisfied that the Probationer has completed his/her academic studies and training as a Probationer and shows adequate ability in Ministry, it issues a Ministry Certificate to the Probationer. The Probationer may now receive a Call or Appointment. Any sanction by a court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of para.18.6 counts against the Probationer in this review. In the event of the Committee's decision not to issue a Ministry Certificate it advises the Probationer of this and of his/her right to appeal to the General Assembly.

The Assembly adopted Proposal 8 regarding amendments to paragraph. 17.39 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

9. The Assembly amends para.12.50 (d) (ii) as follows:

The Assembly deals with proposals which, if adopted, would change the Constitution of this Church or its laws respecting doctrine, discipline, government or worship, in accordance with the following procedures….

(d) In reporting back the Presbyteries are to state clearly whether they approve of, or disapprove of, each proposal. They may also propose amendments to the proposals. A Presbytery that proposes an amendment or amendments to any proposal must make clear with regard to every amendment it proposes which of the following applies:

(i) the Presbytery approves the proposal as a whole even if Assembly does not accept that particular amendment;

(ii) the Presbytery disapproves a particular item in, or part of, the proposal, but approves the rest of it;

(iii) the Presbytery regards that particular amendment as of such importance that it disapproves of the whole proposal if Assembly does not accept the amendment.

A Presbytery may not abuse option (iii): where its real sentiments are in accordance with (i) or (ii), it may not resort to purporting (iii), in order to try to compel acceptance of the amendment.

Moreover if a Presbytery does disapprove of the whole proposal unless it is amended and proposes more than one amendment, it specifies to which amendment or amendments the condition applies.

If a report is not clear, the Clerk of Assembly is authorised to obtain clarification of its meaning.

If the proposal originated with any General Assembly Committee or Commission, the Clerk informs the Convener of the Committee or Commission of each Presbytery's return and sends its Convener a copy.

The Assembly adopted proposal 9 regarding amendments to para. 12.50 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**CONFESSIONS**

The Clerk moved:

2. The Assembly enacts the amendments to the Confession of Faith set out in Appendix A to the Report that the Executive Commission adopted and remitted to Presbyteries in remit EC/11/03 in 2013.

This proposal **fell away** as already dealt with under the Clerk’s report.

* 1. The Assembly enacts the amendments to the Confession of Faith proposed in Appendix B to the Report.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

4. The Assembly instructs the webmaster to replace the revised version of the UPCSA Confession of Faith presently on the UPCSA web site with the 2014 revised version, including all the amendments that the Assembly has enacted this year.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

5. The Assembly instructs the Translation Task Teams to incorporate into their translations of the Confession of Faith all the amendments that the Assembly has now enacted.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

6. The Assembly, through the General Secretary of the UPCSA, thanks the General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches and everyone else he involved in examining the Confession.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

7. The Assembly approves the replacement of the present introduction to, and English translation of, the Heidelberg Catechism on the UPCSA website with the introduction in Appendix C and the translation cited therein.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

8. The Assembly

a) approves the placing of the introduction to, and the English translation of, the Leuenberg Agreement in Appendix D in the section on “Other Confessional Documents” on the UPCSA website; and

b) refers the issue of what steps we should initiate in southern Africa in the light of the Agreement to the Ecumenical Relationships Committee.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

9. The Assembly, in the light of the arguments in Appendix E to the Report:

a) adopts the amended English translation of the Nicene Creed in Appendix F as the standard translation for English-speaking congregations in the UPCSA;

b) adopts the Afrikaans translation of the Nicene Creed in Appendix G as the standard translation for Afrikaans-speaking congregations in the UPCSA;

c) adopts the isiXhosa translation of the Nicene Creed in Appendix H as the standard translation for isiXhosa-speaking congregations in the UPCSA;

d) instructs the webmaster to place these three versions of the Nicene Creed on the website with a note stating that the Assembly has adopted them as the standard translations for use in the UPCSA; and

e) instructs the Nominations Committee to nominate competent translators to make translations of the Nicene Creed into the other languages used in the UPCSA along the lines of the above translations and in light of the material in the Report (including the material in the relevant endnotes) and submit their translations to the Clerk for inclusion on the website.

This was **agreed** by consen­sus.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Assembly adjourned at 11h09 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery at 11h40.

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| **TENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Tuesday 15 July 2014 at 11H40 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Clerk of the General Assembly made announcements.

**Leave of absence**

The Clerk presented a request that the General Assembly excuse Mr M. Jafta a commissioner from the Western Cape, who needed to see a family member in Johannesburg who had taken ill and was in a critical state.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Vote of thanks**

The Moderator called the Rev. A. Nyoni to pass the vote of thanks to the Immediate retiring Moderator.

**LISTENING SESSION 3**

The Assembly considered and received the following reports in a listening session:

* Nominations committee (second draft)
* Church and Society
* The changes where “differently able people” be changed to “people with disabilities”
* Tiyo Soga to change to J.H Soga

**M4:**

The Rev. J. Smith presented his Notice of Motion:

1. That further investigations be made into the nature of HARM reduction and the possible effects of its implementation in our society;
2. That should the said cluster share the concern of the Presbytery of Thekwini, it

1. inform via the central administrative body of the church members of the UPCSA in

South Africa of its findings

2. arrange that a public statement is made opposing HARM Reduction.

**M5:**

The Rev D Bax presented his Notice of Motion:

The Assembly gives thanks to God and to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela for the great courage and integrity that she has shown in investigating corruption in the highest places in the South African Government without fear or favour, despite all the pressures on her to desist and all the criticism and threats that she has had to endure from those in high places.

The Assembly calls on the Government to fund the Public Protector and her staff adequately, so that they can investigate all the many thousands of cases of alleged corruption referred to her instead of being debilitated by severely inadequate funding.

In view of

* + 1. the massive misappropriation, or theft, of funds from the public treasury for the construction of President Jacob Zuma’s palatial home at Nkandla that the press has uncovered and that the investigations of the Public Protector have confirmed and
    2. the encouragement that this misappropriation constitutes for the corruption that is otherwise so endemic in the body politic in South Africa,

the Assembly further calls on President Zuma

* + - 1. to repay into the public treasury the money that has been misappropriated, or stolen, and
      2. to resign his office and step out of the public square.

The Assembly instructs

* + - * 1. its Press Officer to communicate this statement to the press within 2 hours of its being adopted; and
        2. the Clerk of Assembly to convey the statement in letters to the Public Protector and to the President no later than 3 days after the end of the Assembly.

**LISTENING SESSION 3(continued)**

The Assembly considered and received the following reports in a listening session:

* Mission and discipleship
* Stewardship

The proposals to receive the reports were agreed by consensus.

**ELECTIONS OF THE MODERATOR DESIGNATE AND THE COURT OF ASSEMBLY (second ballot)**

**The explanation of the voting process for the Moderator designate and the Court of the Assembly/AARP**

The General Secretary explained how the voting process would take place as contained in the Standing Orders.

The Moderator called for the second election. The General Secretary explained the procedure and confirmed the number of commissioners present. The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer. The voting took place.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 13h36 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery at 14h30. The Rev D.C Batchelor closed the session with prayer.

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| **TENTH SESSION ( continued**) |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Tuesday 15 July 2014 at 14H49 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**INSPIRITIONAL INPUT ON MISSIONAL CONGREGATIONS**

The Ministry Secretary the Rev E Germiquet called upon the following to speak to the Assembly, which they did:

The Rev. Prof. Nelus Niemandt from the DRC

The Rev. Thando Mpambani from UPCSA

Mr Jason Germiquet

**FRATERNAL GREETINGS**

Dr. Doug Tilton

Dr. Nelus Niemandt

**LISTENING SESSION (CONTINUED)**

The Moderator of General Assembly announced the second election’s results for the Moderator Designate and the Court of the Assembly/AARP**.** The results were as follows:

**MODERATOR DESIGNATE**

The Rev. Dr R. Munthali had been elected Moderator Designate.

The Moderator of General Assembly announced that the Rev. Dr Munthali would be given an opportunity to address Assembly on Friday.

**COURT OF THE ASSEMBLY/AARP:**

The following Ministers had been elected:

The Rev. P. Baxter

The Rev. V.Mabo

The Rev. Dr M. Masango

The Rev. Dr V.Vellem

The Rev. C Leeuw

The Rev. Marchinkowski

The following elders had been elected:

Mr Gelese

Mr Booysens

Mr Mbandazayo

Mr Havenga

Mr Lubanga

Mr Fourie

**Announcements**

The Business Convener made the announcements.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 16H12 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery at 16H30 for the Insaka session. The Rev. D.C. Batchelor closed the session with prayer.

**INSAKA SESSION**

The Assembly considered the following reports in the INSAKA groups**.**

* Nominations committee (second draft)
* Church and Society
* Mission and discipleship
* Stewardship.

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| **ELEVENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Tuesday 15 July 2014 at 19H00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator commented on how the session would proceed and led Assembly in prayer

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Decision Session (continued)**

**FINANCE**

2. The General Assembly approves

1. the audited Financial Statements of the UPCSA for the 18 months to June 2013 with concern about the qualifications;
2. the audited financial statements of the Sedibeng Trust for the year ended 31st December 2013; and
3. the appointment of RSM Betty and Dickson as auditors for the 2014/2015 financial year.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3.The General Assembly notes

(i) the unaudited Financial Statements for the 6 months to 31st December 2013;

(ii) the report of the convener of the audit committee; and

1. the report on unallocated deposits and communicates this to Presbyteries one last time.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The General Assembly instructs all Presbyteries at their next presbytery to meeting follow up on Title deeds or permission to occupy, and to report to the CFO on progress by 31st December 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The General Assembly instructs Presbyteries to recoup outstanding CEA loans and to report to CFO on progress by 31 October 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The General Assembly notes that the RB Hagart Trust fund is still available to retired ministers to assist where possible with unusual medical expenses.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The General Assembly approves the increase in minimum assessments to R1200 per annum with the equivalent in US Dollars or Zambian Kwachas.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The General Assembly approves the implementation of the invoice system proposed in the report on assessments.

This was **agreed** by consensus

9.The General Assembly instructs

a) Presbyteries to follow up on non-contributing congregations;

b) Ministers, Treasurers or Session Clerks of non-contributing congregations to provide a written explanation for their lack of contribution to the Clerk of their Presbytery before 30 November 2014; and

c) the Clerks of Presbyteries to forward this information to the CFO for inclusion in the Finance report to the Executive Commission in 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus

**Supplementary**

**FINANCE**

2. The Assembly approves the members of the board of Guild Cottage as presented: Trish Heslop, Director; Pippa Barnes, Chairperson; Douglas Hendry, Treasurer; Nomachula Lupuwana, Secretary; Mlungisi Mahlangu, Legal advisor; George Suliali; Karen Webb.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly notes the proposed changes to be made to the constitution of Guild Cottage and authorises the Finance Committee of General Assembly to approve the new constitution as amended.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly authorises a special committee made up of members from the Church Office Committee, the Finance Committee and General Secretary to appoint the new Clerk of Assembly by the 31st December 2014.

This proposal **fell away**, as it had been dealt with under the Church Office Committee.

5. The Assembly instructs the Treasurers and Committees of the Associations to submit their latest available Financial Statements to the Finance Committee of General Assembly by 31st December 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus

**M3**

Mr D Anderson spoke to his Notice of Motion:

1) The Assembly record appreciation of the services rendered by the Rev. Dr Alan Maker on the Finance Committee and as a Trustee of the Pension Fund.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2) The Assembly instructs

a) congregations to pay pension and medical aid funds by the 25th of each month;

b) the CFO to inform Presbytery Treasurers and Clerks regularly regarding what payments have been made; and

c) Presbyteries to ascertain what payments have been made and follow up on these at every meeting, and take the appropriate action where there is non-compliance.

This was **agreed** by consensus

3) The Assembly supports the proposal regarding the size and composition of the Finance Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4) The Assembly notes the 10 year Presbytery assessment analysis and the 2013 Congregation Assessment report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5) The Assembly supports the Assessment proposals as set out on page 162 of the *Papers* and the continuation of a 2% rebate on normal assessments payable until General Assembly 2016.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6) In terms of submissions made in Stellenbosch in 2012, the General Assembly instructs Associations to submit annual audited financial statements within 4 months of the end of their financial year .

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7) The Assembly records and expresses its thanks to the Investment Committee and to the C.F.O. and his staff.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8) The Assembly notes:

a) the unpaid outstanding CEA loans and that the Finance Committee will follow this up with the various Presbyteries concerned;

b) that if no resolution of payment is made via this action within three months, the Finance Committee will refer this matter to the Court of Presbytery for its intervention.

**This proposal fell away as it was covered under proposal 5 in the main report.**

**OVERTURE 2:**

2. CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENTS THAT CONGREGATIONS PAY TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Bearing in mind that presently:

a) many congregations face critical financial challenges and are barely able to pay their ministers’ stipends, or any other salaries;

b) every congregation owning any fixed property has ongoing maintenance and other needs that require financing;

c) many congregations do not pay the full amount of their assessments;

d) the denomination is increasingly dependent on a diminishing number of contributing churches for its finances,

The Presbytery overtures the Venerable General Assembly:

1) to rule that as from the 01 January 2015 the annual assessment for every congregation be structured in terms of the appended proposal (see Appendix 1), which is based on the model used by the Dutch Reformed Church in the Western & Southern Cape.

2) to rule that each Presbytery be responsible to collect all assessment monies and to forward these to the Central Office;

3) to instruct the Clerk of the Assembly to see that all congregations and their financial bodies are informed of this ruling and advised to prepare and act accordingly; and

4) to instruct the General Assembly Finance Committee to monitor the diligence of all Presbytery Finance Committees in this regard.

**AMENDMENT**

The Assembly notes this model and refers this Overture to the Finance Committee for serious further investigation in consultation with the Presbytery of the Western Cape (the Rev. M. Muller), noting the Assembly’s desire to achieve assessment relief and greater levels of contribution, and to report to the Executive Commission in 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Moderator called on the Zambian and Zimbabwean commissioners, who shared stories from Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Evening devotions**

The Moderator called the Rev. G. Goyns to lead devotions. She called the Assembly to worship, reading from Psalm 148:1-13, read Genesis 3: 6-10, and led the Assembly in prayer.

The Moderator pronounced the benediction.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 21h00 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery on Wednesday 16 July at 08h30.

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| **TWELFTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Wednesday 16th July 2014 at 8h33 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The Moderator called on the Rev. G. Msiska to lead the Assembly in devotions. The Rev. G Msiska called the Assembly to worship, reading from Psalm 166. He read from Exodus 3:14 -15 and John17: 20-26.

The Moderator reminded Assembly that we were here to do God’s business and not our own.

**DECISION MAKING SESSION 3**

**CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

The Moderator called for the presentation of notices of motion.

**M4:**

The Rev. J. Smith spoke to his Notice of Motion in the following amended form:

The Assembly instructs

1. the Church and Society Committee to conduct an investigation of HARM Reduction and the possible effects of its implementation;
2. to report its findings to the Executive Commission in 2015 for dissemination to Presbyteries; and

c) If the investigation concludes that the UPCSA should oppose HARM Reduction, instructs the General Secretary to make a public statement to this effect.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M5:** **Church and Society**

Τhe Rev. D. Bax spoke to his Notice of Motion.

