



THE UNITING  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
IN SOUTHERN  
AFRICA

8<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## **TO THE UPCSА FAMILY**

### **UPCSА STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF THE PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS AND ON THE PAYMENT OF SOCIAL GRANTS**

The Church and Society Committee of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSА) met at Lumko Institute/Retreat Centre, Benoni on 06-08 March 2017 to deliberate on a wide range of the trending socio economic and political issues that concern church and society. Among others, the Committee noted with dismay the degeneration and deviation from good governance in the South Africa political and public systems, which border on the violation of the people's constitutional rights. The Committee, therefore, resolved to formulate the following statements on behalf of the UPCSА:

#### **ON THE DEATH OF THE PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS IN GAUTENG**

While we acknowledge the service of men and women who operate under trying and testing conditions, but still determined to serve with diligence and compassion to treat the sick, the atrocities that have been committed by the health department cannot be overlooked. The value of human life has been taken for granted. We noticed with deep distress the negligence that was inspired by corruption and greed, which led to the loss of more than 100 precious lives.

We, therefore, call upon the church to repentance:

- We have neglected our call from the Lord to visit and care for the sick.
- Our complacency has allowed for the exploitation of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Furthermore, this is a call to action:

- The Church has to exercise her role as the voice of the marginalised and speak truth to power.
- The Church should diligently visit the sick and evaluate the conditions they may be in and report/speak against negligence and maltreatment.
- The Church is to be visible and should avail herself to assist the affected families wherever and however possible.

#### **ON THE PAYMENT OF THE SOCIAL GRANTS**

The distribution of the social grants in South Africa was awarded to Cash Paymaster Services (a private service provider) by the Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini. This contractual arrangement has been challenged, investigated and judged as irregular. Whilst the Constitutional Court had ruled that this service contract be regularised and also stipulated by a reasonable deadline, the Minister failed to respect this ruling and, in what appears to be a cynical abuse of power, has effectively held the 17 million grant receivers to ransom.

Tiyo Soga House  
28 Rhodes Ave, Parktown, 2193  
PO Box 96188, Brixton 2019  
Tel: +27 11 727 3500  
Fax: +27 11 727 3506  
Email: [gensec@presbyterian.org.za](mailto:gensec@presbyterian.org.za)

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Moderator : Rt Rev R Munthali PhD (UP)  
General Secretary: The Rev L Mpetsheni PGDSS MTh  
Clerk of Assembly : The Rev WV Mkhungo DipTh  
General Treasurer : Mr R Johnson MCom(UP) MIRMSA

The allocation of the distribution of these funds appears to have been deliberately mismanaged to create unnecessary social tensions and unlawfully renew the service contract in a self-created 'crisis'.

This administrative failure is an injustice and is deeply disturbing. The Church condemns this injustice and calls upon the Minister to apologise to the nation and resign. The Church also calls for the payment of the grants to be stabilised.

This statement is to be shared with all the members of the UPCSA for information and with the view to encourage the UPCSA members that serve in the relevant public offices to exert their influence towards good and ethical governance.

Yours in Christ.



The Rev Lungile Mpetsheni  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**