The Assembly gives thanks to God and to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela for the great courage and integrity that she has shown in investigating corruption in the highest places in the South African Government without fear or favour, despite all the pressures on her to desist and all the criticism and threats that she has had to endure from those in high places.

The Assembly calls on the Government to fund the Public Protector and her staff adequately, so that they can investigate all the many thousandsof cases of alleged corruption referred to her instead of being debilitated by severely inadequate funding.

This was **agreed** by consensus

In view of

1. the massive misappropriation of funds from the public treasury for the construction of President Jacob Zima’s palatial home at Nkandla that the press has uncovered and that the investigations of the public protector have confirmed;

2. the encouragement that this misappropriation constitutes for the corruption that is otherwise so endemic in the body politic in South Africa,

the Assembly further calls on President Zuma

1. to repay into the public treasury the money that has been misappropriated, or stolen, and

2. to resign his office and step out of the public square.

The Assembly instructs

1. its press officer to communicate this statement to the press within 2 hours of its being adopted; and

2. the General Secretary to convey the statement in letters to the Public Protector and to the president no later than 3 days after the end of the Assembly.

As the Assembly could not reach consensus at the time the rest of the motion was deferred for later consideration.

**CHURCH AND SOCIETY:**

**Supplementary:**

1) Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2) The Assembly notes the progress on workshops to be held.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3) The Assembly

a) notes with disappointment and concern that the Pimville house issue is still pending;

b) instructs the Church and Society Committee to resolve this as a matter of urgency, enforcing the legal decisions, even if this requires seeking alternative legal counsel; and

c) encourages the Committee in consultation with the Finance Committee and the Presbytery of Egoli to consider the best use of the property

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Additional proposals from Insaka groups**

4) The Assembly

a) notes with sadness the inadequate range of engagement of the Church and Society Committee in addressing major societal issues, and instructs the Committee to engage with the social ills that abound in Southern Africa;

b) invites Presbyteries and congregations to submit issues that need to be considered to the Church Society Committee to it; and

c) instructs the Church and Society Committee to formulate opinions and make statements on pressing social and economic issues in liaison with the General Secretary, in order to restore the prophetic voice of the denomination.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5) The Assembly instructs the Church and Society Committee to undertake research into the needs of people living with disabilities in the denomination and to make recommendations to provide increasing care for them and awareness of their needs.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6) The Assembly encourages the Church and Society Committee in conjunction with the JH Soga Synod to expedite the poverty summit.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7) The Assembly condemns the on-going consideration by the government of South Africa to decriminalise or legalise prostitution in view of the severe consequences to society, including the spread of HIV and Aids, the link to human trafficking and the damage to the fabric of the family.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8) The Assembly grieves the on-going loss of life through the increasing number of abortions in South Africa, which cause physical, emotional and spiritual harm to humankind, and implores the government to act on this as a matter of urgency.

This was **agreed** by consensus

9) The Assembly

a) condemns the recent decision of the leaders of the Africa Union to grant themselves immunity from prosecution for genocide or crimes against humanity whilst in office; and

b) instructs the General Secretary to convey this decision to the governments of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

This was **agreed** by consensus

10) The Assembly instructs the Church and Society Committee to consider ways of providing care for orphans, vulnerable children, widows, and people infected and affected by HIV and Aids.

This was **agreed** by consensus

11) The Assembly

a) notes with thanks the new Gauteng legislature’s attempt to correct the untenable e-Tolls collection system and encourages the government to provide a workable solution that is more equitable and to end the injustice to the disadvantaged caused by this;

b) encourages the General Secretary and Church and Society Committee to continue to work with other churches in being a prophetic voice for the poor on this matter.

This was **agreed** by consensus

**LISTENING SESSION 4**

The Assembly heard the following reports in a listening session.

Ecumenical Relationships

Notice of motion 8

Notice of motion 9

The proposal to receive the Ecumenical Relationships report was **agreed** by consensus.

**Adjournment**

* The Assembly adjourned at 10H37 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery to meet again at 11h00.

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| **THIRTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Wednesday 16th July 2014 at 11h09 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

The General Secretary welcomed the General Secretary of the WWC, the Rev. Dr. Olav Tviet, and invited him to address Assembly on the theme “The Church Jesus Christ Prayed For”, which he did.

**FRATERNAL DELEGATES (ORDER OF THE DAY)**

The Moderator received the fraternal delegates.

The General Secretary introduced the following delegates to Assembly:

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| **Fraternal Delegate** | **Title** | **Church/Institution** |
| Τhe Rev. Arends | General Secretary  [monalisa@uccsa.co.za](mailto:monalisa@uccsa.co.za)  [gensec@uccsa.co.za](mailto:gensec@uccsa.co.za) | UCCSA |
| The Rev. Keith Griffiths | General Secretary  Keith Griffiths [kgriffs@mweb.co.za](mailto:kgriffs@mweb.co.za) | Church Unity Commission |
| Ds. Dr. K Gerber  Prof Nelus Niemandt | General Secretary  [KobusG@ngkerk.org.za](mailto:KobusG@ngkerk.org.za) | Dutch Reformed Church |
| Stiaan van der Merwe | Executive Director – [stiaan@safcei.org.za](mailto:stiaan@safcei.org.za) | SAFCEI |
| The Rev Douglas Tilton | [tilton@igc.org](mailto:tilton@igc.org)  082 879 0520 | PC(USA( |
| Dr Michael Cassidy | [drees@ae.org.za](mailto:drees@ae.org.za) | African Enterprise and Creare Training Institute Bloemfontein |
| The Rev Dr Leepo Modise | [modiseleepo@yahoo.com](mailto:modiseleepo@yahoo.com) | URCSA |
| The Rev Archibald Speirs |  | Church of Scotland |
| The Rev. Dr. Olav Tviet | General Secretary | WCC |

The delegates addressed the Assembly.

The Moderator thanked all the delegates and presented them with a token of appreciation.

The Moderator called on the Clerk of Assembly to make the announcements.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 12h56 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery, to meet again at 17h00 for INSAKA groups.

The Moderator closed the session in prayer.

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| **FOURTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Wednesday 16th July 2014 at 17H00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**INSAKA**

The Assembly considered the following reports in the INSAKA groups**.**

Priorities and Resources

Ecumenical Relationships

Notice of motion 9

Notice of motion 8.

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| **FIFTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Thursday 17th July 2014 at 08h32 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Devotions**

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook called the Assembly to worship. She read from John 17:6-18 and led the General Assembly in prayer and reflected on the Scriptures.

**Leave of absence**

The Clerk of assembly presented requests for leave of absence from the following:

Commissioner S.H Xaso from Amatola for leave of absence from the end of business that day. He had received news that his daughter had been admitted in hospital the previous day. Mr S.H Xaso would be driving with Mrs Pona to the Eastern Cape.

The Rev. S .Ncapayi, Elders T Mhauli, I Mateza and N Tonjeni, all commissioners from the Central Cape Presbytery for Friday because of the distance they had to travel by car. They would be leaving at 5h30 on Friday morning. Leave of absence was granted.

**DECISION SESSION 4**

The Clerk of Assembly proposed the transactional proposals: 2,4,5, and 9.

These were **agreed** by consensus.

**MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly

(a) celebrates the fruitful “Inspire” Conference held from 9 to 11 September 2013;

(b) expresses its appreciation to Dr. Marius Nel who spoke at the conference; and

(c) instructs the M&D Committee to plan a second “Inspire” Conference in 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly

(a) applauds the fact that the M&D Committee is studying the “Fresh Expressions” initiative of the Church of England (UK) and becoming involved in its ecumenical structures;

(b) instructs the committee to investigate the Mission Shaped Ministry apprenticeship offered by the Universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria for use in the UPCSA and report to the Executive Commission in 2015;

(c) encourages the committee to present new models of how “congregations” might be shaped in the future to the Executive Commission in 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus

4. The Assembly

(a) celebrates the fact that R 900 000 of the UPCSA’s assessment income is returned to congregations in grants; and

(b) encourages the committee to continue to explore ways of how assessment income can be used to grow the UPCSA.

This was **agreed** by consensus

5. The Assembly thanks those who have donated resources to the M&D Committee for use in the Church and encourages its ministers and members to use the website.

This was **agreed** by consensus

6. The Assembly

(a) celebrates the launch of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries;

(b) calls on all lay members of the UPCSA involved in supportive ministries to join the OSLM by applying to their Sessions from 1st January 2015;

(c) encourages all Sessions to seek out lay persons who may benefit from inclusion in the OSLM and to assist them to join; and

(d) instructs Sessions to forward the applications they approve to the Mission and Discipleship Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly, noting that the decision of its Executive Commission (Decision 10 of Mission and Discipleship Report) has not been carried out, instructs the Church Office Committee to proceed to the appointment of a part-time Co-ordinator for the OSLM without any further delay;

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly instructs the Church Office Committee to clear out unusable resources in the resource centre in conjunction with other conveners and to provide a computer terminal with internet access and a printer for the use of ministers and members of the OSLM who need to find resources on the internet, with funding to be budgeted for by the Mission and Discipleship Committee for this and future upgrades as required.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Assembly

(a) celebrates the positive response of congregations to the committee’s focus on the International Sailors’ Society;

(b) notes the generally low level of engagement of congregations with missionary organisations; and

(c) commends the work of African Enterprise to congregations and members of the UPCSA, encouraging them to support this organisation with prayer, service and financial support.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**SUPPLEMENTARY - MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP**

The Clerk of Assembly proposed transactional proposals 3, 6 and 7.

The Assembly **agreed** by consensus.

1. The Assembly receives the Supplementary report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly resolves

(a) to designate the month of October “Mission month” for congregations within the UPCSA;

(b) that the Mission and Discipleship Committee should construct a series of Sermon outlines that may be used by preachers during “Mission month” and distribute these to all ministers and Session Clerks of congregations of the Church;

(c) that the Mission and Discipleship Committee should make additional training, small group study material and other resources available for use during mission month.

This was a**greed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly notes the information on mission consultations (section 2 of the supplementary report) contained in the report.

This was a**greed** by consensus

4. The Assembly

(a) encourages all congregations of the UPCSA to explore the “National Congregational Life Survey” as a tool that may be used to consider the life of individual congregations;

(b) instructs the committee to provide all congregations of the UPCSA with information about the NCLS by 15th August 2014; and

(c) urges the Mission and Discipleship Committee to consider the translation of this tool into a few vernacular languages.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly

(a) adopts the changes to the Manual outlined in Appendix 1 to this supplementary report, as amended, and refers these to the Faith and Order committee for inclusion in the Manual of Faith and Order;

This was **agreed** by consensus

(b) instructs the Faith and Order Committee in consultation with the Mission and Discipleship Committee to incorporate the current section 12 of Chapter 16 on Lay Preachers.

This was **agreed** by consensus

(c) forwards Proposal 5 of the Mission and Discipleship Supplementary Report to the Presbyteries.

(This proposal **fell away**)

6. The Assembly notes the outline of the Foundations course for members of the Order of Supportive Lay Ministries in section 5 of this report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly draws to the attention of congregations the resources, Just walk across the Room and the Volunteer Revolution as outlined by the committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly

a) sets the minimum stipends, monthly travel allowances and pulpit supply fees for Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa as outlined in section 7 of the supplementary report, except that it changes changing the travel allowance to R5227 for South Africa;

b) urges the Assembly and Presbytery Finance Committees to consider increasing the per kilometre travel rate; and

c) urges the Mission and Discipleship Committee to include years of experience to develop a minimum stipend scale for Zambia from 2015 onwards.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9) The Assembly urges the Committee to consider the difference between urban and rural ministry with regard to travel and the difference this makes to travel expenses and necessary allowances.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**FAITH AND ORDER**

**Confessions**

10. The Assembly, in response to the English Language Liturgical Commission's invitation to comment on its work,

a) sends the section on the Nicene Creed in the main part of the Report, Appendices E and F and decision 9 above to the Secretary of the ELLC; and

b) requests the ELLC to respond with its reaction and comment.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly

a) approves the material in Appendix I for instruction of candidates for Believers' Baptism and the Public Profession of Faith; and

b) commends it to the attention of all Ministers and others who instruct such candidates, for their use and comment (comments to be sent to the convener of the Task Team by the end of February 2015).

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**SERVICE BOOK**

The Clerk of Assembly proposed the transactional proposals 2,3,4,13 and 14.

These were **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly

(a) reminds all Ministers of the availability of the three UPCSA documents on baptism, *The Meaning and Challenge of Baptism*, *10 Questions about Baptism*, and *The Case for Infant Baptism*;

(b) emphasizes the need for all parents who bring their children for baptism, as well as believers who come for baptism, to be instructed in the significance and implications of baptism;

c) urges that one or other of the first of these two documents be used in this instruction, either in printed form or else by oral instruction on the basis of its contents;

d) instructs all Ministers to see to it that all the Elders and leaders in their congregations receive copies of at least one of the first two of these documents to read (or to have read to them) and that their Sessions discuss its contents;

e) instructs the Assembly Office to see to it that *10 Questions about Baptism* be translated into the various South African, Zambian and Zimbabwean languages used in our Church, and that all the translations be placed on the website; and

f) urges that *The Case for Infant Baptism* be made available to members who are confused about the validity of infant Baptism and are literate in English.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly endorses

a) the action of the SBTT in sending these documents and chapter 3 of the Manual to the Doctrine Committee of the Church Unity Commission for it to examine and, if it approves them, send copies with its commendation to all other member Churches of the CUC for them to adapt and use or implement as they see fit; and.

b) the covering letter to the CUC in Appendix A.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly reminds Ministers that

a) in accordance with the *Manual*, par. 3.19 and 20, services of thanksgiving and prayer may be held, either in church or at home, when parents fail to meet the requirements for their children to be baptized or wish their children to be baptized only later; but

b) “dedication” services for children are strictly contrary to the practice and discipline of the UPCSA, and Ministers who conduct such services are liable to discipline.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly

a) approves the Order for the Public Profession of Faith (“Confirmation”) in Appendix B for use and comment, comments to be sent to the convener by 1 February 2015; and

b) instructs the webmaster to place the Order on the UPCSA website.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly conforms the Promise in the adopted Order for Believers' Baptism to that in the Order for the Public Profession of Faith in Appendix B.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly amends the Directions for the Administration of Baptism and the Public Profession of Faith in the way proposed in the body of the Report and set out in Appendix C below.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly

a) rescinds the instruction of the Executive Commission in 2013 that the SBTT prepare a new certificate for the baptism of believers;

b) approves the form of the CUC Certificate for Baptism in Appendix D for use with the baptism of believers; and

c) instructs the webmaster to place it on the website.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Assembly

a) adopts the form of Certificate for the Public Profession of Faith in Appendix E; and

b) instructs the webmaster to place it on the website.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

10. The Assembly

a) amends the adopted “Directions for the Celebration of Holy Communion” to the revised version in Appendix F;

b) instructs the webmaster to place the amended Directions on the website; and

c) draws the attention of all Ministers and all who are licensed to administer the sacraments to the amended Directions.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly

a) approves the Order for a Funeral or Memorial Service in Appendix G below for use and comment in our Church;

b) instructs the webmaster to place it on the website.

c) draws the attention of all ministers to this document

This was **agreed** by consensus

12. The Assembly

a) approves the amended Directions for the Conduct of a Funeral or Memorial Service in Appendix H below for implementation in our Church and comment;

b) instructs the webmaster to place the amended Directions on the website; and

c) draws the attention of all Ministers to the amended Directions.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

13. The Assembly

a) draws the attention of all Ministers and other worship leaders who need Orders in Afrikaans to the site specified in the body of the report; and

b) requests all Ministers (and others) who have translated any adopted UPCSA Orders of worship into any vernacular languages in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe to inform the convener of the Service Book Team of this, so that a record of the translated Orders can be kept and they can be made available in a similar way.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

14. The Assembly

a) commends to all UPCSA Ministers and preachers the *Word and Worship* series and its Afrikaans equivalent, *Woord en Fees,* as resources for preaching and worship;

b) thanks all Ministers who have continued to work for, and contribute to, this project; and

c) instructs the Clerk to write to Ekklesia on its behalf to express the thanks and appreciation of the UPCSA and its Ministers and lay preachers for all the time and work it continues to devote to the project;

d) instructs the Clerk also to write and express thanks to the printers, Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, for sponsoring the first edition of Word and Worship and for keeping the price of the two subsequent editions low*.*

This was **agreed** by consensus*.*

**Supplementary–SERVICE BOOK**

The Clerk moved proposal 11 as transactional.

This was **agreed** by consensus**.**

2. The Assembly

a) notes and approves the list of contents in the Report that is planned for the Service Book and Ordinal; and

b) instructs the webmaster to place the list of contents with the Orders of Worship on the UPCSA website.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly sends the Statement on Sexism and Language to all Ministers, Sessions and worship leaders for discussion and comment, with comments to be sent to the convener of the Service Book Task Team by 28 February 2015 at the latest.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly instructs Presbyteries:

a) to distribute and discuss the Statement on Sexism and Language and

b) to send comments to the convener of the Service Book Task Team by 28 February 2015 at the latest.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly sends the Statement on Sexism and Language to the Executives of the UPCSA Men’s and Women’s Associations

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly

a) calls on all Bible study groups in congregations to study and discuss the Statement; and

b) invites them to send comments to the convener.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. To these ends the Assembly instructs the webmaster to place the Statement on Sexism and Language with the Orders of Worship on the website, as a resource document under discussion.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly instructs the new General Secretary and the Ministry Committee to invite an appropriate keynote speaker on the topic of sexism in the Church and in worship to the next Ministers’ Conference.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Assembly

a) sends the Statement on Sexism and Language to the Executive of the Church Unity Commission for it to distribute to the member Churches of the CUC as a discussion document; and

b) through the CUC Central Committee invites the member Churches of the CUC to respond to the Statement by way of sending comments to the convener of the Service Book Team.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

10. The Assembly inserts into par. 16.33 of the Manual the following rule: Call Committees may not reject any applicant for a call on the basis of gender or race.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly instructs its Office to see that in future PEF Sunday does not coincide with any of the great festivals of the Christian Calendar like Trinity Sunday.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**OVERTURE 1: CONCERNING THE PREACHING OF THE SCRIPTURES:**

The Rev MV Tati presented the overture:

**OVERTURE:**

The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are all inspired by God and the Holy Spirit used His servants to pen them. During the reading of the Torah the Israelites used to stand. However, it has been observed in the UPSCA services and in some specific congregations, that

1. Congregants stand for the Old Testament only;
2. Others stand for the Gospels only;
3. Others stand for both the Old Testament and New Testament readings;
4. Others do neither of the above;
5. During the introit, when the service is commencing, the elders and the minister enter the Church led by the Clerk with the Bible and the members stand as the word enters.

The Church gives liberty for difference of opinion on issues that do not affect the substance of faith. This may not affect the faith, but it has liturgical implications that cause the practice to be questioned by many observant members. It is with this in mind that the quest for a resolute position that can easily apply to all our membership should be found.

Since it is one denomination, I overture the Venerable General assembly to re-evaluate and review the practice and take a stand that will be the standard practice for the whole denomination. The theological basis of the practice should be investigated and then a resolution be found as to whether the denomination continue to practice standing when reading the Scriptures in its liturgy.

It was **agreed** by consensus that the overture fall away, as the Service Book Committee was already working on the issue and would report on it.

**CONVENER OF COURT/AARP**

The Moderator called the General Secretary to lead the Assembly on the elections of the Convener of the Court of Assembly. The General Secretary explained the process. The General Secretary asked the Moderator to lead the Assembly in prayer. The election then took place.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 10h23 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery to meet again at 11h00.

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| **SIXTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Thursday 17 July 2014 at 11h00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Announcements**

Moderator called upon the CFO to explain the travelling arrangements for Friday the 18 July 2014.

**Leave of absence**

The Clerk of Assembly read the leave of absence requests.Leaveof absence was granted to the applicants.

**LISTENING SESSION:**

The Moderator ruled that instead of going to the Insaka groups the commissioners would have round-table discussion after the presentation of every report and thereafter decisions would be taken.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly instructs the Clerk of Assembly to convey its thanks to Mr Fouche for the donation of his time and expertise in the establishment of the new website.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly requests our Presbyteries and ministers to identify those in the UPCSA with skills in Social Media and the Word Press environment and find out if they would be willing to be part of the Website and Facebook Team. These names can then be forwarded to the Convener.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

The Clerk moved the following proposals.

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly encourages Presbyteries to establish Education and Training committees within their bounds.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly expresses its sincerest thanks to all whose donations to the PEF ensure the on-going work of the fund and thanks the trustees for their role in its continued work.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4 The Assembly declares Sunday, 14 June, 2015 PEF Sunday and requests all congregations to hold a retiring offering or make a donation for the PEF on that Sunday or another of the congregation’s choosing within the month of June.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly urges a representative of the PEF to attend the conference of Associations, promote the work of the PEF and encourage financial contributions.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Leave of absence**

The Clerk of Assembly read requests for leave of absence from

a) the Revs. Thamaga, Machachamise and Monokoane and elders Pitso, Seshea and Dlodlongwane (all commissioners from East Griqualand from 7h00 on Friday morning, because Commissioner Dlodlongwane had lost a brother;

b) the Revs. Jonga, Mabo and Nqakwana, Ngebulana and elders Gelese, Maqekeni, Mfeya, Mbandazayo (all commissioners from Mthatha) from 5h30 on Friday morning, when they wished to start travelling home.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES:**

The Clerk moved the following proposals.

2. The Assembly notes and gives thanks for the work done on the document for Reflections on the biblical and theological background to the Vision and Mission Priorities of the UPCSA.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly

a) adopts the document for Reflections on the biblical and theological background to the Vision and Mission Priorities of the UPCSA as a working document for the Vision, Mission Priorities and values of the UPCSA;

b) commends the document for use; and

c) instructs the Clerk to circulate the document to all Presbyteries.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly

a) acknowledges the Priorities and Resources Committee’s intention to focus on the work of Presbyteries as part of bringing the denomination in line with its vision, mission, priorities and values; and

b) urges the Priorities and Resources Committee to develop a clear plan and strategy to achieve this outcome as a matter of urgency and to expedite this work.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**M9: ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS:**

Τhe Rev D Bax presented his notice of motion:

In view of

* our Lord’s prayer that all his disciples might be one;
* the undertaking implicit in our name as the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa; and
* the hope that all Reformed Churches in southern Africa may begin to move towards unity,

the General Assembly mandates the General Secretary, as convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to approach the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk through their respective General Secretaries, Dr Kobus Gerber and Dr Dawid Kuyler, to ask the two Churches to consider whether or not they deem it appropriate to invite the UPCSA to be represented, even if only by way of observers, on the combined commission discussing union between them, in order

that we may offer any relevant insights we may have from our own experience of unification for their process of moving towards unity; and

2. to open the way for discussions about unity between them and the UPCSA, any such unity being subject to all the parties endorsing the Belhar Confession but leaving open whether unity between them and us should, to begin with, take simple or federal or confederal form.

We recognize, however, that the two Churches should place this question on their agendas for consideration only when their negotiating teams agree that the right time has come for it.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Clerk moved the following proposals.

1. The General Assembly receives the report together with the report of the Church Unity Commission (Appendix 1).

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly expresses it appreciation and gratitude to the WCC General Secretary for his presence and address at the 2014 Assembly, and pledges its continuous support and prayer for the ongoing work of the WCC.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly expresses its thanks and appreciation to the outgoing General Secretary, the Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, for his faithful work over the past 14 years with the WARC and the WCRC, and wishes him God’s blessings and wisdom in his future ministry.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly:

a) instructs the Ecumenical Relationships Committee to investigate and commission the translation of the Accra Confession into at least isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Ndebele, Shona and Zambian by the Executive Commission 2015; and

b) encourages Presbyteries and congregations to study, reflect on and apply the Accra Confession as part of the 10th Anniversary celebration since its formulation, with urgency.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly:

a) notes with appreciation the work that is being done to revive the SACC and pledges its continued support of, and prayer for, the organisation.

b) calls on all Presbyteries and congregations actively to engage in the work and life of the SACC in the different regions and provinces, and

c) encourages congregations to make financial contributions to the work of the SACC, especially in this time of their financial crisis.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

6. The Assembly urges ministers and congregations to use the SAFCEI information on their website to raise awareness of environmental issues and to participate in activities to care for the earth.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

7. The Assembly commends the Dutch Reformed Church family on the progress made thus far in their (re)unification process and pledges itself to continue to keep them in prayer and offer support where possible, and when needed.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

8. The Assembly commends Presbyteries and congregations that are involved in ecumenical activities in their areas, urges those which are not involved to become involved, and encourages all ministers and members to take seriously their participation and involvement in local ecumenical structures and facilities.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

9. The Executive Commission urges Presbyteries that have not as yet submitted details of their ecumenical committee/person to do so by 30th September 2014.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

10. The Assembly instructs the Ecumenical Relationships Committee to investigate the possibility of initiating talks about unity with the UCCSA and other Reformed churches in Southern Africa.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

11. The Assembly urges the Ecumenical Relations Committee to start exploratory talks with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa to establish whether uniting with this denomination is a possibility in the near future.

This proposal **fell away**.

12. The Assembly instructs the General Secretary

a) to invite ecumenical delegates from Zambia and Zimbabwe to attend General Assemblies and Executive Commissions; and

b) informs ecumenical delegates about the transnational nature of the UPCSA prior to their addressing the council.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS:**

**Supplementary Report:**

The Clerk of Assembly moved those proposals that were transactional:

2. The Assembly notes the success of the Ecumenical Consultation on Confessions and encourages the Ecumenical Relations Committee to continue to engage other Churches and partners in its work.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly expresses its congratulations to the Rev. D. Gevers on his election as the new CEO of the Bible Society and assures him of our continued prayers and support for him and the organization.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Results of AARP/ Court of Assembly Convener**

The Moderator announced the result as follows:

The Rev Dr. GW Marchinkowski had been duly elected as the new Convener of the Court of Assembly/AARP.

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. P. Neshangwe, led the Assembly in intercessory prayers for all commissioners who had lost their loved ones, with special mention of the Rev. Jonga and Commissioner Dlodlongwane.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 12h59 to meet at the Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery at 14h30.

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| **SEVENTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall Polokwane within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Thursday 17 July 2014 at 14h41H00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened

**Announcement**

The CFO made announcement about the travelling arrangements for Friday the 18th June 2014.

The Rev G. Goyns announced to the commissioners that she had posters to give away on a first come, first served basis.

**NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:**

The Moderator ruled that the report be deferred to be dealt with at a later stage.

**Unfinished business**

**UPCSA PENSION FUND:**

The Clerk moved proposal number 3 as transactional.

2. The Assembly approves the merger of the UPCSA Pension Fund and Presbyterian Employees’ Pension Fund.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Church thanks the advisors and contractors to the Fund and in particular the Actuaries Arthur Els and Associates for the assistance given to the Trustees over the past period.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**UPCSA PENSION FUND:**

**Supplementary:**

1. The Assembly receives this report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly appoints Mr. G Kelly as Employer Trustee to replace Mr C Henley.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly appoints Mr C. Gauld as an alternate employer Trustee to replace Mr C. Henley.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**EMPLOYEES’ PENSION FUND:**

1. The Assembly receives the Report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**COURT/AARP:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly agrees that the quorum of the Court and Administrative the Review Panel be changed to 7 in each instance.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly refers the following matters under Chapters 15 and 18 of the Manual of Faith and Order to the Faith and Order Committee with the associated comments in the body of the report:

a) Condonation of late or out of time submissions to the Court of the Assembly or the AARP.

b) Rules regarding proceeding when a Court or Administrative Review Panel no longer has a quorum.

c) Further guidelines on the meaning of “a reasonable chance of success,” particularly as it relates to the terms of reference of the ”Small Committees” of the Court/AARP.

d) Clarification of the role, function and appointment of a stated supply.

e) Reviewing of the decisions of the Small Committee.

f) Scheduling of meetings of the COURT/AARP.

g) Time frames to be incorporated into paragraph 15.12 along lines of what has been suggested in the main body of the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**AARP:**

**Supplementary:**

2. The Assembly refers section 10.54 of the Manual to the Manual Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**STEWARDSHIP:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2. The Assembly notes the terms of reference of the Committee that were accepted by the Executive Commission in 2013, removes terms 5 and 6 and urges the committee to include a new term stating that stewardship includes stewardship of the earth.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly notes with appreciation that the Committee is having its meetings and is making progress on its work.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4. The Assembly notes with appreciation that Presbyteries and Congregations continue to be served by the Committee through the gift of its Convener to empower members of the UPCSA on Stewardship.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

5. The Assembly encourages collaboration between the Stewardship and Ministry Committees on ministerial formation and stewardship.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS:**

2. The Assembly notes the work of the Committee.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3. The Assembly agrees that the Convener of Church Associations must make sure that:

* 1. all Denominational Conferences of Associations are constituted by the Moderator of the General Assembly;
  2. all arrangements for Sunday Services that form part of Association Conferences are in line with the practices and norms of the Associations; and
  3. the Moderator of the General Assembly is informed well in advance about the conferences of the associations and their arrangements.

The Assembly **agreed** by consensus to refer Proposal 3 of the Associations Committee report to the Working Group on Associations for consideration.

**MINISTRY:**

The Assembly agreed to pass from Mr Mbhele’s matter and to allow Mr Mbhele an extension on his right to appeal to the AARP.

**M5: CHURCH AND SOCIETY**

The Assembly returned to the Notice of Motion concerning President Zuma and his home at Nkandla. A slightly amended form of the motion was proposed to the Assembly, but it could not find consensus to agree on this either. As a result the Assembly mandated the Moderator, the General Secretary and the Convener of the Church and Society Committee to make a statement on the Nkandla upgrades on behalf of the UPCSA General Assembly if and when this was appropriate, after the investigation into the Nkandla upgrades was finalized, and if the findings of Adv. Thuli Madonsela’s report were verified.

The following amended version was then voted on:

The Assembly gives thanks to God and to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela’s for the great courage and integrity that she has shown in investigating corruption in the highest places in the South African Government without fear or favour, despite all the pressures on her to desist and all the criticism and threats that she has had to endure from those in high places.

The Assembly calls on the Government to fund the Public Protector and her staff adequately, so that they can investigate all the many thousands of cases of alleged corruption referred to her instead of being debilitated by severely inadequate funding.

1. The Assembly appoints the Moderator, General Secretary and Convener of the Church and Society Committee to make a statement on the Nkandla security upgrades on behalf of the UPCSA General Assembly if and when required.

2. The Assembly waits for the conclusion of the investigation into the Nkandla upgrades and, if it is found that the findings of Adv Thuli Madonsela’s report are verified, then the General Secretary issue a statement on behalf of the UPCSA on this issue after correcting any inaccuracies.

This was **agreed** by consensus with one Commissioner’s dissent submitted with reasons.

**Reasons for Dissent*:***

The Rev Smith recorded his dissent, on the following grounds:

* + 1. The use of the consensus model is not ideal in prophetic issues:

       i. Whilst this model is ideal for allowing greater participation, understanding and dialogue, the prophetic ministry of the church cannot function well in the consensus model.

       ii. Which prophet ever operated successfully by consensus?

       iii. If we persist in using the consensus model the church’s prophetic voice will be muffled, silenced or gagged.

* + 1. We are naive if we honestly believe that commissioners are freely able to criticize the regimes of Mr Robert Mugabe or Mr Zuma’s ANC. Some commissioners support these regimes; others live in fear of them. They know that there will be consequences if they participate openly in our debates/conversations.
    2. The proposal had great merit, and is based upon the public protector’s report; there is also the history of Mr Zuma’s generally corrupt relationship/dealings with Mr Shabir Shaik. Mr Zuma has adequately demonstrated that he is unfit to serve as President in a democracy. However certain commissioners shouted this proposal down with such belligerence that the council was intimidated into paralysis. This is a great shame for the church.

**RECORDS:**

The Clerk of Assembly moved that

1) The Assembly receives the report.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

2) The Assembly urges Committee Conveners, Presbytery and Synod Clerks to note that only Presbyteries, Synods and the fourteen Committees of the Assembly created by the restructuring process are required to submit Minute Books to the General Assembly or Executive Commission for scrutiny and attestation.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

3) The Assembly instructs its committees to attest the minutes of their sub-committees or task teams annually at a time suitable to their meeting schedules and to ensure that a ) The Assembly agrees that the Records Committee Convener attests the Finance Committee Minute Book in situ and that this be reported to the Executive Commission 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

4) The Assembly agrees that the Records Convener attests the Finance Committee minute book *in situ* and that this be reported to the Executive Committee in 2015.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

**Evaluation form**

The Business Convener asked the commissioners to fill in and submit their evaluation forms.

**Announcements**

The Moderator announced that the nomination committee report would not be dealt with on Friday the 18th at 8h30.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 16h52 to meet again at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of Limpopo Presbytery at 17h30.

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| **EIGHTEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Dining Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Thursday 17 July 2014 at 17H30 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened.

**Valedictory service**

The Moderator called upon the Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev P. Neshangwe, to lead worship.

**Recognition of Ministers Emeritus**

The Moderator led the Assembly in worship and called upon Ministry Secretary the Rev. Dr. E. Germiquet, who read the tributes to the retiring ministers.

The Clerk of Assembly moved that:

1. the Assembly grants the Rev. M. Boshomane the status of Minister Emeritus from 31 December 2014 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside;

2. the Assembly grants the Rev. J. Masaka the status of Minister Emeritus from 31 January 2015 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside;

3. the Assembly grants the Rev. A.M. Mhaga the status of Minister Emeritus from 30 September 2014 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside;

4. the Assembly grants the Rev. N.E. Stevenson the status of Minister Emeritus from 31 October 2013 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside;

5. the Assembly grants the Rev. V.S. Zondi the status of Minister Emeritus from 31st July 2014 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside;

6. the Assembly grants the Rev. J. Patrick the status of Minister Emeritus from 30th September 2014 and a seat on the Presbytery within whose bounds he may reside.

All this was **agreed** by consensus.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 18h00 to meet again at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Friday 18th July 2014 at 08h30.

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| **NINETEENTH SESSION** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall Polokwane within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Friday 18 July 2014 at 08H35 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened

The Moderator led the Assembly in opening prayer. He then called for the Nominations Report to be presented.

**NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:**

The Rev. Z Rashe presented the report, and the Assembly scrutinised it on a page-by-page, committee-by-committee basis.

The Clerk moved that:

1. The Assembly receives the report and adopts the changes contained therein.

This was **agreed** by consensus.

The Moderator announced that the Assembly would adjourn for 5 minutes.

**Adjournment**

The Assembly adjourned at 08h54 to meet again at the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Friday 18th July 2014 at 09h00.

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| **NINETEENTH SESSION (Continued)** |

At the Capricorn High School Hall, Polokwane, within the bounds of the Limpopo Presbytery, on Friday 18 July 2014 at 09H00 the Ministers and Elders, as Commissioners of the General Assembly appointed to meet this day, reconvened

**Closing service:**

The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. M. Cook, made announcements and drew the attention of the Assembly to commissioner the Rev. Ntisane who had fallen sick and been hospitalised.

The Rev M Cook led the Assembly in worship, reading from the Assembly service booklet and prayed. The Moderator’s Chaplain, the Rev. P. Neshangwe, read from 1 Corinthians 5:16-21.

**Recognition of the Moderator Designate:**

The Moderator called upon the Moderator Designate, the Rev. Robert Munthali, to address the Assembly. The Moderator Designate addressed the Assembly.

**Closing address:**

The Moderator drew the Assembly’s attention to the text 1 Corinthians 5:16-21, laying emphasis on the ministry of reconciliation. The Moderator led the General Assembly in prayer.

**Vote of thanks:**

The Moderator called upon the Rev. R. Armstrong, who presented the vote of thanks to the local organising committee for the job they had done.

The Moderator called upon the Rev. M. Boshomane, who led the Assembly in intercessory prayer.

The Moderator called upon all Commissioners to read the statement of commitment in the Assembly service book, which they did.

The Business Convener, the Rev Loni, declared that the business of the 2014 Assembly had been completed.

**Commission and benediction:**

The Moderator closed the 2014 General Assembly and delivered the benediction.

**Adjournment:**

The General Assembly adjourned at 10h45 to meet again as the Executive Commission on the 7th July within the bounds of the East Griqualand Presbytery.

**ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

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| **COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS**  **OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  **CONTACT DETAILS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**  **2014 - 2016** |

**COURT OF ASSEMBLY/AARP**

**Convener:**

**The Rev Dr G Marchinkowski**,

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**RECORDS COMMITTEE**

14 Minute Books were received from 12 Presbyteries and

12 Minute Books from 7 Committees, 65% of the total expected.

This means that 7 Presbyteries and 7 Committees have not submitted their books.

Books were also received from The UPCSA Pension Fund, The Presbyterian Employees’ Pension Fund, the Worship Committee (task team of the Committee on Faith and Order) and the PEF.

Apologies for not submitting books were received from the CFO for the Finance Committee, East Griqualand which is having difficulty in finding a new minute book, and George Regional Commission.

Of the books received, one was for the first time for a new committee, three were submitted for scrutiny in 2013, 8 in 2012 and the rest in 2010 or prior to 2010. Commissioners are reminded that books are to be submitted annually for scrutiny. Scrutinizing this number of books is a big enough job on its own, without having to check multiple years’ minutes at a time.

Minute Books were not received from the following:

Presbyteries: Copperbelt, East Griqualand, Highveld, Limpopo, Mthatha, Munali and Tshwane

Committees: Church and Society, Court of Assembly and AARP, Education and Training, Faith and Order, Finance, Priorities and Resources, Stewardship

The General Assembly is asked to thank those Presbyteries and Committees and their task teams which have submitted their minute books for scrutiny.

It is clear that the task of Minute keeping is taken seriously and on the whole the standard of the Minute Books is to be commended. However, many omissions continue to be made and the following would assist in rectifying these omissions:

1. Pages of the Minute Book must be numbered;
2. Each set of Minutes must have its own page numbers(start each set of minutes with page 1);
3. Pages pasted into the book must not obscure the page number of the Minute Book;
4. Each page should be initialed across the edge of the page preferably top and bottom.
5. There should be a designated place at the end of the Minutes for the Minute Clerks/Moderators/Conveners to sign with dates to be entered manually at the time of signing not when typing the Minutes. Do not anticipate the date on which the minutes may be signed
6. Minutes should not be signed in advance of the meeting.
7. Include an item ‘Absent’ under which ‘Absent without apology’ must be included to account for the full roll of members/commissioners. If no-one is absent without an apology this can be stated. This item will make it clear that all have been accounted for.

Minutes are legal documents and must stand up in court should that ever be necessary.

Further improvement can be achieved by applying the following tips:

* + If a date has been given for the next meeting and this has to be changed or the meeting has been cancelled and a long time has elapsed since the last meeting, it is suggested that a note be made in the new minutes as to why the meeting was not held on the scheduled date. This can be done under the heading “Confirmation of minutes’ and makes it clear that there is no set of Minutes missing from the record.
  + If a Presbytery has an Executive (or Executive Commission), Minutes of the Executive cannot be approved by the full Presbytery, this must be done by the Executive and minutes of the Executive simply noted in the Minutes of the Ordinary /Stated meeting of the Presbytery. Any decisions taken by the Executive, if this power is given to them, should be ratified by the meeting of the full Presbytery.

It is suggested that the Assembly clarifies for Presbyteries and Committees which minute books should be submitted to the General Assembly / Executive Commission for scrutiny, and sets out clearly who should scrutinize the minute books of Task Teams and sub-committees. No Minute Books were received from the Synods of TH Soga and Zambia, or from the Regional Commission, and clarity is sought as to whether these should be scrutinized and attested by their Presbyteries or by the Assembly/Executive Commission.

It is further suggested that Task Team and sub-committee Minute Books be scrutinized by the Committee of General Assembly to which they report and that committees are notified that these books need not be brought to Assembly/Executive. Each committee should note in its minutes once per year that it has attested the minutes of its task teams or sub-committees.

**E M WHITE**

**CONVENER RECORDS COMMITTEE**

**PROPOSALS:**

1. The Assembly receives the report.

2. The Assembly urges Committee Conveners, Presbytery and Synod Clerks to note that only Presbyteries, Synods and the fourteen Committees of the Assembly created by the restructuring process are required to submit Minute Books to the General Assembly or Executive Commission for scrutiny and attestation.

3. General Assembly instructs its committees to attest minutes of their sub-committees or task teams annually at a time suitable to their meeting schedules and to ensure that a minute appears in their records to this effect.

4. The Assembly agrees that the Records Committee Convener attests the Finance Committee Minute Book in situ and that this be reported to the Executive Commission 2015.

**REMITS**

|  |
| --- |
| ***REMITS TO BE SENT DOWN TO PRESBYTERIES BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2014*** |

**Manual:**

**REMIT: GA/14/01**

2. The Assembly amends para. 16.104 to read:

(a) In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session and Congregation and to obtain the consent of the Presbytery before taking up new secular appointments. The Presbytery must then appoint an assessor to the Session to assist the Session in negotiating the new arrangement with the minister.

(b) Those who have secular employment when these rules come into force are required to report to their Sessions and to seek to obtain the consent of the Presbytery, giving full details. Should the Presbytery not approve, the position to must be renegotiated. Where Presbytery agrees to the minister's taking up secular employment, Presbytery appoints an assessor to the Session to oversee the process.

(c) If the minister wishing to take up secular employment has been inducted into the Congregation, then the induction ends on a date that the Presbytery sets. The minister must then be appointed for a specified period under new terms and conditions that the minister, Session and the Congregation mutually agree on. This agreement must stipulate all the emoluments, the terms and conditions of the appointment, including, but not limited to, working hours, leave provisions and related matters. This appointment, including all the terms and conditions of the appointment and the emoluments, must be approved at a special congregational meeting moderated by the assessor appointed by the Presbytery. Presbytery must then approve the appointment and all its terms, conditions, emoluments and other relevant matters.

(d) If the minister wishing to take up secular employment was appointed to the Congregation, that appointment ends on a date set by the Presbytery, if it is not in any case due to end prior to the date on which the secular employment starts. The minister must then be re-appointed for a specified period under new terms and conditions mutually agreed to by the minister and the Congregation. This agreement must stipulate all the emoluments and the terms and conditions of the appointment, including, but not limited to, the working hours, leave provisions and related matters. This new appointment, including the terms and conditions of the appointment and the emoluments, must be approved at a special congregational meeting moderated by the assessor appointed by Presbytery. Presbytery must then approve the appointment and all its terms, conditions, emoluments and other relevant matters.

The Assembly adopted proposal 2 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.104 of the Manual of Faith and Order and sent it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/02**

3. The Assembly amends para. 16.25 to read:

When a pastoral charge becomes vacant or a specific date on which it will become vacant is set, the following steps are taken:

(a) the Presbytery appoints an Interim Moderator/Assessor;

(b) Presbytery stipulates the remuneration to be paid to the Interim Moderator or Assessor as a per kilometre travelling allowance and pulpit supply, provided that the amount for pulpit supply and per kilometre travel may not be lower than that of the Presbytery or General Assembly minimum for pulpit supply and travelling allowances;

(c) the Interim Moderator or Assessor, on the first convenient Sunday, notifies the Congregation of the vacancy or impending vacancy and instructs the Congregation to fill the vacancy as soon as possible;

(d) whenever possible the Interim Moderator or Assessor interviews the outgoing Minister; and

(e) with the outgoing Minister and the Assistant Minister, if there is one, not present, the Interim Moderator or Assessor meets with the Session and then with the Congregation.

The Assembly adopted proposal 3 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.25 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/03**

4. The Assembly amends para.16.47 to read:

Before considering the Call the Presbytery must

(a) approve the emoluments offered;

(b) satisfy itself that the Congregation is not in arrears in the payment of the previous Minister’s stipend and other emoluments;

(c) satisfy itself that the Congregation is not in arrears in the payment of the assessments of the Councils of the Church or, if it is in arrears, that the Congregation has explained the circumstances of its failure to pay its outstanding assessments and that adequate arrangements have been made to settle the outstanding assessments; and

(d) ascertain whether the incoming Minister has any outstanding loans either from the Church Development Loans Fund (or its successor, if any) or from any Presbytery and, if such loans exist, decide how they are to be handled.

The Assembly adopted Proposal 4 regarding amendments to paragraph. 16.47 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/04**

5. The Assembly inserts a new para. 14.18:

Rescinding a Decision

(a) Any member of a Council who was present or had registered an apology for the meeting where the decision in question was made, may, in a meeting of that Council, move that the Council rescind a previous decision of that Council. The Council must fully investigate the implications of rescinding the decision. If after such an investigation the Council is reasonably satisfied that no person will suffer prejudice if the decision is rescinded and that the implications of rescinding the decision will not adversely affect any person or party, it may rescind the decision.

(b) Except where a party is or will be prejudiced as a result of a decision of a Council or if a decision of a Council is found to be unlawful or illegal, or made in error, a Council may entertain a motion to rescind a decision only at a subsequent sitting of a Council;

(c) An Executive may not rescind decisions of a full Council, unless the Council grants permission to its own Executive to rescind decisions of the full Council. A Council may rescind decisions of its Executive.

The Assembly adopted proposal 5 regarding a new para. 14.18 of the *Manual of Faith and Order* and sent it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/05**

6. The Assembly inserts a new para. 15.4:

No Council of the Church may pressure an applicant who has made application for review to withdraw his/her application, either by threat or otherwise, prior to the Administrative Review Panel's hearing of the pending application. This rule applies inter alia to any Council whose decision is to be subjected to review.

The Assembly adopted proposal 6 regarding a possible new paragraph. 15.4 of the Manual of Faith and Order to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/06**

7. The Assembly amends para. 17.27 to read:

17.27 At the end of each academic year the Committee reviews the Student’s academic, personal and spiritual progress and approves or else declines to approve the Student’s year. The Committee may also review the Student’s progress at any time during the year. Any sanction by a court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of para.18.6 counts against the student in this review. The Committee informs the Student of its decision within two weeks of the review.

The Assembly adopted proposal 7 in its amended form and referred it to Presbyteries for their consideration and approval l under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT; GA/14/07**

8. The Assembly amends para.17.39 to read:

17.39

a) The Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Ministry Committee, may review the Probationer’s progress at any time during the period of probation and has the authority to remove a Probationer from the roll of Probationers. Any sanction by a court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of para.18.6 counts against the Probationer in this review. In the event of the Committee's deciding not to issue a Ministry Certificate it advises the Probationer of this and of his/her right to appeal to the General Assembly.

b) When the Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Ministry Committee of the Presbytery that licensed the Probationer, is satisfied that the Probationer has completed his/her academic studies and training as a Probationer and shows adequate ability in Ministry, it issues a Ministry Certificate to the Probationer. The Probationer may now receive a Call or Appointment. Any sanction by a court of Session, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly in terms of para.18.6 counts against the Probationer in this review. In the event of the Committee's decision not to issue a Ministry Certificate it advises the Probationer of this and of his/her right to appeal to the General Assembly.

The Assembly adopted Proposal 8 regarding amendments to paragraph. 17.39 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/08**

9. The Assembly amends para.12.50 (d) (ii) as follows:

The Assembly deals with proposals which, if adopted, would change the Constitution of this Church or its laws respecting doctrine, discipline, government or worship, in accordance with the following procedures...

(d) In reporting back the Presbyteries are to state clearly whether they approve of, or disapprove of, each proposal. They may also propose amendments to the proposals. A Presbytery that proposes an amendment or amendments to any proposal must make clear with regard to every amendment it proposes which of the following applies:

(i) the Presbytery approves the proposal as a whole even if Assembly does not accept that particular amendment;

(ii) the Presbytery disapproves a particular item in, or part of, the proposal, but approves the rest of it;

(iii) the Presbytery regards that particular amendment as of such importance that it disapproves of the whole proposal if Assembly does not accept the amendment.

A Presbytery may not abuse option (iii): where its real sentiments are in accordance with (i) or (ii), it may not resort to purporting (iii), in order to try to compel acceptance of the amendment.

Moreover if a Presbytery does disapprove of the whole proposal unless it is amended and proposes more than one amendment, it specifies to which amendment or amendments the condition applies.

If a report is not clear, the Clerk of Assembly is authorised to obtain clarification of its meaning.

If the proposal originated with any General Assembly Committee or Commission, the Clerk informs the Convener of the Committee or Commission of each Presbytery's return and sends its Convener a copy.

The Assembly adopted proposal 9 regarding amendments to para. 12.50 of the Manual of Faith and Order and referred it to the Presbyteries for their consideration and approval under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**REMIT: GA/14/09**

11. Notice of motion **M7:**

The Assembly adopts the following:

**1**.

a. The third sentence of Par 16.108 of the Manual of Faith and Order be amended to read as follows:

“Toward the end of each unbroken three year period the Minister may, after new discussions with the Session and Congregation about the continuance of the arrangements, apply to the Presbytery for approval for a further three year period.”

b. The first sentence of Proposal 2 of the Manual of the Faith and Order Report be amended to read as follows:

“In all cases Ministers are required to discuss their proposal in detail with the Session and Congregation and to obtain the consent of the presbytery before taking up new secular appointments.”

[Then the Paragraphs will be in line with other paragraphs in various paragraphs of the Manual that deal with the filling the Vacancy either by a Call or by Appointment; where in both processes the congregation is involved (see 16.35 – 16.40 for the Call and 16.58-16.59)]

**2**.

The last sentence of Par 16.127 (a) be amended in a manner that will allow the discussion of the application for credentials where a Minister for genuine reasons cannot be present at a meeting where his application for credentials is to be discussed.

The Assembly adopted the proposals and sent them to the Presbyteries to consider and approve under paragraph 12.50 (the Barrier Act) of the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA.

**BASIS OF UNION**

**BETWEEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (PCSA) AND REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (RPCSA)**

**PREAMBLE**

The Churches proposing to unite do so in the belief that it is God's will for them: that this union of Churches holding the Christian Faith and practising the Presbyterian Order in Southern Africa will be a strengthening of their witness to the Word of God and also a material contribution to the cause of wider Church union in Africa and in the world.

The following is placed before the Churches by the Central Committee negotiating union as the proposed Basis of Union.

**1. THE NAME OF THE CHURCH**

The name of the Church shall be "The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa"

**2. THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH**

The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (hereinafter referred to as (the "Uniting Church") holds the faith which the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church has ever held in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, in whom men and women are saved by grace through faith. In accordance with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ the Uniting Church worships one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Uniting Church acknowledges the Word of God in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only final rule of faith and life.

The Uniting Church accepts the historic Creeds of the undivided Church, commonly called the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, as witnessing to and safeguarding the faith which was first committed to the disciples of our Lord, and which is continually confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the experience of the Church.

Similarly the Uniting Church accepts, as witnessing to and safeguarding that faith, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Twenty Four Articles of the Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) and with these the Appendix to the Twenty Four Articles and the Declaration of Faith for the Church in Southern Africa of the PCSA.

The Uniting Church affirms its right, subject to the Word of God and in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, adopt, modify and interpret doctrinal statements, always in agreement with the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, of which agreement the Uniting Church itself shall be the sole judge

The Uniting Church recognises liberty of conscience on all points of doctrine which are not fundamental to the faith; the Uniting Church nonetheless retains the right in every case to judge what falls within this description

**3. THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

The Uniting Church adheres in general to the traditional forms of Presbyterian worship Each congregation shall have the right to continue the forms of worship to which it has been accustomed prior to union. Every Service Book, Hymnary, and other literature used in worship which has been sanctioned for use in either of the negotiating Churches is sanctioned for use in the Uniting Church Such literature shall thereafter be authorised by the General Assembly as it may see fit.

The Presbyterian form of Church government is held to be founded upon, and agreeable to, the Word of God The form of government of the Uniting Church shall be determined in all matters by a book to be named "The Manual of Law and Procedure of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa". In the interim this will be the Manual of Law and Procedure, as amended, of the former PCSA It will be given a new title and all references in it to the PCSA will be read as references to the Uniting Church After union the General Assembly of the Uniting Church will set up a Manual Committee to draw up the new Manual of Law and Procedure of the Uniting Church.

**4. THE POLITY OF THE CHURCH**

**STATUS OF CONGREGATIONS, MINISTERS, ELDERS AND MEMBERS**

**(a) Congregations**

Each congregation of each Church shall enjoy in the Uniting Church the status which it held in its own Church prior to union and its development and status thereafter shall be constitutionally determined in terms of the Manual of Law and Procedure.

**(b) Ministers and Elders**

In conformity with the Presbyterian form of government, the ruling authority of each minister and of each elder is equal, and the teaching authority of each minister is equal, under the Word of God. This shall apply in the Uniting Church to each minister and each elder of the negotiating Churches. After union the rights and duties of each shall be constitutionally determined in terms of the Manual of Law and Procedure.

**(c) Members**

Each member of the negotiating Churches shall have rights and obligations of membership in the Uniting Church equal to those of all other members in the Uniting Church.

An official list of congregations and ministers in the negotiating Churches, indicating the status of each, will be published by the Special Commission on Union referred to in Section 6, in consultation with the Central Committee, in time for the uniting Assembly.

**6. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH**

**(a) Structure of the Church**

The Uniting Church shall be governed by Courts at a maximum of four levels: General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions. Synods may be formed at the request of two or more Presbyteries.

The temporal affairs of congregations are conducted by the Board of Management or Deacons' Court or by a committee of the Session. The detailed powers, functions and duties of these Courts and Committees are as set out in the Manual of Law and Procedure.

The official language of the General Assembly shall be English, in which language its records shall be kept. Any member of the General Assembly shall have the right to address the Assembly in his/her own language and to have his/her address interpreted into English, subject to the availability of an interpreter. Any motion to be voted upon, and the decision taken, shall be announced in whatever languages may be requested, subject to the availability of interpreters.

Each Presbytery and Synod shall have the right to determine what shall be its official language, in which its business shall be conducted. All records however shall be kept in English. Presbytery and Synod proceedings shall be interpreted, if requested, into any other language, subject to the availability of an interpreter.

**(b) Special Commission on Union**

When the General Assembly of each negotiating Church is in a position to resolve on full acceptance of the Basis of Union, it shall at that time appoint ten Commissioners and five alternates, whom it shall empower, acting jointly with those appointed by the other negotiating Church, to make all final arrangements for the consummation of union in the name of the negotiating Churches. It shall indicate in what order of preference alternates are to be called on if needed.

The Central Committee shall call the first meeting of the Special Commission; the Co-Conveners of the Central Committee shall preside and constitute; and one of the Secretaries of the Central Committee shall act as Clerk

The first duty of the Co-Conveners shall be to conduct an election of Convener and of Secretary or Secretaries of the Special Commission on Union, who shall thereupon take office

The Special Commission on Union shall draft regulations for its continued existence and shall submit these for approval to the first General Assembly of the Uniting Church.

The Special Commission on Union shall have power to finalise all arrangements, shall receive reports from the Central Committee on matters to be finalised, and shall have the power to retain the Central Committee as an advisory body and to discharge it when this seems appropriate. Inter alia the Special Commission on Union shall be charged with arranging that meetings of the General Assemblies of the negotiating Churches be held at the same time and in the same centre for the celebration of union and shall also be charged with the selection of the first Moderator of the General Assembly of the Uniting Church from the nominations made by the Presbyteries of the negotiating Churches immediately before the Assemblies which made the final decision on union It shall also, for that year only, draw up the agenda of the General Assembly and make nominations for the membership and convenerships of Assembly Divisions and Committees, though it may delegate these functions to sub-committees appointed by it. The Secretary of the Special Commission on union shall act as Clerk of the Uniting General Assembly until such time as a permanent appointment has been made by the General Assembly.

The Special Commission on Union shall remain in being as a judicial commission to determine any matter in dispute as to the terms of union for a period of at least three years after the Uniting General Assembly, at which time, or at any later date, it may be discharged by the General Assembly.

**(c) The Uniting General Assembly and first meetings of subordinate Courts**

The Uniting General Assembly shall consist of all the members of each General Assembly of the negotiating Churches. The proposed Standing Orders of this General Assembly shall be determined by the Special Commission on Union and thereafter approved by the Uniting General Assembly In the year following the General Assembly, and any Special General Assembly, if such an Assembly needs to be called, shall be composed of Commissioners from Presbyteries in terms of the Manual of Law and Procedure of the Uniting Church Thereafter the basis of representation shall be as determined by the General Assembly from time to time

The Special Commission on Union shall arrange, under the authority of the General Assembly, for the first meeting of each Presbytery and Synod of the Uniting Church. Each Presbytery shall be required to meet within three months of the Uniting General Assembly and each Synod within six months of the Uniting General Assembly. The first meeting of each Presbytery and Synod shall be summoned by the Special Commission on Union, in consultation with the former Presbytery officials concerned in each Uniting Church At each first meeting there shall be present at least two members of the Special Commission on Union, appointed by the Special Commission on Union on the authority of the General Assembly to constitute the Court. These two members shall at this first meeting act as Moderator and Clerk respectively It shall be part of their duty, after constituting the Court, to secure the election of a Moderator and Clerk, and before the Court adjourns, to induct the Moderator Thereafter each Court shall function in terms of the Manual of Law and Procedure.

A list of proposed Presbyteries and the grouping of congregations in Presbyteries and where necessary the grouping of Presbyteries in Synods is attached to this Basis of Union as Schedule B

**7 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CHURCHES**

The Uniting Church shall assume whatever relationships each of the negotiating Churches may have had with other Churches and Councils of Churches at the time of union and shall thereafter determine and develop such relationships in terms of its own policy and decisions as a united Church Note is taken in this connection of conversations with a view to union which may at that time exist between the negotiating Churches and other member Churches of the Church Unity Commission

It is also affirmed that the continuance of special relationships which have existed between either of the negotiating Churches and other Churches will be welcomed, ego between the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Church of Scotland

**8 EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL**

Each minister serving a congregation in either of the negotiating Churches shall remain in the service of the Uniting Church in the congregation in which he/she was serving at the time of union. His/her future service in the Uniting Church shall thereafter be determined by the appropriate Courts in terms of the Manual of Law and Procedure.

No gross stipend shall be reduced as a result of union. It shall be the task of the Special Commission, or a Committee appointed by it, to establish in the shortest possible time a new system of minimum stipends, taking into account the current minimum stipend of the PCSA and incorporating the principle of increases for length of service which obtains in the RPCSA Levels of minimum stipend shall thereafter be determined by the General Assembly from time to time.

The body administering the temporal affairs of a congregation shall be responsible for paying the minister's stipend and other emoluments The method of payment, whether directly to the minister or through Presbytery or the Assembly Office of the Uniting Church, and whether by the same or by different methods for the stipend and other emoluments, shall be determined after union by the Uniting Church.

The General Assembly of the Uniting Church, through its Ministry Committee, shall select candidates for the ministry and for the position of Evangelist on such conditions as the Assembly shall lay down from time to time Until such time as the Assembly may rule otherwise the minimum academic qualification required for a candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament shall be a Matriculation Certificate or its equivalent and the minimum academic qualification for ordination to this ministry shall be a Diploma in Theology from an institution recognised by the Uniting Church.

A mature age candidate for the ministry shall be admitted in terms of the regulations in the Manual of Law and Procedure, as amended from time to time by the General Assembly of the Uniting Church.

All debts owed by bodies or individual members of the negotiating Churches to Courts or Committees of those Churches shall, after the uniting Assembly, be owed to the corresponding bodies in the Uniting Church.

The Office of the General Assembly of the Uniting Church shall be situated at a new venue, to be determined by the Special Commission, until such time as the Assembly may move it elsewhere. At its first meeting the Special Commission shall set a date, not later than 1 st January of the year following the uniting General Assembly, for the merging of the General Assembly/Central Offices of the negotiating Churches At the same meeting it shall determine the posts to be created in the new Office and shall arrange for these to be advertised in good time. These posts shall include the positions of General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, Chief Accountant, Stewardship Secretary and Ministry Secretary The Commission shall also make the appointments in due course If no satisfactory applications are received for any post the Commission may approach suitably qualified individuals and invite them to apply.

On the day before the uniting of the two Offices all posts in the existing Offices shall be abolished, but the pension benefits of staff members of either of the existing Offices who are the successful applicants for any of the posts in the Office of the Uniting Church will be carried over to the Uniting Church The Special Commission may invite any member of staff of the existing Offices to stay on for a limited period after the establishment of the Uniting Church Office, in order to familiarize new staff members with their work.

The Special Commission shall determine the length of the period of preparation for merging of the existing Offices How this preparation will be done will be determined by the Special Commission

**9 ASSESSMENT**

In order to promote and support the wider work of the Church the funds of the congregations of the Uniting Church shall be assessed on the following principles

(a) a charge will be made on the assessable income of each congregation and preaching station in any year, based initially on tables or percentages laid down by the Uniting Assembly and revised from time to time thereafter by the General Assembly; assessable income may be defined as the total revenue, less any determined allowable expenditure in any year;

(b) a minimum assessment per annum will be payable to the General Assembly by every congregation and preaching station;

(c) Presbyteries and Synods may similarly assess congregations on their assessable incomes, as each Presbytery or Synod may determine, to finance their own wider work

**10 PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS**

The properties and investments of the negotiating Churches shall become the properties and investments of the Uniting Church in the following manner:

(a) fixed property formerly held by the General Assembly of the PCSA shall be re-registered in the name of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa;

(b) fixed property formerly held by other Courts and congregations of the PCSA shall become the property of the corresponding bodies in the Uniting Church;

(c) fixed property formerly held by the RPCSA shall be re­registered in the name of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa;

(d) sites in former Black townships and areas which either of the negotiating Churches has leased or has permission to occupy shall be re-registered in the name of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa;

(e) fixed property acquired after the formation of the Uniting Church shall be registered in the name of The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa; and

(f) all investments and other assets held and registered in the name of either of the negotiating Churches shall become the property of the Uniting Church

**11 PENSION FUNDS**

(a) With effect from the first day of January of the year following the date of the uniting General Assembly, the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension and Widows' and Orphans' Fund and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa Pension Widows' and Orphans' Fund shall be amalgamated as follows

1. all members and pensioners of the above Funds shall become members and pensioners of a new contributory fund from the date of amalgamation;

2. all ministers and probationers accepted into the ministry of the Uniting Church after that date shall become members of the new fund; and

3. the scheme of amalgamation shall provide that the basic benefits for service before the date of amalgamation shall, for each member and pensioner of each Fund be based on the assets of that Fund at that date.

(b) The Presbyterian Employees' Fund of the PCSA shall be maintained and administered by the Uniting Church for all eligible employees on a money-purchase basis

(c) Personnel seconded by other Churches for service in the Uniting Church shall not be required to become members of any of the Pension Funds, but may do so if they wish, in accordance with the rules of the Funds

(d) Any changes in the rules of any of these Funds between the date of this publication and the first day of January of the year following the date of the uniting Assembly shall be taken into account

(e) The members of the Finance Committee of the General Assembly of the Uniting Church shall act as the Trustees of the South African Pension Funds of the Uniting Church Separate Boards of Trustees shall be appointed to administer the Zimbabwean and Zambian Pension Funds of the Uniting Church.

**12. CUSTODY OF RECORDS**

The records of the various Courts and Committees of the negotiating Churches at the time of union shall thereafter be deposited and held as follows:

**(a) Assembly Records**

The records of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and of the General Assembly of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa shall become the property of the General Assembly of the Uniting Church and shall be in the custody of the Clerk of General Assembly until handed for safe-keeping to the official Archives of the Uniting Church. Until otherwise decided by General Assembly these shall be the William Cullen Library of the University of the Witwatersrand and the Cory Library for Historical Research of Rhodes University.

**(b) Synod Records**

The records of Synods from the time of their first meetings shall be in the custody of Synod Clerks until such time as they are handed to the Clerk of General Assembly for storage in the official Archives of the Uniting Church

**(c) Presbytery Records**

The minute book in current use in each Presbytery of each of the negotiating Churches shall become part of the records of the Presbytery of the Uniting Church which is its successor, and shall be in the custody of the Presbytery Clerk Where a Presbytery of one of the negotiating Churches is divided between two or more Presbyteries in the Uniting Church the Special Commission on Union, when constituting such Presbyteries of the Uniting Church, shall determine which Presbytery shall have custody of the records involved Letters and other documents referring to the period covered by such minute books shall also be in the custody of the Presbytery Clerk concerned. All Presbytery records prior to those mentioned above shall be lodged with the official Archives of the Uniting Church. The Clerk of General Assembly shall be informed when this is done. Each Presbytery of the Uniting Church, on being constituted, shall open a new minute book. Thereafter, in respect of minute books retained at the time of union and of all subsequent minute books of Presbyteries, when a new minute book is opened the previous minute book shall be retained in the custody of the Presbytery Clerk, but on the expiry of not more than five years the former minute book shall be lodged by him/her with the official Archives of the Uniting Church The Clerk of General Assembly shall be informed when this is done.

**(d) Session and Congregational Records**

The records of Sessions and Congregations and of their committees and agencies in each of the negotiating Churches shall remain the property of these congregations in the Uniting Church and shall be in the custody of the appropriate office­-bearers It is desirable that old records of Sessions and Congregations be lodged with the official Archives of the Uniting Church The Clerk of General Assembly shall be informed when this is done

**( e) Records of Standing Committees**

All records of Standing Committees of the General Assembly in each of the negotiating Churches shall form part of the records of the Standing Committees of General Assembly in the Uniting Church which are their successors and shall be in the custody of the Conveners concerned. The same practice shall be followed with regard to Standing Committees of Presbyteries The records of any Standing Committee which is discontinued at any time shall be lodged with the Clerk of the Court which appointed it, or of its successor. Old records shall be lodged with the official Archives of the Uniting Church The Clerk of General Assembly shall be informed when this is done

**13. CHURCH BODIES, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

The rights, powers, functions and duties of any body, group or organisation in each of the negotiating Churches shall become the rights, powers, functions and duties of the corresponding bodies in the Uniting Church and shall be exercised in accordance with the provisions of the Manual of Law and Procedure of the Uniting Church

Rules previously applicable to bodies which have been replaced by other bodies or have been absorbed into other bodies or whose functions, or part of whose functions, have been transferred to other bodies, shall continue in force until repealed or amended, and will be applicable whenever the functions previously performed by the old bodies are being performed or are to be performed by the new bodies or sub-divisions of the new bodies

Where organisations recognised on a Church-wide basis by each of the negotiating Churches have similar membership and objects, steps shall be taken for their amalgamation as follows.

Within three months of the uniting General Assembly the Special Commission on Union shall provide for the setting up of Joint Committees representative of the central authorities of such organisations, to prepare detailed proposals for their amalgamation, including a common constitution and arrangements for amalgamation of funds. Such Joint Committees shall as soon as possible present such proposals for the approval of their organisations in terms of their separate constitutions. As soon as such proposals have received the approval of the organisations concerned, the Joint Committee shall present them to the Special Commission on Union, which in turn shall present them to the General Assembly for approval The organisations concerned shall then be amalgamated by resolution of the General Assembly in terms of the proposals approved by the General Assembly.

**SCHEDULE A**

After the General Assemblies of the negotiating Churches have resolved on full acceptance of the Basis of Union (see Section 6) the necessary changes to the Manual of Law and Procedure of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa will be proposed to the Uniting Assembly by the Special Commission and/or the Central Committee. Such changes will include amendments to the provisions for Deacons' Courts.

**SCHEDULE B**

**PROPOSED LIST OF PRESBYTERIES, \WITH THEIR CONGREGATIONS, OF THE FUTURE CHURCH, "THE UNITING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA"**

NOTE: In the case of South Africa the boundaries of Presbyteries in almost all cases follow those of magisterial districts. It is proposed that the boundaries of the present Zimbabwean and Zambian Presbyteries of the PC SA remain unchanged, but that the name of the present Central Presbytery in Zambia be changed, because the present geographical reference may be confusing to those outside that country. The following list indicates congregations of the existing Churches which it is proposed to include in each new Presbytery in the Uniting Church. For the sake of simplicity outstations, preaching stations, etc., have been omitted.

It is suggested that congregations be responsible for the travelling costs of ministers and commissioners to Presbytery and Synod meetings.

**1. Cape Town**

**PCSA**: Atlantis United, Bellville, Blue Downs

United, Bridgetown, Camps Bay United, Darling, Delft, DurbanvilIe, Kraaifontein, Eastridge United, Gardens, Goodwood, Panorama, Guguletu, Heideveld-Manenberg United, Khayelitsha United, Kuils River United, Langa, Maitland, Milnerton, Mitchell's Plain United, Mowbray, Nyanga, Pinelands, Plumstead, Retreat, Rondebosch United, St Andrew's, Salem United, Tableview United, Trinity, Wynberg; Somerset West; Stellenbosch United; St George's (Wellington); Vredenburg United; Oranjemund United.

**RPCSA**: Boland, Carolusberg, Elsies River, JL Zwane, Khayelitsha, Tiyo Soga, WPT Ndibongo.

Total: 44 congregations.

**2. Central Cape**

**PCSA**: All Saints United, St Andrew's (Somerset East); Makana's Kop & Theopolis, Trinity (Grahamstown); Port Alfred; St Thomas' (Uitenhage); Arcadia, Bluewater Bay United, The Hill, Motherwell, St Andrew's, St Barnabas', St Columba's, St James', St Martin's, St Patrick's, Summerstrand United (PE); George, Thembalethu; Knysna; Sedgefield United: Oudtshoorn.

**RPCSA**: Graaff Reinet, Knysna, Patensie, Port Elizabeth, Kwazakhele, Uitenhage, Somerset East, Grahamstown.

Total: 30 congregations.

**3. Amatola**

**PCSA**: Adelaide, Davidson Memorial, Khobonqaba; Bedford, Nonzwakazi; St Columba's (Queenstown); Tarkastad, Wheatlands, Zola-Winterberg; Stutterheim & District; Fort Beaufort, Dorrington; Alice, John Knox Bokwe; St Andrew's, St Philip's (King William's Town); Mdantsane, Cambridge, Gonubie, Parkside, St George's, St Nicholas' United, St Paul's, Stirling (East London)

**RPCSA**: Adelaide, Bumshill, East London, Emgwali, Lovedale, Macfarlan, Pirie, Queenstown, Semple, Stuart Memorial.

Total: 34 congregations.

**4. Transkei**

**PCSA**: No congregations.

**RPCSA**: Columba, Cunningham, Duff, Gcuwa, Govan Blyth, Irvine, Kidston, Njoloza, Lundie Memorial, Maclay, Main, Malan, Mbulu, Ncisininde, Ndakana, Njikelana, Tutura.

Total: 17 congregations.

**5. Umtata**

**PCSA**: St Andrew's.

**RPCSA**: Central Rainy, Erskine, Kulani, Lower Ngqara, Lower Rainy, Miller, Rainy, Ross, Somerville, Ugie, Western Rainy.

Total: 12 congregations.

**6. East Griqualand**

**PCSA**: St Columba's (Kokstad).

RPCSA: Balasi, Buchanan, Gillespie, Mafube, Mbonda, Mpharane, Paballong, Rietvlei, Springside, Sterling, Tsekong, Upper Mkemane, Yekelo Mbale.

Total: 14 congregations.

**7. Thekwini**

**PCSA**: Alfred County; Berea, Christ the Redeemer, Clermont, Durban Central United, Ernest Reim Memorial, Frere Road, Greyville, Highland Hills United, Hillcrest, McDonald Memorial, Merebank, North Durban, Pinetown, St Augustine's, St George's, St Margaret's, St Paul's, Shalom, Stella, Westville.

**RPCSA**: Durban.

Total: 22 congregations.

**8. Drakensberg**

**PCSA**: All Saints United, Midlands. Pietennaritzburg, Scottsville: Upper Urngeni (Howick ); St John's (Nottingham Road).

**RPCSA**: Edendale, Estcourt, Glenbain, lmpendle, lmpolweni, Pholela District, Pietennaritzburg

Total: 13 congregations

**9. Thukela**

**PCSA**: Ladysmith; St Andrew's (Newcastle); St Margaret's (Dannhauser), Trinity (Dundee); Vryheid; Eshowe: Richard's Bay

**RPCSA**: Douglas, Dundee, Gordon Memorial, Jokweni, Ladvsrnith. Msinza. Newcastle, Ulundi

Total: 15 congregations.

**10. Free State**

**PCSA**: St Andrew's (Bethlehem); Witsieshoek United; AR Poho Memorial (Deneysville); Frankfort- Villiers: Parys; Phomolong, St Andrew's (Town), St Andrew's (Lengau); St Andrew's (Bothaville); St Andrew's (Heilbron); St Andrew's (Virginia); St Augustine's, St Paul's (Welkom); St John's (City), St John's (Batho) (Bloemfontein); St Luke's (Hoopstad); St Monica's (Odendaalsrus); Thaba Nchu-Botshabelo United; Zarndcla (Sasolburg).

**RPCSA**: Welkom.

Total: 20 congregations.

**11. Lekoa**

**PCSA**: Vryburg United; St Andrew's (Beaconsfield). St Andrew's (Vergenocg) (Kimberley); SI Andrew's (Westonaria); St Matthew's (Carletonville): St Michael's. Trinity (Klerksdorp); St Paul's, St Luke's (Vereeniging): St Stephen's (Vanderbijlpark); St Silas. St Timothy's. SI Anthony's (Sebokeng); St Andrew's (Henley-on-Klip)

**RPCSA**: Kimberley, Stilfontein, Vaal.

Total: 17 congregations.

**12. Egoli**

**PCSA**: Chartwell United. Hamilton Memorial. Kagiso, Krugersdorp, Kensington United, Linden, Mayfair, Meadowlands, Midrand, Moletsane, Orlando, Randburg, Randpark Ridge United. St Barnabas' United, SI Columba's. St George's United. St Giles'. St James', St.John the Evangelist (Ecumenical), St John's (Turffontein), St Mark's, St Magnus, St Mungo's United, St Ninian's (Parktown North), St Ninian's (Roodepoort), St Patrick's, Alexandra, St Paul's United, St Stephen's, Trinity.

**RPCSA**: Johannesburg, Central Johannesburg.

Total: 32 congregations.

**13. Highveld**

**PCSA**: St Paul's (Alberton); All Saints United (Balfour); Heidelberg; Crystal Park, St Thomas's, St Mark's, St Andrew's (Benoni); St Andrew's (Brakpan); St Peter's, Kempton Park; St Andrew's, Trinity (Germiston); Kwa­Thema, St Michael's (Springs); Ebenezer, St John's (Boksburg), St David's, St Peter's (Nigel), St Peter's United (Secunda).

**RPCSA**: East Rand, Germiston, Tembisa

Total 22 congregations.

**14 Tshwane**

**PCSA**: Saints, Saintspark (Centurion); Emmanuel, Jonas Lediga, Mamelodi, , St Andrew's, St Columba's, St Francis', St Mark's. Trinity (Pretoria); Ga Rankuwa; Mabopane; St Thomas' (Temba); Soshanguve; St Andrew's (Witbank); St John's (Middelburg); Rustcnburg, St Peter's (Brits)

**RPCSA**: Pretoria, Rustenburg.

Total: 20 congregations.

**15 Polokwane**

**PCSA**: Lowveld; Mahwelereng; Mount Horeb, Nazareth, Wm Samson Memorial, Seshego (Pietersburg).

**RPCSA**: Blaauwberg, Donhill, Polokwane, Gooldville, Phalaborwa, Stuartville, Weirdale.

Total: 13 congregations.

**16. Zimbabwe**

**PCSA**: St Columba's, (Mutare); City, Chitungwiza, Hatfield, Highfield, Highlands, Kuwadzana, Mbare, Trinity (Harare), Lomagundi (Chinhoyi); St Peter's, Trinity (Gweru); ~ lasvingo; Ntabazinduna; Makokoba, Njube, St Andrew's, (Bulawayo).

**RPCSA**: No congregations

Total: 17 congregations.

**17. Lusaka (Zambia)**

**PCSA**: David Livingstone Memorial (Livingstone L Chawama, Kabwata, Kaunda Square, Matera, St Columba's (Lusaka).

**RPCSA**: No congregations

Total: 6 congregations.

**18 Copperbelt (Zambia)**

**PCSA**: Chimwemwe, St Andrew's, Wusakili (Kitwe ); John Knox (Luanshya); Kabushi (Ndola): St Columba's (Kabwe).

**RPCSA**: No congregations

Total: 6 congregations.

**RETIRING MODERATOR’S ADDRESS**

**General Assembly 2014**

Readings:

Ps 51:1-19

Matt 13:44-46

2 Cor 11:1-3

Moderator, there is a song which was written in 1939 at the outbreak of th3 2WW.

I wish to borrow it today: and maybe the Clerk of Assembly, Tom Coulter, will help me sing it!

It goes like this:

Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye.

Cheerio, here I go, on my way.

Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye.

With a cheer, not a tear, make it gay.

Give me a smile, I can keep for a while

in my heart while I’m away.

Wish me luck, as you wave me goodbye.

Cheerio, here I go, on my way.

Mukondi, I have loved being Moderator but it is with great joy I hand over the Chair, the robe, the stole, the ring: the office of Moderator of General Assembly to you.

I hope you will have fun and I hope you will love the next two years as I have so enjoyed the last 2 years.

Moderator, Brother Mukondi,

I made a lot of people very cross 2 years ago in Stellenbosch when I preaching my first sermon as Moderator. And I will probably make some more people cross today ... but I am now over 60 years old and you are about 60 and this is my last official address so I am going to break tradition and do what I can already hear many of our colleagues will say is bad behaviour.

I chose not to use this retiring address as a “State of the Church” address. Only Jesus can measure the State of the Church.

I am going to pretend this is your ordination: and, as we do at Ordinations and Inductions, I am going to preach a Charge to you and the 11th Assembly.

Moderator, in Paul’s words to Timothy (2 T 4:1)

In the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His Kingdom,

I give you this charge:

\* Put Jesus 1st, in all things! (Phil 2)

\*\* Make it your goal to please Him, Jesus (2 Cor 5:9)

\*\*\* And whenever you can and as often as your can remind us, and keep reminding us, to put Jesus 1st.

I thank the Lord that you know Him and that you love Him. As I toured the Limpopo Presbytery in May this year, the Presbytery where once you were our only minister, the Spirit King of Vhembaland!, wherever I went people could testify to your hard work for Christ Jesus and His Church.

I charge you to love the Lord of the Work more than you may love the Work of the Lord.

And I charge you to keep telling us to love Jesus.

Moderator Mukondi, Brother and Sisters of this 11th Assembly, just as was read to us earlier:

I am calling you back to your sincere and pure devotion to Christ Jesus. 2 Cor 11:3.

There is no judgementalism in me about this but one of the privileges of being Moderator of the General Assembly is you get around the denomination and you are given the change to LOOK AND SEE to LISTEN AND HEAR.

Since last July (Exec Comm) I have made 61 visits and in the 2 years probably over 130 = more than one visit per week, and my observation – not judgement – is that our “sincere and pure devotion” to Christ Jesus has grown lukewarm. It is neither hot nor cold. That is a dangerous place for God’s people to be.

We seem to be hotter. We seem to get more excited by and we seem to become more hot under the collar about things that divide us.

We seem to want to score points against each other. We are quick to attack, quicker to defend ourselves, and slow to bless each other, slower to affirm and compliment one another and even slower still to ask for forgiveness.

Our Presbyteries are not noted for being places of joy.

Reports back to congregations about Presbyteries carry little news of thanksgiving and blessing each other and a lot of news about hurt and pain and another commission.

We use culture (not just black and white culture) – membership of an Association and sometimes even race as reasons to be prickly, on edge toward each other and not as reaons to enrich one another.

We seem to forget, so easily, so quickly, so conveniently, that our identity is “IN CHRIST” and not in the ‘UPCSA”.

Christ Jesus 1st and last and in Him is no Greek, Barbarian, male, female, MCG, UPWF.

I see our “sincere and pure devotion” to Jesus as lukewarm because we find it so hard to put others 1st. And to believe Jesus is at work in others so different from us.

What I also observe about our sincere and pure devotion to Christ Jesus is that we are shy to use His name and to say “Jesus” with love and affection.

Instead we blaspheme: “O my God”; we say it and let it be said as if it was like saying “eish”. “Nkosiyam” sometimes pretending it is an exclamation of prayer but it is lazy language.

Some of us have grown lukewarm to the name “Jesus” but use titles for Jesus: “The Christ” we say as if referring to some cosmic power and not our brother, Jesus, our King, Jesus, our friend, Jesus.

It is not sincere and pure devotion to Him to avoid His name: Call Him Jesus, Gabriel told Joseph.

And Paul who met Him, the Risen Lord Jesus, thunders to us in Phil 2: It is at the name of Jesus that every knee shall bow and to the name of Jesus that every tongue will say: Jesus is Lord.

And it was Peter who insisted, insisted when talking to the office bearers and elders and teachers of the Jewish peole, that it was by the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, he and John healed and preached.

And in case they missed the pointe Peter makes matters simply stunningly clear:

AA 4:13 There is no other name under heaven given to humankind by which we must be saved.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!

Those who know Your name put their trust in your power and majesty.

Moderator how my heart soared when the Elders of the Sheshego told me Moses Boshemane, "Bosch" led them to Salvation. They did not believe being saved was Presbyterian but Bosch changed their hearts. And Seani & Livuwani Mavinha rejoicing at the retreat on being allowed to talk about the person and work of the Holy Spirit also made my heart rejoice.

I think, I see that, our sincere and pure devotion to Jesus has grown lukewarm when we presume the Holy Spirit is in us and with us even when Jesus calls us to ask for the Spirit Luke 11:13.

Moderator, Brothers and Sisters, just as Paul did; just as we read about Paul just now 2 Cor 4, I ask you to put up with a little of my foolishness. Like Paul for the Church in Corinth: I am jealous for the UPCSA. I, too, want our Church to be a pure virgin, presentable to Him.

This is striking language but only to those who hold that virginity is beautiful, precious, and a treasure to be given to your lifelong partner in marriage.

When I talk of virginity here I mean a virgin man before I think of a virgin woman. Both.

In our lukewarm devotion to Christ Jesus we have ceased to make sex before marriage an issue.

As a Church we have lost the battle with those who live together before marriage and come to be married with no shame, no sense of anything could be amiss and certainly no reason to ask Jesus to forgive them.

If we have made virginity an issue it is probably in terms of AIDS and safe sex and not “purity”.

Please stick with this image from Paul, from the Holy Spirit, I say.

A church so serious about its sincere and pure devotion to Christ Jesus is a virgin Church, a bride beautiful and a groom groomed in holy purity. Saved for each other.

A couple and a church that is virginal is serious about its sincere and pure devotion to each other, to Christ.

Is Christ coming back?

Well then, does He return for His Bride or some other “who has spent herself on men worse than herself for they have no principles and no regard for her?”

If Paul has any favourite phrases about God then “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit”, must be one.

That is God’s character being shared with us.

And Paul also uses Faith, Hope and Love in several ways.

That is God’s eternal gifts to us and at work in us.

But Paul has another 3 word phrase he uses about us, about the church in 1 Cor 8, Eph 5:27, Phil 2:25; Col 1:22; 1 Thes 3:18, 5:23; 1 Tim 2:3; Tit 1:6: Pure and blameless and Holy and Blameless.

And that is the work of the Holy Spirit in us. And that is the reason for us to give back to Him sincere and pure devotion. Because of what the living Jesus has done and is doing in us: making us like Himself.

So I ask you: Is Jesus returning for some weary old prostitute whose

\* beauty has passed but is not forgotten

\*\* self respect has gone but is longed for

\*\*\* identity is blurred into confusion and

\*\*\* diginity is only defined as being relevant to every passing wind of godless doctrine and pleasure?

Is Jesus returning to take such a one to the Wedding feast of the Lamb?

Well yes: at some level the UPCSA may be like Gomer and Christ Jesus like Hosea but HIS sincere and pure devoltion TO US cleans us as Hosea’s love to Gomer restored her.

And so Moderator, Brothers and Sisters, Christ’s love for us persuades me to call you to your sincere and pure devotion to Jesus: The Son of Man, The Son of God. The Saviour Redeemer. The friend of Sinners. The Way, the Truth, the Life: To Jesus. God, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

So, I have loved being Moderator for 2 years and I am glad, so glad to let you Mukondi improve on my stumbling attempts to bless our Church.

But like Paul (2 Cor 3) I say “I am afraid we in the UPCSA may somehow have been led stray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ Jesus”.

Moderator, you are already well loved and received a massive vote when you were elected. I was not such a popular choice and squeaked in with just a few votes, so I have wanted to do well and not harm. You may be more secure than I have been. But you cannot stop what others think of you. And so I was interested when one of our colleagues said when he hears me talk he thinks I am just like a bulldog. I take a bite and won’t let go.

Another said I am just like Gerrie Nel the Prosecutor in Oscar Pistorius’ trial: I go over and over and over the same thing!

Well let me prove that right now:

Moderator, I charge you to remind us as often as you can that Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure in a field and when someone found it, in his JOY he sold all and bought the field. Mod, for those who do not want land but want jewellery, the bling!

Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is like one pearl of great value and someone sold everything he had and bought it.

Mod, please remind us often of everything and the all we have to give up includes the colour of our jackets ... and the jackets; includes the colour of our hats ... and the hats; includes the shape of our god collars and the collars.

Sir, sincere and pure devotion gets watered down very easily. When a man loves his wife’s cooking more than he loves her. Sincere and pure devotion has been watered down when I say I am a Pirates’ fan, I am confessing I am a soccer fan. But when I love the Buccaneers colours more than the sport, my sincere and pure devotion to soccer has been watered down.

When King David realised his sincere and pure devotion to God had been watered down by lusting after Bathsheba, he cried to God: “Create in me a new heart O God. And renew a steadfast spirit in me. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me”.

That, I hope, is a prayer we will all pray again.

And so Brothers and Sisters at this 11th General Assembly:

Do not be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Jesus.

Make it your goal to please Jesus.

1. As you speak here, speak in sincere and pure devotion to Jesus.
2. As you attend devotions and pray here do so with sincere and pure devotion.
3. As you consider your vote for Moderator Designate, make your vote as act of sincere and pure devotion.
4. When you decide on the new General Secretary, make your vote as act of sincere and pure devotion.
5. When you receive the Good News of the report about the Associations, do not be led astray nor lead others astray from sincere and pure devotion to Jesus.
6. Behave with one goal. Act with one intention. Serve each other with desire.

This is my sincere and pure devotion to Jesus.

Moderator, as your friend, colleague and servant, I ask us all and charge us all to make it our goal to please Jesus with sincere and pure devotion to Him. Amen

**THE RT REV RODERICK BOTSIS**

**RETIRING MODERATOR**

**MODERATOR’S OPENING ADDRESS**

**General Assembly 2014**

**SERMON: THE CHURCH JESUS PRAYED FOR**

**TEXT: Psalm 133:1 – 3**

**Eph. 4:1 – 6**

**John 17:20 – 26**

**INTRODUCTION**

A story has been told about the minister and a congregant in a particular church. Every time after the sermon the congregant would follow the minister in the vestry to congratulate the minister for the good sermon preached. She would call the minister her son; “*My son today’s sermon was great – you told them”.* It went on and on for a long time. Every sermon was very good for “*them”* and he told “*them”*.

One day just about the time the church started it rained cats and dogs. The minister and our friend made it to the church. The minister preached fire down and she was nodding and smiling to the minister as he preaches. At the end of the sermon she followed the minister to the vestry and still congratulates him and she said; “*My son God himself was here today, the sermon was so powerful unfortunately they are not here you would have told them.”*

During my early days in ministry I was very much interested in attending every General Assembly meeting and every conference. I loved the debate, the tensions and sometimes some great celebrations. I am one of those who never missed one meeting of the Special Commission to the Union between our former two churches. This was because I did not trust others. The decisions would be good if I participated. In September 1999 it was a dream comes true when we came together in New Brighton to form the UPCSA. I was running in front of the dancing procession leading to the Centenary Hall, in Port Elizabeth taking a video of that historical moment.

The church was doing the right thing, responding to Jesus’ prayer – *that they maybe one*. I felt I had made it – almost calling “Come Lord Jesus, come.”

My dream was short lived. Conflicts, tensions and divisions characterized our church. Brothers and sisters could not see each other as one body of Christ but small groups that claim to be followers of Christ. As the church that believes in the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit why would it take us almost a decade to resolve one problem; that of disunity in the body of Christ? In 1Cor. 3:16 – 21a Paul has this question and warning; “*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, no more boasting about men (So let no one boast about human leaders)! All things are yours*”,

Now in Gal. 4:7 - 10 I hear Paul again saying; *“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of person does not come from the one who is calls you. A little yeast works through the whole batch of though. I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.”*

Paul’s words make me wonder; what kind of a church are we? In his book; “*The Church Jesus prayed for*” Dr Michael Cassidy writes; *“As it happened, I also asked the Lord to touch my heart afresh with his love for the church of Jesus and all who are in it, in spite of the many weaknesses and failings in both institution and individuals. For while there is so much that is both lovable and laudable in so many in the church, there is also so much that is damning and deplorable.*

*Not only do I see this dichotomy in others, but more depressing personally is the fact that I also see it and know it most acutely in myself. Yes, I see the enemy in the church. And it is I.”*

Maybe I need to ask this question to all of us who are gathered here today; who is the real enemy of the church? Is there anyone here today who is bold enough to stand up with me together with Michael Cassidy and say; it is I; I am the enemy of the church. But it does not end there! There must be a way out of this situation. We cannot leave in this situation forever. I am sure no one can be proud of a situation where some are labelled as enemies. This is the house of God. Jesus Christ is the King and head of the Church. It is his body. We all must do something right here and now without any delay. Sin must be dealt with and be removed among us. We must join hand and together be united and be the true body of Christ.

**THE POWER OF TOGETHERNESS**

The devil is a liar; he will always deceive you that you are better divided than united. It takes few minutes to fight and destroy a relationship that was build through decades and it takes decades to rebuild broken relationships. Living together is beautiful and pleasant. Hear what David says*; “How beautiful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! ..... For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forever.”* There when they are together in unity.

Psalm 133 is the fourteenth of fifteen Psalms that run from Psalm 120 to 134. They are called Songs of Ascents. There are many views about when were these songs sung. I go with the view that the songs were sung by the pilgrims as they went up to Jerusalem. They would go up for great feasts; the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. People from all over came and as they went up to Jerusalem, Zion, the Holy City of God; they would sing these fifteen Songs of Ascents.

Hear some of these Songs of Ascents.

120. I call in the Lord in my distress and he answered me.

121. I lift up my eyes to the hills-where does my help come from? My help come from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth

122. I rejoice with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem.”

123. I lift up my eyes to you whose throne is in heaven.

124. If the Lord had not been on our side when men attacked us, when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive.

125. Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

126. When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed.

127. Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labour in vain.

128. Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.

133. Behold, how beautiful and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. For there the Lord bestows his blessing even life forevermore.

134. Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of thee Lord.

You can praise the Lord only when all the stuff is over with and done; when people of God are living together in unity. This is all about God’s people coming together with one goal, one hope and one prayer – living together in unity; together in harmony achieving great things for God and his people. Unity is beautiful and attractive, it is lovely and harmonious.

The song is calling on people of God to hold themselves to the object in view - when brothers live together in unity, the song calls them to hold their eyes and their hearts in the meditation of the blessed society and joyousness of the people of God whose hearts beat in perfect accord with God and with each other. *“Behold, how beautiful and how pleasant….”*

There in Jerusalem they gathering before their God their eyes and their hearts were fixed on God. The beauty of the glory of God united them. Their hearts were bound together by the presence of God in their midst. There is nothing so pathetic and dangerous than when the people of God are no longer able to discern that the glory of God has departed – Ichabod. When people of God are more inward looking and cannot observe that God has long left them because they make him sick as we have heard yesterday. When people are no more on fire for the Lord, the church in Laodicea; they were by themselves locking Christ out of their gathering and their hearts. Those who know what it means to live in the presence of God will never leave any stone unturned until God’s glory is manifest within and among them.

May it becomes the desire of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa to always make sure that God’s glory can be seen and experienced in our local congregations, in our Presbyteries, in our Synods and General Assembly meetings. That UPCSA will becomes a home for all; black and white, male and female, young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, able and disabled always caring for each other making sure that we are one big family; the family of God. This is the power of unity; when the people of God are together.

**UNITY AS THE FOUNDATION OF EVENGELISM**

If ever there was a time the message of the church has become so weak is today. Today the world cannot even listen to what the church is trying to say. The division in the church is so visible that the world cannot trust the church anymore.

Hence Jesus prayed in John 17 and left us such a powerful prayer – *that they may be one*. He was praying in the presence of a divided small church of only 12 people. Physically they were together but in reality they were far apart. The sons of Zebedee have just had a meeting with their mother asking Jesus to treat them in a special way that they may be given powerful positions. Peter has a sword in his coat. Judas is going to betray Jesus. It is in this context that Jesus prayed for this very small congregation and those who will believe their message.

We can see this in the book of Acts 2:42 – 47 *“They* ***devoted*** *themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to* ***fellowship,*** *to the* ***breaking of bread*** *and to* ***prayer.*** *Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were* ***together*** *and had everything in* ***common.*** *Selling their possessions and goods, they* ***gave*** *to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to* ***meet together*** *in the temple courts. They broke bread* ***in their homes*** *and* ***ate together*** *with glad and* ***sincere hearts****, praising God and* ***enjoying the favour of all the people****. And* ***the Lord added*** *to their number daily those who were being saved.”*  This is the church Jesus prayed for; it was an answer to his prayer. In this church were devotion, fellowship, sharing, sincerity, and togetherness. This is what attracted all the people and the church enjoyed the people’s favour. There is power in the togetherness of the people of God and unity is the powerful tool for evangelism.

**UNITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD**

The carnal mind cannot understand this. So many treaties have been signed around the world in search and unity. Governments of national unity have been formed in search of peace and national unity. Many lives have been destroyed in search for peace and security. Many lives are in severe addiction of alcohol and drugs in search for peace and joy.

You cannot buy peace and unity as it cannot be sold. Peace and unity is given. Only Jesus can give it to them that need it. It is free for all.

Dietrich Bonheoffer wrote in his book, Life Together: “*Christian community is not an ideal we have to realize, but rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate*”. This means that our oneness as believers is not something we can create in and of ourselves but it is something that has already been accomplished in Christ. So we’re left with no responsibility to unite ourselves, but we are left with the liberty to participate in the unity that already exists*.* In Christ, our unity is already a fact. Ours is to celebrate this finished work of Jesus Christ. It is said that; *“In 1054, there was a great divide between the Western and the Eastern Church that was provoked because the Western church had inserted a single word into the creed. This division still exists between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the 1500s, the time of the Reformation, another great divide occurred when men like Martin Luther began to speak out against corruption in the church. They had hoped to heal the church of its corruption, but it only resulted in more splits. We’re all descendants of the Reformation: we’re Protestants. Protesting is who we are! Dividing is part of our heritage! It’s pretty common these days that when someone doesn’t agree with some aspect of their church – the music, the preaching, the people, and the location – they just go to a different one****.”***

Common goal or purpose may not be our good point for our unity. Belonging to one association may not be our best point of departure for our oneness. This is how secular organizations are formed and united. If we use these methods to unite the body of Christ, it becomes obvious that we create unity by exclusion. One said; *“If a common goal is the foundation of our unity, then we must exclude those who think we should be spending our time on other pursuits.*

*If a common enemy is what unites us, then not only must we exclude the enemy from our fellowship, but also any who count our enemy as their friend. If this is how we unite ourselves, then people can only be one with us if they become like us, taking on our interest, or our goal, or our enemy as their own. This makes us the judges of our community, because it is based on standards that* we *have set. Quite soon, we must become the accusers of our community, because as its judges, we have to enforce unity by excluding all that might dissolve it. It is not long before we become the destroyers of our community, because as its judges and accusers, we have had to create divisions in order to retain the vision and the dream of oneness – like digging moat around a great fortress. When we have as the basis of our unity anything less than Christ, then either we cannot sustain our community, or we have to cut ourselves off from all other communities.”*

*Christ, and nothing less, is the source and strength and center of our unity.*

We don’t have to create unity out of nothing, but that it has already been established in Christ. We don’t need to fear diversity in the church, because we know it is not a threat to the greater oneness we have in Christ. When people enter our community with different goals, interests, and needs, we can welcome them, knowing that, long ago, we have already been joined by the unity of the Spirit. This is all about living according to reality, as opposed to making reality for ourselves. Our being, our identity, and our life in Christ is not to be distinct from the message we bring. How can we say that God is love if we do not love? How can we say that all are one in Christ if we are divided? How can we say “Jesus is Lord,” if Jesus is not our Lord?

Paul calls on the believers to consider this very serious. He challenges them on the issue of life style. He calls on the church in Ephesus to deal with pride and temperaments – *“be humble and gentle, be patient, bear with one another in love. Keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body, one Spirit, there is one hope, there is one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all”.* All these emphasize the importance of the unity of the body of Christ; his church. The Church Jesus prayed for.

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US AS UPCSA**

The UPCSA is called upon to revisit its own conduct – how are we carrying out our task of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is it beautiful and pleasant, are we enjoying favour of all the people? Is this church growing or almost dying? The UPCSA needs to know that we are strong together than apart. The UPCSA needs to know that it is impossible to talk about unity when among its own people there are those who have and those who have not, and very few want to know what is going on.

I personally struggled as we were preparing for this Assembly when we were almost going to spend over R40, 000 on sound system for this few days when we will be here. I called on my brother John that do your best to cut down these expenses. My reason was that if we can spend this amount this way surely we can do more for the many who are facing difficulties in their lives including ministers who may not receive their stipend this month. We live in a very complicated system that governs our lives. I have come to know that in this church much is still to be done when it comes to the way we treat our ministers and the poor in the church. When it comes to real things of faith we always do not know what to do. Some are now saying that wow; where were you Mukondi? Tell them they are just but very difficult people. Don’t leave any stone unturned blast them.

You know what; when the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, there are no spectators. It is only in sports that few do the play as other watch. We are all guilty; either of the sin of commission, omission and or negligence.

Christ is calling all of us to think about the church he prayed for. The church where you and I are equally treated, the church where all are respected, the church whose hope, and goal is to live together in unity. “For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.” Jesus prayed for the church that will manifest the glory of God. And you are that church. Let us go from here and participate and celebrate the unity of the UPCSA. Let no one of us be found busy working against that which Christ has accomplished. Ours is to unite and not divide. Let Unity reigns in the UPCSA. We are better together than apart.

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. AMEN

**THE RT REV MUKONDELELI RAMULONDI**

**MODERATOR’S CLOSING ADDRESS**

**General Assembly 2014**

**ADDRESS: THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION**

**TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 – 21**

**INTRODUCTION**

We have been here for almost a week now. We have been discerning together the will of God about the Church Jesus prayed for. We have finished the business of General Assembly and are now ready to go home. What will take back to the churches where we came from? I want to leave you with this; “The Ministry of Reconciliation.” We have a duty to perform. I hope we are leaving here not the same people as we came. Someone has this to say;

*“The cross cannot be glamorized. There is no way to make it a pretty sight. A brutal, bloody execution took place there. To the Roman soldiers that took part in it, it was a form of entertainment. There, Jesus hung exposed to the elements, unable to protect his eyes from the sun or wipe away the sweat and blood that ran down his face. But why, why the cross? Who was on the cross?”* That is our question.

In 2 Cor. 5:19, Paul writes; *“that God was, reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*

We may never understand the cross until we know who it was that died there; Jesus the Son of God. Jesus was the ordinary man. There has never been anyone like him. Had we known him, it would have been obvious that he was a man born by a young woman called Marry in her teenage years. She did not come from a well known family. She was not a great mother but just an ordinary person.

WHO WAS THIS JESUS?

We are talking about the man Jesus who hungered, thirsted, and his body needed rest. Jesus was truly and completely a man.

Yet he was more than man. We hear this from Nicodemus; *“..we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”* The Professor declared!Jesus was not just the best of men. He was God manifest in the flesh. *“God was in Christ.”* Jesus was God who became man not simply the man of God as we hear these days. I terribly get disturbed when I hear people calling ministers man of God, because this has a temptation to go beyond the line and forgetting that being man of God means being the people’s servants. That those of you and me who are ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacraments may think that there is something divine in us.

Sometimes we hear words like these; *“I will not allow people in my congregation to behave as they wish; I will not allow elders to tell me what to do.”* Who are you after all? *“Man of God?”* Remember it is God who became man. This must be taken very serious. It means that Jesus was the eternal, all powerful, holy God, creator of heaven and earth and all things as we see them. In John 1:3 we read; *“Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made.”*

I love verse 14; *“The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* In Col. 1:16 Paul has this to say; *“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.”* If this is understood by all of us the world would become the better place for all to live in.

**WHY WAS JESUS ON THE CROSS?**

Jesus was on the cross because of men’s sin. In 2 Cor. 5:19 we read; *“that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*

In 2 Cor. 5:17 Paul continues to say: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* A saint, a heaven born son and daughter of God. There are some of us who steal these statements and use them but having not been converted by the power of the same word of God. Until we are changed by the power of the word of God, these statements become a song in our mouths. Apart from Jesus we are all sinners. We are condemned in sin.

I wonder how much those of us who believe in salvation understand this. I am one of those who believe in salvation here and now. I claim salvation, I claim that I am born again; I claim that I am the son of God and I do not apologize for these claims. Anywhere I go in the world, at home, with friends, foreigners and strangers, I claim that I am born again.

But what does it mean to be a born again child of God because it is beautiful to say it. It has a tendency to make you think you are little bit holy and better than others, self-righteous. I have seen how much of those of us who claim to be born again hurt others, how we judge others to a point that we would pull Jesus aside and say to him; you stand there: I will do the work for you. I will tell you who is good and who is bad, I will show you who is yours and who is the devil’s. You know sometimes Jesus is shocked by our own actions.

TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER THAN APART

If anyone is in Christ, that one is a new creature. I am not a fine scholar! Academically I argue to a certain level and end there. I need all of you to do some work on my behalf. There are many of you who are far much better than me academically and theologically. But because you are my brothers and sisters; I am a better theologian too. But I am worried: are there born again, converted or convinced Christians here today? – Terminology does not matter. Do we have such members in our church today? If yes why then so much divisions and quarrels.

To the General Assembly Committees, Church Associations and every structure in our church I leave this question with you: for how long are we going to hurt each other in the name of Christ. Why is it so difficult for us to resolve our differences without any delay? Why can’t we resolve our differences within the possible short time? Why should it take us so long to realize that divisions and quarrels are sinful before God? What is it that we are unable to handle on our own? For if anyone is in Christ, that one is a new creature. Let there be repentance that is visible and can be felt. Then and only then, the Spirit of the Lord God Almighty will fall on us.

**WHAT DID JESUS ACCOMPLISH AT THE CROSS?**

At the cross Jesus reconciled us to God. For those who are born again it means that their relationship with God has been restored and that means that it should translate to the fellow brothers and sisters. They have been reconciled and brought back to God. All things have become new. That is what it means to be reconciled. We were sinners and now we are sons and daughters of God Almighty. We were condemned and now we are justified, we were enemies and now we have fellowship with God and one another.

**THE NATURE OF RECONCILIATION**

Reconciliation goes beyond forgiveness. We can forgive without being reconciled to the one we forgive. That is what we usually do in our churches. We come together, we worship together but not reconciled. We may put away the offense but not restored the relationship. God has done both; he put aside the offense and restored our relationship with himself. He brought us back to himself. He did not only put away our past but he has brought us into his own family. He has prepared a place for us in heaven. In John 14:2 Jesus said; *“In my Father’s house are many rooms, if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you…”* Jesus promised that we will be with him for eternity. We have been made the righteousness of God. Christ’s righteousness has been put on my account. That is the basis of our relationship with God and each other.

All our sins, past, present and future have been paid for by Jesus’ death at the cross of Calvary. Our sins are no longer in God’s record books. Salvation is not in the behaviour but in the being forgiven and restored.

**CONCLUSION**

What does God expect of us? For those who are not born again, they are invited to be reconciled to God. To agree with the word of God that they are sinners and that Christ died in their place to pay for their sins’ debt, to choose, today to accept Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Lord of their lives.

For those who are children of God, born of the Spirit of God, be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God. Make it your business to witness for Christ. Encourage others to be reconciled to God.

Let us go from here and be reconciled to one another. Let us not go from here and dig our past for our past is very ugly, dirty and unprofitable. Let us go from here and be champions of peace and justice. Let us go from here and be the voice of the voiceless. Let us go from here and be the feet and hands of Jesus Christ the Lord and King of the Church. Let us go from here and be ambassadors of the Kingdom of God and then and only then the world will say this is the Church Jesus prayed for.

Francis of Assisi, well known to many of us prayed this prayer:

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love;*

*Where there is injury, pardon;*

*Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair; hope;*

*Where there is darkness; light;*

*Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek*

*To be consoled as to console,*

*To be understood as to understand,*

*To be loved as to love;*

*For it is in giving that we receive;*

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;*

*It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.*

We need to die to self, then Christ will emerge and the Holy Spirit will manifest himself and the fruit of the Spirit will overflow. And the Church of Jesus Christ will become a home for all. Those of us who are orphans will smile. Those of us who are considered outcasts will find a new identity when Jesus will be leading his Church. Let us be united and go out there and proclaim that Jesus is Lord. To God alone be the glory now and always.

**AMEN**

**THE RT REV MUKONDELELI RAMULONDI**